

Peter Skilling

Buddhism and Buddhist Literature of South-East Asia  
Selected Papers

Edited by Claudio Cicuzza



Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation • Lumbini International Research Institute

Bangkok and Lumbini 2009

# Materials for the Study of the Tripiṭaka Volume 5

ข้อมูลพระไตรปิฎกศึกษา เล่ม ๕

PHOTO: DHANAKRITI LAORSUWAN



The twelve essays in this volume survey aspects of Buddhism and Buddhist literature in pre-modern South-east Asia and Thailand, drawing on Pāli and vernacular texts, liturgy, and inscriptions. They discuss Theravādin conceptions of the Bodhisatta, relations between Sanskrit and vernacular literature in Thailand, and questions of the transmission and dissemination of Buddhist ideas and narratives through sermon and ceremony. The texts studied are both products and agents in the intellectual and social world of South-East Asian Buddhism. Broader questions include the

advent of Theravāda Buddhism to South-East Asia and the role of South-East Asia in Buddhist studies.

*Peter Skilling* is a member of the École française d'Extrême-Orient (Bangkok and Paris).

*Front cover* Sudhana-jātaka: Prince Sudhana peeks from behind a tree at his Kinnarī wife Princess Manoharā. From paintings depicting scenes from Thai literature including non-classical *jātakas* like *Sudhana* and *Suwannasang*. Window frames of the Uposatha Hall of Wat Suthat Thepwararam, Bangkok, mid-nineteenth century.

*Back cover* 'Ngoh' with Nang Rocana from the story of *Suwannasang*: Wat Suthat Thepwararam, Bangkok, mid-nineteenth century.

Peter Skilling  
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Peter Skilling

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Selected papers

Edited by Claudio Cicuzza

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Lumbini International Research Institute*

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*Dedicated to*

Ven. Bhikkhu Pāsādika  
Prof. Hubert Durt  
Prof. Dr. Prasert Na Nagara

*with gratitude*





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## Preface

The twelve essays in this volume were published between 1996 and 2006. Six of them were published in Thailand, two in Japan, and the remaining four in international journals. We are grateful to the original publishers for giving us permission to reprint the articles. As far as I know they still retain their currency in that they draw directly on original sources which are still not available in European language translations or studies. I hope that publishing them together here will give them a wider access.

We decided not to make any substantial alterations to any of the essays. As a result the reader may find a degree of overlap and a certain amount of inconsistency. One of the few talents of which I may boast is a flair for inconsistent spelling. In the present volume the inconsistency has been augmented by the passage of time. Where once I held firmly to 'South-East Asia', later I took the easy path and changed to 'Southeast Asia'. But there is no easy path: British colonial administrative records use 'North-East Frontier' and 'North-West Frontier', and there is no end to possible variation. Closer to home there are spellings like 'Lanna', 'Lan Na', 'Lān<sup>2</sup> Nā', and so on.

The romanization of the Thai and Tai languages remains a problem for everyone. There has been no consensus since a series of essays were published in the early volumes of the *Journal of the Siam Society* at the beginning of the twentieth century. Scholars have followed the 'graphic system', but almost always with their own modifications – that is, the system has not stood as a viable standard. When one uses Pāli and Sanskrit sources, the situation becomes all the more unsatisfactory. The graphic system allows international scholars to understand the Indian form or origins of a word: they can immediately recognize 'Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja' or 'Śrīdeba', but they may have trouble finding them on a road-map. On the other hand, 'Nakhon Si Thammarat' and 'Si Thep' can be readily located, but their Indian pedigrees have become obscured. To make matters even more interesting, Thai has many hybrid forms, what we might call 'Thai hybrid Indic'. This hybrid Indic delights in Sanskrit and pseudo-Sanskrit forms. Sanskrit *sūtra* (discourse of the Buddha) is preferred to Pāli *sutta*. *Tripiṭaka* becomes *Traipīṭaka*, in Thai pronounced *Traibidok*. A genre of Thai cosmological works is called *Traibhūmi*, pronounced *Traiphum*. While the term *tebhūmi* exists in Pāli, *traibhūmi* is not used in Sanskrit. Pāli *ānisaṃsa* (benefit, reward, blessing) is often spelt

*ānisaṇṣa* and is pronounced *anisonḡ*. *Vaṃsa* might be *vaṇṣa* or *vaṇṣā*, and is usually pronounced *wong*.

In discussing texts in these essays I have preferred to retain the spelling of titles as given, rather than to suppress the hybridity. *Vijaya* may be *vijaiya* (pronounced *wichai*), as in the *Uṇhissa-* (*Uṇhisa-*, *Uṇhassa-*, etc.) *Vijaiya* (pronounced *Unahit-wichai*). I do not think the inconsistencies lead to the sacrifice of clarity, but the reader trained in ‘standard Pāli’ is likely to shake his or her head in bewilderment and disbelief.

My profound gratitude goes to Claudio Cicuzza for his dedication to this project over a period of five years, during which the author was more often absent than present – and even when present was more often absent-minded than in the here and now of the book. Thanks also go to Songwut Boonmak for his work on the design and layout. I am grateful to Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche and the Khyentse Foundation for their interest in and support of my work, to Justin McDaniel for his enthusiastic response to our request for an introduction, and for his understanding when modesty impelled me to trim many of the superlatives. I thank Prapod Assavavirulhakarn for being a constant resource, and Arthid Sheravanijkul for assisting in countless ways. Santi Pakdeekham’s unstinting help was essential in getting the book through the final throes of publication. Many others have read sections of the book over the years, offering precious corrections, criticisms, and comments, and I offer them all my thanks. Special thanks are dedicated to Giuliana Martini, who at the last stage guided me through the landscape of typos during hours-long telephone calls from Hachioji. Any clumsiness or infelicity that remain are my own responsibility.

Peter Skilling  
Nandapurī  
February 2009

## Introduction

I exhort my students to make choices. They often approach me with unbounded enthusiasm, eager to undertake research in a wide variety of topics related to Buddhist studies. I quash this enthusiasm with warnings about the sins of sacrificing depth and detail to the desire to tackle big questions plaguing the field. Make choices. Choose a language of research and become an unapologetic expert. Choose a time period and know everything about it from literary developments to trade patterns to agricultural output. Choose an approach. You cannot be a good anthropologist, historian, philologist, philosopher, archivist, political scientist, and statistician all at the same time. Master a discipline. Scholars cannot just be inspirational, they must be resources. Only scholars who have absolutely mastered one time period, approach, and language can be a true resource. However, reading and rereading this short collection of articles by Peter Skilling, I realize now that I have been doing my students a disservice.

I first met the person whom I shall call Achan Peter a little more than ten years ago in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was a visiting professor at Harvard University – the only visiting professor I had ever met who wasn't visiting from another academic institution. He was an independent scholar without the normal academic pedigrees. I had read dozens of his articles, but who he was and what choices he had made in his career in Buddhist Studies were mysteries to me. I remember distinctly that we were to meet on the steps of the Widener Library. I imagined we would find a quiet place to sit. I would ask my questions, steal some ideas, and we would part our ways. Instead, Achan Peter asked if I would walk with him to a few bookstores. We spent a long afternoon bending down or standing on tiptoes examining seemingly every book on Asia spread across thousands of linear feet of bookshelves, from Japanese art to Mongolian history to Indo-European linguistics. He never answered my questions directly, but I found myself grabbing napkins from a coffee shop counter in order to write down the information he was giving me about all and sundry. I thought I would be sitting at a table and would be able to write in a proper notebook. No time, we had to walk and talk, always interrupted by fragments of conversation about the importance of this book on Sri Lanka or that essential study

on Borobudur. I was learning a great deal, my pen kept tearing the flimsy light brown napkins, I was growing more and more confused. Who was this scholar? He didn't come from a teaching position at the University at Uppsala, Oxford, or Kyoto. He did not have a doctorate from Benares Hindu University, the University of Toronto, or Rome. He apparently knew at least Tibetan, Sanskrit, Pali, and Thai. I did not get my questions answered that particular day. I have in my notes, translated from napkins, that finally over coffee later that day, we talked about the early 'indianized' Oc-Eo culture of the Mekong delta and other Vietnamese archaeological sites. I would spend the next ten years having conversations at Oriental Books in Pasadena, California, at Chulalongkorn University Bookstore in Bangkok, at Arthur Probsthain Books in London, and at Evergreen Books in Singapore, among many others.

Not all of our conversations were in informal situations. I had the rare opportunity to work in the Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation's 'manuscript house', an archive where more than ten thousand palm-leaf and mulberry-paper manuscripts were being preserved, documented, scanned, and made available for research. The Foundation had saved the manuscripts from being scattered and lost through the open markets in Thailand a decade or two earlier. The conversations around manuscripts Achan Peter and I would have over various hand selected varieties of mango were illuminating. His advice on how to approach manuscripts in general was invaluable to my research in Laos and Northern Thailand and was well-worth the boat, two buses, and motorcycle taxi I used to have to take to get to the manuscript library. His manuscript work and his collection of primary and secondary sources in Tibetan, Japanese, and Chinese, as well as South and Southeast Asian Buddhist sources, show the value of not limiting oneself to a narrow expertise in Thai, Khmer, or Tibetan texts or a single time period. His wide interests have not only allowed him to see connections and trends that have been obscure to scholars with less experience, but to be a resource to students and scholars throughout the world. He has lent his extensive expertise to institutions such as the Pali Text Society, the Lumbini International Research Institute, and most recently the École française d'Extrême-Orient. He has published numerous articles as well as useful resources like the Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation's series of reference works, *Materials for the Study of the Tripitaka*, and the several issues of the *Fragile Palm Leaves Newsletter*.

One might imagine from my comments than Achan Peter is a pure textualist who is more comfortable in libraries and bookstores than in the field. This could not be further from the truth. He is what I would call a textual anthropologist, meaning not only that he sees how texts are used in various contexts, but also the ways in which texts have changed over time through different editions, translations, liturgical, magical, and homiletic settings. He has taken me to Ratchaburi, Ayutthaya, Singhburi, and other places, and to the monastery of the legendary Mon monk Luang Pho Uttama along the Burmese-Thai border to pay our last respects.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to write a brief introduction to this selection of twelve articles. This is only a small collection of relatively recent writings, which were thematically selected by editor Claudio Cicuzza (an eclectic and multi-talented scholar in his own right) because they concentrate on Pali and vernacular texts and textual history in Southeast Asia and because, although all of them have been published before, some are very hard to find. The detailed notes, the appendixes at the end of several of the articles, and the comprehensive bibliography join together to make the volume a reference work which will stand the test of time. I must add that many more are the studies that remain unpublished – two that I especially wish had made it into this volume are a history of Thai Buddhist liturgies and a discussion of the problematics of the term ‘Theravāda’. Nevertheless, thanks to Claudio’s painstaking efforts, now at least the writings included here are accessible to a wider reading audience.

Although Achan Peter has refused to make conventional choices in his work and career, Claudio has made admirable ones in preparing this volume. What follows is a small but representative selection of essays on Southeast Asian Buddhist texts and textual practices. Achan Peter writes about literary and ritual trends in Southeast Asia broadly, but each article is highly detailed and copiously referenced. He demonstrates that the only way to make grand claims about the advent of Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia, the relationship between orality and textuality, or the place of Buddhist Studies in Southeast Asia, is to concentrate on the details and to study languages and primary sources thoroughly. These studies are rarely speculative, but always exhaustive.

Now let me make a few brief introductory notes to some of the individual studies. Four look directly at the place of Pali and Sanskrit

language and literature in Thailand specifically, and in Southeast Asia more broadly: 'Pāli in Early South-East Asia and in Sukhothai' (originally published in 2004), '*Jātaka* and *Paññāsa-jātaka* in South-East Asia' (2006), 'Pieces in the Puzzle: Sanskrit Literature in Pre-modern Siam' and 'Manuscripts and Inscriptions, Languages and Letters' (2003). The first has been renamed and refined here as 'Language and Writing in Southeast Asia and Sukhothai' and begins with a succinct overview of the movement of Pali Buddhist literature into Southeast Asia and the rise of Buddhist writing in Shan, Arakanese, Mon, Lao, Thai, Khmer, and other vernaculars. It is emphasized that the rise of vernacular literary traditions did not lead to the 'death' of Pali, a subject tackled more directly in the last section of 'Manuscripts, Inscriptions, Languages, and Letters'. This marks the Mahāvihāran lineages of Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia as different from Buddhist textual traditions in Tibet, Japan, and China where classical Sanskrit ceased to be studied by all but a 'small elite' (p. 19). Achan Peter also notes that the various scripts used to write Pali and vernaculars in Southeast Asia were not only tools of communication to the masses, but also reveal the wide variety of textual communities which adopted and slowly changed the way Pali texts were rendered, collected, and cited. Of particular importance is the explanation of the subtle differences between 'khom' scripts and the categorization of inscriptions as 'citation inscriptions' and 'composition inscriptions'. A curious fact is further pointed out – in Sri Lanka, long known as the virtual homeland of Pali texts, there are almost no Pali inscriptions, while there are numerous early citation inscriptions in lower Burma and in the central regions of Thailand. The final section offers some details on the early Pali textual evidence from Sukhothai.

'*Jātaka* and *Paññāsa-jātaka* in South-East Asia' was one of the most influential articles in my own research career. I first read a longer draft of this article almost six years before the published version saw the light of day. I carried this quickly tattered and much annotated draft in my shoulder bag during two years of manuscript field work in Laos and Thailand. In fact '*Jātaka* and *Paññāsa-jātaka* in Southeast Asia' could easily be a separate monograph. It provides a lucid description of the history and literary qualities of the canonical or classical *jātakas* and gives a fresh study of the local and regional collections of 'apocryphal' *jātakas* (Thai: *chadok nok-nibat*) known as the *Paññāsa-jātaka*, 'Fifty *Jātakas*' (Thai: *Ha-sip chat*). Moreover, the essay emphasizes that there is neither simply one collection



known as the *Paññāsa-jātaka* in the region nor do these collections contain fifty stories! The essay also explores the use of the *jātakas* in different communities, a textual anthropology which is expanded in Achan's most recent book (with Pattaratorn Chirapravati, Pierre Pichard, Santi Pakdeekham, and Prapod Assavavirulhakarn) on the art, architecture, and history of Sukhothai's Wat Sri Chum, *The Past Lives of the Buddha* (Bangkok: River Books, 2007).

'Pieces in the Puzzle: Sanskrit Literature in Pre-modern Siam' looks at a topic hitherto unexplored in any systematic way – the range and role of Sanskrit texts in Southeast Asia. Most of the Sanskrit sources in Southeast Asia are undated fragments scattered across a number of areas. Therefore, many scholars have ignored the Sanskrit evidence because of a general preference for determining origins and Ur-texts and then proceeding to trace Indic and other 'influences'. Achan Peter goes in a different direction, writing:

At the outset I would like to point out that I am not entirely happy with this 'quest for origins', which seems to privilege the Indian over the local, the classical over the vernacular, the old over the new. If we find that a text has an Indian antecedent, we should reflect carefully on the relations between the two. Rarely, if ever, is there a case of straightforward borrowing: the Thai counterparts are creative adaptations, conscious recastings, of their 'originals'. In addition, we should note that many works in the Siamese corpus that pose as *sūtras* and *jātakas* are original compositions, and that they are *significant* contributions to world Buddhist literature and culture. The Siamese contribution has not been adequately recognized, despite the fact that it is prodigious and full of surprises. (See p. 28 in this volume.)

Indeed there are a number of surprises. Here he presents five Southeast Asian Pali/vernacular 'texts' – *Jambūpati-sūtra*, *Uṇhissavijaya-sūtra*, *Lokaneyyapakaraṇa*, *Vidagdhamukhamāṇḍana*, and *Paññāpāramī*. Each text is traced backwards and forwards from manuscript evidence in Southeast Asia (often Lanna and Lao archives) back to India and throughout Southeast Asia. The process of tracing the texts is the point, not finding the origin. In this way, the study of each text stands alone and advances our knowledge, and at the same time it provides an excellent model for future textual studies in the region. After investigating these five, he offers some provocative 'possibilities' that help us understand textual transmission in general.

'Manuscripts and Inscriptions, Languages and Letters' looks closely not at individual texts or languages, but at the material culture of textual transmission in the region. This study speaks to art historians and palaeographers as much as to scholars of Buddhist studies. Claudio Cicuzza opens the entire collection with this article. This is appropriate as without understanding texts as 'objects' with their own technological as well as material limitations and possibilities, we cannot hope to fully appreciate their semantic contents within the communities that cherished or even discarded them. Achan Peter offers an understanding of 'bi-scripts', composite texts, and orthographic idiosyncrasies, which are often ignored by textualists who tend to be satisfied with a Roman script edition or a modern translation. Printed editions too often erase the contexts, linguistic features, and material technology of pre-modern texts. He sums it up simply: 'language has its own landscape' (below, p. 3).

Moving from broader studies of texts and textual communities in Southeast Asia to close studies of individual texts we have: 'Some literary References in the Grande Inscription d'Angkor' (2001) and 'Three Types of Bodhisattva in Theravāda Tradition: A Bibliographical Excursion' (2002). Here we find two very different studies. The first examines the famous 'Great Inscription' of Angkor Wat, which Achan interprets as an example of the fluid intertextuality of Southeast Asian Buddhist literature. A single text can contain explicit, indirect, or subtle references to other canonical and non-canonical, classical and vernacular texts. Therefore, one must be wary of studying any text in isolation or of limiting one's choice of expertise either to a particular country, a single language, or a defined time period. In this long eighteenth-century inscription, for example, he looks closely at three allusions to other texts: to *Lokaneyyappakaraṇa*, to the story of *Nān Bhogavatī*, and to the story of *Jotika-seṭṭhī*. The first is an apocryphal Southeast Asian *jātaka* composed in Pali and popular in vernacular translations. The second is a vernacular Thai narrative found in manuscripts in Southern Thailand. The last concerns Jotika, a fabulously rich devotee in the time of the Buddha, whose name and status are invoked in inscriptions and even in an administrative position in the Ayutthaya and Ratanakosin periods, showing how certain 'canonical' individuals became ideals of human aspiration in Southeast Asia. Other *seṭṭhī* (entrepreneurs) are well-known in stories throughout the region, and although it is not mentioned in this article, Achan Peter shows that the Buddhists in the area (and throughout Asia) were rarely apprehensive of aspiring to wealth

and power. Buddhism is not merely an ascetic tradition. To trace intertextual references like this requires a broad vision and a knack for detail.

'Three Types of Bodhisattva in Theravāda Tradition: A Bibliographical Excursion' should appeal to a wide audience of students of Mahāyāna as well as of Theravāda Buddhism. Three possible Bodhisattva 'careers' described in Pali texts form the basis of the discussion; although they can be compared on some points with material in Sanskrit from non-Theravādin lineages, the point is that the Theravādin or Pali theory is self-confident and independent. Here we find another common feature of Achan's work – looking closely at one text to illuminate broader trends in Buddhist thought. Close textual study is combined with copious reference to a wide range of textual traditions, thus encouraging students of Buddhism to hone their linguistic skills while at the same time seeing Buddhism as a tradition that crosses geographical, linguistic, and historical boundaries.

In another group of articles, Achan Peter moves from a study of texts and languages to the ways in which texts are used in ritual and in sermons: 'Ārāḍhanā Tham: Invitation to Teach the Dhamma' (2002), 'Tripiṭaka in Practice in the Fourth and Fifth Reigns: Relics and Images according to Somdet Phra Saṅgharāja Pussadeva's *Paṭhamasambodhi Sermon*' (2002), a product of collaboration with Achan Prapod Assavavirulhakarn (now Dean, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University), 'The Sambuddhe Verses and Later Theravādin Buddhology' (1996), and 'Praises of the Buddha beyond Praise' (1998). The first two, originally published in *Manusya*, a journal published by Chulalongkorn University, are rather difficult to find outside Thailand. The articles should be read together as they inform each other. The last two articles were published in the *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, but they are included here because they deserve to be read by those outside of Pali textual studies. These four articles are significant for a number of reasons. First, they are abundantly referenced not only to primary and secondary sources in Pali, Sanskrit, French, and German, but also to the work of Thai scholars. The contributions of Thai Buddhist studies experts have been ignored for too long in the field of Southeast Asian Buddhism, even by those who study Buddhism in Thailand. Only recently have Western scholars started to learn from the arguments and research agendas of their Thai colleagues. Achan Peter's work demonstrates

the benefits of paying close attention to Thai intellectual trends and publications.

Secondly, these studies question the term '*Tripitaka*'. I drew on the first two articles in my doctoral dissertation (submitted to Harvard University in 2003), particularly because they count among the few publications that demonstrate how the general Buddhist public in Southeast Asia comes to know the *Tripitaka*. There has been a general assumption that good Buddhists study the *Tripitaka*, but there has not been much investigation into what the term *Tripitaka* actually invokes in the mind of an everyday student of Buddhism. Achan Peter and Achan Prapod assert that the *Tripitaka* 'left the library and entered society through the sermon' (p. 120). Sermons as well as visual images in mural paintings were the vehicles by which people came to know the ideas and narratives of the *Tripitaka*. Therefore, a full study of a curriculum involves examining these points of encounter where the canon was negotiated by the teacher in oral performance. These points of encounter, manipulation, and creative engagement reflect an episteme where classical and canonical texts are neither sacrosanct nor static. The canon, in practice, is fluid and open. Just as monastic library collections and the choice of source texts for pedagogical use are wide-ranging and most often non-canonical, in modern Thailand and Laos (and pre-modern Thailand and Laos as seen in section one) the term *Tipitaka* (*Tripitaka*/*Traibidok*) refers not just to the 'three baskets' as the Pali canon which received its final codification by the Mahāvihāra school in Sri Lanka over 1500 years ago, but to all types of religious books. In Achan Peter and Achan Prapod's more specific study of Somdet Phra Saṅgharāja Pussadeva's *Paṭhamasambodhi* sermon there is a translation for the first time of a royally authorized sermon on the influential Southeast Asian biography of the Buddha, the *Paṭhamasambodhi*, which gives a good example of how in Thailand, as in Laos, Cambodia, and Burma, Pali texts were adapted when communicated orally. Thirdly, these articles are important because, as in other studies, Achans Peter and Prapod show the importance of tracing texts not only through manuscripts but also through different printed editions, as shown by the fact that in the case of the *Paṭhamasambodhi* it is only in the second edition of the sermon, which was sponsored as a cremation volume, that we find an introduction to the sermon revealing the importance attributed to this work by Prince Damrong Rajanubhab.

In 'The Sambuddhe Verses and Later Theravādin Buddhology'

and 'Praises of the Buddha beyond Praise', Achan Peter presents two short Pali texts. In the case of the former, the text is not rare, rather it is an extremely popular liturgical text in Thailand and in Burma that had been previously overlooked by scholars of Pali Buddhism. He shows how these seemingly straightforward stanzas with which lay and ordained people praise the 512,028, 1,024,055, or even 2,048,109 past Buddhas oblige us to reconsider the assumption that for Theravādins only one Buddha, Sakyamuni, is relevant at any one historical moment. Achan traces the concept through inscriptional and textual evidence from India, Sri Lanka, Burma, and Thailand. Thence he shows how the way Buddhas of the past are listed and imagined can be further understood by looking at the theories of various lineages of future Buddhas. Such close study of this short liturgical, non-canonical text, provocatively reassesses basic Buddhist understandings of soteriology and time itself. The second article also takes a short liturgical text and explores the ways in which it questions fundamental concepts of Buddhahood and the cosmos. It shows how canonical maxims are read through local Thai texts over time. Finally, both are examples taking into account the importance of liturgy and performance, as well as exemplary studies in 'close-reading'. I read them as a graduate student in 1999, and they changed the very way I approached texts. At that time, I was trying to decide whether to concentrate on canonical/classical or non-canonical/vernacular texts. These articles showed me that those very options are stultifying and that the Buddhist world of Southeast Asia is one in which, as Achan Peter writes in another essay in this volume:

Many more questions can be asked. Our knowledge is always incomplete, our conclusions are always in need of reformulation, our methodology is always in need of revision. I hope in this essay to have pointed out some of the gaps in the study of Buddhism, to have given at least a hint of the rich resources available for the study of South-East Asian Buddhism, and to have made some suggestions about how to look at not only South-East Asian Buddhism but Buddhism in general. (See p. 68 in this volume.)

Southeast Asian Buddhism in general is examined in the two most far reaching contributions in the collection: 'The Advent of Theravāda Buddhism to Mainland South-east Asia' (1997), and 'The Place of South-East Asia in Buddhist Studies'. The latter was first delivered as a talk on November 21, 2000. I used a copy of the draft

talk for several years when preparing lectures. I surmise that the former is informed by the conversations and collaboration between Achan Peter and his close colleague, Achan Prapod, who wrote his dissertation submitted at the University of California at Berkeley in 1990 on a similar theme. In both articles Achan Peter dispels some oft-repeated myths about the 'Theravāda' and at the same time shows how the study of Buddhism in Southeast Asia can be relevant and fruitful for scholars in Buddhist Studies more broadly. 'The Advent of Theravāda Buddhism to Mainland South-east Asia', unlike Prapod Assavavirulhakarn's impressive dissertation (regrettably still unpublished) does not look at archaeological and linguistic evidence to trace the movement of Theravāda teachers into Suvarṇabhūmi, but largely focuses on the problem of the 'school identification'. Achan Peter has studied the schools of early Buddhism in several other publications not included in this volume. Here, he takes on another fundamental problem in the study of Buddhism – is there such a historical entity known as the Theravāda and if so, what makes it distinctive, as a school of Buddhism in Southeast Asia? Thus, the very foundations of Theravāda Buddhism, long considered one of the oldest and most traditional schools of Buddhism, are questioned. Firstly, there is almost no evidence of a separate and so-named school of Theravāda Buddhism in mainland India. Secondly, what we call the Theravāda may and may not be the same as the school of Buddhism connected with the Mahāvihāra in Sri Lanka. Even though both the Mahāvihāra and Abhayagiri schools used Pali and even though there is epigraphical evidence for the presence of the latter for at least a short period in central Java, does this mean that we can trace a direct line from the Mahāvihāra or Abhayagirivihāra to different lineages of Burmese, Cambodian, Thai, and Lao Buddhism? The best evidence for school affiliation in Southeast Asia comes from Mon and Pyu kingdom inscriptions in what are today central Thailand and lower Burma respectively. From this evidence, he demonstrates that 'All told, there is no conclusive local evidence that the early Theravāda of South-East Asia was affiliated with either the Mahāvihāra or the Abhayagiri' (114). In reading the inscriptions he also asks an important question – is the evidence of the use of the Pali language alone enough to justify identifying a particular inscription as 'Theravādin'? Or perhaps we should ask: are 'Pali Buddhism' and 'Theravāda Buddhism' synonymous? Further investigation leads him to this important observation:

We should not regard the establishment and development of Buddhism in the region as a mere mechanical process. Rather, it was a human, and hence unpredictable, progress in which decisions were made and acted upon by individuals and communities. A single charismatic monk could attract followers and sponsors of status to his school; a single ruler could, whether for political, economic, or purely religious reasons, decide to favour a particular *saṅgha*. Changing trade routes or political alliances could bring new patterns of patronage. (See p. 116 in this volume.)

‘The Place of South-East Asia in Buddhist Studies’ is essential reading for students of Buddhism in general. Southeast Asian Buddhist beliefs and practices have long been understudied compared to Tibetan, Japanese, Sri Lankan, and Chinese Buddhisms. There is much they can teach us. First, Achan Peter inquires into the geographic parameters of Southeast Asian Buddhism. Does it include places like Bangladesh which has a sizeable Buddhist population around Chittagong? Those parts of Assam where important Buddhist communities and sites still exist? The Tai speaking Buddhist communities of Yunnan? Secondly, a major problem that has faced the field is pointed out – studies limited by the boundaries of modern nation-states. Thai or Burmese Buddhism is not a single entity; regional, linguistic, and cultural sub-groups like the Arakanese, Mon, and Shan straddle and defy modern borders. These sub-groups do not exist in a vacuum, but interact with others in different ways. This diversity of Southeast Asian Buddhism has not been adequately addressed in our scholarship. When differences are noted, they have been seen as minor compared to the similarities that they share because it is assumed that they are all part of the ‘Theravāda school’. This is a central problem in the study of Southeast Asian Buddhism:

[A] conceptual problem lies in the fact that the Buddhism of South-East Asia is seen through the frame – or forced into the Procrustean bed – of a ‘Theravādin Buddhism’ inevitably described as ‘early’, ‘conservative’, ‘unworldly’... to lump all of South-East Asia under ‘Theravāda’ oversimplifies and obscures the historical development of monasticism, ritual, and literature. Furthermore, if the monks (there have been no nuns for at least a thousand years) ordain within lineages that trace their origins to the Sri Lankan Thera school, it does not follow that the laity were or are ‘Theravādins’ by ‘faith’, ‘creed’, or ‘profession’, and indeed both monastic and lay (the boundary is at any rate fluid) practices entail many specifically local

or regional elements. By the same token, rituals, sacred images, art, and architecture are not 'Theravādin'. I prefer to use specific terms and to try to understand these phenomena as part of socio-historical evolution. (See p. 49 in this volume.)

How do we go about confronting some of these basic conceptual problems? As Achan Peter argues, 'specific data are needed for general studies, and it is the general studies that place specific data in context' (51). There have been a number of specific studies of inscriptions, images, and texts, but very little in the way of general studies which grow out of this close study of details. One problem which faces those who seek to gain a broad and deep knowledge of Southeast Asian Buddhism is the need to study both classical and vernacular languages. Moreover, scholars need to rise above their own disciplines in archaeology, history, philology, art history, anthropology, and the like. They need to begin to use all possible evidence – inscriptions, manuscripts, literature (secular and religious), art, and rituals. Only with this openness can we begin to show, as scholars, the contributions Southeast Asian writers, ritualists, artists, political theorists, and ethicists have made to the world heritage of Buddhism. This collection of Peter Skilling's work on the region and on Buddhist Studies in general gives us an admirable model of the possibilities inherent in this material and in this field. I have learned a great deal and I trust that the reader will as well.

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## Abbreviations

AN	Aṅguttara-nikāya
BEFEO	Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient (Paris)
BhB	Bhūmibalo Foundation edition
BHSD	Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary (Edgerton [1953] 1972)
BSR	Buddhist Studies Review (London)
ChS	Chatt̥ha Saṅgīti edition
DN	Dīgha-nikāya
ed.	edition; edited
EFEO	École française d'Extrême-Orient
IMA	Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor
IPMC1	Inventaire provisoire des manuscrits du Cambodge. Première Partie (de Bernon 2004)
IsIAO	Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (Rome)
IsMEO	Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (Rome)
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JIAS	Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies
JPTS	Journal of the Pali Text Society
JSPS	Journal of the Office of the Supreme Patriarch's Secretary = Warasanchotmaikhao samnak-lekhanukan Somdetphrasangkharat (Bangkok)
JSS	Journal of Siam Society (Bangkok)
LSPÉB	Linh-Son—Publication d'études bouddhologiques (Paris)
Mm	Mahāmakūṭarājavidyālaya edition
MN	Majjhima-nikāya
MST	Materials for the Study of the Tripiṭaka (see IPMC1, PLCS, PVL)
P	Peking edition of the Kanjur (Otani Reprint)
PÉFEO	Publication de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient (Paris)
PLCS	Pāli Literature Transmitted in Central Siam (Skilling and Santi Pakdeekham 2002).
PTS	Pali Text Society edition
PVL	Pāli and Vernacular Literature Transmitted in Central and Northern Siam (Skilling and Santi Pekdeekham 2004)
SN	Saṃyutta-nikāya
v.	verse
Vin	Vinaya
VOHD	Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland

WFB Review  
WZKS

World Fellowship of Buddhists Review (Bangkok)  
Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens  
(Vienna)

## Eras

BE	Buddhist Era (BE – 543 = CE)
CE	Christian Era (CE + 543 = BE)
BCE	Before Christian Era (543 – BCE = BE)
CS	Lesser Śaka Era (Culaśakarāja) (CS + 638 = CE)
RE	Ratanakosin Era

## Periods of Thai history

Sukhothai	1239?-1438
Ayutthaya	1351-1767
Thonburi	1767-1782
Ratanakosin (Bangkok)	1782-present

## Kings of the Early Bangkok Period

Rama I (Phra Phutthayotfa Chulalok Chaoyuhua)	1782-1809
Rama II (Phra Phutthalætla Naphalai Chaoyuhua)	1809-1824
Rama III (Phra Nangklao Chaoyuhua)	1824-1851
Rama IV (Phra Chomklao Chaoyuhua (commonly known in the West as King Mongkut))	1851-1868
Rama V (Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua (commonly known in the West as King Chulalongkorn))	1868-1910
Rama VI (Phra Mongkutklao Chaoyuhua (commonly known in the West as King Vajiravudh))	1910-1925

## Note on spelling and usage

Thai words are spelt according to the Royal Institute system of [1968] 1982 (with some exceptions for proper names). In the titles of texts and in certain formal terms, words of Indian origin are spelt according to standard Indic usage: *Paññasa-jataka*, for example, rather than, as pronounced in Thai, *Panyatsa-chadok*.



## Manuscripts and inscriptions, languages and letters

THIS ARTICLE STUDIES AND DISCUSSES TWO PRIMARY HISTORICAL sources, inscriptions and manuscripts, in mainland South-East Asia, primarily Siam. My interests extend beyond doctrinal and literary history – the evolution and expression of ideas – to social, economic, political, and institutional history, as well as to the evolution of liturgy, ritual, and iconography. The expressions of Buddhism evolve continually, as only to be expected in this world of impermanence and flux.

### Script and language

The main scripts in the region derive from a single writing system, Indian Brāhmī, more specifically a southern variety conventionally termed ‘Pallava’. In the earliest period, from the fourth or fifth to the seventh centuries CE, this script was used for Sanskrit and Pāli, and was strikingly similar throughout the region, even in insular South-East Asia. By the eighth and ninth centuries, language-specific scripts were devised to record vernaculars like Khmer, Cham, Mon, and Pyu.

In the early centuries of the second millennium, the Thai in central Siam developed two scripts from the Old Khmer script: 'Khom Pāli' for writing Pāli and 'Khom Thai' for writing Thai. The two scripts were taught together up until the late nineteenth century, when both Pāli and Thai began to be written in the Thai script. In the Centre, South, and parts of the North-East extant inscriptions and manuscripts use Khom Pāli, Khom Thai, Thai, Khmer, and Mon scripts, for the Pāli, Thai, Khmer, and Mon languages. In the North and North-East we find the several Tham scripts, used for recording Pāli, and the Lanna, Fak Kham, Thai Noi, Shan, and Burmese used for vernaculars.

In the nineteenth century King Rāma IV (as a monk, before he ascended the throne) devised the Ariyaka script for the writing of Pāli. It was used by a limited circle in the Dhammayutika monasteries of the capital until it was replaced by the Thai script during the Fifth Reign. The brahmins, with their centre in the Bot Phram near Wat Suthat, used a 'Siamese Grantha'. In the corpus of inscriptions there are a few epigraphs in Nāgarī, one in Sinhala script (but Pāli language), and two in Tamil script and language. The use of scripts from non-Indian writing systems was limited: there are a very few relatively early inscriptions in Chinese: one from Si Thep (ca. eighth century?), another from Ayutthaya (Wat Rajaburana: fourteenth century?), and there are much later ones from Thonburi and Bangkok. The roman script was used in a few royal inscriptions by the late nineteenth century. Muslim communities use the Arabic script.

Written languages include Sanskrit, Pāli, Mon, Khmer, Thai, Lanna Thai, Shan, Lao, Isan Thai, Southern Thai, and Burmese. Given this linguistic complexity, it is not surprising that there are bilingual inscriptions, for example Sanskrit/Khmer, Pāli/Mon, Pāli/Thai, or Pāli/Lanna Thai. Most bilinguals record a composite text in which the languages have different functions. Opening invocations and closing benedictions are in Sanskrit or Pāli, while details of a grant or other 'official' matters are in a vernacular.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For Indian bilinguals see Richard Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 109; for Khmer and Cham bilinguals, see J.G. de Casparis (ed.), *Sanskrit Outside India* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991, Vol. VII of Johannes Bronkhorst [ed.], *Panels of the VIIth World Sanskrit Conference*), p. 3, and Claude Jacques, 'The Use of Sanskrit in the Khmer and Cham Inscriptions',

A feature of Thai, Lanna Thai, and Isan bilinguals is the use of two (or very rarely three) scripts in the same inscription or text, for example Thai script for Thai language combined with Khom script for Pāli, or Fak Kham for Lanna language and Tham for Pāli. These, in which a classical language is marked by use of a special script, may be called ‘biscripts’. As far as I know neighbouring cultures do not use biscripts: the Mon use the Mon script for both Mon and Pāli, the Burmese the Burmese script for both Burmese and Pāli, the Khmer the Khmer script for both Khmer and Pāli.<sup>2</sup> (I do not count multilingual records such as the early twelfth century quadrilingual ‘Myazedi’ inscription erected by Rājakumāra at Pagan, since the four languages – Mon, Pāli, Burmese, and Pyu – are each given a separate face. That is, the languages and scripts are not combined in the same text. Further, the Pāli is in the Mon script.)

The complexity of the history of the study and publication of South-East Asian inscriptions is reflected in the opening sentence of Claude Jacques’ ‘Use of Sanskrit in the Khmer and Cham Inscriptions’:<sup>3</sup> ‘the very first Sanskrit inscription of Cambodia (actually found in Laos) was published by Hendrik Kern in the *Annales de l’Extrême-Orient* in 1873’. That is, a Sanskrit inscription from Laos, deemed to belong to ‘Cambodia’, was published by a Dutch scholar in a French journal. In the same way, many inscriptions from Siam – in Sanskrit, Khmer, and Pāli – have been published in French in *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, and Thai-language inscriptions from Burma have been published in the semi-official Thai “Corpus of inscriptions”, *Prachum Silacharuk*. Language has its own landscape, and inscription has its own imperative, which is often obscured by the modern map.

### The inscription of Pāli

The earliest evidence for the use of Pāli in Siam is in inscriptions from Central Thailand.<sup>4</sup> Not even a single inscription is dated, and it

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in *ibid.*, pp. 5–12; for Indonesian bilinguals see J.G. de Casparis, ‘The uses of Sanskrit in inscriptions of Indonesia and Malaysia’, in *ibid.*, pp. 30–32.

<sup>2</sup> The Pāli is distinguished from the vernaculars by the absence of the special marks and letters used in the latter, but the basic script is the same.

<sup>3</sup> Claude Jacques, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Skilling, ‘Some Citation Inscriptions from South-East Asia’, *JPTS XXVII* (2002), pp. 159–175, and below, pp. 105–111.

is difficult to date the records on palæographic grounds alone. The result is that over the years different scholars have assigned different dates to the same inscriptions. In any case, the picture is sufficiently clear for us to conclude that Pāli was inscribed in central Siam by the sixth century CE, in Dvāravatī and neighbouring states.

These early inscriptions are not original or local compositions; rather, they are citations from classical Pāli texts from India and, in at least one case, from Sri Lanka. Most common of all was the *ye dhammā* inscription, which is found inscribed on stone, brick, and terracotta.<sup>5</sup> It is sometimes inscribed alone, sometimes in combination with other texts. It is inscribed on bricks or slabs of stone, or on *cetiya*s and images of the Buddha. The practice of inscribing *ye dhammā* is very rare in Sri Lanka, but common in India. How can we explain the abundance of *ye dhammā* inscriptions in Siam? According to classical definitions it is a '*dhamma-cetiya*' or 'shrine of the teaching', to be placed in a *stūpa* and revered. It is also connected with the consecration of *cetiya*s and images.

Other texts inscribed during the early period include formulas on the Four Truths of the Noble (*ariya-sacca*) and Dependent Arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*). Some of the Pāli inscriptions were studied and published by George Cœdès (1886–1969), both in his study of so-called 'votive tablets' and in his work on inscriptions. Since Cœdès' time many more Pāli inscriptions have been published in Thai, but for the most part remain unpublished in European Languages.

The inscription of Pāli did not end with Dvāravatī. It continued in Ayutthaya and Sukhothai, where some original inscriptions were composed, and in Krung Ratanakosin or Bangkok. It flourished especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, when texts were inscribed to be installed in *stūpas* or displayed on stone slabs. One of the biggest projects was the inscription of the complete *Dhammapada* and several other texts in Khom script around the inner gallery of the Phra Pathom Cetiya. In the late twentieth century the *Tipiṭaka* and other texts were inscribed on marble slabs at Phuttha Monthon (Buddhamāṇḍala), in Nakhon Pathom province.

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Skilling, 'Traces of the Dharma: Preliminary reports on some *ye dhammā* and *ye dharmā* inscriptions from Mainland South-East Asia', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 90–91 (2003/2004), pp. 273–287.



## Buddhist literature of Siam

‘Literature’ can be defined or delimited in several ways. The *New Oxford Dictionary of English* offers ‘written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit’.<sup>6</sup> The dust-jacket informs us that this lexicon is ‘the foremost authority on English’ and is one of ‘the World’s Most Trusted Dictionaries’, but nonetheless the definition of this important term, which does not even allow the existence of ‘oral literature’, is weak. The definition alerts us to the fact that literature may not be as self-evident as we think: that it is not a pure ‘given’ (if such a thing exists).

For this paper I propose the following definition: ‘Literature is deliberate and conscious composition, individual, joint, or communal, that is deemed worthy of preservation by an interest group or community, with the result that it is preserved or transmitted, orally or in written or printed form.’ The definition should not be too restrictive, since so little of the literature under discussion has been studied or published, or is even easily accessible. It is absurd to impose strictures and categories at this stage of our ignorance.

Pāli literature has been transmitted in South-East Asia for at least a millennium and a half. Texts and *Tipiṭakas* have travelled back and forth across the Indian ocean, throughout the ‘Southern Seas’, and along the South-East Asian land routes. The different countries and cultures of the region have each made their own contributions to the transmission, preservation, and composition of Pāli literature. The result is that the Pāli heritage of each culture is different. That of Siam is especially rich, but it is also little known and little studied.

The Buddhist literature of Siam is transmitted not only in Pāli but also in vernaculars. Pāli and vernacular are intimately related, and it is often impossible to assign priority to the one or the other. That is, Pāli texts were translated into Thai, and Thai texts were rendered into Pāli. Examples of the latter are chronicles like the *Cāmadevī-vaṃsa*<sup>7</sup> and *Ratanabimba-vaṃsa*,<sup>8</sup> the opening verses of which state that the texts were translated from Thai (*deyya-bhāsā* and *sāma-bhāsā*, respectively). Thai terms or names appear in Pāli texts, and

<sup>6</sup> Judy Pearsall (ed.), *New Oxford Dictionary of English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 1077b.

<sup>7</sup> PLCS 2.47 and PVL 3.26, 14.3, 14.4, 25.1.

<sup>8</sup> PLCS 2.183 and PVL 3.19, 7.191, 14.19, 14.20, 14.21.

Pāli terms permeate Thai texts. It should be evident that the study of South-East Asian Pāli literature cannot be undertaken in isolation, without taking vernaculars into account.

Overall, the number of manuscripts waiting to be catalogued is in the tens of thousands. The number of texts which have not yet been studied is in the hundreds, more probably thousands. It is therefore only with some trepidation that I attempt to survey this literature. Whole classes or genres are scarcely known or recognized, such as texts on the rewards or benefits (*ānisaṇsa*) of meritorious deeds, or texts describing the passing away (*nibbāna*) of the hearers of Buddha.<sup>9</sup> I do not doubt that many surprises lie ahead as we venture slowly to map this *terra incognita*. I do not doubt that what I write here will soon need to be refined and corrected.

I am not certain that we even know the contours of this literature. Descriptive catalogues of manuscripts – a number are available – are a first step, which should be followed by analysis, edition, and translation.

Most surviving manuscripts are late, from late Ayutthaya or, more commonly, from nineteenth century Ratanakosin. The bulk of the literature is anonymous, and the majority of the manuscripts bear no date. What circumstances, what needs, produced this literature? What do we know about its chronological, geographical, and social history? When, where, and by whom were the texts written or compiled? When, where, and by whom were they translated, whether into Pāli or into Thai and other vernaculars?

At present not many of these questions can be answered, even approximately. We know the authors of a number of scholarly texts composed in the North of Thailand in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – Ñāṇakitti, Ñāṇavilāsa, and Sirimaṅgala, for example. We have chronicles written in the same period by Ratanapañṇā (*Jinakālamālinī*<sup>10</sup>), Brahmarājapañṇā (*Ratanabimba-vaṃsa*<sup>11</sup>), Bodhiraṇṣī (*Cāmadevī-vaṃsa*,<sup>12</sup> *Sihinga-nidāna*<sup>13</sup>). We know something about a few individuals who actively collected and copied texts, such

<sup>9</sup> See, in this volume, 'The Place of South-East Asia in Buddhist Studies', pp. 57–58.

<sup>10</sup> PLCS 2.55 and PVL 14.5, 14.6.

<sup>11</sup> PLCS 2.183 and PVL 3.19, 7.191, 14.19, 14.20, 14.21.

<sup>12</sup> PLCS 2.47 and PVL 3.26, 14.3, 14.4, 25.1.

<sup>13</sup> PLCS 2.239 and PVL 3.32, 14.23.

as the nineteenth century monk Khru Ba Kañcana of Wat Sung Men in Phrae. But on the whole we know very little about the agents who created, transmitted, and preserved the literary heritage.

### *Jātaka* and *Paññāsa-jātaka*<sup>14</sup>

The *jātaka* is one of the most popular vehicles of literary expression. It is impossible to state the number of non-classical *jātakas* composed in the region, but they number in the hundreds. Some of these are in Pāli, but many are transmitted only in vernaculars such as Northern, North-Eastern, Central, and Southern Thai. Some of these have been collected in anthologies known as '*Paññāsa-jātaka*',<sup>15</sup> which exist as both Pāli and vernacular collections. At present we know of three Pāli collections: Central Thai, Khmer, and Burmese. The *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections of the National Library, Bangkok, preserved in Khom-script palm-leaf manuscripts, have not yet been published in Pāli, but are accessible through an early twentieth-century Thai translation. A Pāli anthology from Burma has been published in Burmese and roman script editions,<sup>16</sup> and translated into English<sup>17</sup> and Thai.<sup>18</sup> There are several vernacular collections from Northern Siam and Laos. One of these, from Wat Sung Men in Phrae province, has been published.

Outside of these anthologies there are 'uncollected' *jātakas* – those that do not enter into any collection. The same *jātaka* was sometimes transmitted alone, in its own manuscript, and sometimes in one or the other collection. In addition to the well-known *Paññāsa-jātaka* anthologies, there exist lesser known – or in any case unresearched – collections like *Paramatthamaṅgala*,<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See, in this volume, '*Jātaka* and *Paññāsa-jātaka* in South-East Asia', pp. 161–217.

<sup>15</sup> PLCS 2.102 and PVL 2.253, 2.254.

<sup>16</sup> Padmanabh S. Jaini (ed.), *Paññāsa-jātaka* or *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa* (in the Burmese Recension), 2 vols. (London: The Pali Text Society, 1981, 1983).

<sup>17</sup> Padmanabh S. Jaini (tr.), *Apocryphal Birth-Stories (Paññāsa-jātaka)*, 2 vols. (London: The Pali Text Society, 1985, 1986).

<sup>18</sup> Fine Arts Department (ed.), *Chiang Mai Paṇṇāsajātaka*, 2 vols. (Bangkok: 2541 [1998]).

<sup>19</sup> PLCS 2.120 and PVL 2.192.

*Sammohanidāna*,<sup>20</sup> and *Suttajātakanidāna-ānisaṃsakathā*.<sup>21</sup> The more popular stories exist in several recensions, in different vernaculars or genres, from prose embedded with Pāli to verse and recitation versions.

Comparison of the titles included in the *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections, of the order in which the texts are arranged, and, in some cases, of the contents of the stories, leads me to conclude that there is no single, 'original' *Paññāsa-jātaka* collection, from which the others evolved. The collections contain different texts, in different sequences. Comparison of individual texts in the Pāli collections reveals that even when the title is the same, the phrasing of the text, including the verses, is often (indeed usually, if not always) different. That is, there is no single *Paññāsa-jātaka* collection: there are only *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections, among which the relationship is not linear.

In the face of this data, I emphatically reject the widely accepted Burmese tradition that 'the' *Paññāsa-jātaka* was composed by a novice in Chiang Mai, since it implies the existence of a single *Ur-Paññāsa-jātaka*. This origin myth is late (attested only in the latter part of the nineteenth century) and vague. It may be true for the Burmese Pāli collection (but this remains to be demonstrated) but it cannot be true for the other collections, which were collected independently at different places, at different times, by different editors, all unknown. Niyada Lausoonthorn has collected evidence to show that certain non-classical *jātakas* were known in Pagan-period Burma and in Sukhothai in Thailand. On the whole the Burmans transmit very few non-classical *jātakas*: the composition of original *jātakas* seems to have been an expression of the story-telling genius of the T(h)ai. It is possible that the Burmese *Zimmè Paññāsa* may be younger than the central Siamese or Northern collection.

This is a preliminary result. The study of *Paññāsa-jātaka* requires the examination of several hundred texts in several languages, most of them unpublished and preserved only in manuscript collections. First the evolution of individual texts must be traced – only then, perhaps, we will be able to understand the evolution of the collections.

<sup>20</sup> PLCS 2.225 and PVL 2.245.

<sup>21</sup> PLCS 2.244 and PVL 2.284.

## The stream of narrative

The texts discussed so far belong to the category of narrative literature. Narrative literature is inherently unstable. Stories do not stand still. As soon as a story enters the imagination of listener or reader, it transforms. Stories must have social relevance to survive; public tellings conserve some aspects and transform others. The transmission of literature is not passive: it involves agents, not recipients, and creativity. We must therefore be cautious in our analysis of the sources of stories, or in attributing them to different schools of Buddhism.

## Cosmology

One striking feature of the Siamese Pāli tradition is the number of texts on cosmology (a term I am not especially happy with, but I leave that problem aside). The National Library, Bangkok, has published many of these in Pāli with Thai translation. The texts include:

1. *Aruṇavatī-sūtra* (PLCS 2.18; PVL 2.209, 18.6)<sup>22</sup>
2. *Aruṇavatisūtra-aṭṭhakathā* (PLCS 2.4; PVL 2.210)
3. *Okāsalo-dīpanī* (PLCS 2.28; PVL 2.236)
4. *Cakkavāla-dīpanī* (PLCS 2.43; PVL 2.237)
5. *Pañcagati-dīpanī* (PLCS 2.99; PVL 2.203)
6. *Pañcagatidīpanī-ṭīkā* (PLCS 2.64; PVL 2.204)
7. *Mahākappalokasaṇṭhānapaññatti* (PLCS 2.157; PVL 2.240)
8. *Lokadīpakasāra* (PLCS 2.190; PVL 2.238)
9. *Lokasaṇṭhānajotaratanagaṇṭhī* (PLCS 2.193; PVL 2.239)
10. *Lokapaññatti* (PLCS 2.194; PVL 2.194)
11. *Lokuppati* (PLCS 2.195; PVL 2.195).

In contrast, cosmological texts are relatively rare in modern Burmese collections. A Pagan inscription dated 1442 does list *Lokapaññatti*, *Lokuppati*, *Aruṇavatī*, and *Chagati-dīpanī*, but these texts do not seem to have had much impact, or to have entered into the curricula of study or ritual. Cosmological themes were part of the tapestry of mural paintings in the Pagan temples, and cosmological diagrams were both incised on palm-leaf manuscripts and painted in colour on

<sup>22</sup> Cf. IPMC1 pp. 174, 243, 363.

paper folding manuscripts.<sup>23</sup> But cosmology does not seem to have succeeded as an independent genre.

The science of cosmology is essential to many aspects of Buddhism, including architecture, mythology, mural painting, and astrology. The Thai penchant for cosmology expressed itself in the vernacular, from the '*Traibhūmi phra ruang*' composed at Sukhothai to the *Trailokavinicchaya-kathā* composed during the First Reign of the Bangkok period. Several texts bearing *Traibhūmi* or *Trailoka* in their titles are preserved in paper manuscripts (*nangsu but*) in the South. I will tentatively describe them as local texts; since they have not yet been studied or published I cannot situate them chronologically. Finally, as at Pagan, the depiction of the 'Three Worlds' was part of the inner world of temples, in Siam most often painted behind the presiding Buddha.

The fascination with cosmology finds its fullest expression in illuminated *Traibhūmi* manuscripts. It is fortunate that a number of fine examples, from the late Ayutthaya period on, have been preserved in the National Library and in foreign collections. The illuminated manuscripts were encyclopædias: the cosmological charts are supplemented by maps marking holy sites in the Middle Country, Sri Lanka, and the known Asian world, and they depict *jātakas* and the life of the Buddha. In addition to the classical 'Nipāta' and 'Ten Jātakas' (*Daśajāti*), non-classical *jātakas* such as the story of Sudhana and Manoharā are woven into the representations of the Himavanta, the Himalayan forests.

There is a common – one might say pervasive – misconception that all Thai-language cosmological texts are linear descendents of the *Traibhūmi phra ruang*. Such is not the case, at all or in any way. Cosmology is a genre, and the texts we have are independent compilations on the theme of cosmology. They are not recensions of a single text, but compilations of texts with a similar purpose, the explication and representation of the ideology of karma, of merit and demerit, of heavens, hells, and Nirvana, with its exemplifications in the career of Samaṇa Gotama, through his past lives in *jātakas* up to his final birth and Buddhahood. The *Traibhūmi phra ruang* is the first known such text to have been composed in Thai. The numerous

<sup>23</sup> Patricia Herbert, 'Burmese cosmological manuscripts', in Alexandra Green and T. Richard Blurton (ed.), *Burma: Art and Archaeology* (London: The British Museum Press), pp. 77–97.

Pāli sources that it lists in a foreword and an appendix testify to the author's erudition. The *Trailokavinicchaya-kathā*, the Southern *Traibhūmi* texts and the illustrated manuscripts are independent compositions.

### Mapping the literature of Siam

The existence of Nepalese Sanskrit literature has been recognized for well over a century.<sup>24</sup> Studies of the 'Pāli literature of Burma' and the 'Pāli literature of Ceylon' were published by Bode in 1909 and Malalasekera in 1928, respectively, and remain classics. There has been no corresponding recognition of the category 'The Pāli literature of Siam' or comparable survey of the Pāli literature of Siam. This is not to say that the subject has been entirely neglected. Finot's 'Recherches sur la littérature laotienne', which appeared in the *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* in 1917, describes the literature of Northern Laos (Luang Prabang), which is intimately related to that of Northern Siam. In 1915 Coëdès published a note on Pāli works composed in Thailand, and in 1925 he published excerpts from several chronicles in Pāli and translation. In 1923, in the introduction to *Saṅgītiya-vaṇśa*, Prince Damrong published the titles of twenty-four works which he believed to have been composed in Siam.<sup>25</sup> Decades later, Supaphan Na Bangchang (1990) produced a study dealing in detail with thirty-three Pāli works composed in Siam.<sup>26</sup>

But despite this considerable research, the Pāli literature of Siam has not been adequately recognized as a significant and independent body of literature, whether by Thai or foreign scholars. Siam was the centre of the production, transmission, and elaboration of a large corpus of Buddhist literature, Pāli and vernacular. Why were so many

<sup>24</sup> In 1828 Brian Houghton Hodgson wrote on the 'Sanskrit Baudhdha Literature of Nepaul' in his 'Notices of the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet', *Asiatic Researches*, vol. XVI (1828), reprint in Brian Houghton Hodgson, *Essays on the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet together with further papers on the Geography, Ethnology, and Commerce of those countries*, London: Trübner and Co., 1874. In 1882 Rajendralala Mitra published his *Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*.

<sup>25</sup> See *Fragile Palm Leaves Newsletter* 7 (Bangkok: December 2545/2002), p. 19.

<sup>26</sup> Supaphan na Bangchang, *Wiwathanakan wanakhadi bali sai phra suddantapidok ti taeng nai prathet thai* (Bangkok: 2533 [1990]).

Pāli texts produced? One factor may be ethnic and linguistic diversity. Texts may have originally been translated from vernaculars into Pāli in order to make them more accessible; the Pāli version might then be rendered into other vernaculars, including, in new versions, the original language. This is precisely the case with the *Cāmadevī-vaṃsa* and *Ratanabimba-vaṃsa*, which were rendered into Pāli and then back into Thai. The same process occurred in Sri Lanka. For example the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā* was translated from old Sinhala to Pāli and then again into Sinhala. The translation process does not close.

Such a vast literature can only have diverse origins. In the case of Thailand, the quest for origins is often presented in terms of two choices, as *either* Chiang Mai or Ayutthaya. But there are other possibilities both within the country – Haribhūñjaya, Nakhon Si Thammarat, and other centres – and without – Haṃsāvati, Arimaddanapura, Luang Prabang, etc. We should not ignore the possible role of regional centres or the force of autonomous literary history. Certainly there were centres in which Pāli flourished during certain periods, supported by an infrastructure of large monasteries and refined courts – for example Chiang Mai in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But the monastic system promoted an autonomous urbanization that was able to flourish away from the centre, and was the custodian of regional and oral literatures, as well as of local sciences and crafts. There is no reason why texts should not have been produced in such centres.

As seen above, in only a few cases do we know from the colophons where a text was composed. Not many anonymous texts are localized, an exception being the *Duñyantiniḍāna*.<sup>27</sup> Some stories have relatives in the *avadāna* literature of Buddhist India – for example the *Mahākappina-sutta*<sup>28</sup> and *Jambūpati-sutta*,<sup>29</sup> or three of the four *jātakas* belonging to the very beginning of Śākyamuni's career as a Bodhisattva, related at the beginning of *Sotatthakī-mahānidāna*,<sup>30</sup> *Sampinḍita-mahānidāna*,<sup>31</sup> and *Sambhāravipāka*,<sup>32</sup> as well as of the *Jinakālamālinī* and the Northern Thai chronicle *Mūlasāsanā*. The Pāli

<sup>27</sup> PLCS 2.86 and PVL 3.30.

<sup>28</sup> PLCS 2.158 and PVL 2.279.

<sup>29</sup> PLCS 2.52 and PVL 2.211, 18.90.

<sup>30</sup> PLCS 2.252 and PVL 2.244.

<sup>31</sup> PLCS 2.223 and PVL 2.242.

<sup>32</sup> PLCS 2.224 and PVL 2.241.



*Uṇhissavijaya*<sup>33</sup> is a version of a text that spread through much of Asia from the seventh century on. Okano<sup>34</sup> has shown that the Pāli *Lokapaññatti*<sup>35</sup> is in part based on the \**Lokaprajñāpty-abhidharma-śāstra*, which is lost in the original Indic but preserved in a Chinese translation made by Paramārtha in CE 559. He has also shown that this text belonged to the Sāṃmitīya school. How and where did these Pāli texts come into being?

There is also a body of secular literature. Texts like the *Vidagdhamukhamāṇḍana*<sup>36</sup> and its commentaries and translation,<sup>37</sup> the *Lokaneyyapakaraṇa*,<sup>38</sup> the *Vajirasārasaṅgaha*,<sup>39</sup> and *Nīti* and didactic texts show an intimate knowledge of Indian literature. There is a Northern Thai *Kāmandakī Nīti-śāra*, and there are references to *Kāmandakī* in literature, for example in the *Pum Rājatham*. Stories from *Pañcatantra* find their way not only into vernacular literature<sup>40</sup> but also into Pāli, and Thai tellings of Vetāla tales date back to at least the Thonburi period.<sup>41</sup>

Some works depend on Sri Lankan texts, for example the massive compendium *Vaṃsamālinī*,<sup>42</sup> a rewriting of the *Mahāvāṃsa* to which are appended versified versions of *Milindapañhā* and *Buddhaghosaniḍāna*. The so-called extended *Mahāvāṃsa* has been more or less ignored

<sup>33</sup> PLCS 2.25 and PVL 2.174; below, pp. 32–36.

<sup>34</sup> Kiyoshi Okano, *Sarvarakṣitas Mahāsaṃvartanīkathā: Ein Sanskrit-Kāvya über die Kosmologie der Sāṃmitīya-Schule des Hīnayāna-Buddhismus* (Sendai: Seminar of Indology, Tohoku University, 1998, Tohoku-Indo-Tibetto-Kenkyūsho-Kankokai Monograph Series I), pp. 55–60.

<sup>35</sup> See PLCS 2.194 and Eugène Denis, *La Lokapaññatti et les idées cosmologiques du bouddhisme ancien*, 2 vols. (Lille/Paris: 1977).

<sup>36</sup> PLCS 4.111 and PVL 5.101. For some preliminary remarks see below p. 37 and Nalini Balbir, ‘Three Pāli Works Revisited’, *The Journal of the Pali Text Society* XXIX (2007), 331–364.

<sup>37</sup> PLCS 4.110, 4.49 (PVL 5.102), 4.72 (PVL 5.104), 4.99 (PVL 5.103).

<sup>38</sup> PLCS 2.192 and PVL 2.251.

<sup>39</sup> PLCS 4.108 and PVL 5.88.

<sup>40</sup> See Kusuma Raksamani, *Nandakaprakarana attributed to Vasubhāga: A Comparative Study of the Sanskrit, Lao, and Thai Texts* (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1978).

<sup>41</sup> Kusuma Raksamani, ‘The Sanskrit Vetāla Cycle in Thai Tales’, in *Sanskrit in Southeast Asia. The Harmonizing Factor of Cultures. Proceedings of Papers of International Sanskrit Conference, May 21-23, 2001, Bangkok, Thailand* (Bangkok 2003), pp. 140–145.

<sup>42</sup> See PLCS 2.205 and PVL 3.22.

since its publication by Malalasekera in 1937. It is generally accepted that it was composed in South-East Asia, most probably Siam, but exactly when or where cannot be said.

Our literature thus has links with India and Sri Lanka, and covers several fields. The mechanisms of this complex cultural exchange remain to be explained. We know from Tibetan records such as the works of the sixteenth-century historian Tāranātha that during the later Pāla and Sena periods monks from South-East Asia visited Magadha and North-Eastern India in large numbers. Tāranātha also records that monks travelled from India to South-East Asia, in Siam to 'Haribhuñjaya with its great golden *stūpa*'. The peregrinations of South-East Asian pilgrims to Magadha are confirmed by epigraphic evidence from Bodh Gaya, by Burmese and Thai chronicles, and by Northern Thai chronicles, legends, and inscriptions.

Did the South-East Asian monks encounter and study this literature in India, and bring books and ideas back with them? Is it possible that some of these Pāli works were composed in Pāli in North India, for example in the great centres of learning like Nālandā, and then brought to South-East Asia? Can some of these works be survivals from the so-called Dvāravatī period, that is, the sixth to seventh centuries? All of these are possible. Were the Sanskrit texts taught in monasteries in the region itself? This seems less likely, although it is quite conceivable that monks brought Sanskrit texts and studied or translated them on their own.

In any case, it is clear that Siamese Pāli literature is not a piecemeal collection of discrete texts passively received from abroad, or mechanically translated into vernaculars. Verses are shared by the *Lokaneyyapakaraṇa* and non-classical *jātakas*, and by non-classical *jātakas* and non-classical texts like the *Jambūpati-sūtra*. Similarities of phrasing and style run throughout the texts. This web of intertextuality suggests that the non-classical texts preserved in Siam are socially and historically related, and that we may speak of a community of Pāli texts that share many features and express a similar ideology – of merit, of reward (*ānisaṇsa*), of the adventures of the Bodhisattva, and the indescribable power and glory of the Buddha. They embed similar value systems, extolling *dāna* and the fashioning and gilding of Buddha images and the production of *Tipiṭakas*.

The uses of Pāli are many. It was used for the recording of events, including historical narratives and histories of Buddha images. It was used for the writing of letters, from monk to monk or ruler to ruler.

It was used for the exposition of law: incorporated into the legal code compiled at the behest of King Rāma I are verses from a Pāli *Dhammasattha*. The origin of the Pāli text, which is also cited in Mon and Burmese law codes, is not known, and so far it has not, to my knowledge, been found as an independent work. Today Pāli remains an integral part of the monastic education system. There are many liturgical uses of Pāli; in addition to the daily recitations of monks, nuns, and lay-followers, to the recitations on special occasion of merit or at death-rites, Pāli verses are recited in ceremonies of royal consecration, of homage to teachers, and of classical dance. Here the formulas are often hybrid Pāli, mixed with Sanskrit and Thai.

### Pāli: dead or alive?

Pāli is preserved in inscriptions on stone and other materials, and in manuscripts of palm-leaf and paper. It is preserved in memory, ritual, and recitation. Old texts are interpreted, studied, and translated into Thai and other languages, and new compositions are made. According to a common definition Pāli is a dead language – ‘a language which is no longer used as a natural daily means of spoken communication within a community’.<sup>43</sup> But this definition fits Pāli awkwardly if at all: Pāli is fully alive as a literary and ritual language within the communities of Buddhists in South-East Asia. It is more useful to think in terms of the distinction between ‘natural’ and ‘learned’ languages.<sup>44</sup> Like Sanskrit, Pāli is ‘a language to be studied and consciously mastered’. Pāli is not, and never has been, a natural language; that is, a language ‘acquired and used instinctively’. As a learned language Pāli has changed and developed over the centuries, and it continues to do so. It is a learned (and learned) language, and as such it is still alive and (relatively) well, even in this age of globalization.

<sup>43</sup> David Crystal, *The Penguin Dictionary of Language* (second edition, London: Penguin Books, 1999), p. 80.

<sup>44</sup> See Michael Coulson, *Sanskrit: An Introduction to the Classical Language* (revised by Richard Gombrich and James Benson) (London, Teach Yourself Books: 2003), pp. xix–xx, and Steven Collins, *Selfless persons: Imagery and thought in Theravāda Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1982), pp. 23–24.

## Conclusions

It is not possible at this point to reach any grand conclusion and work remains in progress. We can conclude that in the Pāli records of Siam, whether inscriptions or manuscripts, we have a vast treasury that is very imperfectly known. We can conclude that we need to prepare inventories of inscriptions and manuscripts, and to prepare annotated editions and translations of inscriptions and texts. We can conclude that many questions remain. And I believe that we must keep an open mind and try to see these texts in a broad context, taking into account their literary, social, and historical implications.

## Language and writing in South-East Asia and in Sukhothai

### I. Buddhist languages in context

THE BUDDHA WAS BORN IN LUMBINI GROVE NEAR KAPILAVASTU, in present-day Nepal. He spent much of his life and teaching career in the region of Magadha, the ‘Middle Country’ or Madhyadeśa of India. It is likely that he taught in more than one dialect, adapting his language to that of his audience, as suggested by a passage in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*.<sup>1</sup> For the most part he would have spoken in a variety of Māgadhi.

After the Buddha’s Parinirvāṇa, his teachings were collected by his followers at the Councils of Rājagṛha and Vaiśālī. The Saṅgha soon spread across India, especially during the reign of the great Emperor Aśoka. Monks and nuns had to teach the Dharma in local languages. A number of Vinaya schools (*nikāya*), traditionally counted as eighteen, developed. Eventually these schools transmitted their own collections of scriptures in a number of Indian languages and scripts. By the time these collections were written down, from the first century BCE

<sup>1</sup> DN 16 (PTS II 109), *tattha yādisako tesaṃ vaṇṇo hoti tādisako mayhaṃ vaṇṇo hoti, yādisako tesaṃ saro hoti tādisako mayhaṃ saro hoti, dhammiyā ca kathāya sandassemi samādapemi samuttejemi sampahaṃsemi*.

onwards, they were recorded in a number of Prakrits, including Pāli and North-Western Prakrit or Gāndhārī.

Today most of these scriptures are lost. The only *Tripitaka* to survive in a complete form – complete at least as described by Ācārya Buddhaghosa in the fifth century CE – is the ‘Pāli canon’ of the Mahāvihāravāsin Theravādin school, preserved in Ceylon and South-East Asia. The *Tripitakas* of other schools survive, if at all, only in fragments, whether in original Indic languages or in Chinese or Tibetan translations. Some of the languages used by other schools are known from surviving manuscripts and inscriptions or from citations in philosophical literature (see Table 1).

As the Dharma spread across Asia it was transmitted in new languages. In addition to Sanskrit and Prakrit, Buddhist communities in Central Asia used Khotanese, Tokharian, Uighur, Sogdian, and Tibetan. When the Dharma reached China it was translated into Chinese, by the second century CE or earlier, and over the centuries the immense Chinese *Tripitaka* came into being. This *Tripitaka* was eventually propagated in Vietnam, Korea, and Japan. Buddhist texts went on to be translated into Tangut, Mongolian, and Manchu, and late imperial pentaglot editions were produced in Chinese, Tangut, Tibetan, Mongolian, and Manchu.

In Nepal texts were preserved in Sanskrit and Buddhist Sanskrit, and a vibrant narrative-cum-ritual literature in Newari developed. In Sri Lanka texts were preserved in Pāli and composed in Old Sinhala in the early period, and in Sinhala in the mediæval period. In South-East Asia the earliest Buddhist vernacular inscriptions were in Old Mon.<sup>2</sup> After the eleventh century Buddhist communities continued to transmit texts in Pāli, including new texts from Ceylon. They soon began to use vernaculars like Arakanese, Burmese, Javanese, Khmer, and Thai, including the several dialects of the Tai and Lao language groups such as Shan.

One notable characteristic of the Mahāvihārin Saṅghas of Sri Lanka and Suvarṇabhūmi<sup>3</sup> is that they cherished and preserved the classical Pāli tradition, copying, reciting, studying, and writing texts in Pāli even as vernacular literatures developed and flourished. In contrast, the Chinese and Tibetan traditions translated and studied

<sup>2</sup> I do not include the Pyu language because the early records are royal rather than Buddhist in content.

<sup>3</sup> Suvarṇabhūmi refers here to South-East Asia.

the texts received from India into their own languages. Sanskrit continued to be studied only by a small elite, if at all, or to be used when copying or reciting in mantras and *dhāraṇī*.

What does this tell us? We may conclude that the use of local language to communicate the teaching of the Buddha was seen as necessary and important by Buddhist communities from the earliest period. This, after all, is obvious. As a result the body of the pre-modern Buddhist literature, taken as a whole, in all its languages, is vast and diverse. The process has continued into the modern period with the spread of Buddhism to the West. Buddhist texts are now translated into or written in probably every European language. New translations and writings continue to appear in the 'traditional' languages such as Thai, Chinese, or Japanese, as well as in modern Indian languages like Hindi, Telugu, Marathi, and Bengali. Buddhist literature, naturally, continues to grow and evolve.

## II. Buddhism and writing

In India and Central Asia two scripts were used, Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī.<sup>4</sup> The use of the former, essentially a regional script, waned by the third century CE and by the sixth or seventh century it died out altogether. Brāhmī, in contrast, evolved into Northern and Southern Brāhmī, and is the parent not only of most of the scripts of India but also those of Tibet, Lanka, and South-East Asia. The Northern variety developed into the Kuṣāṇa, Gupta, Siddhamātrkā and Nāgarī scripts, and finally into the regional alphabets of modern North Indian languages. One descendant of Southern Brāhmī, the Pallava script, was used extensively in South-East Asia from the fourth century or earlier, and evolved into the scripts used by modern South-East Asian languages.

<sup>4</sup> For these scripts see K.R. Norman, *A Philological Approach to Buddhism*, Lancaster 2006, p. 103; Richard Salomon, 'Brahmi and Kharoshthi', in Peter T. Daniels and William Bright (ed.), *The World's Writing Systems* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 373–383); Richard Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Peter Skilling, 'Redaction, recitation, and writing: transmission of the Buddha's teachings in India in the early period', in Stephen C. Berkwitz, Juliane Schober, and Claudia Brown (ed.), *Buddhist Manuscript Cultures: Knowledge, ritual, and art* (London and New York 2008), pp. 53–75.

There is nothing Buddhist about these scripts, which were used for different languages for secular purposes or shared by Buddhists, Jainas, and Brahmans. Buddhism certainly encouraged the practice of writing, and biographies like the *Lalitavistara* recount how the Blessed One himself, as a youth and Bodhisattva, effortlessly mastered sixty-four alphabets. The earliest written records of India, the Aśokan inscriptions, in part concern Buddhism, and the greatest early corpus of Indian dedication inscriptions is engraved on Buddhist monuments – the great *caityas* and the numerous rock-cut monasteries that start with the second or first century BCE.

As Buddhism spread across Asia it inspired the development of writing and of elegant calligraphy. The Tibetan monk 'Phags-pa developed a script for the writing of Mongolian, and in Japan Kukai or Kobo Daishi is associated by tradition or legend with the origins of the Kana syllabaries. The Mon script first appears in Buddhist dedications in Central Thailand, as does, centuries later, the Burmese script at Pagan. In all Buddhist cultures the copying of scriptures was encouraged by the ideology of merit.

### III. Inscriptions

Inscriptions may be classified in several ways. One is by support or type of material used. The most durable records are on stone and metal, but some ink inscriptions survive, for example on the walls of the Ajanta caves or of the temples of Pagan. Inscriptions may be undated or dated. In some cases they once bore dates which are now lost or fragmentary. Inscriptions may be monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual – using one, two, or several languages. Inscriptions may be classified by the script which is used (see preceding section).

I have noted that much of the older Buddhist literature, composed in varieties of Prakrits, is lost. This is because it was recorded on perishable materials such as birch-bark and palm-leaf. Such records as do survive are inscriptions on more durable materials such as stone and metal. These too – like all things – are ultimately perishable, but at least some inscriptions survive, often, regrettably, in a fragmentary state. These inscriptions are invaluable records of the spread of Buddhist ideas, texts, and ritual and social practices.



#### IV. The inscription of Pāli

Pāli is not associated with any single script. In the earliest period Pāli texts, including the primitive forms of the *Tripitaka*, were transmitted orally. According to later texts of the Mahāvihāra school, the Pāli texts were first written down in Ceylon in the first Century BCE, presumably in a script related to the Brāhmī of the early Prakrit (Old Sinhala) inscriptions of the island.

In the first millennium CE, Pāli was inscribed in South-East Asia in the Pallava and Post-Pallava scripts. In the second millennium, Pāli was written in Siam in varieties of the Khom script, including 'Khom Sukhothai', 'Khom Ayutthaya', and 'Khom Ratanakosin'. In Cambodia Pāli was written in the cognate Khmer script. In Siam and Burma Pāli is written in Mon and Burmese, and in Lanna and the Lao principalities in varieties of Tham script. In the nineteenth century, Pāli was written and printed in the Ariyaka, invented by King Rāma IV when he was a monk, and by the end of the nineteenth century, with the age of print, in Thai script. Today Pāli is printed in two forms, one following the orthography of everyday writing, the other specially adapted for Pāli.

The early Pāli inscriptions, of the first millennium of the Christian Era, are monolingual. In the second millennium we meet with bilinguals, and find Pāli used in conjunction with Khmer, Mon, Lanna Thai, Isan, and Thai. In the old Thai bilinguals the Pāli is in one script, the vernacular in another. Both Pāli and Sanskrit loan-words are used. While the early inscriptions are written in very correct Pāli, the later bilinguals are often in a very hybrid language strongly influenced by Thai pronunciation and orthography.

The texts given in inscriptions may be divided into two types: citations and compositions. I use the term 'citation inscription' for lithic or other engraved records that give excerpts from Buddhist texts. Such inscriptions are not original compositions, although they may be combined with original material.

In early South-East Asia the greatest concentrations of citation inscriptions known to date are in Burma (from the Pyu kingdom of Śrīkṣetra) and Siam (from the Dvāravatī period on).<sup>5</sup> Smaller

<sup>5</sup> See in this volume 'The Advent of Theravāda Buddhism to Mainland South-East Asia', pp. 105–111, for a preliminary and already outdated list. See also Peter Skilling, 'New Pāli Inscriptions from South-East Asia,' *Journal of the Pali*

numbers, all in Sanskrit, have been found in Java, Borneo, and the middle Malay peninsula.<sup>6</sup> Very few Indic citation inscriptions have been found in Laos, Cambodia, or Vietnam, in the areas known to historians as Funan, Chenla, and Champa.

In the early period the northernmost Pāli inscriptions in Siam are from the ancient city of Si Thep in Petchabun province. Two of them are on display in Sukhothai in the Ramkhamhaeng National Museum. One is the *ye dhammā* verse, engraved on the base of an image of the seated Buddha, unfortunately fragmentary.<sup>7</sup> The other is the formula of conditioned arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), inscribed on both sides of a broken circular stone.<sup>8</sup> The same formula is inscribed on another fragment, probably from the same piece, still kept at Si Thep.

It is noteworthy that no significant Pāli inscriptions, citation or composition, are found in Sri Lanka. The richest heritage of inscribed Pāli texts is that of old Lower Burma and the Chao Phraya valley and contiguous areas. In Siam the Pāli tradition continued in Haribhūñjaya, where bilinguals (Mon and Pāli) were produced. In Burma Pāli flourished at the great capital of Pagan.

### V. Pāli in Sukhothai<sup>9</sup>

What does what we have discussed so far have to do with Sukhothai? By sketching the distribution of Buddhist languages, we can determine which areas used Pāli and which did not; as a result the significance of the use of Pāli becomes clearer. During the first millennium of the Christian Era, when Buddhism spread across Asia, the use of Pāli in inscriptions was essentially limited to two cultures: the one in Śrīkṣetra, the lower Irrawaddy, the other in Dvāravatī and the

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*Text Society* XXIII (1997), pp. 123–157, and, below, ‘The Place of South-East Asia in Buddhist Studies’, pp. 61–63.

<sup>6</sup> I do not count here the clay sealings inscribed with *ye dhammā* or *dhāraṇīs*, which have been uncovered in the hundreds at numerous sites throughout the region.

<sup>7</sup> See Peter Skilling, ‘Traces of the Dharma: Preliminary reports on some *ye dhammā* and *ye dhammā* inscriptions from Mainland South-East Asia’, BEFEO (2003/2004), p. 280.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Skilling, ‘Some Citation Inscriptions from South-East Asia’, *Journal of the Pāli Text Society* XXVII (2002), pp. 159–175.

<sup>9</sup> In this paper I refer to Sukhothai as a state rather than a period.

Chao Phraya valley, including neighbouring areas and sites such as Muang Phra Rot, Muang Sema, and Chaiyaphum. These inscriptions date from the sixth to the eighth or ninth centuries. Pāli was used in Hariphunchai up to the thirteenth century. This demonstrates clearly that the Pāli of Sukhothai (and of neighbouring Lanna) did not appear from nowhere, out of a vacuum. Pāli had already enjoyed a long presence in the region.

In Sukhothai inscriptions Pāli is written in the Khom script. We find both citation and composition inscriptions. The texts chosen for citation change, with the exception of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, a perennial favourite. The *ye dhammā* ceases to be inscribed, and is replaced by the twenty-four conditions (*paccaya*) of the Abhidhamma system. Compositions begin to be inscribed. Some are quite long, and are composed in verse. That is, in Sukhothai we see the emergence of Pāli composition and metrics.

The Wat Pa Mamuang inscription, dated CE 1361, is written in several metres and in prose.<sup>10</sup> The Buddhapāda inscription now kept in Wat Bovaranives, Bangkok, dated CE 1426, is in prose and verse.<sup>11</sup> Several bilingual inscriptions open with Pāli stanzas of homage. Citation inscriptions give formulas like the *iti pi* so or the abbreviated seven books of the Abhidhamma.

## VI. Neighbours

As noted, Pāli citations were inscribed in what is today lower Burma, and both Pāli citation and composition thrived in the Pagan period, from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. In the nineteenth century the entire *Tripīṭaka* was engraved on marble slabs at Mandalay, in Burma.

In contrast, Cambodia has few Pāli inscriptions, early or late. Only one from the early period is known, a citation inscription from Angkor Borei. (There is also one *ye dhammā* inscription in Prakrit.)<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Inscription no. 6, in Prasert Na Nagara and A.B. Griswold, *Epigraphic and Historical Studies* (Bangkok: The Historical Society, 1992), pp. 514–521.

<sup>11</sup> 'The Buddhapāda of Vat Pavaranivesa and Its Inscription', in Prasert and Griswold, *Epigraphic and Historical Studies*, pp. 757–767.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Skilling, 'A Buddhist inscription from Go Xoai, Southern Vietnam and notes towards a classification of *ye dharmā* inscriptions', in *80 pi satsadachan dr. praḥsert na nagara: ruam bot khwam vichakan dan charuk lae ekasan boran* [80

The next inscription, and the earliest known dated Pāli record, bears the date CS 1230 (CE 1308), and records the religious foundations and meritorious acts of King Śrīśrindravarman (Sirisirindavamma). From Kok Svay Cek, south of the Western Barai near Angkor Wat, the record is bilingual, inscribed on a stone stele 1.70 metres in height, one side with twenty lines of Pāli verse in ten *ślokas*, the other with thirty-one lines of Khmer prose.<sup>13</sup> It is the oldest dated Pāli composition from Cambodia, since the Angkor Borei inscription is a citation. As an early epigraph from the period during which the Mahāvihāra Theravādin Vinaya lineage of Sri Lanka rose to prominence in the region, it bears witness to the change of classical language from Sanskrit to Pāli.

Khmer inscriptions from the early fourteenth century use Pāli loan-words and terms used up to the present day in Thai.<sup>14</sup> The next dated inscriptions is from Wat Nokor, dated CS 1488 (CE 1566).<sup>15</sup> Later Khmer inscriptions are rich in reference to Pāli literature.<sup>16</sup>

Few Pāli inscriptions are known from Laos. There seem to be none from the early period. There are several composition inscriptions from the sixteenth century on.<sup>17</sup>

In sum, Buddhism has a long and rich tradition of exploitation of language and writing. The contributions of Buddhist writers and scholars – whether lay or monastic – to the literature of South, Central, South-East and East Asia is enormous. One of these languages, Pāli, has been used continuously for over two thousand years. It has been

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Years: A collection of articles on epigraphy and ancient documents published on the occasion of the celebration of the 80th birthday of Prof. Dr. Prasert Na Nagara] (Bangkok: 21 March 2542 [1999]), pp. 171–187.

<sup>13</sup> George Coédès, 'La plus ancienne inscription en pâli du Cambodge', reprinted in George Coédès, *Articles sur le pays khmer* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1989), pp. 282–289 (originally: 'Études cambodgiennes XXXII', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* XXXVI [1936], pp. 14–21).

<sup>14</sup> K. 754, in George Coédès, *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, Vol. VII, pp. 34–36, 37–39.

<sup>15</sup> K. 82, in Jean Filliozat, 'Une inscription cambodgienne en pâli et en khmer de 1566 (K 82 Vatt Nagar)', (Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1969, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 1969*, janvier-mars), pp. 95–106.

<sup>16</sup> See below 'Some Literary References in the Grande Inscription d'Angkor (IMA 38)', pp. 69–79.

<sup>17</sup> See Michel Lorrillard, 'Les inscriptions du That Luang de Vientiane : donnée nouvelles sur l'histoire d'un stūpa lao', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* (2003/2004), pp. 289–348.

read in South-East Asia for at least a millennium and half, for study, composition and ritual, and continues to be used today.

Table 1. Languages used in Buddhist texts

### 1.1 Indic

Gāndhārī is written in Kharoṣṭhī. All other languages are written in scripts belonging to the Brāhmī family.

<i>Language</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Gāndhārī	Inscriptions, birch-bark and palm-leaf MSS (from first c. CE).
Pāli	Inscriptions, manuscripts (seventh c. CE).
Sanskritized Prakrit	Inscriptions, 'Patna <i>Dharmapada</i> '.
Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit	Mahāsāṃghika <i>Vinaya</i> , <i>Mahāvastu</i> .
Buddhist Sanskrit	Inscriptions, Sarvāstivāda texts from Central Asia and Kashmir.
Sanskrit	Inscriptions, Śāstra literature such as <i>Abhidharmakośa</i> .
Old Sinhalese	Inscriptions.

### 1.2 Central Asian

Khotanese	Inscriptions, manuscripts.
Tokharian	Manuscripts.
Uighur	Inscriptions, manuscripts.
Tibetan	Inscriptions, manuscripts. Tibetan <i>Tripitaka</i> .

### 1.3 East Asian

Chinese	Inscriptions, manuscripts. Chinese <i>Tripitaka</i> .
Vietnamese	Inscriptions, manuscripts.
Korea	Inscriptions, manuscripts.
Japan	Inscriptions, manuscripts.

### 1.4 Himalayan

Newari	Inscriptions, manuscripts.
Bhutanese (Dzongkha)	Inscriptions, manuscripts.

## 1.5 South-East Asian

Old Mon	Inscriptions.
Old Khmer	Inscriptions.
Old Javanese	Inscriptions.
Cham	Inscriptions.

Table 2. Pāli inscriptions before the eleventh century CE

India	Sarnath (1)	
Nepal	—	(Note: 'Kathmandu Manuscript': earliest surviving Pāli palm-leaf)
Sri Lanka	—	(Note: many Sanskrit inscriptions, including Mahāyāna <i>sūtras</i> such as <i>Prajñāpāramitā</i> , <i>Ratnakūta</i> , and <i>Dhāraṇī</i> )
Indonesia	—	(Note: Ratu Baka inscription from Central Java attests to presence of Abhayagiri lineage from Ceylon)
Vietnam	—	(Note: Prakrit gold plate inscription)
Laos	—	
Cambodia	Angkor Borei (1)	(Note: Prakrit Tuol Phra Theat inscription)
Burma	Śrīkṣetra (many)	
Siam	Dvāravati and early states of central and eastern Siam (many)	

Table 3. Pāli inscriptions after the eleventh century CE

Sri Lanka	few	
Burma	many	From early Pagan to present.
Siam	many	From Sukhothai and Ayutthaya to present.
Cambodia	few	
Laos	few	

## Pieces in the puzzle: Sanskrit literature in pre-modern Siam

### I

IN THE PRE-MODERN PERIOD SIAMESE AUTHORS DREW ON REGIONAL and transregional traditions to create a rich and lively literary corpus.<sup>1</sup> The literature is anonymous and undated, and presents many puzzles. The mechanisms of borrowing and adaptation are imperfectly understood. How did Sanskrit texts from India, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, find their way to Siam, to be transformed into Pāli, Thai, and Lanna Thai (and, in some cases, Mon, Khmer, and Burmese) versions? The texts examined here belong to 'Siamese literature' in the broadest sense of the word, and include not only classical compositions in Central Thai but also sermons and ritual texts, in

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<sup>1</sup> 'Pre-modern' and its relatives 'modern' and 'post-modern' are troublesome and overworked terms. With regard to South-East Asian literature, I define 'pre-modern' as the period of manuscript and oral culture, before the age of print, which in Siam means up to the Fourth, and, more dramatically, the Fifth, Reigns. I do not use the terms in a purely chronological or sequential sense, however, but rather as broad indicators for modes (technologies, ideologies) of production and dissemination, which can – and do – overlap.

regional languages and in Pāli. 'Siamese literature' is an intertextual tapestry woven of many threads.

At the outset I would like to point out that I am not entirely happy with this 'quest for origins', which seems to privilege the Indian over the local, the classical over the vernacular, the old over the new. If we find that a text has an Indian antecedent, we should reflect carefully on the relations between the two. Rarely, if ever, is there a case of straightforward borrowing: the Thai counterparts are creative adaptations, conscious recastings, of their 'originals'.<sup>2</sup> In addition, we should note that many works in the Siamese corpus that pose as *sūtras* and *jātakas* are original compositions, and that they are *significant* contributions to world Buddhist literature and culture. The Siamese contribution has not been adequately recognized, despite the fact that it is prodigious and full of surprises.

## II

It has become increasingly clear that many pre-modern Siamese texts have Indian rather than Sri Lankan antecedents.<sup>3</sup> They include both Buddhist texts and 'shared' texts – works in genres like *nīti* that are part of a common Indian – or Indic – heritage. Some of these

<sup>2</sup> Consider, for example, the creativity that produced a uniquely Thai *Three Kingdoms* in the First Reign. See e.g. Malinee Dilokwanich, 'A Study of Samkok: The First Thai Translation of a Chinese Novel', *Journal of the Siam Society* 73 (1985), pp. 77–112; Ronald D. Renard, 'Sam Kok: Thai Versions of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*', paper prepared for the Conference on Translation: East and West, A Cross-Cultural Approach, University of Hawaii and East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, January, 1991 (I am grateful to Louis Gabaude [EFEO, Chiang Mai] for the reference); Niyada Laosoonthorn, *Thai Literature Restoration in the Reign of King Rama I* (Bangkok: Mae Kham Fang, 2539 [1996]), pp. 257–268 (in Thai); Kannikar Sartraproong, *Rajadhiraja, Samkok, and Saihan: World Views of the Thai Elites* (Bangkok: The Thailand Research Fund/The Foundation for the Promotion of Social Sciences and Humanities Textbooks Project, 2541 [1998]) (in Thai).

<sup>3</sup> Thai scholarship regularly attributes Lanna origins to texts that are not known in Lanka – even when there is no evidence – perhaps because there is, indeed, a definite corpus of Lanna Pāli texts, such as *Maṅgala-dīpanī*, *Cakkavāla-dīpanī*, etc. Here I expand the frontiers of possibility to embrace a wider 'Buddhist world'.



texts circulated independently, as single texts; others entered into anthologies like the *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections. In addition, there are narrative units within greater textual bodies that do not agree with the received Lankan versions.<sup>4</sup> In some cases the chronological sequence is different, such as in the attempted seduction of the Bodhisattva/Buddha by Māra's daughters. In some cases the events are not found in Lankan sources at all, such as the story of Upagupta in the *Paṭhamasambodhi*.<sup>5</sup>

It is too easy to speak of 'influence': to suggest, for example, that the Upagupta story shows 'Sanskrit' or 'Sarvāstivādin' influence. This does not explain anything. Texts did not float through space to emanate an influence over Siam and then miraculously appear in written form.<sup>6</sup> The concept of influence must be used sparingly and carefully: at best it is a convenient shorthand, at worst it carries with it fundamental distortions. For example, the concept attributes agency to abstract and non-historical entities ('Indian influence', 'Gupta influence', 'Mahāyāna influence'), rather than to the individuals or communities who actively adopted and adapted ideas and forms into their own cultures. In the case of Upagupta, we need to investigate the possible historical and cultural transactions that brought the story to South-East Asia. And to ask: How was the text received, how was it transmitted, and how was it transformed?

The texts in question are not only religious. Secular texts – if that term is appropriate – were transmitted, transformed, and mined for narrative and wisdom. Examples include the *Pañcatantra*, the *Hitopadeśa*, and *nīti* texts.<sup>7</sup> The great epics *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*

<sup>4</sup> For an example in the so-called *Extended Mahāvamsa*, see Oskar von Hinüber, 'The Tittira-Jātaka and the Extended Mahāvamsa', *Journal of the Siam Society* 70 (1982), pp. 71–75.

<sup>5</sup> For Upagupta see John S. Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta: Sanskrit Buddhism in North India and Southeast Asia* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> The same is true for the migration of iconic forms and styles: we need to explore the historical contacts that led to the exchange of forms.

<sup>7</sup> For *Pañcatantra* see Kusuma Raksamani, *Nandakaprakaraṇa attributed to Vasubhāga: A Comparative Study of the Sanskrit, Lao, and Thai Texts* (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1977). The standard Thai collection remains *Prachum pakaraṇaṃ* (Bangkok: 2465 [1922], repr. in one binding 2541 [1998]). See also J. Crosby (tr.), 'The Book of the Birds (Paksi Pakaranam)', *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 7–8, pp. (1)–(90); Édouard Lorgeou (tr.), *Les entretiens*

– perennial sources of story, ideology, and ideals – have been known in South-East Asia for over a millennium.

In the following section, I present five texts which I presume had, in varying ways, Sanskrit or Indian origins. All of them were popular in the pre-modern period. They are only examples: many others remain.

### III

#### 1. *Jambūpati-sūtra* (PLCS 2.52: 1 bundle; PVL 2.211, 7.147–9, 18.90)<sup>8</sup>

The *Jambūpati-sūtra* has a long and complex history that can only be hinted at here.<sup>9</sup> In South-East Asia it circulates in Pāli prose mixed with verse, and in vernacular versions. A similar story – of a proud and powerful monarch who is overcome by the majesty of the Buddha when the latter conjures up a magical city – seems to have circulated widely in the Buddhist world. It is told in the *Kapphiṇa-avadāna*, no. 88 in the *Avadānaśataka*.<sup>10</sup> The earliest version preserved is a translation which dates to approximately the fourth century, and is wrongly attributed to Zhiqian.<sup>11</sup> In it the king's name is transcribed rather than translated. That the story was well known in mediæval north India is suggested by the fact that Indian commentaries of the Pāla period invoke the 'vanquishing of Kapphiṇa' to illustrate the Buddha's quality (*guṇa*) of 'supreme leader of men to be tamed' (*anuttara-puruṣadāmya-sārathī*).

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*de Nang Tantrai* (Paris: Éditions Bossard, 1924). For *Hitopadeśa* see Sayam Patthranuprawat, 'Hitopadeśavattthupakaraṇam: rong roy khong hitopadeśa chabap sanskrit nai prathet thai', *Damrong Wichakan* (Bangkok: Silpakorn University, 2545 [2002]), pp. 421–437.

<sup>8</sup> The number of 'bundles' (*phūk*) is given as in the catalogues. PLCS and PVL give details of published editions and translations.

<sup>9</sup> An edition of the Pāli with English and Thai translations is under preparation by Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, Peter Skilling, and Santi Pakdeekham.

<sup>10</sup> Note that the story bears little relation to the story related in the *Mahākappina-vatthu* of the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā* and other Pāli sources.

<sup>11</sup> Taishō Vol. 4, pp. 247c18–248c13. I am grateful to Jan Nattier for information about the Chinese version. See also Demoto Mitsuyo, 'Senjū hyaku innen gyō no yakushutsu nendai ni tsuite' [The Date of the Chinese *Avadānaśataka*], *Pārigaku bukkyō bunkagaku* [*Journal of Pāli and Buddhist Studies*], Vol. 8 (1995), pp. 99–108.

The story was transmitted to Central Asia at an early date, and included in the collection of narratives known as the *Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish*, based on a Khotanese version which was received aurally and recorded in Chinese. The Chinese version was later translated into Tibetan and Mongolian. In Tibet, a version of the Kapphiṇa story is related in a life of the Buddha composed by Tse Chokling Yeshe Gyaltsen (1713–1793), one of the great scholars of his time, holder of the Ganden throne and tutor of the Eighth Dalai Lama.<sup>12</sup>

In Pāli the story of Kapphiṇa is told in the non-classical *Mahākapphiṇadhaja-sūtra*, a one-bundle manuscript found in temple collections in Thailand (PLCS 2.158; PVL 2.279, 3.27) but not, so far as I know, in Burma or Ceylon. The story resembles the *Kapphiṇa-avadāna*, with which it even shares verses:<sup>13</sup>

*ārabbhatha nikkhamatha yuñjatha buddhasāsane  
dhunātha maccuno senaṃ naḍāgāraṃ iva kuñjaraḥ  
yo imasmim dhammavinaye appamatto vihessati  
pahāya jātisaṃsāraṃ dukkhaṃ antaṃ karissati.*

Arise, go forth, devote yourselves to the teaching of the Awakened  
Ones:  
Crush the army of death, as an elephant crushes a hut made of  
reeds.  
One who dwells heedful in this teaching and training  
Leaves behind the cycle of birth, and reaches the end of suffering.

The similarity between the *Mahākapphiṇadhaja-sūtra* and the *Jambūpati-sūtra* was noted in the old catalogue of Pāli texts in the National Library, Bangkok, published in 1921 (BE 2464). But in terms of circulation, the story of Mahākapphiṇa was totally eclipsed by that

<sup>12</sup> Robert A.F. Thurman, *Essential Tibetan Buddhism* (San Francisco: Harper, 1996), pp. 91–92, 299.

<sup>13</sup> I have used a draft romanized transliteration prepared by Santi Pakdeekham on the basis of a single Khom-script manuscript from Wat Bovaranives, Bangkok, entitled *Mahākappinarāja-jātaka*. For a comparative study of the two verses in a variety of sources, see Peter Skilling, “‘Arise, go forth, devote yourselves...’: A verse summary of the teaching of the Buddhas’, in *Socially Engaged Buddhism for the New Millennium: Essays in honor of the Ven. Phra Dhammapitaka (Bhikkhu P.A. Payutto) on his 60th birthday anniversary* (Bangkok: Sathirakoses–Nagapradipa Foundation, 1999), pp. 440–444.

of Jambūpati, which was told and retold in verse and sermon versions and was depicted in painting in the early Bangkok period. The story was also known in Lan Chang – as shown by the murals at Wat Pa Ruak in Luang Prabang – and in Arakan and Burma. One important function of the narrative is to explain the origin of the image of the Buddha in royal attire. But it also shares in several genres, including sermon (*deśanā*), *ānisaṇsa*, and *jātaka*.

## 2. *Uṇhissavijaya-sūtra* (PLCS 2.25: 1 bundle; PVL 2.174, 7.26, 18.36)

Another text with apparent north Indian origins is *Uṇhissavijaya*, a narrative text composed in Pāli prose and verse. The title is variously spelt: *Uṇhisa-vijaya*, *Uṇhissa-vijaya*, *Uṇhassa-vijaya*, *Uṇhisa-vaijaya*, and so on. It is composed of two Pāli words, which in standard spelling are *uṇhisa* and *vijaya*.<sup>14</sup> The Indian counterpart of the Pāli *Uṇhissavijaya* is the Sanskrit *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī*, a text – or more accurately a ritual ideology – which swept across Asia with attendant ceremony and iconography from, approximately, the seventh century CE.<sup>15</sup> The *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* was translated into Chinese several times, and was inscribed in Chinese characters on stone pillars in China and northern Vietnam, and in Sanskrit in Kunming in Yunnan. It was also inscribed on bells, for example at Yōnboksa in Korea.<sup>16</sup>

The Peking edition of the Tibetan *Tripitaka* contains five *Uṣṇīṣavijaya* texts in the Tantra division (see Appendix 1).<sup>17</sup> The narrative of one of these, the *Ārya-sarvadurgati-pariśodhani-uṣṇīṣavijaya-nāma-dhāraṇī*, features a Devaputra Supraṭiṣṭha, Indra, and Śākyamuni, and is similar to the South-East Asian version. The story is summarized by the Tibetan savant mKhas grub rje (1385–1438):<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> In the present article I regularize the title as *Uṇhissa-vijaya*.

<sup>15</sup> For the date see p. 166 in Akira Yuyama, 'An *Uṣṇīṣa-Vijayā Dhāraṇī* Text from Nepal', *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University for the Academic Year 1999* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, 2000), pp. 165–175.

<sup>16</sup> See Yang Han-Sung, Seo Kyung-Bo, and Charles Goodwin, *Yōnboksa Bell in Kaesōng, Korea* (Seoul: Po Chin Chai Ltd., 1992).

<sup>17</sup> I exclude another group of texts with *Uṣṇīṣavijaya* prefixed by *Sītātapatra* in their titles.

<sup>18</sup> Ferdinand D. Lessing and Alex Wayman (ed., tr.), *Mkhas Grub Rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras, rgyud sde spyiḥi nram par g'zag pa rgyas*

[The *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī*] was promulgated by the Blessed One in the Heaven of the Thirty-three (*trayastrimśā*). When the omens of death appeared to the Devaputra Supraṭiṣṭha, he saw that he would die in one week to be reborn successively through seven lives as a dog, a pig, and other beings, and then would be reborn in the Avīci Hell. He sought succour from Śakra, Lord of the Gods, who replied, 'I cannot rescue you' and led him before the Blessed One to ask [for help]. Rays of light streamed forth from the Blessed One's *uṣṇīṣa*, accompanied by the syllables of a *dhāraṇī*. The Devaputra recited the *dhāraṇī* for six days and purified the hindrances of karma which would cause rebirth in a miserable destiny (*durgati*).

In the four other versions the story is different. It opens with the 'thus I have heard' (*evam mayā śrutam*) formula: the Buddha Amitāyus, dwelling in the Dharmasaṃgīti Guhyaprasāda<sup>19</sup> in Sukhāvātī, tells the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara of the *dhāraṇī* and, at the latter's request, recites it. The *dhāraṇī* is similar in all four versions.<sup>20</sup>

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*par brjod* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1968, Indo-Iranian Monographs Vol. VIII) pp. 114–117. The translation is my own. Note that the narrative of the *Vimaloṣṇīṣa-dhāraṇī* is similar, and that the theme – a *deva* learns that he will be reborn in a miserable realm, and seeks out a remedy, usually from the Buddha – is found in others texts as well.

<sup>19</sup> The Sanskrit is from Rājendralāla Mitra, *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal* ([Calcutta, 1882] Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1971) p. 263.

<sup>20</sup> For the *dhāraṇī* see F. Max Müller and Bunyiu Nanjio, 'The Ancient Palm-Leaves containing the Pragñā-pāramitā-hridaya-sūtra and the Uṣṇīṣa-vijaya-dhāraṇī', *Anecdota Oxoniensia, Texts, Documents, and Extracts chiefly from Manuscripts in the Bodleian and other Oxford Libraries, Aryan Series* Vol. I, Part III ([Oxford 1884] Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1972). Valuable studies on the *dhāraṇī* have been published by Akira Yuyama: see e.g. 'The Uṣṇīṣa-vijayā Dhāraṇī Transliterated by Tz'ü-hsien', in Petra Kieffer-Pülz and Jens-Uwe Hartmann (ed.), *Bauddhavidyāsudhākaraḥ: Studies in Honour of Heinz Bechert on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1997, Indica et Tibetica 30), pp. 729–742; 'An Uṣṇīṣa-Vijayā Dhāraṇī Text from Nepal', *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University for the Academic Year 1999* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, 2000), pp. 165–175. See also Paul W. Kroll, *Dharma Bell and Dhāraṇī Pillar* (Kyoto: Scuola Italiana di Studi sull'Asia Orientale, 2001, Italian School of East Asian Studies, Epigraphical Series 3). Peking no. 199 also features Indra and Supraṭiṣṭha; nos. 197, 200, and 201 do not.

The extant Pāli version exists in printed verse editions, which I describe as long, middling, and short (Appendix 2). The long version gives the full narrative. None of the versions consulted give the *dhāraṇī* – a key verse states simply that ‘there exists the *Uṇhissa-vijaya Dhamma*’, but does not say what it is:

*atthi uṇhisavijayo dhammo loke anuttaro  
sabbasattahitathāya taṃ tvaṃ gaṇhāhi devate ...*

The narrative was summarized and discussed by Finot ninety years ago.<sup>21</sup> The story – of the Devaputra Supatīṭṭhita who has come to the end of his pleasant sojourn in the Tāvatisa Heaven and is about to fall into hell – agrees in most details with the North Indian version outlined above, and with Yijing’s Chinese translation (as summarized by Finot). South-East Asian versions – always without the *dhāraṇī* – are available in Thai, Mon, Lao, Lanna, Tai Khün, and Khmer – but not Burmese or Sri Lankan – recensions.<sup>22</sup> Keyes lists fourteen *Uṇhissavijaya* texts inscribed in the Lanna script from a manuscript trove in the Red Cliff Cave near the Salween River in lower Mae Hong Son province.<sup>23</sup> Five are undated; the dated manuscripts fall between CS 1039 and 1141: that is, between CE 1677 and 1779 (see Appendix 3).<sup>24</sup>

The Pāli *Uṇhissavijaya* verses are recited in long-life ceremonies (*sup chada*) in the region, just as the *Uṇṇisavijayā-dhāraṇī* is recited

<sup>21</sup> Louis Finot, ‘Recherches sur la littérature laotienne’, *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* XVII (1917), pp. 74–76.

<sup>22</sup> The manuscript collection of Wat Bovoranives Vihāra in Bangkok includes a *Phra Uṇhisavijaya* in Khom script in one bundle (Bhūmibalo no. 1022) and a Thai version in Khom script in one bundle (Bhūmibalo no. 265). Mon manuscripts are kept in Siamese temple collections, for example: *Uṇhissavija*, Wat Tan, Tambol Bang Tanai, Pakkret district, Nonthaburi province; *Sla pat prakuhi uṇhissa vijaya ron au*, Wat Paramayikavas, Pakkret.

For a printed Lao version, in Lao translation mixed with Pāli, see *Nangsu sut chaiyamungkun lae botthetsanamungkumriap, kana phutthaparatchapa sun kang pho so lo* (Vientiane: 1990), pp. 57–65; for Tai Khün versions see e.g. Anatole-Roger Peltier, *Wannakam tai khün/La littérature tai khoeun/Tai Khoeun Literature* (Chiang Mai: 1987), § 211, pp. 190–191.

<sup>23</sup> Charles F. Keyes, ‘New Evidence on Northern Thai Frontier History’, in Tej Bunnag and Michael Smithies (ed.), *In Memoriam Phya Anuman Rajadhorn* (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1970), §§ 83–96.

<sup>24</sup> The undated manuscripts are numbers Nos. 83, 84, 89, 92, and 95.

in Nepalese and Tibeto-Himalayan rituals. In central Siam the *Uṇhissavijaya* is often incorporated into the *Dibbamanta* or *Mahādibbamanta*, a compendium of five texts, in the following order:<sup>25</sup>

*Phra Mahādibamantra*<sup>26</sup>  
*Phra Jaiyamaṅgala-sūtra*  
*Phra Mahājaiya-sūtra*  
*Uṇhisavaijaya-sūtra*  
*Mahāsāvaṃ.*

In his introduction to the 1928 edition of *Mahādibamanta*, Prince Damrong Rajanubhab does not describe the manuscript, except to say that it is old, and written in the Ayutthaya period. He describes *Mahādibamanta* as ‘a collection of chants (*manta*) to be recited for well-being and auspiciousness (*svastimaṅgala*)’.<sup>27</sup> The *Mahājaya* and *Uṇhissavijaya* were chanted on the birthdays of rulers, and the *Mahādibamanta* was recited before battle. The introduction to the 1973 edition also notes the military use of the *Mahādibamanta*.<sup>28</sup> It states that during the reign of King Rāma V, when Krommaluang Pracakṣaṣilpāgam led troops to suppress the Hó, the Thai troops recited the *Mahādibamanta*.<sup>29</sup>

In one manuscript in the National Library, Bangkok, *Uṇhissavijaya* is kept together with *Mahāsānti*, another protective text, and the above-mentioned *Mahājaya*.<sup>30</sup> The story of Supatiṭṭhita Devaputra from the *Uṇhissavijaya* is cited in the *Extensive Abhidhamma: 7 Books*

<sup>25</sup> I follow the spelling of the printed edition. For references see PLCS 2.161, to which add Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, ‘Mahādibbamanta – A Reflection on Thai Chanting Tradition’, in Olle Qvarnström (ed.), *Jainism and Early Buddhism: Essays in Honor of Prof. Padmanabh S. Jaini* Part II (Fremont, California: Asian Humanities Press, 2003), pp. 379–406.

<sup>26</sup> I retain the degeminated *diba* for *dibba* (Sanskrit *divya*) of the original. For a romanized edition of a Pāli *Mahādibamanta* see Padmanabh S. Jaini, ‘Mahādibbamanta: A Paritta Manuscript from Cambodia’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 28 (1965), pp. 61–80.

<sup>27</sup> *Mahādibamant*: for details see Appendix, 2.1.1.

<sup>28</sup> *Phra Mahādibamantr*: for details see Appendix, 2.1.2.

<sup>29</sup> In the late nineteenth century, bands of ‘Chinese Hó’ raided areas of northern Laos and northern Vietnam, which were then under the sovereignty of Bangkok.

<sup>30</sup> See remarks at PLCS 2.25.

to repay the virtues of parents, mother and father.<sup>31</sup> In the pre-modern period, the *Uṇḥissavijaya* was required curricular reading.<sup>32</sup> There are texts that extoll the benefits (*ānisaṇsa*) of the *Uṇḥissavijaya* (Appendix 4), which in the *Paramatthamaṅgala* is presented as a *jātaka* (Appendix 5.1). There is a literary verse (*kham lilit*) version, probably composed in the nineteenth century (Appendix 5.2).<sup>33</sup> In sum, like the *Jambūpati-sūtra*, the *Uṇḥissavijaya* appears in many genres.

3. *Lokaneyypakaraṇa* (PLCS 2.192: 12 bundles; PVL 2.251, 13.48, 13.49, 19.67)

The *Lokaneyypakaraṇa* or *Dhanañjayapaṇḍita-jātaka* exists in Pāli, Thai, Lanna, and Khmer versions.<sup>34</sup> An exceptionally long non-classical *jātaka*, it contains forty-one sub-plots in addition to numerous *nīti* verses from both Pāli and Sanskrit sources.<sup>35</sup> Jaini, who edited the text in romanized Pāli, describes it as possibly ‘the sole Pāli work to have attempted to present a narrative in which the prose merely serves as a convenient foil for presenting the *nīti* verses deemed appropriate, however tenuously, to the occasion.’ Jaini traces eighty-nine verses to the Pāli *nīti* collections transmitted in Burma, and twenty-two verses to Sanskrit sources.<sup>36</sup> As many as thirty *nīti* verses remain untraced.

<sup>31</sup> Phra Tham Mahawiranuwat (Braḥ Dharmmamahāvīrānuvatra) (ed.), *Phra Abhitham phitsadan chet khamphi taen khun phra chonok chonani manda bida (braḥ abhidhrrm bistār 7 gambhūr taen guṇa braḥ janakajanani mārta pitā)* (Bangkok: So. Thamphakdi Fils, 2530 [1987]), pp. 51–53. (A preface by the editor gives the date 2502 [1959], which seems to be the date of compilation or original publication.)

<sup>32</sup> See Luang Prasert Aksoranit, *Boranasaksa lae vidhi son nangsui thai* (Bangkok: Royally sponsored cremation of Nāṅg Phuangphet Iamsakul at Wat Makut Kasatiyārām, 19 November, 2502 [1959]) p. 32, *phra pāli khu phra abhidhamma 1 phra uṇḥissavijaya 1*; see also p. 69.

<sup>33</sup> For the religious or ideological context of the *Uṇḥissavijaya* in twentieth-century Siam, see Louis Gabaude, *Une Herméneutique bouddhique contemporaine de Thaïlande: Buddhadasa Bhikkhu* (Paris: École française d’Extrême-Orient, 1988, Publications de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient CL), pp. 246 foll.

<sup>34</sup> For allusions to the text in a post-Angkorean inscription, see below ‘Some Literary References in the ‘Grande Inscription d’Angkor (IMA 38)’, pp. 69–79.

<sup>35</sup> See Peter Skilling, review of Niyada Lausoonthorn, ‘Thananchaibanditachadok: phap saton phumipanya khong chau ayutthaya’, *Aséanie* 4 (1999), pp. 206–208.

<sup>36</sup> Padmanabh S. Jaini, *Lokaneyypakaraṇam* (London: The Pali Text Society, 1986), p. xiii.



The *Lokaneyyapakaraṇa* is a complex and learned work that certainly merits translation.

4. *Vidagdhamukhamaṇḍana* of Sirivipulabuddhi (PLCS 4.111: 1 bundle; PVL 5.101–4)

The Indian *Vidagdhamukhamaṇḍana* is a celebrated collection of riddles composed by Dharmadāsa in four chapters containing a total of 220 Sanskrit and Prakrit verses.<sup>37</sup> In the colophon of the Pāli version, the compiler mentions his indebtedness to Dharmadāsa. In addition to the root-text, the following related texts are available:

<i>Vidagdhamukhamaṇḍana-upadesa</i>	
by Brahmasāgara Thera	(PLCS 4.110: 1 bundle)
<i>Vidagdhamukhamaṇḍana-ṭīkā</i>	(PLCS 4.49: 7 bundles)
<i>Vidagdhamukhamaṇḍana-phadet-nissaya</i>	(PLCS 4.72: 3 bundles)
<i>Vidagdhamukhamaṇḍana-yojanā</i>	(PLCS 4.99: 4 bundles).

The *Vidagdhamukhamaṇḍana* was also known in Pagan: a copy was donated to a temple in 1442, and the *ṭīkā* was composed by Dhammakitti Thera Lokarājamoli at Pagan at an unknown date. Lanna and Khmer versions are also known. It is clear that the text enjoyed an enduring regional status.

5. *Paññāpāramī* (1 bundle)

A short text entitled *Paññāpāramī* is widely represented in Lanna and Lao manuscript catalogues.<sup>38</sup> It is not clear whether the text existed in central Siam or in Cambodia, although the basic formula of thirty perfections (*pāramī*) certainly did. These are presented in the beginning in Pāli in an *iti pi so* formulation.<sup>39</sup> Then comes the Pāli-

<sup>37</sup> See now Nalini Balbir, 'Three Pāli Work Revisited', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XXIX (2007), pp. 331–364.

<sup>38</sup> I use here the printed palm-leaf edition published by S. Thammaphakdi Fils: *Paññāpāramī-deśanā, sadaeng anisong haeng kan charoen pāramī 30 that*, edited by Mahāsilā Vīravanś, Wat Pathumwanārām (Bangkok: 2504 [1961]). A Lanna or Thai Khün version in one bundle is kept in the Fragile Palm Leaves Collection, Bangkok. The opening Pāli section on the thirty *pāramī* is given in several modern printed Lao chanting books, without the narrative.

<sup>39</sup> Folio 1 recto to folio 2 verso 1.

Thai introduction: ‘At one time, it is said (*ekasmiṃ kira samaye*), the Teacher was seated on Indra’s throne, the Paṇḍukambalasilāsana’. It is not clear whether there existed or exists a Pāli version. None has come to light.<sup>40</sup>

In the passage that interests me here, the Buddha explains to Śakra that one who possesses the *paññāpāramī* is like a *cetiya*:

Reflect, Mahārāja: A person who safeguards the verses of the *Perfection of Wisdom* (*gāthā-paññā-pāramī*) is one to be revered and worshipped (*sakkāra-pūjā*) by all humans and gods, just like a relic in a shrine (*phra dhātu-cetiya*) ...

It is hard not to draw a comparison between this and similar passages in Sanskrit *Prajñāpāramitā* literature (and in other Mahāyāna sūtras). In the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, for example, the Blessed One says to Indra:<sup>41</sup>

*anayaiva hi kauśika prajñāpāramitayā prthivī-pradeśaḥ sattvānāṃ  
caityabhūtaḥ kṛto vandaniyo mānanīyaḥ pūjaniyo 'rcaniyo 'pacāyāniyaḥ  
satkaraṇiyo gurukaraṇīyaḥ, trāṇaṃ śaraṇaṃ layanaṃ parāyaṇaṃ kṛto  
bhaviṣyati tatropagatānāṃ sattvānāṃ.*

Therefore, Kauśika,<sup>42</sup> through this Perfection of Wisdom that spot on the earth has become a shrine for beings, worthy of homage, honour, worship, devotion, respect, and adoration; it has become a sanctuary, a refuge, a shelter, and a retreat for the beings who go there.

In the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* a similar thought is addressed to Subhūti:<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> This is a question that concerns a large number of Thai texts, largely narrative. Do the embedded Pāli phrases come from an ‘original Pāli version’? Or are they stylistic devices, invocations of the authority of the Mūlabhāsā? Probably there are instances of both.

<sup>41</sup> P.L. Vaidya (ed.), *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā with Haribhadra’s Commentary Called Āloka* (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1960, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts no. 4), p. 28.25.

<sup>42</sup> The gotra-name ‘Kauśika’ (Pāli ‘Kosiya’) is an epithet of Indra.

<sup>43</sup> Edward Conze, *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Roma: IsMEO, 1974, Serie Orientale Roma, Vol. XIII), p. 37.11. The trope is found in other sūtras, as, for example, the *Aparimitāyuh-sūtra*: *yasmin prthivīpradeśe idaṃ aparimitāyuh-sūtraṃ likhīṣyati likhāpayiṣyanti, sa prthivīpradeśaḥ caityabhūto vandaniyaś ca bhaviṣyati.*

*api tu khalu punaḥ subhūte yasmin pṛthivī-pradeśa ito dharma-paryāyād  
antaś ca tuṣṭādikām api gāthām udgrhya bhāṣyeta vā samprakāśyeta  
vā, sa pṛthivī-pradeśaś caitya-bhūto bhavet sa-deva-mānuṣa-asurasya  
lokasya.*

Furthermore, Subhūti, a place where someone extracts as little as a four-line verse from this text and reads it out or proclaims it, that place is equal to a shrine (*caitya-bhūta*) for the world with its gods, humans, and asuras.

The comparison of one who knows a text or is otherwise accomplished to a *cetiya* is rare in Pāli or vernacular texts (see Addendum, p. 45). Given that in the *Paññāpāramī* the statement is made in the context of the *Perfection of Wisdom* and that it is spoken to Indra, one wonders whether it can be a trace of *Prajñāpāramitā* thought. That *Prajñāpāramitā* was known in the region up to the eleventh or twelfth centuries is established by epigraphic and iconographic evidence. The *Paññāpāramī* seems to be a ritual text, a recitation text; so also was (and is) the *Prajñāpāramitā* itself, which is recited to this day in Nepalese and Himalayan Buddhism.

#### IV

How and when did these texts, and others like them, enter the Siamese corpus? Each text has a different history, which remains to be written. On the whole, it is hard to imagine a late date, given that the Buddhism of India had already waned by the mid-Ayutthaya period, and the exchange of Buddhist texts and ideas with South-East Asia would have practically ceased.

Let us envisage five possibilities. I stress that they are *possibilities* – lines for future investigation – that have not yet reached the status of *hypotheses*:

(a) A Pāli text was brought to or composed in Siam at an early date, before or during the ‘Dvāravatī period’, and has been copied and recopied up to the present.

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See A.F. Rudolf Hoernle, *Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature Found in Eastern Turkestan* ([Oxford, 1916] Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1970), pp. 315–316, and David Drewes, ‘Revisiting the phrase *sa pṛthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet* and the Mahāyāna cult of the book’, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 50 (2007), pp. 101–143.

- (b) A text was written in Pāli in India, and carried to Siam.
- (c) A text, originally in Prakrit or Sanskrit, was translated into Pāli in India and then brought to Siam.
- (d) A text was brought from India and translated into Pāli in Siam.
- (e) A text, originally in Mon or another vernacular, was translated into Pāli in Siam.

By text I mean a manuscript or an orally transmitted, remembered text.

For (a) we have no evidence. The inscriptions of the Chao Phraya valley show that Pāli was the preferred scriptural language by the seventh or eighth centuries – something which was not to change up to the present day. All the inscriptions found to date are citations from the Pāli *Tiṭṭaka* or, in a few cases, ancillary works; there are no independent compositions. Nonetheless, given that Dvāravatī and other early states must have had a literature, we can entertain the possibility that some of this survived, perhaps in the form of the non-classical *jātakas* or *sūtras* of Siam.

In (b) and (c) I envisage the production or translation of literature in Pāli in India itself. This is possible for any of the texts discussed here. We do not know enough about the use of Pāli in India, or about the identity of the Indian branches of the Sthāvira school and their relation to the South Indian and Sri Lankan Theravaṃsa or Theravāda.<sup>44</sup> It is clear from Tibetan sources that some sort of Sthāvira-*nikāya* did exist in north India, and that the *nikāya* was represented in the great monastic universities like Nālandā. It is possible that the monks and nuns of this tradition produced texts in Pāli, or produced Pāli versions of popular texts like the *Uṣṇiṣavijayā*.

In (b), (c), and (d) I suggest that texts were brought from India to Siam. There is a great deal of evidence for interregional travel, both by traders and by religieux, and texts could have been imported at any time by any number of routes. In his *History of the Dharma in India*, composed in 1608, the Tibetan historian Tāranātha describes the situation in north India as follows:<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> I have grappled with this problem in 'Theravādin Literature in Tibetan Translation', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XIX (1993), pp. 69–201.

<sup>45</sup> Antonius Schiefner, *Tāranāthae de Doctrinae Buddhicae in India Propagatione* (St. Petersburg, 1868; Suzuki Research Foundation Reprint Series 2), p.

From the time of Dharmapāla on, students from [South-East Asia] were especially numerous in the Middle Country (Yul dbu = Madhyadeśa). Their numbers increased so that during the time of the four Senas half the *saṅgha* gathered in Magadha originated from the Ko-ki region.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, the Mahāyāna spread widely, and, as in the kingdom of Tibet, Hinayāna and Mahāyāna ceased to be distinguished from each other.

It is possible that during the Pāla-Sena period – the post-Dvāravati and pre-Ayutthaya periods – some of the texts came to Siam. During this period artistic and ritual prototypes spread across Asia, from Ladakh to Dunhuang to Kharakhoto, from Pagan to Java.

If northern India is a likely source for texts like the narratives of Kapphiṇa and Jambūpati, or for the *Uṇhissavijaya* or *Paññāpāramī*, we should not neglect south India. Monks like Śrīśraddhā-rājacūḷāmuni of Sukhothai travelled to Andhra and other sites in India. As Kusuma has shown, some of the non-Buddhist texts transmitted in Thai and Lao may come from south India.<sup>47</sup>

What was the status of the texts? As far as I can tell – and here much more research is needed – the *Jambūpati-sūtra*, *Uṇhissa-vijaya*, and *Paññāpāramī* had *de facto* status as Buddhavacana. In the Ayutthaya and early Bangkok periods, the *Jambūpati-sūtra* belonged to the grand story of the life of the Master, and was integrated into mural paintings on the life in, for example, the Phutthaisawan Chapel in Bangkok. The *Uṇhissa-vijaya* and *Paññāpāramī* were powerful ritual texts, and their power derived from that of the Buddha himself. Even the *nīti* and linguistic texts were transmitted within a Buddhist setting, insofar as manuscript production and storage was a monastic concern. To sponsor or copy a grammatical or historical text contributed equally to the ‘preservation of the *śāsanā*’ for five thousand years.

I have not touched upon the possible school-affiliation of the antecedents of the texts discussed here. This is deliberate. The

199.15. The translation is my own: for another rendering, see Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (ed.), *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India* ([1970] Calcutta: KP Bagchi and Company, 1980), p. 330.

<sup>46</sup> ‘Ko-ki’ is the word used by Tāranātha for South-East Asia, from – roughly – Arakan to Cambodia.

<sup>47</sup> Kusuma, *Nandakaprakaraṇa attributed to Vasubhāga: a comparative study of Sanskrit, Lao and Thai texts* (Ann Arbor: Dissertation Abstracts International 1979).

texts are narrative or didactic: a good story is a good story, and a good aphorism is a good aphorism. Narrative literature need not be confined within the narrow bounds of constructions of canonicity. Narrative texts were transmitted by *Vinaya* lineages, but did not necessarily *belong* to them. In the case of Siam, the tradition of the pre-modern period seems to have been more tolerant than that of the modern period, in that it preserved and transmitted numerous non-normative texts and a rich narrative literature. Today these texts have fallen into oblivion, and no comprehensive attempt to study or publish them has been made.

The findings presented here show that pre-modern Siam participated in a much wider world of cultural interchange than is usually assumed. The nature and extent of the intellectual world of Buddhism during the periods in question remain a puzzle. I question whether 'India' should always be the 'centre', Siam the periphery – a passive recipient of 'influence'.<sup>48</sup> Some of our stories are retellings of Indian stories, and some of our *subhāṣita* are recastings of Indian *subhāṣita*. This is normal: we must not forget that the Indian, Tibetan, and Chinese versions are also retellings, and that original recycling is the breath of art. The 'original' cannot be retrieved, although the prototype may – in certain cases – be reinvented.

### Appendices

1. Tibetan versions of *Uṣṇīṣāvijaya-dhāraṇī* in Volume *pha* of the Tantra division of the Peking *Tripitaka*:<sup>49</sup>

§ 197. *Sarvatathāgata-uṣṇīṣāvijaya-nāma-dhāraṇī-kalpa-sahita*, folios 221b7–226b5 (10 folios): no translator's colophon.

§ 198. *Ārya-sarvadurgati-pariśodhani-uṣṇīṣāvijaya-nāma-dhāraṇī*, folios 226b5–231b3 translated by Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi, Ye śes sde (ca. 800).

<sup>48</sup> 'India' readily collapses, geographically and chronologically. That 'India' abides as a centre *ideologically* – as the Middle Country or as the indeconstructible Vajrāsana – is plausibly incontestable. This India belongs to a shared *imaginaire*, eminently portable and infinitely multipliable: but this is another topic.

<sup>49</sup> D.T. Suzuki (ed.), *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Peking Edition, Kept in the Library of the Otani University, Kyoto*, Vol. 7 (Tokyo–Kyoto: Tibetan Tripitaka Research Institute, 1956).

- § 199. *Sarvatathāgata-uṣṇīṣavijaya-nāma-dhāraṇī-kalpa-sahita*, folios 231b3–239b4 (16 folios): translated by Paṇḍita Chos kyi sde and Bhikṣu Ba ri, the translator from Khams (eleventh century).
- § 200. *Sarvatathāgata-uṣṇīṣavijaya-nāma-dhāraṇī-kalpa*, folios 239b4–241b7 (4 1/2 folios): translated single-handedly by the learned (*bahuśruta*) translator, the senior monk (*sthavira*) Śrī Ńi ma rgyal dpal bzañ po at Śrī Thar pa gliñ monastery (*vihāra*) (early fourteenth century).<sup>50</sup>
- § 201. *Sarvatathāgata-uṣṇīṣavijaya-nāma-dhāraṇī-kalpa-sahita*, folios 241b7–243a2 (2 folios): no translator's colophon.

## 2. Printed Pāli verse versions of *Uṇhissavijaya*<sup>51</sup>

### 2.1. Long Pāli verse version of *Uṇhissavijaya*

- 2.1.1. *Uṇhisavijaiya*:<sup>52</sup> *Mahādibamant*, printed for the royally sponsored cremation of Amat To Phraya Akkhanitniyom (Samui ābharaṇasīri) (Bangkok: 2471 [1928]), pp. 28–35;
- 2.1.2. *Uṇhisavijaiya-sūtra*:<sup>53</sup> *Brah Mahādibamantr*, printed for the royally sponsored cremation of Mrs. Chavivan Prakobsantisukh, at the crematorium of Wat Makutaṅkṣatriyārāmarājavavīhār (Bangkok: 2516 [1973]), pp. 24–30.

### 2.2. Middling Pāli verse version of *Uṇhissavijaya*

- 2.2.1. *Uṇhassavijaya*:<sup>54</sup> Bunkhit Wachrasat (ed.), *Suat mant muang nua* (Chiang Mai: n.d.), pp. 217–219;

<sup>50</sup> For this translator see Peter Skilling 'Theravādin Literature in Tibetan Translation', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XIX (1993), pp. 90–98.

<sup>51</sup> The bibliographic notes that follow are woefully inadequate. Bibliography of Thai printed materials presents a number of challenges: titles are not always consistent, a different title being given on the spine, front cover, and title page(s); the date of publication is not always given; sometimes the only date is at the end of the foreword (or in small print of the last page). Few if any give the sources of their contents. I apologize for inevitable inconsistencies in my hybrid Pāli-cum-phonetic transliterations.

<sup>52</sup> The title is so given at the head of the text: the colophon reads *iti uṇhisavijayasammatam niṭṭhitam*.

<sup>53</sup> So given at head of text: the colophon reads *iti uṇhisavijayasammatam niṭṭhitam*.

<sup>54</sup> So given at head of text: the colophon reads *atthi uṇhassavijayo niṭṭhito*.

- 2.2.2. Uṇhissavijaya:<sup>55</sup> Insom Chaiyachomphu (ed.), *Suat mant muang nua* (Bangkok: n.d.), pp. 109–111;
- 2.2.3. Uṇhassavijaya:<sup>56</sup> *Khong di chak pap sa* (Lamphun: n.d.), pp. 52–53;
- 2.2.4. Gāthā Uṇhisavijaya: Phra Mahathawee Khuenkaew (Tṭhānavaro Bhikkhu) (ed.), *Suat mant chabap phra buat mai* (third printing, Bangkok: 2533 [1990]), pp. 235–237;
- 2.2.5. Uṇhisavijaya Gāthā: Phra Visuddhisambodhi (ed.), *Chumnum suat mant chabap luang* (Bangkok: 2535 [1992]), pp. 504–506;
- 2.2.6. Uṇhisavijaya: Phan To Fun Saengrak (ed.), *Dibamant prachum pad suat mant* (Bangkok: 2518 [1975]), pp. 140–142.
- 2.3. Short Pāli verse version of *Uṇhissavijaya*
- 2.3.1. Atthi Uṇhissavijaya Gāthā: Matcharoen Thiraphatrasakul (ed.), *Nangsu suat mant mahā phra buddhamant* (Bangkok: 2532 [1989]), p. 113;
- 2.3.2. Uṇhissavijaya Gāthā: Tho Thammasi (ed.), *Buddhamant bidhī (chabap somboon)* (Bangkok: n.d.), p. 36;
- 2.3.3. Gāthā Uṇhissavijaya: *Nangsu suat mant chabap bodhiñāṇ* (Bangkok: 2533 [1990]), p. 60;
- 2.3.4. Uṇhissavijaya Gāthā: Phra khru Samuh Iam Sirivaṇṇo (ed.), *Mant bidhī samrap phra bhikṣu sāmaṇera lae buddhaśāsanikajana tua pai* (Bangkok: n.d.), p. 39;
- 2.3.5. Uṇhissavijaya Gāthā: Phan Tho Tongkhaw Phuangrotphan and Nava Tri Tongbai Hongviangchan (ed.), *Maṅgalabidhī (chabap mahācūḷābarrṇāgār)* (Bangkok: 2532 [1989]), pp. 143–144.

### 3. Dated Lanna Thai versions of *Uṇhissavijaya*<sup>57</sup>

- 88: CS 1039  
 87: CS 1063  
 93: CS 1067  
 86: CS 1070  
 94: CS 1074  
 90: CS 1078  
 85: CS 1086

<sup>55</sup> The colophon reads *atthi uṇhissavijayo niṭṭhito*.

<sup>56</sup> The colophon reads *atthi uṇhassavijayo niṭṭhito*.

<sup>57</sup> Information from Keyes, op. cit.



96: CS 1098

91: CS 1141

#### 4. *Uṇhissavijaya* in Thai *Ānisaṃsa* Literature

4.1. *Ānisaṃs Uṇhissavijaya*: J. Parian (ed.), *Ānisaṃs 108 kaṇḍ chabap perm term mai* (Bangkok: 2510 [1967]), pp. 863–869;

4.2. *Ānisaṃs Uṇhissavijaya*: Phra Mahāpaiśāl (ed.), *Chumnum ānisaṃs 65 ruang* (Bangkok: 2499 [1956]), pp. 337–343.

#### 5. Other versions of *Uṇhissavijaya*

5.1. *Uṇhisavijayajāṭaka*:<sup>58</sup> *Paramatthamaṅgala* (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, 2536 [1993]), pp. 22–26.

5.2. *Nangsu Unahit-wichai (Uṇhitavijaiy) kham lilit* (Bangkok: 2467 [1924]).

### Addendum to p. 39, third paragraph, first sentence

I have modified the original sentence, ‘I have not seen any other Pāli or vernacular text that compares one who knows a text ...to a *cetiya*.’ The *Visuddhimagga* (VII 67) states that the body of a *bhikkhu* who is devoted to the recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānussati*) merits homage like a shrine-house (*cetiya-ghara*). (I owe the reference to Paul Harrison, ‘Commemoration and Identification in *Buddhānussmṛti*’, in Janet Gyatso (ed.), *In the Mirror of Memory: Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992, p. 219.)

<sup>58</sup> So given at the head of the section; the colophon reads *uṇhisavijayavarṇanā chop* (‘is completed’). *Vārṇanā*, or Pāli *vaṇṇanā*, is frequent in titles of extracanonical suttas from Siam. See e.g. Padmanabh S. Jaini, ‘Ākāravattārasutta’, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 35 (1992), p. 209, *ākāravattārasuttavaṇṇanā nīṭṭhitā*; E. Denis (ed.), ‘Brah Māleyya-devattheravattum’, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XVIII (1993), p. 60, *itī māleyyadevatherassa vaṇṇanā nīṭṭhitā*; Charles Hallisey, ‘Nibbānasutta: an allegedly non-canonical sutta on Nibbāna as a Great City’, ib., p. 124, *nibbānasuttavaṇṇanā nīṭṭhitā*.

## The place of South-East Asia in Buddhist studies

### I

**S**OUTH-EAST ASIA IS A NEGLECTED AREA IN INTERNATIONAL Buddhist studies. This may easily be seen in the bookstores of Europe and North America. The shelves devoted to Buddhism will be well-stocked with books on all aspects of Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, and even 'American' Buddhism, but one will be lucky to find a single book on South-East Asian Buddhism. Furthermore, surveys of Buddhism usually devote only a few pages to the region, using sources that for the most part are outdated and inaccurate.

In general, 'Buddhist studies' is a very imperfect field. Outside of Japan it receives little institutional support and scarcely stands as an academic discipline. In reality 'Buddhist studies' is a catch-all for studies conducted in individual departments by philologists, philosophers, historians of religion, anthropologists, archæologists, art historians, and translators, by Indologists, South Asianists, South-East Asianists, Sinologists, Tibetansists, Mongolists, Koreanists, Japanologists, and so on. Some of these scholars might relate their work to 'Buddhist studies', but others may not.

It is time to recognize and assess the imperfections that bedevil Buddhist studies. One of the most ruinous is the heritage of assumptions and pre-conceptions built up over the last century. Our conceptual tools are outdated and inadequate, and need to be scrutinized, revised, and invigorated. In this paper I address another problem: that of unmapped territories, of the blanks in the historical geography of Buddhism. One of the biggest blanks is South-East Asia. Our understanding of the historical and social development of Buddhism will remain incomplete and lopsided until South-East Asia takes its proper place in Buddhist Studies.

South-East Asia is a huge region. In terms of modern states it comprises Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei, and East Timor. But the modern states are not especially relevant to our studies, which relate to a radically different pre-modern map. The list I have just given is relatively new, and describes (so far excluding East Timor) the political-economic group ASEAN, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, founded in 1967.

The boundaries of the 'South-East Asia of Buddhist studies' are less certain. Should we include Bangladesh, not only because of the Buddhist populations of Chittagong, but also because of important historical sites like Mainamati and Paharpur? In that case should we include other parts of Bengal? Should we include Indian states like Tripura, or Assam with its Tai populations (or perhaps, at least for protohistory, Meghalaya with its Mon-Khmer culture)? Surely we must take Yunnan into account, and some scholars even include Sri Lanka in South-East Asia, mainly because of its religious intercourse with the South-East Asian mainland.

That there is no single answer to the question of where South-East Asia begins or where it ends is not surprising, since the boundaries are dictated by the nature of the research or the whims of the researcher. Geographically 'South-East Asia' is often divided into 'mainland' (Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, plus the Malay peninsula) and 'insular' (the Malayan and Indonesian archipelago).<sup>1</sup> These terms are conventions and do not correspond

<sup>1</sup> The mainland may also be called 'peninsular' South-East Asia or Indo-China (Indochina, Indo China), the latter in the sense given by the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Fifth Edition, Oxford: University Press, 1964), p. 620b, 'Indo-Chinese: of the region between India and China', or in sense

to any historical, geopolitical, or cultural boundaries. In this paper I limit my discussion to the mainland, to peninsular South-East Asia, for the most part to Siam or Thailand.<sup>2</sup>

Here we face a conceptual problem. Most studies present Buddhism in terms of modern nation-states, giving us 'Thai Buddhism', 'Burmese Buddhism', 'Khmer Buddhism', and 'Lao Buddhism'. But these labels mask complex and continually evolving realities and overlapping boundaries. 'Thai Buddhism', for example, expresses itself differently in the several regions of the modern nation-state of 'Thailand', regions which traditionally used different scripts for Pāli and transmitted literature in their own vernaculars, as well as in Mon, Lao, and Khmer. Art and architecture, custom, ritual, and liturgy all vary from region to region, province to province, district to district. Furthermore, to frame the history of Buddhism in terms of modern nation-states excludes one of the most important cultural groups, the Mon, today a nation without a state. It also excludes smaller states like Haribhujaya, Chiang Tung, or Chiang Rung.

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1 of the *Second College Edition of Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* (New York and Cleveland: 1972), p. 717b, 'a large peninsula south of China including Burma, Thailand, Indochina (sense 2), & Malaya'. Webster's sense 2 is the 'E[astern] part of this peninsula, formerly under Fr[ench] control, consisting of Laos, Cambodia, & Vietnam'. I use the term sparingly because of possible confusion between the two senses. Further, at the surface level the term Indo-China denies the region any identity, rather like 'Further' or 'Greater India'. Insular South-East Asia has been called 'the Archipelago' and 'Insulinde'. The traditional Chinese name for the region as a whole has been Nanyang, 'Southern Ocean'.

To add to the confusion, Burma, once a part of the British Indian Empire, is not always included in South-East Asia, and the Philippines is sometimes excluded on the grounds of history (as a former Spanish and then American colony) and of religion (Catholicism introduced across the Pacific, rather than the Indian religions of the Mainland). Anthony Reid has shown that the region shares some common cultural features, one of which is the use of betel-nut as a social lubricant (Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. 1, *The Lands below the Winds*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1988, I. Introduction, pp. 1–10). For the evolution of South-East Asia as a political entity see Nicholas Tarling (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Volume Two, Part Two, *From World War II to the present*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 258 foll.

<sup>2</sup> The boundary is defined by my own limitations, since I am able to use Thai sources but not Burmese or Khmer.

Although I will refer to modern political states when appropriate, I prefer to think in terms of *cultures*, and refer to Mon, Lanna, Lao, Thai, Khmer, Arakanese, Shan, Khün, or Burmese Buddhism (or Buddhisms). But these cultures do not float in ahistorical vacuums: each has its own history, and we must therefore also relate these cultures to *historical polities*, and examine the evolution of Buddhism in the states of Śrīkṣetra, Dvāravatī, Kambuja, Arakan, Ayutthaya, Rāmaññadesa, Pagan, Ava, Mandalay, Lanna, Lanchang (Laos), and Bangkok – to name only the better known.

This procedure is not entirely satisfactory: like any methodology it raises its own problems. I use the cultures and states as descriptive conventions, and do not want to suggest that they are water-tight or uniform entities. They are not: each impinges on the other, and each is internally diverse. Above all, I do not want to suggest that ethnicity is constant or self-sufficient, that it has any *svabhāva*. Rather, it is one of the determining factors of a culture, in many respects interchangeable with language. ‘Mon Buddhism’, for example, is transmitted in the Mon language within Mon society, which both comprises and interacts with other ethnic groups.

Another conceptual problem lies in the fact that the Buddhism of South-East Asia is seen through the frame – or forced into the Procrustean bed – of a ‘Theravādin Buddhism’ inevitably described as ‘early’, ‘conservative’, ‘unworldly’. No one can deny that Theravādin Vinaya lineages were introduced during the Śrīkṣetra and Dvāravatī periods, and that starting with the eleventh century this lineage gradually became the main and then the only lineage. No one can deny that the textual lineage of the *Tipiṭaka* is the Pāli canon of the Mahāvihāra school of Sri Lankan Theravāda. But to lump all of South-East Asia under ‘Theravāda’ oversimplifies and obscures the historical development of monasticism, ritual, and literature. Furthermore, if the monks (there have been no nuns for at least a thousand years) ordain within lineages that trace their origins to the Sri Lankan Thera school, it does not follow that the laity were or are ‘Theravādins’ by ‘faith’, ‘creed’, or ‘profession’, and indeed both monastic and lay (the boundary is at any rate fluid) practices entail many specifically local or regional elements. By the same token, rituals, sacred images, art, and architecture are not ‘Theravādin’. I prefer to use specific terms and to try to understand these phenomena as part of socio-historical evolution.

If South-East Asia is a blank spot on the map of Buddhist studies, we must recognize that there are many gaps in our knowledge of South-East Asia itself, and that this is part of the problem. The history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka can be framed in the perspective of the *Mahāvamsa*, a continuous chronicle from before the introduction of Buddhism to the island up to the last century. (The *Mahāvamsa* is a partisan document of the Mahāvihāra, of course, and presents one version of narrative history, as does the earlier *Dīpavamsa*, which goes up to the fourth century CE.) Similarly, China possesses a wealth of secular and religious records, the latter including biographies, essays, and even letters going back almost two thousand years. For Japan we have ancient chronicles like the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon-shoki*, and poetry, temple chronicles, biographies, sermons, and textbooks from the Nara period (eighth century) on. For Tibet we have inscriptions and Dunhuang documents dating to before the tenth century, and after that an abundance of historical materials, including histories of Buddhism composed by Bu-ston, Tāranātha, and others.

But for South-East Asia we have no ancient, indigenous, continuous histories whatsoever. We do not even know the names or boundaries of many of the states that existed before the eleventh century, or understand much about their trade and international relations.<sup>3</sup> We know the *name* of Śrīvijaya, an important state that controlled the international trade through the Straits of Malacca, but we do not know with certainty where its ‘capital’ was located (assuming it had one). That historical documents once existed I do not doubt, but they have not survived. The few fragmentary inscriptions from Śrīkṣetra, Dvāravatī, and Śrīvijaya give us only the names of a few rulers and their relations, but the information is inadequate for the reconstruction of genealogies or of a continuous narrative history.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> From Chinese sources we know the names of early states like Funan and Chenla, but we do not know, with certainty, where or what they were. For Funan see most recently Michael Vichery, ‘Funan reviewed: deconstructing the Ancients’, in *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* 90–91 (2003/2004), pp. 101–143.

<sup>4</sup> The exception here is Cambodia, where it has been possible to construct genealogies of kings, brahmins, and leading families – albeit with many question marks – and to extract social structure from the rich epigraphical record.

## II

Inscriptions, archæological remains, and Chinese historical records leave no doubt that Buddhism (in tandem with Brahmanism) flourished in the region in the first millennium of the Christian Era. In what way, then, is the study of Buddhism in South-East Asia a neglected area? Where does the problem lie? It is not that no work has been done – indeed, our research is indebted to a long line of predecessors.

Let me phrase my answer in terms of two aspects of the intellectual endeavour: the specific and the general. The first refers to the study of specific data: to the transcription and translation of inscriptions or manuscripts, the study of archæological and iconographic remains, the recording of rites and rituals. These specific studies engage primary sources directly. The second, ‘the general’, refers to the compilation of analytic or synthetic studies, the integration of specific data into greater narratives. The two aspects are interdependent (*pratitya*, as are all things): specific data are needed for general studies, and it is the general studies that place specific data in context.

A great deal of specific research has been done, some of it monumental, such as the work of Gordon H. Luce or of Pierre Pichard in Burma, or that of George Cœdès and the members of the *École française d’Extrême-Orient* (EFO) in Indo-China. Louis Finot’s ‘Recherches sur la littérature laotienne’, published in the *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* in 1917, remains unsurpassed after ninety years. Much of the research up to the end of the first half of the last century was carried out under colonial auspices of the British, Dutch, and French and published in their respective languages. Independent Siam developed its own research program, influenced by and sometimes in collaboration with the EFO, and overseen by the remarkable scholar-statesman Prince Damrong Rajanubhab. Unlike its colonized neighbours, Siam remained in control of its own history, and published historical materials in its own language, Thai.

In the post-colonial period, from the beginning of the second half of the last century, the newly independent nations regained possession of their past. But the tragic wars in Indo-China and the civil wars in Burma disrupted archæological research, and in an atmosphere of national struggle history became an ideological tool, the exclusive domain of the single-party state. Research was now published mainly in the national languages, and contact even with

neighbouring countries – let alone with a wider scholarly community – was restricted if not prohibited. Thailand steered its way through this difficult period with considerable success, and research continued to be carried out and published under the auspices of the Department of Archæology and the Fine Arts Department, mainly in Thai as before. Today we can benefit from several collections of inscriptions, and, most recently, an *Encyclopedia of Thai Culture* (*Saranukrom watthanatham thai*) in 63 volumes. Exciting new developments in the archæology of southern Vietnam have been published, if at all, in Vietnamese, and thus remain inaccessible to those who do not know the language.<sup>5</sup> New materials have begun to be published in English in Burma, and archæology is being revived in Cambodia.<sup>6</sup>

It is obvious that to benefit from these materials scholars must know and read at least several of the modern languages of South-East Asia, and that to conduct serious research one must study the older forms of the languages and their evolution. A background in Sanskrit and Pāli is indispensable. But internationally, regionally, and even nationally, the study of South-East Asian languages can hardly be described as flourishing. One effect of globalization is that, despite the good efforts of ASEAN, South-East Asians show little interest in their own history and culture, not to speak of those of their neighbours. Few Thais learn Khmer or Burmese; few Burmese study Thai or Malay. Internationally, the national languages of South-East Asia are taught at only a few universities, and academic study of Old Khmer and Mon (Old or New) – two languages vital to regional historiography

<sup>5</sup> See for example Le Xuan Diem, Dao Linh Con, Vo Si Khai, *Van Hoa Oc Eo: nhung kham pha moi/Oc Eo: Recent Discoveries* (Hanoi: Social Sciences Publishing House, 1995), in Vietnamese, and more recently James C.M. Khoo, *Art and Archaeology of Fu Nan* (Bangkok: 2003). For one of the inscriptions see Peter Skilling, 'A Buddhist inscription from Go Xoai, southern Vietnam, and notes towards a classification of *ye dharmā* inscriptions', in *80 pi sasadachan dr. prasert na nakhon ruam botkhwam wichakan dan charuk lae ekasan boran* (Bangkok: 2542 [1999]), pp. 171–187.

<sup>6</sup> I should note here the exemplary work of French scholars, again not directly on Buddhism, but essential to our research: for example the recent book of Michel Jacq-Hergoual'ch (Michel Jacq-Hergoual'ch, *The Malay Peninsula. Crossroads of the Maritime Silk Road* [Translated by Victoria Hobson] [Leiden: Brill, 2002, Handbook of Oriental Studies (Handbuch der Orientalistik), Section three, South-East Asia, ed. by B. Arps, M.C. Ricklefs, D.K. Wyatt, Volume thirteen]) or some of the *Études thématiques* published by the EFEO.



– barely survives. The rich vernacular materials remain inaccessible, and international scholars must rely on the same old textbooks and recycle the same old facts. Predictably, this has led to stagnation.

The main problem lies not, however, with the accumulation of specific data, but rather in the realm of the general, of the greater narrative history of Buddhism in South-East Asia. The scholars who produced data in the earliest period worked within the frame of their own disciplines – archæology, history, linguistics, anthropology. They did not locate their work in ‘Buddhist studies’, and there is no reason to expect them to have done so, since at that time the idea of ‘Buddhist studies’ scarcely existed. Today it may be fashionable to assert that the data were gathered as part of the colonial taxonomic enterprise, and this is certainly true. But we should not let ideology obscure the fact that the colonial scholars were human. They were talented individuals with their own vision and imagination, and they have left us an inestimably precious legacy. Of course they worked within the colonial framework of the age: any research is inevitably framed by time and circumstance – as is this article.

It has been left to those in the field of religious studies or of ‘Buddhism’ as a (relatively new) academic field to analyse the data, to construct a narrative history of Buddhism, and to place this in the context of international Buddhist studies. But this has been inadequately or poorly done, for several reasons: lack of the necessary languages, lack of background in Buddhist studies, lack of vision, lack of institutional support. As a result the academic study of Buddhism in South-East Asia remains a backwater. There are, of course, exceptions, such as Kenneth Wells’ classic *Thai Buddhism: Its Rites and Activities*, Yoneo Ishii’s *Sangha, State, and Society: Thai Buddhism in History*, and Prapod Assavavirulhakarn’s thesis on the ascendancy of Theravāda in South-East Asia.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Wells’ *Thai Buddhism* (originally published in Bangkok in 1939, and reprinted in 1960 and 1975) has aged well, and in many regards has not been replaced. Unfortunately the English translation of Ishii’s work (translated by Peter Hawkes, published as English-language Series no. 15 of the Monographs of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, by The University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1986) ‘condenses’ two of the original chapters. Prapod Assavavirulhakarn’s historical study, *The Ascendancy of Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia*, remains to be published.

## III

Having outlined the problems as I see them, I will describe the sources available for the study of Buddhism in South-East Asia before going on to assess their significance to Buddhist studies. I will deal with literature, manuscripts, inscriptions, images of the Buddha, and ritual.

## Literature

I have noted above that we have no early literature from South-East Asia, and, especially, no chronicle or local or regional history (discounting the *Sāsanavaṃsa* of the nineteenth century and other late texts).<sup>8</sup> The first millenium of the Christian Era is something of a blank, and only by exploiting archaeological data and Chinese records can we produce a patchy and speculative history. But with the second millennium, documentation increases, and we can explore a broad range of traditional historical materials, including royal records and the chronicles of states, images, relics, and temples – as well as inscriptions, to be discussed below.<sup>9</sup>

The 'reliability' of these documents in terms of 'solid facts' has long been contested. But as valid productions of the pre-modern *imaginaire* they cannot be ignored. Furthermore, the traditional historiographical practices of South-East Asia merit comparison with those of other Buddhist cultures, such as those of Tibet or Japan.

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<sup>8</sup> One of the earliest surviving texts of South-East Asia as a whole is the *Durbodhāloka*, a commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* composed by Dharmakīrti in the city of Śrīvijaya at the beginning of the eleventh century. The work – probably the sole surviving example of the presumably extensive literature of Śrīvijaya – is preserved in a Tibetan translation by Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna or Atiśa, a direct disciple of Dharmakīrti. But this is a technical work of abstruse philosophy and, apart from the precious colophon, contains no historical information. See Peter Skilling, 'Dharmakīrti's *Durbodhāloka* and the Literature of Śrīvijaya', *Journal of the Siam Society* 85 (1997), pp. 187–194.

<sup>9</sup> For later periods we can also use Chinese, Arabic, and European records. The classic study of Chinese and Arabic accounts of the Malay peninsula remains Paul Wheatley's *The Golden Khersonese: Studies in the Historical Geography of the Malay Peninsula before A.D. 1500* (repr. Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit University Malaya, 1980).

What are the common points, what are the differences? How do the different traditions situate themselves in 'Buddhist time'? South-East Asian chronicles often open with an account, however brief, of the bodhisatta's (that is, the future Sakyamuni's) career and of the 'Auspicious Æon' (*bhaddakappa*) in which he appears. Needless to say, South-East Asian chronicles model themselves to a degree on the well-known chronicles of Sri Lanka. One of them, the *Vaṃsamālīnī* (composed in Pāli, most probably in Northern Thailand) is a recasting of the *Mahāvāṃsa*, as indeed is the 'Extended' *Mahāvāṃsa*.<sup>10</sup> Many of the vernacular texts are unique. One example is *Phra chao liap lok*, a work in Northern Thai language which gives an account of the Buddha's travels throughout Lanna (Northern Thailand), relating how he distributed relics, left imprints of his feet, and predicted the future glory of local sites. The text maps out a Buddhist geography of the North.

In all pre-modern Buddhist polities kings and emperors lavished their attention on the classical scriptures, sponsoring editions of *Tipiṭakas*, commentaries, and treatises. In South-East Asia the rulers of Pagan, Ayutthaya, Lanna, Lanchang, and Cambodia all engaged in the meritorious act of having the Pāli canon inscribed on palm leaves. In Thailand, the Chakri kings of the present dynasty, which was founded in 1782, have been great patrons of the *Tipiṭaka*. A council (*saṃgīti*) convened by King Rāma I was reckoned as the ninth Theravādin council in contemporary royal records (in Thai) and in the *Saṃgītiyavāṃsa* (in Pāli). In the nineteenth century, during the first five reigns, a total of nineteen royal *Tipiṭakas* were made. In 1895 King Rāma V (Chulalongkorn) sponsored the world's first printed *Tipiṭaka*, which he distributed to temples in Thailand and to institutions abroad. Since then several other printed CD rom editions have appeared, along with Thai translations.

In Ayutthaya and in the early Ratanakosin period the connotation of the term *Tipiṭaka* was wide and probably flexible, comprising not only the texts traditionally listed in the Mahāvihāra tradition, such as in the works of Ācariya Buddhaghosa, but also the commentaries

<sup>10</sup> The 'Extended' *Mahāvāṃsa* was most probably compiled in Ayutthaya. It has been mistakenly described as 'Cambodian' simply because the manuscripts are in the Khmer script, as were most Pāli manuscripts in Ayutthaya and in Bangkok up to the early twentieth century. In Thai the script used for Pāli is called 'Khom'.

(*aṭṭhakathā*), sub-commentaries (*ṭīkā*), grammatical literature, paracanonical and non-canonical works (such as *Rasavāhinī* and its *ṭīkā*), image chronicles (*Ratanabimbavaṃsa*, *Sihiṅganidāna*) and apocryphal suttas like the *Jambūpati-sutta*. That is, the term *Tipiṭaka* embraced the whole of the Pāli literature available at the time.

From about the eleventh century scholars delighted in cosmology, and composed works in Pāli like the *Pañcagatidīpanī*, *Chagatidīpanī* (and its *ṭīkā*), *Lokapaññatti*, *Lokadīpakasāra*, *Cakkavāla-dīpanī*, *Lokupatti*, *Mahākappalokasaṅṭhāna*, *Lokasaṅṭhānajatatanagaṇṭhī*, and *Okāsaloka*. A range of *Traibhūmi*-s, treatises describing the 'Three Worlds' (*kāma*-, *rūpa*, *arūpa*-*bhūmi*), were redacted in Thai (including Northern and Southern Thai) and Khmer.<sup>11</sup> The earliest surviving vernacular cosmological text is the '*Traibhūmi* Phra Ruang', composed in Sukhothai in the fourteenth century. Only the *Lokapaññatti* and the '*Traibhūmi* Phra Ruang' have been objects of modern studies. The former was edited and translated into French by Eugène Denis,<sup>12</sup> Kiyoshi Okano has recently shown that one of its main sources, a *Lokaprajñapti* now preserved only in Chinese translation, belonged to a Puḍgalavādin tradition.<sup>13</sup> The '*Traibhūmi* Phra Ruang' has been translated into French by Cœdès and Archaimbault, and into English by Frank and Mani Reynolds.<sup>14</sup> Recently the National Library of Thailand has published, in two splendid volumes, complete colour facsimiles

<sup>11</sup> See my reviews of published editions of some of these works in *Buddhist Studies Review* 7 (1990), pp. 115–121. It is important to keep in mind that *Traibhūmi* is a genre (which comprises much more than cosmology) rather than a single text.

<sup>12</sup> Eugène Denis, *La Lokapaññatti et les idées cosmologiques du bouddhisme ancien*, 2 vols. (Lille/Paris: 1977).

<sup>13</sup> Kiyoshi Okano, *Sarvaraṣṭas Mahāsaṃvartanīkathā: Ein Sanskrit-Kāvya über die Kosmologie der Sāṃmitīya-Schule des Hīnayāna-Buddhismus* (Sendai: Seminar of Indology, Tohoku University, 1998, Tohoku-Indo-Tibetto-Kenkyūsho-Kankokai, Monograph Series I).

<sup>14</sup> G. Cœdès and C. Archaimbault, *Les Trois Mondes* (Paris: EFEO, 1973); Frank E. and Mani B. Reynolds, *Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Thai Buddhist Cosmology* (Berkeley: University of California, 1982, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series 4). There is also a bilingual (Thai/English) edition: *Traibhumikatha, the Story of the Three Planes of Existence by King Lithai*, translated by the Thai National Team for Anthology of ASEAN Literatures, Volume 1a, published under the Sponsorship of the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information, Bangkok, 1987.

of illustrated *Traibhūmi* manuscripts in the National Library, from the Ayutthaya and Thonburi periods. There are also astrological and astronomical texts in Pāli and Thai, such as the *Candasuriyagatīdīpanī* (and the Indian *Sūryasiddhānta*, transmitted in Burma).

South-East Asia has made exuberant and distinctive contributions to Buddhist narrative literature, the pride of place belonging to what are often called 'apocryphal' or 'local' *jātakas* (described by some modern scholars as novels, *romans*). Some are in Pāli, such as the fifty stories of the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa* collection from Burma (edited by I.B. Horner and P.S. Jaini and translated by Jaini), or the long *Lokanēyya-ppakaraṇa* from Thailand (edited by Jaini), a complex narrative containing numerous *nīti* verses. Vernacular *jātakas* number in the hundreds. Some are known throughout Thailand and beyond, in numerous recensions, often in verse. Others seem to be unique to a specific region, culture, or language.<sup>15</sup> Anatole-Roger Peltier of the EFEO has published vernacular narratives from the Northern Tai cultures,<sup>16</sup> and Niyada Lausunthorn has written extensively on the *Paññāsajātaka* tales and their adaptations in Thai literature.<sup>17</sup>

Another popular genre is biography. There are extensive biographies of the Buddha like the *Sampinḍitamahānidāna*, *Sambhāra-vipāka*, *Sotatthakimāhānidāna*, *Jinamahānidāna*, and *Paṭhamasambodhi*,

<sup>15</sup> For narrative literature in India and Tibet see David Seyfort Ruegg's comprehensive 'Remarks on the place of narrative in the Buddhist literatures of India and Tibet', in Alfredo Cadonna (ed.), *India, Tibet, China: Genesis and Aspects of Traditional Narrative* (Florence: 1999, Orientalia Venetiana VII), pp. 193–227. It is perhaps indicative of the state of the field that neither the title nor the collection makes any mention of the narrative literature of South-East Asia.

<sup>16</sup> Anatole-Roger Peltier, *La littérature Tai Khoeun/Tai Khoeun Literature* (Bangkok: EFEO and Social Research Institute Chiang Mai University, 1987); *ibid.*, *Chao Bun Hlong* (Chiang Mai: 1992); *ibid.*, *Sujavanna* (Chiang Mai: 1993); *ibid.*, *L'Engoulement Blanc* (Chiang Mai: Institute de Recherche sur la Culture, Ministère de l'Information et de la Culture, 1995); *ibid.*, *Nang Phom Hom, 'La femme aux cheveux parfumés'* (Chiang Mai: 1995); *ibid.*, *The White Nightjar: a Lao tale* (Chiang Mai: Rombai boon Sangha Bhandha, 1999); *ibid.*, *Kalè Ok Hno: Tai Khün Classical Tale* (Bangkok: SAC Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, July 1999), *ibid.*, *Nithan Sin ha/Le Conte des Cinq precepts. A Tale of the Five Precepts*, Bangkok 2001, *ibid.*, *Maghavā: Tai Khün Classic Tale* (Phitsanulok Naresuan University, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> Niyada (Sarikabhuti) Lausunthorn, *Paññāsa Jātaka: Its Genesis and Significance to Thai Poetical Works [in Thai]* (Bangkok: 2538 [1995]).

all in Pāli (but some, like *Sotatthakīmahānidāna* and *Paṭhamasambodhi*, with important vernacular recensions). There are texts on Metteyya (Maitreya), the next Buddha, alone, or as the first of the next ten Buddhas. Narratives on future Awakened Ones constitute a family called *Anāgatavaṃsa* or *Dasabodhisatta-vyākaraṇa* (or *-uddesa*). The ten bodhisattas or future Buddhas share the apotropaic functions of the present or past Buddhas:<sup>18</sup>

Any human beings (*narajāti*), women or men, who offer homage and bow in respect to the ten Somdet Lord Buddhas along with the ten Glorious Great Awakening Trees in the way which has been described, those human beings, women or men, will gain fruit and benefit (*phalānisais*), to wit: they will not be born in hell for as long a period as one hundred thousand æons (*kapp*), as a result of the positive attitude (*kuśalacetanā*) of the person who recollects the ten Lord Buddhas.

Other biographies relate the 'lives of the disciples', whether anthologized as in the *Sāvakaniṭṭhāna* or individually as in the *Sāriputtaniṭṭhāna* or *Moggallānaniṭṭhāna*. Texts with titles ending in *-niṭṭhāna* – narratives built around Mahāvihāra canonical and commentarial materials, as well as materials from non-Mahāvihāra sources – constitute an important genre which has only begun to be explored.<sup>19</sup> Some, like the *Bimbāniṭṭhāna* – an account of the passing away of the Buddha's wife Yasodharā – are long and complex, bracketing many *jātakas* and other narratives.

Finally, there is a rich and diverse collection of liturgical texts, many still in use. These extol the power and virtues of Sakyamuni as bodhisatta and as Buddha, as well as of the Buddhas of the past, the ten future Buddhas, and the great disciples. They include the *Sambuddhe-gāthā*, *Uppātasanti*, *Uṇhissavijaya*, *Mahādibbamanta* and *Dibbamanta*, and many variations upon the theme of *itipi so bhagavā*.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Ānisaṇsa* from the end of a Thai *Anāgatavaṃsa* (Bampen Rawin [ed.], *Phra Anakhotawong* [Bangkok: Amaric Wichakan, 2542 (1999)], p. 77).

<sup>19</sup> See François Lagirarde, 'The Nibbāna of Mahākassapa the Elder: Notes on a Buddhist Narrative Transmitted in Thai and Lao Literature', in François Lagirarde and Paritta Chalernpow Koanantakool (ed.), *Buddhist Legacies in Mainland Southeast Asia. Mentalities, Interpretations and Practices* (Bangkok: EFEO and Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, 2006), pp. 79–112.

<sup>20</sup> See below, 'The Sambuddhe verses and later Theravādin Buddhism', pp. 128–154. For *Mahādibbamanta* and *Dibbamanta* see Prapod Assavavirulhakarn,

## Manuscripts

Literature is written down and transmitted through manuscripts (and kept alive through recitation, sermon, and performance). The number of manuscripts produced in South-East Asia is immense. While the bulk of the surviving manuscripts date to the nineteenth century, many older manuscripts have survived the ravages of time and neglect. Oskar von Hinüber has demonstrated that certain Lanna manuscripts are among the oldest available, such as the (sections of) the *Jātaka* dated 1471, a *Milindapañha* dated 1495, and a *Yamaka* dated 1497, all kept at Wat Lai Hin in Lampang province.<sup>21</sup>

Up to the beginning of the last century, manuscripts were produced throughout the region in two main palm-leaf formats, which I shall provisionally call the 'Burmese format' and the 'Central format'.

The Burmese inscribe the leaves with small letters, from eight to twelve lines to the page, and pile the leaves in a single stack held together by two bamboo sticks placed in a pair of holes made in each leaf for the purpose. The stack is placed between protective boards and protected by a cloth wrapper. In the Central South-East Asian tradition, the Mon, Tai (Thai, Lanna Thai, Tai Khün, Tai Lüe), Lao, and Khmer inscribe the leaves in larger letters, on average five lines per page. Twenty-four leaves make up one bundle (*phūk*), which is tied by a string (*sai sanong* in Thai) looped through one (usually the left-hand) of the two holes punched into the leaf.<sup>22</sup> The bundles are stacked together, placed between boards (Thai: *mai prakap*),

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'Mahādibbamanta – A Reflection on Thai Chanting Tradition', in Olle Qvarnström (ed.), *Jainism and Early Buddhism: Essays in Honor of Padmanabh S. Jaini*, Part II (Fremont, California: Asian Humanities Press, 2002), pp. 379–406.

<sup>21</sup> See Oskar von Hinüber, 'On some colophons of old Lanna Pali manuscripts', in *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Thai Studies*, 11–13 May, 1990, Vol. IV (Kunming: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, n.d.), pp. 56–77.

<sup>22</sup> The most common pagination system employs a series of twelve vowels for each consonant, successively, starting with *ka k̄a ki k̄i ku k̄u ke kai ko kau kaṃ kaḥ*, then *kha khā*, etc. One *phūk* consists of two twelve-vowel series (*ka* and *kha*, *ga* and *gha*, etc.) and thus totals twenty-four leaves. The bundle may also have opening and closing leaves bearing the title and blank unpaginated leaves. A short work may have fewer than twenty-four leaves, but still will be called a *phūk*. The page numbers (*añkā*) are inscribed in the middle of the left margin of the verso.

protected by a cloth wrapper (Thai: *pha ho khamphi*), and wound with a ribbon or cord. Long manuscripts like the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā* or the *Visuddhimagga* may take up two or more such stacks. The title, number of bundles, and number of pages may be inscribed on a *chalak*, a title marker, made of metal, ivory, wood, cloth, or leather, and inserted into the ribbon.<sup>23</sup>

What is the significance of the two different formats? In many respects the Burmese format resembles that of Sri Lanka, but it also resembles some North Indian Sanskrit manuscripts from the late Pāla period. Does the Central format reflect historical exchanges between the cultures that use it?<sup>24</sup> In what ways does the Mon manuscript tradition of Burma differ from that of the Mon in Thailand? What is the format of Arakanese manuscripts? Can we develop a scientific codicology that will distinguish the different methods of preparation and inscription of the leaves, the different manuscript formats, boards and decorations, cloth wrappers and ribbons? What about the methods of storage, or the processes of gilding and lacquering?<sup>25</sup> The principles of page-numbering, of division into sections and parts, of forming sets and collections, and ultimately libraries? The work that has been published on the subject is scattered in different journals in various languages, and much more remains to be done. We also need to learn more about the paper manuscript traditions, the evolution and variation of the folding books used throughout the region.

<sup>23</sup> See Kongkaew Weeraprachak, *Khamphi bai lan chabab luang nai samai ratanakosin* (Bangkok: The National Library-Fine Arts Department, 2527 [1984]).

<sup>24</sup> This seems obvious. But the *phūk* format is not the only one used in central South-East Asia: palm leaf manuscripts from the Mekong valley in the Thai Noi script and Lao language use single stacks rather than *phūks*. Stacks are also used in Indonesia, but with quite different formatting: see e.g. Annabel Teh Gallop with Bernard Arps, *Golden Letters: Writing Traditions of Indonesia/Surat Emas: Budaya Tulis di Indonesia* (London: The British Library/Jakarta: Yayasan Lontar, 1991), Cat. nos. 47, 48. The format of South Indian copper-plate grants presumably derives from the palm-leaf format. Note that the binding ring runs through a hole in the left middle. Cf. also the format of the 'oldest Pāli manuscript' in South-East Asia, the silver plates from the Khin Ba mound in Śrīkṣetra, in modern Burma.

<sup>25</sup> The leaves of some Mon manuscripts in Thailand were gilt by Chinese craftsmen.



Manuscripts were made to be used: to be read aloud in public ceremonies and to be studied, sometimes as part of a curriculum of monastic study. To produce a manuscript gained merit for the donor, as did the production of a Buddha image. Manuscript colophons often end with the Pāli phrase *nibbānapaccayo hotu*, 'May [the production of this manuscript] be a support [for the realization of] Nibbāna!'. Colophons give historical, social and economic information, very much like image dedication inscriptions.<sup>26</sup>

In Nepal and Tibet the *ye dharmā hetuprabhavā* verse is regularly placed at the end of manuscripts. This is not done in South-East Asia, where we often find a Pāli verse that reads:

*akkharam ekam ekaṃ ca, buddharūpasamaṃ siyā  
tasmā hi paṇḍito poso likheyya piṭakattayaṃ.  
caturāsīti sahaṣṣāni, sambuddhā parimāṇakā  
ṭhiṭā nāma bhavissanti, tiṭṭhante piṭakattaye.*

Each and every letter  
May equal a Buddha image  
Therefore an intelligent person  
Should write down the Three Baskets.  
When the Three Baskets exist  
There will exist indeed  
Fully Awakened Ones  
Eighty-four thousand in number.

This brings to mind the belief in Japan that one character of the *Lotus Sūtra* is equal to an image of the Buddha.

### Inscriptions

One of our most important sources, from the earliest period up to the present, is inscriptions: records engraved primarily on stone, but also on metal and in clay. The oldest known Pāli inscriptions come not from India or Sri Lanka, but from South-East Asia, from two main regions: the lower Irrawaddy valley in present-day Burma, site of the kingdom of Śrīkṣetra, and the lower and middle Chao Phraya valley

<sup>26</sup> See e.g. von Hinüber, 'On some colophons of old Lanna Pali manuscripts' (see n. 21).

in present-day Thailand, site of the kingdom of Dvāravatī.<sup>27</sup> In both cases the Pāli appears in association with the vernaculars Pyu (for Śrīkṣetra) and Mon (for Dvāravatī), in a similar script, usually called 'Pallava' because of its resemblance to the script used by the Pallavas in South India.

The Pāli inscriptions are excerpts from *Sutta*, *Vinaya*, and *Abhidhamma*, as well as from non-canonical and even unknown works. Several describe dependent arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) and the four truths of the noble (*ariya-sacca*). The *ye dhammā* verse is widespread. The inscriptions attest to the transmission of Theravādin versions of Pāli texts and, presumably, the presence of Theravādin monastic lineages in the region from the sixth century CE at the latest.

Other materials for the study of the evolution of the use of Pāli include the Pāli inscriptions from Sukhothai up to the Ratanakosin or Bangkok period: for example, the complete *Dhammapada* inscribed with other texts in Khom script around the circumambulatory at Phra Pathom Chedi (Braḥ Paṭhamacetiya) in the late nineteenth century, or the *Tipiṭaka* and other texts etched in marble at Phuttha Monthon (Buddhamāṇḍala) in the late twentieth century. Even the later inscriptions are interesting from the standpoint of philology and as examples of the public use of Pāli texts.

Vernacular inscriptions record the foundation and dedication of religious images and structures and announce the aspirations of the donors. Mon inscriptions on so-called 'votive tablets' from the Khorat plateau or the Chi-Mun valley culture show that the tablets were created as acts of merit (*puṇya*) and that in some cases the donors wished to meet the future Buddha Metteyya (Maitreya). Stone

<sup>27</sup> See below, 'The Advent of Theravāda Buddhism to Mainland South-East Asia', pp. 105–111; Peter Skilling, 'New Pāli Inscriptions from South-East Asia', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XXIII (1997), pp. 123–157. The earliest inscribed objects in the region come from sites like Khuan Luk Pat and Chansen in Thailand and Óc Eo in southern Vietnam. These are seals inscribed with personal names in Gupta and other scripts. There is also at least one Tamil Brāhmī inscription. But it is likely that at least some of the seals are imports, and only some of them pertain – possibly – to Buddhism. For Dvāravatī see now Peter Skilling, 'Dvāravatī: Recent Revelations and Research', in *Dedications to Her Royal Highness Princess Galyani Vadhana Krom Luang Naradhiwas Rajanagarindra on her 80th Birthday* (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 2003). For the early archaeology of Burma see now Elisabeth H. Moore, *Early Landscapes of Myanmar* (Bangkok: 2007).

inscriptions from the region of Haribhūñjaya in the North, also in Mon, take us up to about the twelfth century. They are rich in information about religious practices. From the thirteenth century onwards we begin to have inscriptions in Thai. I cite here an example of the latter, from a set of five Buddha images cast in BE 1970 (CE 1426):<sup>28</sup>

Somdet Chao Phraya Ngua Phasum, reigning in Nandapūra, set up (*sthāpaka*) five Holy Lords (*sadet phrapen chao haong*), that the Teaching of the Buddha (*sāsaṇā*) might last five thousand years ... in the Horse Year, full moon, in the Lesser Saka Era (*culasakarāja*) 788, the Greater Saka Era (*mahāsakarāja*) 1970, in the sixth month, a Wednesday (*wan budha*), seventh watch (*yāma*), with the aspiration (*prāthaṇā*) to see the Holy Lord Glorious Āriya Maitrī (*phra śrīyāriyamaitrī chao*).

There are many other inscriptions in Thai from which we can learn a great deal about the religious, economic, and social life of the times. Similarly, there is a corpus of Mon and Burmese inscriptions from Burma, starting from the Pagan period (eleventh century on); there are Khmer inscriptions from all periods, with those of the 'post-Angkor period' being especially interesting for our studies; and there are Lao inscriptions from the fourteenth century on.

### Images

South-East Asia is a land of Buddha images. Production began by the fifth century and has continued without stop ever since. The Dvāravatī images are masterpieces in stone, stucco, and metal. Unfortunately, modern art history has tended to explain the images from a materialistic standpoint, without taking social or ritual contexts into account. The artistic record is too often defined in terms of 'style' and 'influences': South Indian (Amarāvati), Deccan (Ajanta caves), Sri Lankan, Gupta (Sarnath), and (later) Pāla. The region is regarded as a passive recipient of mechanical transfers of 'influence', splashing the shores of South-East Asia in 'waves' from century to century. But the medium and mechanism of influence is rarely addressed. Some images may indeed be copies of famous

<sup>28</sup> A.B. Griswold, 'What are the dates of Sukhodaya art?', in *Kham banyai samana boranakhadi samai sukhothai po.so. 2503* [Proceedings of the Seminar on Archæology of the Sukhothai Period BE 2503] (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, 2507 [1964]), p. 76.

'Indian' images, whether through the import of actual images (and we know this happened) or through paintings and sketches (and we can assume this happened), but the images of Dvāravatī and Śrīvijaya are unique. Placed in an Indian museum or beside Indian images, a Dvāravatī Buddha or Śrīvijayan bodhisattva would stand out immediately and equal or surpass its fellows. Similarly, the baked and unbaked clay 'votive tablets' of Dvāravatī and the Korat plateau are thoroughly distinctive. They are contemporary to the tablets of India but follow their own designs and iconographic programs. Other noteworthy features of Dvāravatī culture are the large free-standing *dharmacakkas* and the so-called Banaspati image.

Although the Pāli inscriptions reveal a strong Theravādin presence, other inscriptions and records make it clear that religious society was pluralistic. Other Śrāvaka schools were certainly active, along with practitioners of Mahāyāna and Tantra. Thus we find images of Avalokiteśvara in both Śrīkṣetra and Dvāravatī. Mahāyānist and Tantric iconography had an independent development in Khmer culture (as also in insular South-East Asia), which produced numerous images of Bhaiṣajyaguru, Avalokiteśvara, Prajñāpāramitā, and Hevajra.<sup>29</sup> Brahmanism flourished throughout the region, and was often dominant in the courts, especially in Cambodia. Numerous *liṅgas* of all sizes attest to the cult of Śiva not only in Cambodia and Champa, but also at many central and eastern Siamese sites. Images of deities like Sūrya and Viṣṇu were set up at sites that circle the Gulf of Siam. These images are also distinctive, the products of confident and mature craft and iconographic traditions. The production of 'brahmanical' images continued in the states of Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Bangkok, where the appropriate cults were (and still are) carried out by court brahmins.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Although the transmission of Tantra in South-East Asia, in Siam, Champa, the Malay peninsula, Cambodia, and well as in Insulinde, is well-attested, the recent anthology *Tantra in Practice* contains only a few passing references to South-East Asia, for example, 'Cambodian inscriptions indicate the presence of Hindu tāntrikas ... there in the medieval period': David Gordon White (ed.), *Tantra in Practice* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000, Princeton Readings in Religions), p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> Brahmins are active today in the courts of Bangkok and Phnom Penh, and brahman families, dwindling in number and influence, live in Phattalung and Nakhon Si Thammarat in southern Thailand.

The production of images and the construction of shrines and assembly halls all attest to a developed technology.<sup>31</sup> The study of technology in South-East Asia takes us back to the pre- and proto-historic periods, during which the exploitation of natural resources, the casting of metal, and the fabrication of tools, pottery, and ornaments reached a high level of competence, as seen, for example in the artefacts from the 'Ban Chiang' culture. The Dvāravatī period saw the further development of irrigation, agriculture, trade, and architecture. From then on material culture maintained the highest quality: the stucco work of Dvāravatī and the bronze casting of Sukhothai, Lanna, and Ayutthaya are second to none. Complex calendrical systems were developed, as seen in the datings given in chronicles and inscriptions.<sup>32</sup>

## Ritual

Images require rituals, as does the monastic life, and South-East Asia is alive with ritual: the consecration of Buddha images, the burying of large stone balls known as *luk nimit* to demarcate and validate a monastic boundary (*sīmā*), the raising of the *cho fa* or finial of an assembly hall. One of the chants used in long-life rituals, from Chiang Mai to Phnom Penh, is a Pāli verse version of the *Uṇhissavijaya*. At the traditional new year sand *cetiyas* are built and decorated with paper banners and umbrellas. The transmission of ritual was very much oral and communal. Even today in Cambodia the consecration of a Buddha image involves the whole village, and the ceremony lasts throughout the night.

Chronicles, inscriptions, and present practice attest to the performance (mainly, but not exclusively, by monks) of rituals for the benefit of the state accompanied by the recitation of Pāli texts, from the *Maṅgala-sutta* to the *Buddhavaṃsa* to the *Mahādibbamanta* (a collection both in Pāli, Thai, and combinations of the two).<sup>33</sup> Can the Buddhism of South-East Asia be described as a type of 'state-

<sup>31</sup> An interesting question that merits investigation is the origin and evolution of the practice of gilding manuscripts and images, since it involves natural resources, trade, and technology.

<sup>32</sup> It is perhaps symptomatic that the descriptions of both the 'Buddhist' and Dai calendars in Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Unoperversity Asia Center, 1998), p. 194) are inaccurate.

<sup>33</sup> See n. 19.

protection Buddhism'? This is but one of the aspects of ritual that merits serious investigation.

#### IV

So far I have given a survey, a general inventory, of some of the materials available for the study of Buddhism in South-East Asia. This is only a sampling, and we urgently need something much better: a comprehensive and up-to-date review in English, a handbook or even an encyclopædia, that will put the information before an international audience. This will be a step towards bringing South-East Asia into the mainstream of Buddhist studies.

Another step that must be taken is to liberate South-East Asia from the 'Theravādin box' – in fact to liberate Buddhist studies from the *inappropriate* imposition of terms like 'Theravādin', 'Hīnayāna', 'Mahāyāna', 'Vajrayāna'. There is no denying that Buddhism evolved in relation to the *nikāyas* and *yānas*, but this must not obscure the fact that *nikāyas* and *yānas* are peripheral or even irrelevant to many aspects of this evolution. That is, the *nikāya* and *yāna* brushes should be used sparingly, only when appropriate: in relation to monasticism, interest groups and patronage, or philosophy and tenets.<sup>34</sup>

An alternative to studying international Buddhism by *nikāya* and *yāna* is to examine broader themes, or what I call 'mainstream practices': shared elements (practices, developments, mechanisms, ideologies) within Buddhism as an organism (not monolith). Homage to the Three Gems is a mainstream practice. Practice of *dāna*, *śīla*, *bhāvanā*, of *śīla*, *samādhi*, and *prajñā* – however they may be defined – are mainstream practices. Aspiration (*praṇidhāna*, *praṇidhi*, *patthāna*), whether individual or group, whether recited or inscribed, is a mainstream practice. Worship of relics and erection of *caityas* are mainstream practices (rejected or at least contested by some dissidents at an early date, with little evident success). The production and worship of images is a mainstream practice. The construction of buildings, mainly but not exclusively monastic (residences, libraries, assembly-halls, worship halls), is a mainstream

<sup>34</sup> One author who carefully defines his field of investigation as a set of ideas within Theravāda and then remains within it is Steven Collins, in his *Nirvana and other Buddhist Felicities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

practice. The (largely) monastic study of grammar and writing skills is a mainstream practice. The quest for *punya*, the mobilization of the faithful through the promise of rewards or blessings (*ānuśamsā*, *ānisaṃsā*), and the offering of protection (*raṅṣā*) are mainstream mechanisms or ideologies.<sup>35</sup>

We need to recognize that Buddhism in South-East Asia was produced by people, individuals and societies, who made choices, who made decisions, and shaped their own societies. Buddhism did not float in on a merchant ship as part of a cargo of 'Indian influence'. As pointed out by Prapod, Buddhism did not reach South-East Asia at one single place or one single time, or enjoy a straightforward linear development as a transplanted branch of Sri Lankan Theravāda.<sup>36</sup> Rather, Buddhism is a complex of interest groups, always fluid, constantly interacting with the natural, social, and economic environment.

What are these interest groups? One of the most important is the laity: women and men eager for merit, eager for blessings and protection, eager for education, guidance, and instruction to help them negotiate the present life with a view to the next, eager for success, eager for status amongst their peers. Monastic interest groups are a constant but diverse factor: with some monastics devoted to the spiritual life, some to education, liturgy, ritual, careers, some living apart in the forest, some jockeying for power and patronage. Other groups to consider are crafts-people, merchants, members of the court, local and regional power elites, in search of blessings and benefit, of solutions to their problems or to the human condition.

Our aim, then, should be to learn more about these groups and their practices, through study of the records they or others have left. Topics to explore include education and the media of instruction and propagation of Buddhist practices and ideals, which lead us to the investigation of orality/aurality, of narration and performance, of relations between text and manuscripts. Inscriptions, colophons, and other records encode economic information, but we have not yet found our Gernet. The study of South-East Asia's literary heritage, whether in Pāli and or in the vernaculars, can amplify

<sup>35</sup> Not a few of these ideologies are shared, or at least have structural counterparts, in other Indian religions, and indeed in religions in general.

<sup>36</sup> See Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, *The Ascendancy of Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia*, PhD Thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 1990.

our understanding of the definition of *Buddhavacana* and *Tipiṭaka*, of standards of authenticity and validity. The 'lives' of images and relics, their legends and 'miracle tales' and the practices associated with them should be compared with the culture of images in Khotan, Tibet, China, and Japan.

Many more questions can be asked. Our knowledge is always incomplete, our conclusions are always in need of reformulation, our methodology is always in need of revision. I hope in this essay to have pointed out some of the gaps in the study of Buddhism, to have given at least a hint of the rich resources available for the study of South-East Asian Buddhism, and to have made some suggestions about how to look at not only South-East Asian Buddhism but Buddhism in general.



## Some literary references in ‘La Grande Inscription d’Angkor’ (IMA 38)

THE LONGEST OF THE GROUP OF INSCRIPTIONS KNOWN TO scholars as ‘Inscriptions modernes d’Angkor’ has been dubbed ‘la Grande Inscription d’Angkor Vat’, and assigned the number IMA 38. Dating to Mahāsakkarāj 1623 (CE 1701), it is an extraordinary document. It has been translated and edited several times.<sup>1</sup> Fifty-three lines long and composed in 152 verses using three different metres, it is indeed a poem, a very human document, rich in metaphor

<sup>1</sup> I have consulted the following:

A. Bastian, ‘Translation of an Inscription copied in the temple of Nakhon Vat or the City of Monasteries, near the capital of ancient Kambodia’, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XXXVI, Part I, nos. I to III (1867: published Calcutta, 1868), pp. 76–83.

Étienne Aymonier, ‘Les inscriptions modernes d’Angkor Vat, Preah Peân Bakkan et la Grande Inscription’, extrait du *Journal Asiatique* (Paris: 1900), pp. 52–70.

Mahā Bidūr Krassem, *Silacārik nagar vatt/Inscriptions modernes d’Angkor* (originally published Phnom Penh, 1938; repr. with a new preface by Saveros Pou, Paris: Centre de Documentation et de Recherche sur la Civilisation Khmère, 1984).

Saveros Pou, ‘Inscriptions modernes d’Angkor 34 et 38’, *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* LVII (1985), pp. 283–353.

and literary allusion. The author – ‘grand dignitaire du rang de *uk nā* jouissant de la faveur royale, et *upāsak* remarquablement pieux’ –<sup>2</sup> is also responsible for an earlier inscription, dated Mahāsakkarāj 1618 (CE 1696).<sup>3</sup>

The first section of IMA 38 (vv. 1–45) is in the Brahmagīti metre, as announced in verse 3. The author pays homage to the Buddha and other deities, and requests a panoply of blessings. He identifies himself as one Jaiya Nan gives a brief account of his career – his rise in the court from Senāpati to Yamarāj (vv. 23–26). He describes his meritorious deeds (vv. 32–44), and deeply laments the recent loss of his wife (for whom he built a *caitya*) and the earlier loss of his children (for which see IMA 34). The second part (vv. 46–104), in the Bhujaṅgalilā metre, as announced in verse 46, lists the negative conditions the author wishes to avoid. The third part (vv. 105–152) is in Kākagati metre, as stated in verse 105. The second and third parts are an effusion of aspiration directed towards future lives, a verse inventory of the dangers and ills that the author wants to avoid and the felicities that he wants to obtain, with the ultimate aim of meeting Maitreya and receiving from him the prediction of his own future Buddhahood.

Some of the literary references in IMA 38 are to well-known texts or traditions: to Nāgasena and King Milinda of the *Milindapañha* (v. 116), to figures from the *Jātakas* of the ‘Great Chapter’ (*Mahānipāta*) or ‘Ten *Jātakas*’ (*Dasajāti*) such as Temiya (v. 124), Mahosadha (v. 125), and Vessantara with Maddī, Jālī, and Kaṇhā (vv. 126–127).<sup>4</sup> There are references to Rāma (Rāmadeba, vv. 133, 137), to Śrīvikrama (v. 134), to Hanumān (v. 137), and to Phra Ketumālā, son of Indra, legendary founder of Angkor Wat (vv. 138–139).

In this paper I will deal briefly with three references, the first to the *Lokaneyya-ppakarana*, the second to the story of Nān Bhogavatī, and the third to Jotika-seṭṭhī.

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Uraisi Warasarin, *Charuk nakhon wat samai lang phra nakhon kh.s. 1566–kh.s. 1747* (Bangkok: 2542 [1999]), romanized text pp. 117–138, Thai translation pp. 170–180.

<sup>2</sup> Pou, ‘Inscriptions modernes d’Angkor 34 et 38’, p. 283

<sup>3</sup> This is IMA 34. It seems impossible to determine whether or not Jaiya Nan composed the inscriptions himself or had them composed by another, perhaps a court poet. Given the unique and personal style of the texts, it seems sufficient to treat Jaiya Nan as the author, whether direct or indirect.

<sup>4</sup> The inscription gives Khmer spellings of such names, throughout. I give standardized Pāli or Sanskrit spellings.

1. A sequence of events from the *Lokaneyya-ppakaraṇa*<sup>5</sup>

- |      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
| 120. | <i>(37) mūy sūm prāthnā<br/>thmeñjai parass<br/>nandīyakkh nirabhyas<br/>toy pārmmī thlai</i> | <i>tūc braḥ kāl jā<br/>chloey prisnā phoi<br/>prajñā srec srass</i>   |
| 121. | <i>hey biy noḥ sraec<br/>rvouc jā prabai<br/>saṃṇaks nū jrai<br/>kruoñ krā[p] khlāp khlāc</i> | <i>kār āyūss staec<br/>nām nundiyāgg<br/>jā paribār naiy</i>          |
| 122. | <i>(38) rīeñ mok bī noḥ<br/>abhaṃṇgirāj<br/>jhmoh virojarāj<br/>hov mnāj yaksā</i>            | <i>cāp staec mūy jhmoh<br/>hey jhnaḥ staec mūy<br/>braḥ nik eñ āc</i> |
| 123. | <i>naeḥ sraty kāt<br/>bi toem mak n"ā<br/>croen hnāss sabv grā<br/>ūpparāj (39) eñ e</i>      | <i>bvuṃ pān riep rāp<br/>poe srati iss<br/>paihey pān jā</i>          |
120. May I make this wish: to have decisive wisdom as a precious  
*pāramī*  
 As did the Lord [*braḥ*, the Bodhisatta] when as the man  
 Dhanañjaya He fully solved the riddle of Nandīyakkha  
 without fear.
121. When this was accomplished, the King's life was saved  
 And he escaped to flourish. [Dhanañjaya] led Nandīyakkha,  
 Who dwelt under the fig tree, to join the [royal] retinue,  
 And [the latter] bowed down deeply in awe.
122. After that, [Dhanañjaya] captured a king named Abhaṅgī  
 And then defeated a king named Virocanarāja, confident  
 that he was able  
 To call the mighty Yakṣa [Nandīyakkha] [to assist him].

<sup>5</sup> The text is from Uraisi, *Charuk nakhon wat*. Figures in parentheses refer to line numbers of the inscription. I am grateful to Santi Pakdeekham for help with the translation. The text poses many problems and a new reading is a desideratum.

123. This is an abbreviated account, it cannot be an orderly  
narration  
From the beginning on: if recounted in full it is extremely  
long, every time.  
In the end [Dhanañjaya] became Uparāja.

The references are to a sequence of events in the *Dhanañjayapaṇḍita-jātaka* or *Lokaneyya-ppakaraṇa*, a fascinating South-East Asian Pāli text that has been edited in Pāli by Jaini and published in a Thai version by Niyada,<sup>6</sup> but otherwise has not received the attention it deserves.<sup>7</sup> In this apocryphal *jātaka*, which is 202 pages long in Jaini's edition and is richly ornamented with gnomic verses drawn from both Pāli and Sanskrit *nīti* traditions, the Bodhisatta is reborn as Dhanañjaya. Through various vicissitudes he displays moral rectitude, intelligence, and resourcefulness.

'Solving the riddles of Nandiyakkha' refers to the events related in Chapter 2 of the Pāli: only the seven-year-old Dhanañjaya is able to solve a riddle put to the king of Korabya by Nandiyakkha at the foot of the fig tree (*nigrodha* = Khmer *jrai*, Thai *sai*) where he dwells.<sup>8</sup> If the riddle were not answered, the king would have forfeited his life. Nandiyakkha receives the five precepts from Dhanañjaya under the fig tree, and follows him back to the city, where Dhanañjaya establishes him in a great *sālā* tree. The victory over Abhañgirāja is related in Chapters 29 and 31 to 32 of the Pāli, while the defeat of Virojarāja – with the aid of Nandiyakkha – occurs in Chapters 33 to 35.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Padmanabh S. Jaini (ed.), *Lokaneyyappakaraṇam* (London: The Pali Text Society, 1986, Pali Text Society Text Series No. 175); Niyada Lausoonthorn, *Thananchaibanditchadok: phap sathon phumpanya khong chau ayutthaya* (Bangkok: 2542 [1999]) (see review by Peter Skilling, *Aséanie* 4 [Dec. 1999], pp. 206–208).

<sup>7</sup> Aymonier ('Les inscriptions modernes', p. 65, n. 2) noted that the reference is to 'un Jātaka qui est évidemment traduit en langue cambodgienne', and that Thmeñjai 'paraît être la corruption du sanscrit Dhanañjaya'. But he confused Dhanañjaya with a roguish character of similar name, popular in both Cambodia and Siam, in the latter country known as Si Thanonchai (for whom see Kanyarat Vechasat, *Srithanonchai nai usakhaney/Srithanonchai in Southeast Asia*, Bangkok, 2541 [1998]). The confusion carries over into Pou, 'Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 34 et 38', p. 322, n. (88).

<sup>8</sup> The Thai version presented by Niyada does not have chapter divisions. The corresponding narrative starts on p. 114.

<sup>9</sup> Niyada pp. 377 foll. and 436 foll., respectively.

The Pāli and Thai versions give the name of the king as Virodharāja, but given the sequence of events and the fact that *j* and *dh* can be easily confused in the Khmer/Khom script, there is no doubt that the two are the same. At one point in the story the Bodhisatta is appointed Uparāja or viceroy, as mentioned in verse 123.

The sequence of events in Jaiya Nan's verses agrees perfectly with the Pāli and Thai versions of the *Lokaneyya-ppakaraṇa*. We do not, however, know what source Jaiya Nan used or what versions, written or oral, were available to him. Today the *Lokaneyya-ppakaraṇa* is known in Cambodia in both Pāli and Khmer versions, as may be seen from the titles listed by Jacob under *Dhमेñ Jāy* and *Lokanay*.<sup>10</sup> At the end of the eighteenth century, in 1794, a verse version was composed by Nong (Ukñā Brah Ghlaṃṇ Nañ, also known by several other titles including Ukñā Vañs Sārabejñ Nañ), an outstanding poet and scholar of Khmer, Thai, and Pāli.<sup>11</sup> Nong was an important intellectual during three reigns, and was responsible for the education of several princes; it is interesting that he chose to render this particular work into verse.<sup>12</sup>

The *Lokaneyya-ppakaraṇa* is well represented in Thai manuscript collections, both in Pāli and in Thai. There do not seem to be any literary or poetic versions, and I do not know of any inscriptional references. There is also a Thai Khün version.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. The story of Nāñ Bhogavati

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 132. khñuṃ sūm mān mnāj<br>anubhābh toy cañ | rddhi aṃmnā(43)j<br>khñuṃ sūm soel jup |
|---|--|

<sup>10</sup> Judith M. Jacob, *The Traditional Literature of Cambodia: A Preliminary Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, London Oriental Series Volume 40) pp. 105, 112–113. It seems as if all the *Lokanaya*-° titles on pp. 112–113 refer to the same work, that by Nong. See also PLCS 2.192 and IPMC 1 pp. 344–345.

<sup>11</sup> Jacob, *Traditional Literature of Cambodia*, pp. 78–79. Nañ's date of birth does not seem to be known. Jacob gives 1858 for his death, but in the same paragraph states that he was sent to Bangkok in 1860. See also, in Thai, Santi Pakdeekham, *Kawi si kamphuchathet: khwam riang wa duay prawat kawi khmen* (Bangkok: 2543 [2000]), pp. 49–61.

<sup>12</sup> With the caveat that more than one person may have borne the title, as proposed by Michael Vickery, 'Qui était Nañ/Nong, savant(s) cambodgien(s) des XVIII<sup>e</sup>/XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles?', *Asie du Sud-est et Monde Insulinde* 13.1–4 (1982), pp. 81–87 (not seen).

<sup>13</sup> Jaini, *Lokaneyya-ppakaraṇam*, p. xi, n. 2.

*chut tūj brah aṅg  
jup nān bhagavatiy*

*brah isūr staec drañ*

May I have power, magical potency, might, and authority as I wish.  
May I have the ability to create, as effectively as the Holy One, the  
Holy Īśvara, [when] he created Lady Bhagavatī.

The reference here is to the story of Nān Bhogavatī. Īśvara wants a beautiful woman, intending to use her skin to create the earth. Nārāyaṇa tells him not to worry, slaps his thigh, and a gloriously beautiful maiden appears, Lady (nān) Bhogavatī by name. Seven days later, with great faith and delight, with the wish to perform charity (*dāna*) and fulfill the perfections (*pāramī*), she offers her entire body, flesh, and blood. Īśvara accepts her offer with pleasure, and as a result the earth, plants, and all creatures come into being, all through the *dāna* of Nān Bhogavatī. Her skin becomes the surface of the earth, her bones become the mountains, her blood becomes the waters of the oceans and rivers, and so on.

The story of Nān Bhogavatī is widespread in the south of Thailand, that is to say the central Malay peninsula, both in manuscripts and in ritual texts. *Wannakam thong thin phak tai* lists the following five manuscripts; all are white accordion books (*but khao*) with the text in *kap* verse, inscribed in Thai letters:<sup>14</sup>

*Nān bogahvāḥ*, from Kanchanadit, Surat Thani province

*Nān bogahvāḥti*, from Ko Samui, Surat Thani province

*Nān bhogavatī*, from Songkhla province

*Nān bhogavatī*, from Songkhla province

*Nān Bhogahvāḥti*, source unknown.

Chaiwut Phiyakun has published a further manuscript from Patthalung province.<sup>15</sup> He gives a brief introduction, a modern Thai rendition, a transcription of the original, and a glossary. This recension, written

<sup>14</sup> Sathaban rachapat phak tai, *Wannakam thong thin phak tai: sathanaphab kan suksa lae laeng sup khon* (Nakhon Si Thammarat: September 2540 [1997]), pp. 230–231.

<sup>15</sup> Chaiwut Phiyakun, *Kan pariwat wannakam thong thin phak tai praphet nangsu but ruang nang phokhawadi chabap tambon na tom, amphoe muang phattalung, changwatphattalung* ([Songkhla]: Sathaban Taksinkhadisuksa Mahawithayalai Thaksin, 2542 [1999]) (82 pp.).

in black ink in a white accordion book, was copied down by Mr. Khlai Nuanchim at the age of eighty-one, from Thursday, the eighth day of the bright half of the ninth month to Thursday of the tenth month, dragon year, BE 2504 [CE 1961].<sup>16</sup> The text is composed in verse, in the metres *kap surankhanang* 28 and *kap chabang* 16.

The 'Khlai Nuanchim' text falls naturally into two main parts, followed by several short passages. The first part, described in brief above, tells the story of Nān Bhogavatī and the creation of the world. It is interspersed with Buddhist references, for example to the 'Seven Books of the Abhidhamma' (*Phra aphitham chet khamphi*) and to the five Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa. Indeed, Nān Bhogavatī's sacrifice is couched in Buddhist terms: it is a requisite (*sambhāra*), a perfection (*pārami*), a gift (*dāna*). At the end of this section there is a simple line-drawn cross-section of the universe.

The next section is a new text, opening with an exhortation to listen and words of homage to the Buddha (*Somdet phra chao*). It makes no mention of our noble goddess, but rather describes the universe, from the levels of fire, air, and water with their measurements in *yojana*, to the seven great fish (I cannot find the fourth, however, unless Ubpānnardo [sic] is to be counted as two), the Nāga Kings, Phraya Yama and the four Lokapāla. Narrative elements are woven into the cosmology: accounts of the floating of the golden tray after Sujātā's offering of *madhupāyāsa*, and of how the Lokapāla keep records of good and bad deeds. Here and there the text will assert that this or that statement is drawn from or according to 'the Pāli'.

After this come three short ritual texts: 'Ritual verses [for recitation when] floating [offerings] in a *kratong* [banana-leaf boat] in a canal or river' (*khatha loi thong nai khlong mae nam*), ritual verses for the harvest (*ruab khao*), and ritual verses for calling the female spirit of the rice plants (*tham khwan khao*).

Thus the manuscript contains five independent texts. Whether or not these texts are normally associated in manuscript traditions can only be determined when other manuscripts have been made available and studied. At any rate, because Nān Bhogavatī sacrificed herself to create the world, she is invoked in rituals related to the earth. The 'Encyclopædia of Thai Culture, Southern Region' cites verses paying homage to the earth deity (*wai phra phum*) or Nān Bhogavatī

<sup>16</sup> As noted by the editor (p. 3), the year is incorrect, and should be 2508 [1965].

obtained from Mr. Phet Kankaew of Tambon Khlong Chanak, Muang district, Surat Thani province and a *pleng bok* of Mr. Noi Fongmani of Tambon Laem, Hua Sai district, Nakhon Si Thammarat province. Lady Bhogavatī also receives homage in *tham khwan khao* ceremonies. When performers set up a stage for a shadow play or Manora dance, they must first pay homage to Nān Bhogavatī.<sup>17</sup> In addition, the goddess is invoked in trance-healing ceremonies known as *to khreum*.<sup>18</sup>

Bhogavatī's presence in southern Thailand is thus not negligible. According to the information collected here – which can only be preliminary – she is known in ritual or manuscript in Songkhla, Patthalung, Nakhon Si Thammarat, and Surat Thani provinces. There is evidence for Lady Bhogavatī in other parts of Thailand; we know too little about ritual or about old narrative traditions, and further traces of may be found.<sup>19</sup> A recent thesis (Rawipim 2544) presents a manuscript from Trat province in the East, and Trisin (2547) has studied several central Thai manuscripts. So far I have not been able to locate the story of Nang Bhogavatī in Khmer manuscript collections or ritual tradition, but here again, how much do we really know?

What is the origin of the story? There can be little doubt that the original name of the goddess is Bhagavatī. Should we seek her origins in India, perhaps in local legends, perhaps in the South, rather than in the classical traditions of the North? Or should we allow that legends can originate and develop outside of India, and propose a Thai pedigree? Or could the goddess be Khmer? The only hint for this lies in her name. The Khmer pronunciation of Bhagavatī is Bhokhawadei, which might explain the Thai form Bhogavatī (pronounced Phokhawadee).

The second part of the 'Khlay Nuanchim' manuscript assures the reader (rather, listeners) that the text has been translated into Thai from the 'Pāli of Burma' and, as noted above, refers several times to 'Pāli' sources. A very cursory enquiry has not uncovered

<sup>17</sup> Udom Nuthong, in *Saranukrom watthanatham thai phak tai*, Vol. 12 (Bangkok: 5 December, 2542 [1999]), pp. 5847–5848.

<sup>18</sup> Phinyo Chittham and Sutthiwong Phongpaibun, in *Saranukrom watthanatham thai phak tai*, Vol. 6 (Bangkok: 5 December, 2542 [1999]), pp. 2828–2842.

<sup>19</sup> In the original version of this article, published in 2001, I stated that 'In contrast the story does not seem to be known, and Nān Bhogavatī does not seem to have any ritual role, in other parts of Thailand. But since we know so little about ritual or about old narrative traditions, it is quite possible that evidence to the contrary may be brought forth.'



any references to the Bhogavatī story in Burma but, once again, we know very little about such traditions, and the story might be Mon (which might explain the pronunciation). But I do not believe this to be relevant to Bhogavatī, since the second part is an independent text. The cosmology of this text could perhaps be traced to a Burmese tradition, but on the whole it seems to be a recitative presentation of cosmological materials shared by Theravādin tradition in general. When the author refers his ideas to the 'Pāli' this does not mean that he has translated his text from a Pāli original. Here 'Pāli' does not mean 'canon' or 'language': rather, it reaches beyond these meanings to signify 'authoritative' or 'traditional' text, or even authoritative and traditional lore. Cosmology pervades the Buddhist literature of Siam, not only in the 'Traibhūmi genre' – which is well-represented in Southern manuscripts<sup>20</sup> – but also in chronicles (*tamnan*) and legends. It is also the very basis of everyday ideology and the psychology of daily practice.

### 3. Jotika-seṭṭhī

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>141. <i>khñuṃ sūm drābv dhan</i><br/> <i>kaew mni jot jrah</i><br/> <i>caem braṃh beñ phdaḥ</i><br/> <i>tūc jotikasesṭhi.</i></p> | <p><i>mās prāk ratn tan</i><br/> <i>khien brae kāsa</i><br/> <i>būk phtān manah</i></p> |
|--|---|

May I have property and wealth, gold, silver, and valuable  
 gems;  
 Luminous, pure jewels, along with silken cloths and  
 weaves,  
 Carpets, filling the house, soft beddings, magnificent  
 canopies, like Jotika Seṭṭhī.<sup>21</sup>

Jotika Seṭṭhī was a gentleman of fabulous wealth in the time of the Buddha; he lived in Rājagaha and was associated with King Bimbisāra.

<sup>20</sup> See Sathaban rachapat phak tai, *Wannakam thong thin phak tai*, pp. 218–219.

<sup>21</sup> Like Pou ('Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 34 et 38', p. 323, n. 115), I am unable to understand *manah*, which Uraisi interprets as from Sanskrit *manas* but omits in her translation: see Uraisi Warasarin, *Phochananukrom sap charuk nakhon wat samai lang phra nakhon* (Bangkok, 2542 [1999], p. 152). Olivier de Bernon (personal communication, October 2001) states that '*manah* n'est sans doute qu'un mot euphonique sans signification précise', and derives it not from Sanskrit but from *m + nah* = *m + nass*.

He was a devotee of the Buddha and eventually abandoned the world and became an arhat. He is not mentioned in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka*; his story is handed down in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*.<sup>22</sup> The *Traiphum phra ruang* devotes a long passage to Jotika,<sup>23</sup> whose name became the epitome of wealth and opulence. The aspiration to be as rich as Jotika is expressed in another 'Inscription moderne d'Angkor', dated Mahāsakkarāj 1669 (CE 1747).<sup>24</sup> An inscription from Kyaikmaraw, eleven miles south-east of Moulmein in modern Burma, records a dedication by the ruling queen of Pegu, Bañā Thau in CE 1455. At the end the donor expresses the wish that those who uphold the dedication, whether men or women, should know great bliss in the physical worlds and beyond. 'In the physical worlds, may they be born as the four rich men Jotika, Meṇḍaka, Dhanañjaya, and Puṇṇa.'<sup>25</sup> In Ayutthaya the trope was carried into administrative ranks, in the form of the title Luang Choteuk Ratchesetthi, head of the left harbour department (*krom ta sai*), with a *sakdina* (court rank) of 1400.<sup>26</sup> The position was responsible for trade with the Far East from the Ayutthaya to the Bangkok periods, up to the nineteenth century.

The wish to be reborn with qualities personified by the great listeners (*sāvaka*, *sāvika*) of the Buddha or other literary figures is common. At the end of a Thai-language *Anāgatavaṃsa* the wish is expressed to have the intelligence of Nāgasena and the ability

<sup>22</sup> PTS IV 199–221. See G.P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1983 [1937]), Vol. I, pp. 968–970.

<sup>23</sup> *Phochananukrom sap wannakhadi thai samai sukhothai traiphumikatha, chabap ratchabanditayasathan* (Bangkok: 2544 [2001]), pp. 142–153, with appendix on Jotika, pp. 677–678; Frank E. Reynolds and Mani B. Reynolds (tr.), *Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Thai Buddhist Cosmology* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1982, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series Volume IV), pp. 189–200.

<sup>24</sup> IMA 39; see Aymonier, p. 34; Mahā Bidūr Krassem, *Silacārik*, p. 117 (line 75); Uraisi Warasarin, *Charuk nakhon wat*, text p. 144, Thai translation p. 182.

<sup>25</sup> H.L. Shorto, 'The Kyaikmaraw Inscriptions', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* XXI, part 2, (1958), pp. 361–367. The other three were also rich merchants (*setṭhī*, *Mon saṭhī*) of Rājagaha.

<sup>26</sup> See e.g. Robert Lingat (ed.), *Pramuankotmai ratchakan thi 1 chulasakarat 1166 phim tam chabap luang tra 3 duang*, Vol. 1 (repr. Bangkok: Ongkankha khong Khuru Sapha, 2537 [1994]), p. 234, and Bampen Rawin (ed.), *Phra Anakhatawong* (Bangkok: Amarin Press, 2542 [1999], *Prachum phongsawadan chabap rat*) p. 87.

to practice charity like Vessantara. Other examples occur in the colophons of Burmese manuscripts, expressed in Pāli verse.<sup>27</sup>

Aspiration (*patthanā*, *paṇidhāna*, *paṇidhi*) is a vital feature of everyday Buddhist psychology. On the evidence of literature and early Indian inscriptions this has always been the case. In Mahāyāna ritual and rhetoric it is absolutely central, for example in the form of the famous *Bhadracāripraṇidhāna*. Yet the concept seems to receive little if any mention in Buddhist studies. A study of the historical and social function of aspiration, in conjunction with another essential but generally ignored concept, from which it is inseparable, that of *ānisaṁsa* or reward, is certainly a desideratum.

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<sup>27</sup> *Burmese Manuscripts* Part 2, compiled by Heinz Braun and Daw Tin Tin Myint with an introduction by Heinz Bechert (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1985, VOHD Band XXIII), Cat. no. 359, p. 193, colophon to *Madhurasavāhinīvatthu* dated Sakkarāj 1230 (CE 1869); *Burmese Manuscripts* Part 3, *Catalogue Numbers* 432–735, compiled by Heinz Braun assisted by Anne Peters, edited by Heinz Bechert (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996, VOHD Band XXIII, 3), Cat. no. 432, pp. 3–4, colophon to *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā nissaya* dated to Sakkarāj 1150 CE 1789); *Burmese Manuscripts* Part 4, *Catalogue Numbers* 736–900, compiled by Anne Peters, edited by Heinz Bechert (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000, VOHD Band XXIII, 4), colophon to *Bhikkhunipātimokkha*, Cat. no. 755, p. 24, dated Sakkarāj 1186 (CE 1824).

## Ārāḍhanā Tham: ‘Invitation to teach the Dhamma’

### I

IN SIAM TODAY, BEFORE A MONK PREACHES THE DHAMMA, A LAY follower recites a verse inviting him to do so. The verse and the ritual act are called *ārāḍhanā tham*: ‘invitation [to teach] the Dhamma’.<sup>1</sup> In *Suat mon plae chabap ho phra samut wachirayan*, a collection of Pāli chants with Thai translations dating to the first or second reign of the Ratanakosin Era (that is, the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century) which was published in book form in RE 128 (CE 1910), it appears as follows:<sup>2</sup>

*brahmā ca lokādhipatī sahampati katañjali adhivaraṃ ayācatha  
santīdha sattā apparajakkhajātikā desetu dhammaṃ anukamp’ imaṃ  
pajaṃ.*

<sup>1</sup> This practice does not seem to be followed in Sri Lanka or Burma.

<sup>2</sup> *Suat mon plae chabap ho phra samut wachirayan*, reprinted for the royally sponsored cremation of Phra Mahārajamaṅgalatilaka (Bunruan Puṇṇako) and Phra Debavisuddhiṇāṇa (Ubon Nandako) at Wat Thepsirin (Debaśirindrāvāsa), 25 December 2542 [CE 1999], pp. 336–337.

Brahmā Sahampati, Lord of the Universe  
 Palms pressed in homage, beseeched the pre-eminent one:  
 'Here there are beings with little dust in their eyes:  
 May the Dhamma be taught: take pity on these beings.'

The classical source of the verse is the *Buddhavaṃsa*, where it is the first stanza.<sup>3</sup> The *Buddhavaṃsa* version differs in two places: in line *b* it has *anadhivaraṃ* in place of *adhivaraṃ*, and in line *d* it has *desehi* in place of *desetu*.<sup>4</sup> Both versions of the verse are unmetrical: line *b*, with twelve syllables in *Suat mon plae* and thirteen in *Buddhavaṃsa* and line *c* with thirteen syllables. Line *c* can easily be improved by eliding the final long 'a' in *sattā* and the following initial 'a' in *appa-*° to make *sant' idha sattā 'pparajakkhajātikā*. This gives us three *Indravamśa* lines (*a*, *c*, *d*).

The variant form of the verb in line *d* – *desehi/desetu* – need not detain us, since it does not affect the metre. It is the variant in line *b* that poses a problem. Which is more appropriate, *adhi-vara*, 'pre-eminent' or *an-adhi-vara*, 'unexcelled', 'without superior'?

Either form is possible semantically. One might argue that *anadhivara* is excessive, but our literature delights in superlatives, especially as epithets for the Exalted One, the one beyond epithets. Neither *adhi-vara* or its negative *an-adhi-vara* seem to be attested in classical or Buddhist Sanskrit (the latter in the sense of the various Sanskrit[s] used by Buddhists, rather than the Middle Indic dialect alone), so no help is forthcoming from these sources. (*An*)*adhivara* may be unique to Pāli, but given the fact that so many Buddhist Sanskrit works remain unindexed, and the possibility that Jaina or other Prakrits may have the word, this remains to be proven.

<sup>3</sup> I am grateful to Lance Cousins for identifying the canonical model of the *brahmā ca lokāḍhipati* verse, to Steven Collins for identifying the problem, and to Prapod Assavavirulhakarn for pointing to the solution.

The editions consulted do not show any significant variants: Pali Text Society (London: 1974) p. 1.4; *Syāmaratṭhassa Tepitakam* (Bangkok: 2523 [1980]) Vol. 33, p. 403.5; *Mahācūḷātepiṭakam* (Bangkok: 2500 [1957]) Vol. 33, p. 435; *Dhammagiri-Pāli-Ganthamālā* Vol. 58 (Igatpuri: 1998), p. 287. The verse also occurs in the *Brahmajjhāsanaparivatta* of the *Paṭhamasambodhi*, with *anadhivaraṃ* and *desetu*: this may be a more immediate source.

<sup>4</sup> *Syāmaratṭhassa Tepitakam*, loc. cit. The PTS edition has long 'i' in *sahampati*. For a commentary on the words of the verse see *Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā* (*Madhurattavilāsinī*) (PTS 11.2–13.27).

In classical Pāli texts *adhivara* seems to occur only with the negative prefix: that is, *adhivara* alone may be a ghost word.<sup>5</sup> The negative *anadhivara* occurs only a few times, in works belonging to the *Khuddaka-nikāya*. In verse nine of *Buddhavaṃsa* it is an epithet of Gotama: *satt'uttamo anadhivaro vināyako*.<sup>6</sup> The commentary on the first stanza of *Buddhavaṃsa* explains: *adhivaro n'assa atthi ti anadhivaro*.<sup>7</sup> In the *Kalingabodhi-jātaka*, it is an epithet of all Buddhas:

*idha anadhivarā buddhā abhisambuddhā virocanti.*

(*Idha* refers to the Bodhimaṇḍa, the site of the 'seat of victory', where all Buddhas awaken).<sup>8</sup> In *Vimānavatthu* the word is used seven times in the *Sirimāvimāna* (16: 2d, 3d, 4c, 8b, 9b, 11b, 12a).<sup>9</sup> In all cases but one it is an epithet of the Tathāgata.<sup>10</sup> The exception is verse 4c, where *anadhivarā* describes the *iddhi* of *Sirimā*.<sup>11</sup>

But the question of which term is appropriate is beside the point, because *adhivara* is attested only in *Suat mon plae*. Since *Suat mon plae* itself states that the verse is in *indravaṃsa*, it is easy to conclude that the prefix was dropped in an (unsuccessful) attempt to solve the metrical problem. Other chanting books, however, resolve the problem differently, by indicating in print how the line should be pronounced in order to fit the metre. Different chanting books and ritual manuals do this differently, according to prevailing printing conventions.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret Cone places *anadhivara* under the entry for *adhivara*, for which she does not, however, record any examples: *A Dictionary of Pāli*, Part I, *a-kh* (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 2001) p. 94a.

<sup>6</sup> Note that the reference in the *Pāli Tipiṭakam Concordance* (I 116b) is to be corrected from 'Bv 2' to 'Bv 9'.

<sup>7</sup> *Madhurattavāṇī* (PTS 12).

<sup>8</sup> *Jātaka* 479 v. 69cd (PTS IV 233.15).

<sup>9</sup> See *Vimānavatthu* (PTS 16–18).

<sup>10</sup> The term is given as an epithet of Buddhas at *Abhidhānappadīpikā* (registered also in Childers' *Dictionary of the Pali Language*, p. 30a). Following a different hermeneutical trail, an old Pāli-Thai dictionary gives two meanings for *anadhivara*: space (*ākāśa*) and *nibbāna*: *Gambhīr phra abhidhānaśabd* (Bangkok: 2517 [1974]), p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Superlative adjectives are essential to the poetic fabric of the *Sirimāvimāna*: nearly every verse has one or more, for example *para* (1a, 6c, 8c, 9d, 13d), and *vara*, *anoma*, *anuttara*.

The conventions in question are the use of the graphic symbols *daṇḍaghāta* and *bindu*, both equivalent in function to the Sanskrit *virāma*. The *Suat mon plae* of 1910 (fig. 1) and the *Royal Chanting Book* dated RE 130 (CE 1912, p. 284: fig. 2) use the *vañjhakāra* or *daṇḍaghāta* above consonants which are to be read as medials with the inherent 'a' suppressed. Later editions, such as the *Royal Chanting Book* published in BE 2468 (CE 1925, p. 338: see fig. 3) or the current edition of BE 2538 (CE 1995, p. 373) use the dot or *bindu* below the consonant to indicate the same thing. Chanting books that use 'popular Pāli orthography' use the *mai han akat* and *wisanchani* with the same result (fig. 4).

In line *b* of our verse, the first syllable is lengthened by placing the *daṇḍaghāta* above or *bindu* below the 't' of 'kata'. This indicates that the first syllable is to be read as if it were long: *kat* instead of *ka*. Next, the first three syllables of 'anadhivaraṃ' are elided to make 'andhivaraṃ'. With these ingenious changes, the line may be recited as a twelve-syllable *Indravamśa*, and the verse is now metrical:

— — — — —  
*brahmā ca lokādhipatī sahampatī*  
— — — — —  
*kat/ añ-ja-lī an-dhi-va-raṃ a-yā-ca-tha*  
— — — — —  
*sant' idha sattā 'pparajakkhajātikā*  
— — — — —  
*desetu dhammaṃ anukamp' imaṃ paṇaṃ*

This we may translate as:

Brahmā Sahampati, Lord of the Universe  
Palms pressed in homage, beseeched the unexcelled one:  
'Here there are beings with little dust in their eyes:  
May the Dhamma be taught: take pity on these beings.'

## II

The verse refers to an event in the life of the Buddha, related in the *Pāsārāsi-sutta* (or *Ariyapariyesana-sutta*) of the *Majjhima-nikāya*,<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Majjhima Nikāya* 26 (PTS I 167-179).

the *Brahmasaṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*,<sup>13</sup> and the *Mahāvagga* of the *Vinaya*.<sup>14</sup> Seated beneath the Bodhi-tree, the newly Awakened One reflected that he had reached awakening with difficulty, that the Dhamma he had realized was profound and difficult to see, and that it would be wearisome if he taught the Dhamma and no-one understood him: 'When the Blessed One reflected in this manner, his mind inclined towards inactivity, not towards teaching.'

This was a disaster. Buddhas do not appear in the world every other day: they are as rare as the rare *udumbura* flower. Luckily Brahmā Sahampati was quick to grasp the gravity of the crisis: 'Alas, the world is lost, the world is ruined', he thought, and he instantly vanished from his heaven and appeared before the Tathāgata. Raising his hands, palms pressed together, he implored the Ten-powered One to teach the Dhamma:

Sir, may the Blessed One teach the Dhamma! May the Sugata teach the Dhamma! There are beings with little dust in their eyes; they will fall away if they do not hear the Dhamma. There will be those who understand [if taught]' (*desetu bhante bhagavā dhammaṃ, desetu sugato dhammaṃ, santi sattā apparajakkhajātikā assavanatā dhammassa parihāyanti, bhavissanti dhammassa aññātaro*).

The Sugata realized that this was so, and decided to teach.

This was a defining event in the history of Buddhism: without it, there would be no Buddhism. Indeed, a similar event must occur in the career of any Buddha, past or future, as seen for example in the *Mahāpadāna-sutta*, in which Mahābrahmā requests the Buddha Vipassī to teach,<sup>15</sup> or in the careers of other past Buddhas

<sup>13</sup> *Saṃyutta Nikāya (Brahmāyācana-sutta)* (PTS I 136–138).

<sup>14</sup> *Vinaya (Brahmayācanakathā)* (PTS I 4–7). The turn of events is common to most or all biographies of the Buddha, for example the Sarvāstivādin *Catuṣpariṣat-sūtra* from Central Asia, the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādin *Vinaya* in Tibetan translation, the Lokottaravādin *Mahāvastu*, and the *Lalitavistara* (Chapter 25, *Adhyeṣaṇāparivarta*). Cf. also *Buddhacarita* 14.96–103 and Raniero Gnoli, *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu*, Vol. I (Roma: ISMEO, 1978, Serie Orientale Roma XLIX), pp. 127–130.

<sup>15</sup> *Dīgha Nikāya* 14 (PTS II 37).



related in the *Buddhavaṃsa Commentary*.<sup>16</sup> The request is variously termed *ajjhesana*, *dhammajjhesana*, *dhammāyācana*, *brahmāyācana*, etc. According to the *Buddhavaṃsa Commentary*, Mahābrahmā's request to teach the Dhamma is one of the thirty things common to all Buddhas.<sup>17</sup> Commentaries also aver that all Buddhas hesitate to preach;<sup>18</sup> this is not included in the thirty *dhammatā*, but it goes without saying that the hesitation is a prerequisite for Brahmā's request.<sup>19</sup>

The Buddha's hesitation to teach and Brahmā's request give narrative expression to a key point: the teaching will be fruitful because there exist beings 'with little dust in their eyes' (*apparajakkhajātika*) – beings with the potential to awaken, like lotus buds ready to blossom. Later, after the passing of the first rainy season, it is because these beings exist that the Buddha sends the first group of monks out to teach the Dhamma 'for the good of the multitudes, for the happiness of the multitudes, out of compassion for the world, for the good, the benefit, and happiness of gods and humans.'<sup>20</sup> On his deathbed the devoted lay-follower Anāthapiṇḍika requests Sāriputta to teach profound teachings to white-clad householders, because 'there exist sons of good family with little dust in their eyes'.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. I.B. Horner (ed.), *Madhurattavilāsini nāma Buddhavaṃsaṭṭhakathā of Bhadantācariya Buddhadatta Mahāthera* (London: The Pali Text Society, 1978), pp. 124.19 (Dīpaṅkara); 133.34 (Kondañña); 145.8 (Maṅgala); 154.10 (Sumana); 161.25 (Revata), 167.29 (Sobhita), etc. The rule is stated explicitly in *Milindapañha* (PTS 234.11) *api ca mahārāja sabbesaṃ tathāgatānaṃ dhammatā esā yaṃ brahmunā āyācitā dhammaṃ desenti*.

<sup>17</sup> *Madhurattavilāsini* (PTS 298–299), *mahābrahmuno dhammadesanattāya āyacanaṃ*; *Syāmaratṭhassa Tepiṭakattṭhakathā* Vol. 44 (Bangkok: Mahāmakūṭarājavidyalāya 2535 [1992]) p. 544.

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. *Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā* (PTS 9.34; *Syāmaratṭha*, pp. 17–18); *Jātakanidāna* in *Jātaka* (PTS I 81).

<sup>19</sup> For interesting excursuses on the subject see *Milindapañha* 232–234 and the Most Venerable Mingun Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivamsa, *The Great Chronicle of Buddhas*, The State Buddha Sāsana Council's Version, Vol. Two, Part Two, translated by U Ko Lay and U Tin Lwin, ([Yangon]: Ti=Ni Publishing Center, 1994) pp. 1–6. The reasoning of these texts does not much differ from that of the *Upāyakaśālyasūtra*: see Mark Tatz (tr.), *The Skill in Means (Upāyakaśālyasūtra)* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994) § 125, p. 70.

<sup>20</sup> *Vinaya* (PTS I 20–21).

<sup>21</sup> *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda-sutta*, *Majjhima Nikāya* 143 (PTS III 261), *tena hi bhante sāriputta gihīnaṃ odātavasanānaṃ evarūpī dhammī kathā paṭibhātu. santi hi*

Today, every time the verse is recited Brahmā's request is re-enacted, and Buddhism begins again, recharged. A common event that regularly takes place in temples throughout the country partakes of the life of the Master; the specific becomes archetypal. Dare one suggest that the inviter becomes Brahmā, the monk becomes Buddha?

### III

Requesting the Buddhas to teach the Dharma is one of the limbs of the Unsurpassed Offering (*anuttara-pūjā*), a liturgy that is an essential component of Mahāyāna practice to this day.<sup>22</sup> An early version is given in verse ten of the *Bhadracarī*:

*ye ca daśaśi lokapradīpā, bodhivibuddha asaṅgataprāptāḥ  
tān ahu sarvi adhyeṣāmi nāthāṃ cakru anuttara vartanatāyāi*

And those beacons for the world, in the ten directions – those who have realised enlightenment and non-attachment – I beseech those protectors to turn the peerless wheel [of the Dharma].<sup>23</sup>

The entreaty is given by Śāntideva in his *Bodhicaryāvatāra*:

Holding my hands together in reverence, I beseech the perfect Buddhas in every direction, 'Set up the light of the Dharma for those falling into suffering in the darkness of delusion'.<sup>24</sup>

The Thai *ārāḍhanā* is part of a public ritual, an interaction between laity and monastics. The *anuttara-pūjā* may be public or private, and is often a component of daily personal recitation. A fundamental ideological difference is that the entreaty in the *anuttara-pūjā* is

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*bhante sārīputta kulaputtā apparajakkhajātikā assavanatā dhammassa parihāyanti,  
bhavissanti dhammassa aññātaro*

<sup>22</sup> *The Bodhicaryāvatāra*, translated by Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 9–13.

<sup>23</sup> Nepalese Buddhist Sanskrit and translation from Gregory Sharkey, *Buddhist Daily Ritual: The Nitya Puja in Kathmandu Valley Shrines* (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2001), pp. 314–315.

<sup>24</sup> Śāntideva, *The Bodhicaryāvatāra*, Chap. 3 verse 4.

spoken by an individual in the first person, and is addressed not to a member of the *saṅgha* but to the Buddhas of the ten directions. That is, it presupposes the present, simultaneous, and pervasive existence of multiple Buddhas, a concept rejected by Theravādins (and certain other schools) from an early date.

#### IV

To return to Theravādin tradition: the *Buddhavaṃsa Commentary* recognizes that the first verse of its text poses an historical (or hagiographical) problem.<sup>25</sup> Tradition reports that *Buddhavaṃsa* was spoken by the Buddha in the Nigrodhārāma at Kapilavatthu at the request of Sāriputta. Why bring in Brahmā Sahampati and the events under the bodhi-tree?

*ettha ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā rājagahe viharati veḷuvane kalandakanivāpe ti ādisuttantesu viya ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā sakkesu viharati kapilavatthusmiṃ nigrodhārāme. atha kho āyasmā sāriputto yena bhagavā ten' upasaṅkami upasaṅkamitvā bhagavantaṃ buddhavaṃsaṃ apucchi ti. evaṃ ādinā nayena nidānaṃ avatvā kasmā brahmā ca lokādhipatī sahampatī katañjalī anadhivaraṃ ayācathā ti ādinā nayena nidānaṃ vuttan ti. vuccate. bhagavato sabbaḍhammadesanākāraṇabhūtāya brahmuno dhammadesanāyācanāya sandassanattaṃ vuttan ti.*<sup>26</sup>

Herein [an objection is raised:] 'Why do you not give a prose introduction (*nidāna*) of the type which begins "At one time the Blessed One dwelt at Rājagaha in the Veḷuvana, the Kalandakanivāpa", as in the *Suttantas*, [in this case] "At one time the Blessed One was

<sup>25</sup> The *Buddhavaṃsa* is a uniquely Mahāvihārin text, unknown to other Buddhist schools; the list of Buddhas and other specific features of the text are also unique. Other schools had their own traditions, which share a common ideology but differ in many details. Hence the specific problem addressed in this section applies only to Theravādin, perhaps even more specifically Mahāvihāravāsīn, textual tradition. See Peter Skilling 'A Citation from the \**Buddhavaṃsa* of the Abhayagiri School', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XVIII (1993), pp. 165–175.

<sup>26</sup> *Madhurattavilāsini* (PTS) 5.22–30; (Bhūmibalo ed., Bangkok: 1979), pp. 10.12–11.12; (Syāmaratṭhassa Tepiṭakatṭhakathā, Bangkok: 2534 [1991]), pp. 9.14–10.4; (Dhammagiri-Pāli-Ganthamālā, Igatpuri: 1998), Vol. 66, p. 7.7–12. PTS reads *tattha* for *ettha* and *āpucchi* for *apucchi* against all other editions.

dwelling among the Sakkas in the Nigrodhārāma at Kapilavatthu. Then Venerable Sāriputta went to where the Blessed One was. Arriving before the Blessed One, he asked about the lineage of Buddhas”? Why do you state instead that “Brahmā Sahampati, Lord of the Universe/Palms pressed in homage, beseeched the unexcelled one”, etc.?’ [The commentator] replies: ‘The verse was spoken [by Ānanda at the first Saṃgīti<sup>27</sup>] in order to demonstrate that Brahmā’s request for the teaching of the Dhamma is the cause of all of the Blessed One’s teachings of the Dhamma.’<sup>28</sup>

## V

The commentator’s statement that ‘Brahmā’s request for the teaching of the Dhamma is the cause of all of the Blessed One’s teachings of the Dhamma’ adequately explains the adaptation of the *Buddhavaṃsa* verse to request sermons up to the present. The recitation version (that is, the verse with *desetu* rather than *desehi*) is recited throughout Siam when monks are invited to preach. It is given (with variants, as we have seen) under the title ‘Invitation to preach the Dhamma’ (*ārāḍhanā dhamma*) in the *Royal Chanting Book* dated RE 130, and in all subsequent chanting books and ritual manuals that I have seen.

All of these texts give the one verse only.<sup>29</sup> But the oldest collection of chants available at present, the *Suat mon plaē* from the first or second reign, gives a second stanza:<sup>30</sup>

*saddhammabheriṃ vinayaṇ ca kāyaṇ suttāṇ ca bandhaṇ abhidhamma-*  
*cammaṇ*  
*ākotaṇyanta catusaccadaṇḍaṇ pabodha neyye parisāya majjhe.*

The body of the drum of the Saddhamma is the *Vinaya*,  
The thongs are the *Sutta*, the drum-head is the *Abhidhamma*:

<sup>27</sup> See *Madhuratthavilāsini* (PTS 11.2–12).

<sup>28</sup> For another translation see I.B. Horner, *The Clarifier of the Sweet Meaning* (London: The Pali Text Society, 1978), p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> This statement applies to the old text entitled simply *Ārāḍhanādharmma*. A longer version, *Ārāḍhanādharmma yang bistāra*, included in the *Royal Chanting Book* (2538 [1995] ed. pp. 399–401), gives the *brahmā ca lokāḍhipatī* verses followed by 26 lines composed by King Rāma IV.

<sup>30</sup> The first three *pādas* are Indravajrā, the last Upendravajrā.

Striking it with the drum-stick of the Four Truths  
Amidst the assembly, awaken those ripe for realization.<sup>31</sup>

The verse plays on a metaphor found in a succeeding event in the *Pāsārāsī-sutta* and *Mahāvagga*. En route to Vārāṇasī, where he will teach his former five companions in asceticism, the All-knowing One meets an Ājīvaka, Upaka by name. When Upaka asks what he is about, the Kinsman of the Sun answers with verses that end with:<sup>32</sup>

*dhammacakkaṃ pavattetuṃ gacchāmi kāsinaṃ puraṃ  
andhabhūtasmi lokasmiṃ āhañhi 'matadundubhiṃ.*

I am going to the city of the Kāsis, to turn the Dhamma wheel:  
In a world become blind, I will strike the drum of the undying.

The commentary explains the phrase 'I will strike the drum' as 'I will beat the drum of the undying to cause [those blinded by folly] to gain the eye of Dhamma'.<sup>33</sup> It is this drum that the monk beats when he gives a sermon.

<sup>31</sup> The thongs are cords wrapped around the body of the drum, used for tuning.

<sup>32</sup> The stanza is in Śloka metre.

<sup>33</sup> *Papañcasūdanī*, Part 2, *Mūlapaṇṇāsavaṇṇanā* (Mahāmakūṭarājavidyālaya ed., 255.2) *āhaññiṃ amatadundubhiṃ ti dhammacakkhupaṭilābhāya amatabheriṃ paharissāmi ti gacchāmi*. For the form *āhañhi* see William Geiger, *A Pāli Grammar*, translated into English by Batakrishna Ghosh, revised and edited by K.R. Norman (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1994) § 153.2. The PTS edition of the *Mahāvagga* has *āhañhi amatadudr(!)ubhiṃ*, of the *Pāsārāsī-sutta/Ariyapariyesana-sutta*, *āhañchaṃ amatadundubhiṃ*. The Syāmaratṭha editions have *āhaññiṃ amatadundubhiṃ* and *āhaññiṃ amatadundubhiṃ* respectively. The Syamaratṭha edition of the *Pāsārāsī-sutta* and the PTS edition of *Mahāvagga* have *andhabhūtrasmi*; other editions have *andhabhūtasmiṃ*.

## Three types of Bodhisatta in Theravādin tradition: A bibliographical excursion

### I

A KEY FEATURE OF THE THERAVĀDIN BODHISATTVA IDEOLOGY is the delineation of three bodhisatta careers. The *Sotatthakī-mahānidāna* devotes some verses to the subject.<sup>1</sup> The text bears no date, but is mentioned in a Pagan inscription dated 1442, which we may take as its *terminus post quem*.<sup>2</sup>

[551]	<i>na hete ettakāyeva aparaṃ lakkhaṇaṃ pi vā</i>	<i>bodhisattassa lakkhaṇā kathessāmi suṇātha me.</i>
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<sup>1</sup> *Sotatthakīmahānidāna*, published on the occasion of the funeral of Somdet Phra Phutthachan (Sangiam Candasirimahathera), Wat Suthatthepwararam, 17 December 2526 [1983], pp. 88–89.

<sup>2</sup> Mabel Bode, *The Pali Literature of Burma* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, [1909] 1966), p. 104, no. 95. For a description of the text see Oskar von Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996 [Albrecht Wezler and Michael Witzel, ed., *Indian Philology and South Asian Studies*, Vol. 2]), § 432.

[552]	<i>ugghāṭitañña<sup>3</sup> nām'eko</i>	<i>vipañcitaññū paro mato</i>
	<i>tatiyo neyyo ti nāmena</i>	<i>bodhisattā tidhā matā.</i>
[553]	<i>ugghāṭitaññū bodhisatto</i>	<i>paññādhiko ti nāmako</i>
	<i>vipañcitaññū bodhisatto</i>	<i>vutto saddhādhiko mato</i>
	<i>neyyo vīriyādhiko nāma</i>	<i>bodhisattā ime tayo.</i>
[554]	<i>kappe satasahassee ca</i>	<i>caturō ca asaṅkheyye</i>
	<i>pūretvā bodhisambhāre</i>	<i>laddhā byākaraṇato pare</i>
	<i>ugghāṭitaññū bodhisatto</i>	<i>patto sambodhim uttamaṃ.</i>
[555]	<i>aṭṭha c' eva asaṅkheyye</i>	<i>kappe satasahassee ca</i>
	<i>pūretvā bodhisambhāre</i>	<i>laddhā byākaraṇato pare</i>
	<i>vipañcitaññū bodhisatto</i>	<i>patto sambodhim uttamaṃ.</i>
[556]	<i>soḷasa ca asaṅkheyye</i>	<i>kappe satasahassee ca</i>
	<i>pūretvā bodhisambhāre</i>	<i>laddhā byākaraṇato pare</i>
	<i>neyyo nāma bodhisatto</i>	<i>patto sambodhim uttamaṃ.</i>

551. The features of the bodhisatta are not limited to just those [discussed so far]. I will proclaim another feature: listen to me.

552. One is called 'one who understands through a condensed instruction' (*ugghāṭitaññū*), another is deemed to be 'one who understands through an elaborated instruction' (*vipañcitaññū*), and the third is 'to be guided' (*neyya*) by name. These are deemed the three types of bodhisatta.

553. The bodhisatta who understands through a condensed instruction is 'strong in wisdom' by name; the aforementioned bodhisatta who understands through an elaborated instruction is deemed to be 'strong in faith'; the one to be guided is 'strong in energy' by name: the three are bodhisattas.

554. One hundred thousand kappas and four incalculables after receiving the prediction, having fulfilled the requisites of awakening, the bodhisatta who understands through a condensed instruction realizes ultimate awakening.

555. One hundred thousand kappas and eight incalculables after receiving the prediction, having fulfilled the requisites of awakening, the bodhisatta who understands through an elaborated instruction realizes ultimate awakening.

556. One hundred thousand kappas and sixteen incalculables after receiving the prediction, having fulfilled the requisites of awakening, the bodhisatta to be guided realizes ultimate awakening.

<sup>3</sup> Sic: text has long *a*, *ugghāṭita-*, throughout.

The verses at the end of the *Dasabodhisatta-uddesa* are close enough to verse 553 of the *Sotatthakī* to be a citation:<sup>4</sup>

<i>ugghaṭitaññū bodhisatto</i>	<i>paññādhiko ti nāma so  </i>
<i>vipaṇcitaññū bodhisatto</i>	<i>vutto saddhādhiko nāma  </i>
<i>neyyo viriyādhiko nāma</i>	<i>bodhisattā ime tayo ti   la  </i>

As a final example I cite from the eighth and last chapter, *Pakiṇṇakanayasāra-niddesa*, of the *Lokadīpakasāra*, a work composed by Medhankara at Muttama (Martaban) in about the middle of the fourteenth century:<sup>5</sup>

<i>bodhisattā tayo vuttā</i>	<i>buddhen' ādiccabandhunā</i>
<i>ugghaṭitaññū nām' eko</i>	<i>tathā vipaccitaññū<sup>6</sup> ca</i>
<i>neyyo ca bodhisatto ti</i>	<i>[1] tesu ugghaṭitaññūko</i>
<i>saṅkhittā desitaṃ dhammaṃ</i>	<i>siṅgham eva vibujjhati</i>
<i>ugghaṭitaññū nām' eso</i>	<i>bodhisatto ti vuccati</i>
<i>kappasatasahassaṇ ca</i>	<i>cattāro ca asaṅkhaye</i>
<i>pūritvā pāramī sabbā</i>	<i>patto sambodhim uttamaṃ<sup>7</sup></i>
<i>īdiso bodhisatto va</i>	<i>paññādhiko ti vuccati.</i>
<i>[2] vipaccitaññū bodhisatto</i>	<i>saṅkhittā desitaṃ pana</i>
<i>siṅgham eva ajānetvā</i>	<i>kiñci vitthārite pana</i>
<i>aññāsi sabbaso tena</i>	<i>vipaccitaññū nāma so</i>
<i>kappasatasahassaṇ ca</i>	<i>aṭṭha vā pi asaṅkhaye</i>
<i>pūritvā pāramī sabbā</i>	<i>patto sambodhim uttamaṃ</i>
<i>īdiso bodhisatto tu</i>	<i>saddhādhiko ti vuccati.</i>
<i>[3] neyyo nāma bodhisatto</i>	<i>sammā vitthārite pana</i>
<i>vijāni sabbaso tena</i>	<i>neyyo iti pavuccati</i>

<sup>4</sup> François Martini (ed., tr.), 'Dasa-Bodhisatta-Uddesa', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 36 (1936), p. 335; Praphat Surasen (ed., tr.), *Phra khamphi anakhotawong* (Bangkok: 26 March 2540 [1997]), p. 71.

<sup>5</sup> *Lokadīpakasāra* (Bangkok: The National Library–Fine Arts Department, 2529 [1986]), pp. 553.20–554.11 (translation into Thai pp. 201–202). The verses are not numbered. For the date see von Hinüber, *Handbook*, § 397.

<sup>6</sup> The spelling *vipaccitaññū* or *vipacitaññū* is common in Siamese texts.

<sup>7</sup> *pūretvā pāramī sabbā, patto sambodhim uttamaṃ*, is a stock verse found, with variants, in many chants. Note that here in the first two instances the spelling is *pūritvā*, in the third *pūretvā*.



*kappasatasahassaṇ ca  
piṭetvā pāramī sabbā  
īdiso bodhisatto tu*

*soḷasa ca asaṅkhaye  
patto sambodhim uttamaṃ  
vuccati viriyādhiko ti.*

The Buddha, Kinsman of the Sun, has mentioned three bodhisattas: The one who understands through a condensed instruction, the one who understands through an elaborated instruction, and the one to be guided.

- [1] Among them, the one who understands through a condensed instruction immediately comprehends the Dhamma when it is taught in brief, and is called ‘a bodhisatta who understands through a condensed instruction’. Fulfilling all perfections through four incalculables and one hundred thousand æons, he reaches ultimate full awakening. Such a bodhisatta is also called ‘strong in wisdom’.
- [2] The bodhisatta who understands through an elaborated instruction does not immediately understand what is taught in brief, but when it is expanded a bit, he understands it entirely, and therefore he is named one who understands through an elaborated instruction. Fulfilling all perfections through eight incalculables and one hundred thousand æons, he reaches ultimate full awakening. Such a bodhisatta is rightly called ‘strong in faith’.
- [3] The bodhisatta named ‘to be guided’ understands all when it has been completely explained, and therefore is called ‘to be guided’. Fulfilling all perfections through sixteen incalculables and one hundred thousand æons, he reaches ultimate full awakening. Such a bodhisatta is rightly called ‘strong in energy’.

## II

The delineation of the three types of bodhisatta combines two concepts. One is that of individuals with graded capacities for learning, or, more specifically, as the commentaries make it clear, for realizing the truth. The second is that of three types of bodhisattas, each predominant in one of the qualities of wisdom (*paññā*), faith (*saddhā*), and energy (*virīya*). The *locus classicus* for the first concept

is the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, which lists four kinds of individuals without defining them:<sup>8</sup>

*cattāro 'me bhikkhave puggalā santo saṃvijjamānā lokasmiṃ. katame cattāro? ugghaṭṭitaññū, vipacitaññū,<sup>9</sup> neyyo, padaparamo. ime kho bhikkhave cattāro puggalā santo saṃvijjamānā lokasmin ti.*

There are, O monks, four individuals in the world. What are the four? The one who understands through a condensed instruction, the one who understands through an elaborated instruction, the one to be guided, and the one who does not go beyond words. These, O monks, are four individuals found in the world.

For definitions we may turn to the *Puggalapaññatti*:<sup>10</sup>

- [1] *katamo ca puggalo ugghaṭṭitaññū? yassa puggalassa saha udāhaṭṭavelāya dhammābhisamayo hoti – ayaṃ vuccati puggalo ugghaṭṭitaññū.*
- [2] *katamo ca puggalo vipaṇcitaññū? yassa puggalassa saṅkhittena bhāsitaṃ vitthārena atthe vibhajyamāne dhammābhisamayo hoti – ayaṃ vuccati puggalo vipaṇcitaññū.*
- [3] *katamo ca puggalo neyyo? yassa puggalassa uddesato paripucchito yoniso manasikaroto kalyāṇamitte sevato bhajato payirupāsato evaṃ anupubbena dhammābhisamayo hoti – ayaṃ vuccati puggalo neyyo.*
- [4] *katamo ca puggalo padaparamo? yassa puggalassa bahuṃ pi suṇato bahuṃ pi bhāṇato bahuṃ pi dhārayato bahuṃ pi vācayato na tāya jātiyā dhammābhisamayo hoti – ayaṃ vuccati puggalo padaparamo.*

- [1] What is a person who understands through a condensed instruction? The person for whom realization of the truth occurs at the very time it is being expounded – this is called a person who understands through a condensed instruction.
- [2] What is a person who understands through an elaborated instruction? The person for whom realization of the truth occurs while the meaning of a concise utterance is being analysed in detail – this is called a person who understands through an elaborated instruction.

<sup>8</sup> *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (PTS II 135.9).

<sup>9</sup> The PTS edition records the variant *vipaṇcitaññū*.

<sup>10</sup> *Puggalapaññatti* (Nālandā ed. 64.4; PTS 41.23).

- [3] What is a person to be guided? The person for whom realization of the truth occurs progressively, through (listening to) a summary, through questioning, through careful reflection, and through relying on, serving, and staying near to a spiritual friend – this is called a person to be guided.
- [4] What is a person who does not go beyond words? The person for whom realization will not occur in that rebirth, no matter how much he hears, no matter how much he speaks, no matter how much he retains, no matter how much he recites – this is called a person who does not go beyond words.

The terms are elaborated upon in the commentary:<sup>11</sup>

- [1] *ugghaṭitaññū-ādisu ugghaṭitaññū ti ettha ugghāṭanaṃ nāma ñāṇugghāṭanaṃ, ñāṇena ugghaṭitamatteyeva jānāti ti attho. saha udāhaṭavelāyā ti udāhāre udāhaṭamatteyeva. dhammābhisamayo ti catusaccadhammassa ñāṇena saddhiṃ abhisamayo. ayaṃ vuccatī ti ayaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhānā ti ādinā nayena saṅkhittena mātikāya ṭhapiyamānāya desanānusārena ñāṇaṃ pesetvā arahattaṃ gaṇhituṃ samatto puggalo ugghaṭitaññū ti vuccatī.*
- [2] *vipaṇcitaṃ vitthāritam eva atthaṃ jānāti ti vipaṇcitaññū. ayaṃ vuccatī ayaṃ saṅkhittena mātikaṃ ṭhapetvā vitthārena atthe bhāṇiyamāne arahattaṃ pāpuṇituṃ samatto puggalo vipaṇcitaññū ti vuccatī.*
- [3] *uddesādihi netabbo ti neyyo. anupubbena dhammābhisamayo hotī ti anukkammena arahattapattī.*
- [4] *vyañjanapadam eva paramaṃ assā ti padaparamo. na tāya jātiyā dhammābhisamayo hotī ti na tena attabhāvena jhānaṃ vā vipassanaṃ vā maggaṃ vā phalaṃ vā nibbattetuṃ sakkotī ti attho.*

### III

This terminology is by no means unique to the Theravādin tradition – it is common to the texts of other schools (and I suspect the terms were colloquial expressions which were later assigned technical values within a hierarchical scheme). All four terms occur together in the *Mahāvastu* of the Lokottaravādins. The newly awakened

<sup>11</sup> *Puggalapaññatti-aṭṭhakathā*, in Mahesh Tiwari (ed.), *Pañcappakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā*, Part 1 (Nalanda, Patna: Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, 1968), p. 92.8–20.

Buddha wonders whether or not to teach the Dharma he has discovered:<sup>12</sup>

atha khalu bhagavāṃ mahābrahmaṇo yācanāṃ veditvā sāmāṃ  
ca pratyātmaṃ bodhiye jñānena sarvāvantaṃ lokam anuttareṇa  
buddhacakṣuṣābhivilokayanto adrākṣīt sattvā uccāvācāṃ hīnapraṇītāṃ  
adrākṣīt sattvā durākārā durvineyā durviśodheyā adrākṣīt sattvā svākārāṃ  
suvineyāṃ suviśodheyāṃ, adrākṣīt sattvāṃ udghaṭitājñā vipaṃcitājñā  
neyā padaparamāṃ, adrākṣīt sattvāṃ tikṣṇendriyāṃ mṛvīdriyāṃ (text  
ṛddhindriyāṃ). sattvānāṃ trayo rāśiyaḥ samyaktvaniyataṃ rāśiṃ  
mithyātvaniyataṃ rāśiṃ aniyataṃ rāśiṃ.

We find three of the terms in a rather similar passage in the *Lalitavistara*:<sup>13</sup>

atha khalu bhikṣavas tathāgataḥ sarvāvantaṃ lokam buddhacakṣuṣā  
vyavalokayan sattvān paśyati sma hīnamadhyapraṇītān uccānīca-  
madhyamān svākārān suviśodhakān durākārān durviśodhakān

<sup>12</sup> Radhagovinda Basak (ed.), *Mahāvastu Avadāna* Vol. III (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1968), p. 421.5 [Senart pp. 317–318]; English translation in J.J. Jones, *The Mahāvastu*, Vol. III (London: The Pali Text Society, [1956] 1978), p. 307 (I owe this and the *Lalitavistara* reference to Edgerton's BHSD). The text bristles with problems, especially in case endings. The terms do not occur in other accounts of the events that follow the awakening, such as the *Ariyapariyesana-sutta* (*Majjhima-nikāya* 26, PTS I 169.5) or the *Saṅghabhedavastu* (Raniero Gnoli, *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu*, Part I [Rome: ISMEO, 1977, Serie Orientale Roma XLIX], pp. 129–130), or in the Chinese texts translated by André Bareau, *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dans les Sūtrapīṭaka et les Vinayapīṭaka anciens: de la quête de l'éveil à la conversion de Śāriputra et de Maudgalyāyana*, Tome I (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1963), pp. 135–139. The similarity of the two passages is one of the several pieces of evidence for the close relationship between *Lalitavistara* and *Mahāvastu*, or the Mahāsāṃghika textual lineage, which undermine the received opinion, not, it seems, subjected to any serious scrutiny for over a century, that *Lalitavistara* was a Sarvāstivādin text 'converted' to Mahāyāna. (There are at least two further occurrences of *udghaṭitājñā* in *Mahāvastu*: Basak III 357.14 [Senart 270.9, Jones 259], where young Rāhula describes himself as such, and 510.5 [Senart 382.15, Jones 379], where Nālaka is described as such.)

<sup>13</sup> P.L. Vaidya (ed.), *Lalita-vistara* (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1958, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts no. 1), p. 292.19.

*udghaṭitajñān<sup>14</sup> vipaṇcitajñān padaparamāṃs trīn sattvarāśīn ekam  
mithyatvaniyatam ekam samyaktvaniyatam ekam aniyatam.*

All four terms come together in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā  
Prajñāpāramitā*:<sup>15</sup>

*punar aparaṃ Subhūte dharma-bhāṇakaś cōdghaṭitajño bhaviṣyati,  
dharma-śravaṇikaś ca neyo bhaviṣyati vipaṇcitajño vā pada-paramo vā.  
iyam api Subhūte viśāmagrī bhaviṣyati, imāṃ gambhīrāṃ prajñāpāramitāṃ  
likhatāṃ uddiśatāṃ svādhyāyatāṃ. idam api Subhūte bodhisattvānāṃ  
mahāsattvānāṃ Māra-karma veditavyam.*

*punar aparaṃ Subhūte dharma-śravaṇikaś cōdghaṭitajño bhaviṣyati,  
dharma-bhāṇakaś ca neyo bhaviṣyati vipaṇcitajño vā pada-paramo vā.  
iyam api Subhūte viśāmagrī bhaviṣyati, imāṃ gambhīrāṃ prajñāpāramitāṃ  
likhatāṃ uddiśatāṃ svādhyāyatāṃ manasikurvātāṃ. idam api Subhūte  
bodhisattvānāṃ mahāsattvānāṃ Māra-karma veditavyam.*

Two of the terms, *udghaṭitajña* and *vipaṇcitajña*, occur in the  
*Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*.<sup>16</sup> There is a single instance of  
*udghaṭitajña* in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika-sūtra*: ‘Son of good family,

<sup>14</sup> Text has long *a*, *udghāṭita*-.; I follow variant noted by Edgerton, *BHSD*.

<sup>15</sup> Takayasu Kimura (ed.), *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā IV* (Tokyo: Sankibo Busshorin Publishing Co., 1990), p. 46.14. I was able to trace the passage thanks to the references to *neya* and *pada-parama* in Edward Conze’s *Materials for a Dictionary of the Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1973), pp. 236 and 239 respectively, in conjunction with Kimura’s ‘Comparative Table of all Versions of the Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā’, p. 208.

<sup>16</sup> U. Wogihara, *Abhisamayālaṃkāṛ’ālokā Prajñāpāramitāvyākhyā, the Work of Haribhadra, together with the text commented on* (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1932, repr. Sankibo Buddhist Bookstore, Tokyo, 1973), p. 515.6; P.L.Vaidya (ed.), *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1960, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts no. 4), p. 120.13. The Tibetan as given in Conze’s *Materials*, pp. 126, 356, is that of the *Mahāvīyutpatti*: *udghaṭita-jña, mgo smos pas go ba (ma yin pa)*, ‘understands as soon as the main points are mentioned’; *vipaṇcita-jña, rnam par spros te go ba (ma yin pa)* ‘cannot understand unless all the details are explained’. For an English translation see Edward Conze, *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom with the Divisions of the Abhisamayālaṅkāra* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 339.

these bodhisattvas, mahāsattvas, are ones who understand through a condensed instruction'.<sup>17</sup>

Commenting on the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, the eighth-century North Indian ācārya Haribhadra explains *udghaṭita-jña* as 'fully understanding the aggregate of matter when the word "matter" is spoken', and *vipañcita-jña* as 'comprehending the meaning when it is explained that "it is called 'matter' because it is disturbed"'.<sup>18</sup> In describing the component parts of a *sūtra*, specifically the *Arthaviniścaya*, Haribhadra's contemporary from Nālandā, Vīryaśrimitra, notes that the detailed exposition (*nirdeśa*) is for the benefit of one who understands through an elaborated instruction (*vipañcitajña*), while the summary (*uddeśa*) is for the benefit of one who understands through a condensed instruction (*udghaṭitajña*).<sup>19</sup> (Here *uddeśa* and *nirdeśa* are technical terms in *sūtra* exegesis. The former is the brief statement that opens a *sūtra*, setting forth its main points; the latter is the detailed exposition.)

In his *Pañcaskandha-bhāṣya* – a commentary on Vasubandhu's *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa* preserved only in Tibetan translation – Pṛthivibandhu (Sa'i rtsa lag) states that there are two types of student (*slob ma = śiṣya*): *gleñs pas śes pa = udghaṭita-jña* and *spros pas śes pa = vipañcita-jña*. He defines *vipañcita-jña* as one who understands when a treatise is expounded in detail, and *udghaṭita-jña* as one who

<sup>17</sup> H. Kern and Bunyiu Nanjio (ed.), *Saddharmapuṇḍarika* (repr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992, Bibliotheca Buddhica X), 473.7 *udghaṭita-jñā* (v.l. *udghaṭitajñā*) *hi kulaputraite bodhisattvā mahāsattvāḥ* (*rigs kyi bu byañ chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po 'di dag ni mgo smos pa tsam gyis khoñ du chud pa śa stag go*): reference and Tibetan from Yasunori Ejima et al., *Index to the Saddharmapuṇḍarika-sūtra – Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese* (Tokyo: The Reiyukai, 1985), p. 198. *Vipañcita-jña*, *neya*, and *padaparama* are not listed.

<sup>18</sup> Wogihara, *Āloka*, p. 515.16, Vaidya, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, p. 432.9: Haribhadra's explanation is in the negative, following the *sūtra*, which gives the terms in the negative: *rūpam ity-ādy-ukte rūp'ādi-skandhāparijñānān nōdghaṭitajñāḥ, rūpañā-lakṣaṇam rūpam ity-ādi-abhidhāne tad-arthānavabodhān na vipañcitajñāḥ*. Haribhadra invokes the classical derivation of *rūpa* (*rūpatīti rūpam* [SN III 86]; *rūpyate rūpyata iti bhikṣuvas tasmād rūpopādānaskandha ity ucyate* [Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya 1.13, ed. p. 9]). It seems to be a *nirukti*, a play on words, which is impossible to carry over into English.

<sup>19</sup> N.H. Samtani (ed.), *The Arthaviniścaya-sūtra and its Commentary* (Nibandhana) (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1971, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series Vol. XIII), p. 74.5 *vipañcitodghaṭitajñāpudgalāpekṣayā vā nirdeśoddeśavacanam iti*.

understands many aspects when only a summary is taught.<sup>20</sup> The two terms also occur in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*.<sup>21</sup> The *Mahāvvyutpatti*, a Sanskrit-Tibetan lexicon compiled in Central Tibet at about the end of the eighth century, lists *udghaṭita-jñā* and *vipaṇcita-jñā* together in a section on virtues, and *padaparama* separately in a section on faults (*skyon*). It does not record *neya*.<sup>22</sup>

#### IV

None of the references so far, with the exception of that of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, concern bodhisattas. For the systematic application of the typology to bodhisattas – a development unique to the Theravādins – we may turn to the *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā*.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Tibetan Tripiṭaka, Peking Edition (Otani reprint), Cat. no. 5569, *Pañcaskandha-bhāṣya* / *Phuṅ po lña'i bśad pa*, Vol. 114, *sems tsam*, hi, 102a2, *slob ma rnam pa gñis te, spros pas śes pa dañ, gleñs pas śes pa'o. de la spros pas śes pa ni gzuñ žib du bśad na don rtogs par 'gyur ba ste, de dag gi don du mñon pa'i chos mdzod la sogs pa yañ dgos par 'gyur ro. gleñs pas śes pa ni mdo tsam du bstan na don mañ du khoñ du chud par 'gyur ba ste, de'i phyir gtsug lag 'di brtsam pas brtsams pa don med pa ma yin te*.

<sup>21</sup> Nalinaksha Dutt (ed.), *Bodhisattvabhūmiḥ* [Being the XVth Section of *Asaṅgapāda's Yogācārabhūmiḥ*] (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1978, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, Vol. VII), p. 200.16.

<sup>22</sup> R. Sakaki (ed.), *Mahāvvyutpatti* (Kyoto: Suzuki Research Foundation Reprint ed., 1926), in Section CXXVI, *Nānāguṇanāmāni*, *Yon tan sna tshogs kyi miñ la* § 2384 *udghaṭita-jñāḥ, m(h)go smos pas go pa*; § 2385 *vipaṇcita-jñāḥ, rnam par spros pas (nas) go ba 'am ži ba tu* (sic, for *žib tu*) *bśad na go ba*. Better readings may be found in Yumiko Ishihama and Yoichi Fukuda, *A New Critical Edition of the Mahāvvyutpatti*, *Sanskrit-Tibetan-Mongolian Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology* (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1989), Section 2360, § 2395, *mgo smos pas go ba*, § 2396, *rnam par spros pas go ba 'am žib tu bśad na go ba* (omitting variants). *Padaparama* is given at *Mahāvvyutpatti* Section CXXVII, on defects (*skyon du brsti ba'i miñ la*). (Sakaki) § 2477 = *tshigs la 'chol ba*, (Ishihama and Fukuda) Section 2452, § 2488 *tshig la 'chel ba*.

<sup>23</sup> *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* (PTS 320.18–321.11); English translation from Bhikkhu Bodhi (tr.), *The Discourse on the All-Embracing Net of Views: The Brahmajāla Sutta and its Commentaries* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1978), pp. 325–326. See also Primoz Pecenko (ed.), *Aṅguttaranikāyaṭikā Catutthā Sāratthamaññjūsā*, Vol. II (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1997), p. 139.13, with

How much time is required to accomplish [the perfections]? – As a minimum, four incalculables (*asaṅkheyya*) and a hundred thousand great aeons (*mahākappa*); as a middle figure, eight incalculables and a hundred thousand great aeons; as a maximum, sixteen incalculables and a hundred thousand great aeons. This threefold division obtains by way of those in whom wisdom is predominant, those in whom faith is predominant, and those in whom energy is predominant, respectively. For those in whom wisdom is predominant, faith is weakest and wisdom keenest; for those in whom faith is predominant, wisdom is middling [and energy weakest]; and for those in whom energy is predominant, wisdom is weakest [and faith middling]. But supreme enlightenment must be achieved by the power of wisdom; so it is said in the commentary.

[...] Bodhisattvas also become threefold at the moment they form the aspiration, according to their division into those who comprehend through a condensed teaching (*ugghaṭitaññū*), those who comprehend through an elaborated teaching (*vipaṇcitaññū*), and those who are capable of training (*neyya*). Among these, he who comprehends through a condensed teaching has such supporting conditions that, if he were disposed towards the enlightenment of a disciple, he could attain arahatship together with the four discriminations (*paṭisambhidā*) and the six *abhiññās* while listening to a four-line stanza from the lips of a perfectly enlightened Buddha, even while the third line is as yet unconcluded. The second has such supporting conditions that, if he were disposed towards the enlightenment of a disciple, he could attain arahatship together with the six *abhiññās* while listening to a four-line stanza from the lips of the Exalted One, even while the fourth line is as yet unconcluded. And the third has the supporting conditions to attain arahatship together with the six *abhiññās* when the four-line stanza he hears from the Exalted One is concluded.

These three types, who form their aspirations without any allotted division of time, receive predictions (of their future Buddhahood) directly from the Buddhas. Then they fulfil the *pāramīs* in order and reach the supreme enlightenment according to the aforementioned time allotted to each type. But that these Great Beings ... should become perfectly enlightened Buddhas before the time allotted to their respective type is fulfilled, this is not possible. Why? Because their knowledge is not yet mature enough and their accumulations of the factors issuing in Buddhahood not yet complete. For just as grain ripens only after the lapse of the time are required (for its growth), so too the supreme enlightenment is perfected only after the lapse of the

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further references. Most of the ideas are also presented in the *Suttanipāta-aṭṭhakathā*.



aforementioned periods of time. Before then, even though striving with all his might, the bodhisattva cannot attain enlightenment. The *pāramis* are fulfilled according to the aforementioned distinction of time. Thus it should be understood.

This passage became the key source for the typology in South-East Asia. It is reproduced nearly verbatim, for example, by Mingun Sayadaw in his *Mahābuddhavaṃsa*, translated into English as *The Great Chronicle of Buddhas*.<sup>24</sup> By applying a theory of three stages of aspiration the number of æons for each type increased to twenty, forty, and eighty, respectively.<sup>25</sup>

## V

The typology was applied to past Buddhas and future bodhisattvas. I have not seen any text that gives a systematic enumeration. Information is available for the following:<sup>26</sup>

Predominant in wisdom ( <i>paññādhika</i> )	Sakyamuni
Predominant in faith ( <i>saddhādhika</i> )	Sikhī
	Kakusandha
	Konāgamana
	Kassapa
Predominant in energy ( <i>viriyādhika</i> )	Dīpaṃkara
	Purāṇasakyamuni
	Metteyya

<sup>24</sup> The Most Venerable Mingun Sayadaw, *The Great Chronicle of Buddhas, The State Buddha Sāsana Council's Version*, Vol. One, Part Two, tr. by U Ko Lay and U Tin Lwin (Yangon: Ti = Ni Publishing Center, CE 1992), pp. 118–120. For a succinct modern account of the theory, see Toshiichi Endo, *Buddha in Theravada Buddhism: A Study of the Concept of Buddha in the Pali Commentaries* (Dehiwela [Sri Lanka], 1997), pp. 251–252.

<sup>25</sup> See below, 'The Sambuddhe verses and later Theravādin Buddhology', pp. 128–154.

<sup>26</sup> See below, 'The Sambuddhe verses and later Theravādin Buddhology', pp. 128–154. The textual tradition is not unanimous about Metteyya.

## VI

The typology of the three bodhisattas pervaded religious thought in South-East Asia. The three terms alone – *paññādhika*, *saddhādhika*, and *viriyādhika* – were used as nouns for the three types of bodhisattas or Buddhas. They occur in Pāli and vernacular literature throughout the region, such as the Lanna *Sotatthikī*, the *Sambhāravipāka*, the *Śaṅgītiyavaṇṣa*, and various tellings of *Māleyyadeva-sutta* or *Phra Malai*, as well as in Thai poetic works.

Colophons and inscriptions show that the three types were ideals, very much a part of living Buddhism. For example, in some Burmese manuscript colophons the writer aspires to become a bodhisatta predominant in wisdom:<sup>27</sup>

*etena puññakammena, paññādhikaṃ bhavām' ahaṃ  
buddhatthaṃ pāramī tiṃsa pūretvāna anāgate.*

By this act of merit, may I be a [bodhisatta] strong in wisdom  
fulfilling the thirty *pāramī* for sake of becoming a Buddha in future.

In another colophon the writer wishes to receive a prediction from Metteyya:<sup>28</sup>

*iminā puññak[a]mmena Metteyya jinasāsane  
byākaraṇaṃ patilabhitvā p[a]ññādhikaṃ bhavām' ahaṃ.*

By this act of merit, may I obtain the prediction  
in the religion of the Conqueror Metteyya and become a *paññādhika*.

<sup>27</sup> *Burmese Manuscripts Part 3, Catalogue Numbers 432–735*, compiled by Heinz Braun assisted by Anne Peters, ed. by Heinz Bechert (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996, VOHD Band XXIII, 3), Cat. no. 534, p. 142, colophon to *Samantapāsādikā*, *Cūlavagga-vaṇṇanā*, dated Sakkarāj 1255 (CE 1894); Cat. no. 535, colophon to *Samantapāsādikā*, *Parivāra-vaṇṇanā*, same date; *Burmese Manuscripts Part 4, Catalogue Numbers 736–900*, compiled by Anne Peters, ed. by Heinz Bechert (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000, VOHD Band XXIII, 4), colophon to *Bhikkhunipātimokkha nissaya*, Cat. no. 863, dated Sakkarāj 1230 (CE 1868), p. 184.

<sup>28</sup> *Burmese Manuscripts Part 3*, colophon to *Cittayamaka* in manuscript dated to Sakkarāj 1246 (CE 1885), Cat. no. 502, p. 96. I have corrected the text in two places, indicated by square brackets. Line *a* has *puññakā(sic)mmena*. Line *d* has *puññādhikaṃ*.

Other examples can be quoted from Burmese colophons<sup>29</sup> and from Burmese, Khmer,<sup>30</sup> and Thai inscriptions.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Burmese Manuscripts* Part 2, compiled by Heinz Braun and Daw Tin Tin Myint with an introduction by Heinz Bechert (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1985, VOHD Band XXIII, 2), Cat. no. 253, p. 78, colophon to *Saṅgruih akok* dated Sakkarāj 1237 (CE 1876); Cat. no. 375, colophon to *Vīthi lak rui* dated Sakkarāj 1198 (CE 1836). Another verse in a stock colophon is found in varying degrees of corruption at *Burmese Manuscripts* Part 3 pp. 27, 30, 225, 305, 389, 390, 392; Part 4, pp. 61, 95. One case in which *paññādhika* does not refer to a type of bodhisatta may be cited: Cat. no. 339, colophon to *Khuddasikkhā* dated Sakkarāj 1253 (CE 1891), in the phrase *tikkhapaññādhiko bhava*.

<sup>30</sup> IMA 38, v. 112, in Saveros Pou, 'Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 34 et 38', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* LXII (1995). Unaware of *viriyādhika*'s ancient pedigree, Pou describes it as 'un composé attributif formé selon la syntaxe khmère avec des éléments sanskrits' and misses the point of the verse, which is that the author aspires to be a Buddha like Metteyya.

<sup>31</sup> Inscription no. 236, on the border of a footprint of the Buddha at Phra Taen Sila-at, Uttaradit Province, dated BE 2448 = CE 1905 (*Prachum Silacharuk* 6.2, p. 115).

## The advent of Theravāda Buddhism to mainland South-East Asia

IN THE PRESENT PAPER I EXAMINE EVIDENCE FOR THE SCHOOL-affiliation of the early Buddhism of mainland South-East Asia, in the first millenium of the Christian Era.<sup>1</sup> Is the evidence sufficient to establish that this school was the Theravāda, and, if so, when and from where did it arrive in the region?

For the Theravāda of Ceylon – or more precisely, for the Mahāvihāra school of the Theravāda – we have the history as presented in the two famous chronicles, the *Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvāṃsa*. Information may also be gleaned from references to historical events embedded in the commentaries of Buddhaghosa and others, from inscriptions in Old Sinhala and Sanskrit, from archæological and iconographical evidence, and from Chinese sources – in some cases first hand, such as that supplied by the redoubtable pilgrim Fāxiǎn. Altogether, we have at least in broad outline a continuous history of Theravāda/Mahāvihāra in Ceylon from its inception up to the present day.

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<sup>1</sup> That is, I do not discuss the Buddhism of peninsular and insular South-East Asia, or that of Campā (the coastal regions of present-day central and southern Vietnam). In none of these areas is there any early evidence for Theravāda Buddhism.

Outside of Ceylon, the history of Theravāda is obscure. For mainland India we have almost no information at all. There are some – but not many – references to Theravādin doctrines in the works of other schools,<sup>2</sup> but the historical information – such as that provided by inscriptions or by the Chinese pilgrims Xuánzàng and Yìjīng – is at best sketchy.

For the South-East Asia of the early period we do not have any historical records comparable to those of Ceylon: no indigenous chronicles, whether in Pāli, Sanskrit, or in vernaculars survive. The few extant historical inscriptions do not give us any continuous history, and Chinese reports tell us little about the type of Buddhism practised on the mainland.

### Pāli inscriptions from Burma and Siam

The main evidence for the school-affiliation of early Buddhism in South-East Asia comes from Pāli inscriptions. These are known from two main areas: the Pyu kingdom of Śrīkṣetra in the vicinity of Prome in the lower Irrawaddy valley of Burma, and the Mon kingdom of Dvāravatī in the Chao Phraya basin of Siam.<sup>3</sup> The inscriptions from Burma are engraved on gold plates (fashioned in imitation of palm-leaf manuscripts), a silver reliquary (*stūpa*), terracotta tablets, and stone slabs. The inscriptions from Siam are engraved on stone *dharmacakkas*, octagonal pillars, stone slabs, and clay tablets

<sup>2</sup> See the following works by Peter Skilling: 'The Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛta-viniścaya of Daśabalaśrimitra', *Buddhist Studies Review* 4.1 (1987), pp. 3–23; 'A Citation from the \*Buddhavaṃsa of the Abhayagiri School', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XVIII (1993), pp. 165–175; 'Theravādin Literature in Tibetan Translation', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XIX (1993), pp. 69–201; for some examples from Tibetan sources see also 'Vimuttimaggā and Abhayagiri: the form-aggregate according to the Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛtaviniścaya', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XX (1994), pp. 171–210.

<sup>3</sup> In this paper I set aside the historical questions (of, for example, chronology and geographical extent) attached to the names of these two kingdoms, and (with not a little reluctance) use the names as a conventional shorthand. For Dvāravatī see Peter Skilling, 'Dvāravatī: Recent Revelations and Research', in *Dedications to Her Royal Highness Princess Galyani Vadhana Krom Luang Naradhiwar Rajanagarindra on her 80th birthday* (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 2003), pp. 87–112.

and reliquaries. The script used in both cases is similar, and may be described as a variety of the South Indian Pallava script.<sup>4</sup> The Śrīkṣetra inscriptions are dated to the fifth to seventh centuries CE, the Siamese inscriptions to the sixth to eighth centuries: that is, they are broadly contemporary.<sup>5</sup>

(1) Inscriptions from the region of Śrīkṣetra:<sup>6</sup>

- the *ye dhammā hetuppabhavā* verse;<sup>7</sup>
- the *iti pi so bhagavā* formula;<sup>8</sup>
- the *svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo* formula;<sup>9</sup>
- the formula of dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*);<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The script of the Pyu inscriptions has in the past been variously described as Kadamba, Telegu-Canara, or Grantha: for a welcome reappraisal see Janice Stargardt, 'The Oldest Known Pali Texts, 5th–6th century: Results of the Cambridge Symposium on the Pyu Golden Pali Text from Śrī Kṣetra, 18–19 April 1995', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XXI (1995), p. 204.

<sup>5</sup> For the dating of the former see Stargardt, 'The Oldest Known Pali Texts', pp. 199–213, for the latter e.g. Christian Bauer, 'Notes on Mon Epigraphy', *JSS* 79.1 (1991), pp. 31–83, and Peter Skilling, 'New Pāli Inscriptions from South-east Asia', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XXIII (1997), pp. 123–157, section II ('Pāli Inscriptions on a Stone *Dhammacakka* and an Octagonal Pillar from Chai Nat'), pp. 133–151. It should be stressed that the inscriptions do not bear any dates, and that those assigned to them are tentative and approximate. A comprehensive comparative palaeographical analysis of the 'Śrīkṣetra' with the 'Dvāravati' corpus remains a desideratum.

<sup>6</sup> For details see Nihar-Ranjan Ray, 'Early Traces of Buddhism in Burma', *Journal of the Greater India Society* VI.1 (Jan., 1939), pp. 41–52; G.H. Luce, 'The Advent of Buddhism to Burma', in L. Cousins et al. (ed.), *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner* (Dordrecht and Boston: 1974), pp. 125–127; and Stargardt, 'The Oldest Known Pali Texts', pp. 199–213. Most of the texts are brought together in U Tha Myat, *Pyu Reader* (Rangoon: 1963). Note that several of the passages are known from more than one inscription.

<sup>7</sup> *Mahāvagga, Vinaya*, PTS I 40.28–29.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Dhajagga-sutta, Saṃyutta Nikāya*, PTS I 219.31–33.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Dhajagga-sutta, Saṃyutta Nikāya*, PTS I 220.1–2.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Mahāvagga, Vinaya*, PTS I 1.10–2.1. In addition to the *paṭiccasamuppāda* inscribed on gold plates from Śrīkṣetra, the *Vinaya Mahāvagga* version is known from a stone slab from Kunzeik, Shwegyin township, Pegu: see Aung Thaw, *Historical Sites in Burma* (Rangoon: 1972), pp. 110–111. As far as I know this handsome and well-preserved inscription has not been published, but

- stanzas sung by Sakka, Lord of the Gods, in praise of the Buddha entering Rājagaha;<sup>11</sup>
- the *maggaṇ’atthaṅgiko seṭṭho* verse;<sup>12</sup>
- verses from three popular *parittas*: the *Maṅgala*-, *Ratana*-, and *Mora-suttas*;<sup>13</sup>
- the four confidences (*vesāraja*) of a Buddha;<sup>14</sup>
- the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening (*bodhipakkhiya-dhammā*);
- a list of miscellaneous numerically grouped items, in ascending order;
- a list of the fourteen *ñāṇas* of a Buddha;<sup>15</sup>
- a fragment of a commentary on dependent arising;<sup>16</sup>

fortunately most of it can be described from the photograph. It opens (the readings here are preliminary) with the introductory [1] *t(e)na samayena buddho bhaga(vā) uruvelāyaṃ viharati na(jj)(ā) (neraṇjārāya? unclear)* [2] *tīre* (or *tire?*) *bodhirukkhamūle pathamābhisambuddho atha kho bhagavā...*, followed by the full *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula, both *anuloma* (lines 5–9) and *paṭiloma* (lines 9–14). The latter opens with the phrase *avijjāya tv eva asesavirāgaṇirodhā*, characteristic of the Mahāvihārin (Pāli) version only, and not known in versions of other schools, such as the (Mūla-)Sārvastivādins or Lokottaravādins, or from the Prakrit inscriptions from Devnimorī and Ratnagiri, all of which open with equivalents of *avijjā-nirodhā*. The *paṭiloma* is followed by the *yadā have pātubhavanti dhammā* verse (lines 15–18), known also from inscriptions from Siam. The last two lines continue with the prose text of the *Mahāvagga* – *atha kho (bhaga)vā r(attiya) maj(jh)imaṃ (yā) maṃ paṭicca* – suggesting that the slab is part of a longer inscription. For the Devnimorī and Ratnagiri inscriptions see Oskar von Hinüber, ‘Epigraphical Varieties of Continental Pāli from Devnimorī and Ratnagiri’, in *Buddhism and its Relation to Other Religions: Essays in Honour of Dr. Shozen Kumoi on his Seventieth Birthday* (Kyoto: 1985), pp. 185–200; for a suggestion that the former might be Vātsīputrīya or Sāmmatiya, see P. Skilling, ‘On the School-affiliation of the “Patna Dhammapada”’, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XXIII (1997), pp. 83–122.

<sup>11</sup> *Mahāvagga*, *Vinaya*, PTS I 38.15–23, 29–30.

<sup>12</sup> *Dhammapada* 273.

<sup>13</sup> For these see Peter Skilling, ‘New Pāli Inscriptions from South-east Asia’, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XXIII (1997), pp. 123–157, section III (‘A Paritta Inscription from Śrīkṣetra in Burma’), pp. 152–157.

<sup>14</sup> *Majjhima Nikāya* 12, PTS I 71.32; *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, PTS II 8, penult.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, PTS I 133.19–30.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Vibhaṅga*, PTS 144–45.

- the opening of the *mātikā*: *kusalā [dhammā aku]salā dhammā abyāka[tā] dhammā*;<sup>17</sup>
- a fragment giving two of the twenty-four conditions: [*adhi*] *patipaccayo anantarapaccayo*;
- a list of seven of the eight *vipassanā ñāṇas*.<sup>18</sup>

(2) Inscriptions from the Chao Phraya basin:<sup>19</sup>

- the *ye dhammā hetuppabhavā* verse;
- the formula of dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*);
- an enumeration of the four truths of the noble (*ariya-sacca*), the twelve links of dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), and the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening (*bodhipakkhiya-dhamma*), inscribed together on a rectangular stone bar from Nakhon Pathom;<sup>20</sup>
- extracts from the prose *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, the ‘first sermon’ spoken by the Buddha in the Deer Park at Sarnath, found on stone *dhammacakkas*;<sup>21</sup>
- the three *yadā* have *pātubhavanti dhammā* verses;<sup>22</sup>
- the *anekajātisaṃsāraṃ* verses;<sup>23</sup>
- the *dukkhaṃ dukkhasamuppādaṃ* verse;<sup>24</sup>
- the *abhiññeyyaṃ abhiññātaṃ* verse;<sup>25</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, PTS 1.4.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Visuddhimagga* XXI.1.

<sup>19</sup> Most of the inscriptions may be found in Supaphan na Bangchang, *Wiwathanakan ngan khian phasa bali nai prathet thai: charuk tamnan phongsawadan san prakat* (Bangkok: 2529 [1986], pp. 15–40). As in the case of the Śrīkṣetra inscriptions, several of the passages are known from more than one inscription.

<sup>20</sup> See Peter Skilling, ‘New Pāli Inscriptions from South-east Asia’, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XXIII (1997), pp. 123–157, section I (‘A Recently Discovered Pāli Inscription From Nakhon Pathom’), pp. 123–133.

<sup>21</sup> See above, n. 5.

<sup>22</sup> *Mahāvagga*, *Vinaya*, PTS I 2.3–26.

<sup>23</sup> *Dhammapada* 153–54.

<sup>24</sup> *Dhammapada* 191. See Peter Skilling, ‘A Buddhist Verse Inscription from Andhra Pradesh’, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 34 (1991), pp. 239–246, and Skilling, ‘New Pāli Inscriptions from South-east Asia’, section I, pp. 123–133.

<sup>25</sup> *Suttanipāta* 558.



- fragments of the sixteen senses (*aṭṭha*) of the four truths;<sup>26</sup>
- *nābādhakaṃ yato dukkhaṃ...*, non-canonical verses on the four truths;<sup>27</sup>
- *sacca-kicca-kata-ñāṇaṃ...*, a non-canonical verse on the twelve aspects (*dvādasākāra*) of the four truths;<sup>28</sup>
- three verses from the *Telakaṭāha-gātha*.<sup>29</sup>

The evidence of the inscriptions may be examined from two aspects: language and contents. The language of both the Śrīkṣetra and Dvāravatī palaeographs is Pāli. Is the use of Pāli sufficient to establish the presence of the Theravāda? Or could another Buddhist school have also transmitted its sacred writ in Pāli, and have been responsible for the inscriptions? From an early date, Buddhist tradition recognized dialect as one of the key distinguishing features of the different schools (*nikāya*). In the second half of the first millenium of the Christian Era, tradition spoke of four main schools, each transmitting its canon in a different Indic dialect: (Mūla)Sarvāstivādin, who used Sanskrit; Mahāsāṃghikas, who used an intermediate language; Sāmmatiyas, who used Apabhraṃśa; and Sthāviras (that is, Theras), who used Paisācī.<sup>30</sup> The tradition is confirmed by the distinctive and consistent linguistic features of available texts of the schools. On this evidence I conclude that it is unlikely that another school would have used Pāli, and that the use of that language in the inscriptions is a strong indication of Theravādin activity in the region.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, PTS I 19.31–20.6. See Skilling, ‘New Pāli Inscriptions from South-east Asia’, section II, for this and the two following passages.

<sup>27</sup> Cited at *Visuddhimagga* XVI.25.

<sup>28</sup> Cited in *Paṭhamasambodhi (phasa bali) chabap khatlok chak khamphi bailan aksonkhom* (Bangkok: Wat Phra Chetuphon [Wat Pho]/Borisat Sahathammik Chamkat, 2537 [1994], p. 127.6), and *Sāratthasamuccaya (Sāratthasamuccaya atthakathā bhāṇavāra*, vol. 4 [Bangkok: Rongphim Krung Thep, 2532 (1989)]).

<sup>29</sup> See references below. The inscription is from Prachin Buri, and thus outside of the Chao Phraya valley proper.

<sup>30</sup> See Skilling, ‘On the School-affiliation of the “Patna Dhammapada”’, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XXIII (1997), pp. 83–122, for references. The Theravādins traditionally describe the language of their texts as Māgadhī, ‘the language of Magadha’: see Oskar von Hinüber, ‘On the History of the Name of the Pāli Language’, in *Selected Papers on Pāli Studies* (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1994), pp. 76–90.

What about the contents of the inscriptions? It is true that the canonical extracts – such as the various formulas, the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, and the verses – belong to the common heritage of Buddhism: but our epigraphs give them in their Theravādin recensions, and they agree very closely indeed with the received transmission that we know today.<sup>31</sup> The ‘extracts’ from the *Abhidhamma* and *Paṭisambhidāmagga* are rather more indicative. As far as is known, the seven books of the Theravādin *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* are unique to that school, and employ a unique system and technical vocabulary. The Śrīkṣetra inscriptions preserve fragments with counterparts in the *Mātikā*, the *Vibhaṅga*, and the list of twenty-four conditions (*paccaya*), all of which may be described as specifically Theravādin. Inscriptions from both Śrīkṣetra and Siam employ technical categories known from the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (whether or not they are actual extracts is not clear), an ancient commentary transmitted in the *Khuddaka-nikāya* of the Pāli Canon, and unique to the Theravādin school.

The non-canonical inscriptions provide further convincing evidence for a Theravādin presence. The Śrīkṣetra list of seven *vipassanā ñāṇas* has a parallel in the *Visuddhimagga*, and an inscribed octagonal pillar from U Tapao gives a set of verses on the four truths that is cited in the *Visuddhimagga* and in other works of the school.<sup>32</sup> The *Visuddhimagga* is, of course, one of the most representative and most authoritative texts of the Mahāvihāra Theravāda. An inscription found in association with a giant pair of *Buddhapāda* at Si Maha Phot district in Prachin Buri province gives three Pāli stanzas in homage to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. The stanzas, in the *vasantatilaka* metre, are from the *Telakaṭāha-gāthā*, a work of unknown authorship believed to have been composed in Ceylon. According to the opening Khmer portion, the epigraph was set up by one Buddhasiri in CE 761.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> There are a very few orthographic variants, for which see e.g. Skilling, ‘New Pāli Inscriptions from South-east Asia’, section I, pp. 128–129 – with reference to the work of von Hinüber – and section II, pp. 133–151.

<sup>32</sup> See for references Skilling, ‘New Pāli Inscriptions from South-east Asia’, section II, pp. 133–151.

<sup>33</sup> See *Charuk nai prathet thai* (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department 2529 [1986]) Vol. I, pp. 179–186 and Mendis Rohanadeera, ‘The Noen Sa Bua Inscription of Dong Si Maha Bo, Prachinburi’, *Journal of Siam Society* 76 (1988), pp. 89–99. The *Telakaṭāha-gāthā* was edited by Edmund R. Goonaratne in *Journal of the Pali Text Society* (1884), pp. 49–68.

The *sacca-kicca-kata-ñāṇaṃ* verse is known only from late Mahāvihāra texts: it is noteworthy that the Siamese inscriptions (the verse occurs several times) are much earlier than the known texts that give the verse.<sup>34</sup>

From the point of view of both language and contents, I conclude that the Pāli inscriptions of Burma and Siam give firm evidence for a Theravādin presence in the Irrawaddy and Chao Phraya basins, from about the fifth century CE onwards.<sup>35</sup> From the extent and richness of the evidence it seems that the Theravāda was the predominant school, and that it enjoyed the patronage of ruling and economic elites.<sup>36</sup> But I do not mean to suggest that religious society was monolithic: other schools may well have been present, or have come and gone, and there is ample evidence for the practice of Mahāyāna and Brahmanism in the region.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> See Skilling 'New Pāli Inscriptions from South-east Asia', section II, pp. 133–151 for references.

<sup>35</sup> We must wait for a comprehensive study of Indic loan-words in early Mon inscriptions from Siam before we can determine the degree to which they use Sanskrit or Pāli. An example of the former is the word *punya*, ubiquitous in the epigraphs. A possible example of the latter is the term *upājḥāy*, derived more probably from Pāli *upajjhāya* (also *upajjha* and *upajjhā*) than Sanskrit *upādhyāya*, in an inscription from Lopburi: see George Coëdès, *Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam, Deuxième Partie: Inscriptions de Dvāravatī, de Çrīvijaya et de Lavo* (Bangkok: 1961), p. 8, II (1). Another form, from two *circa* ninth century 'votive tablets' is *pajhāy*: *Charuk nai prathet thai*, Vol. II, pp. 85–89, 90–94 (note that the word occurs side by side with *ācāryya*).

<sup>36</sup> Regarding the 'Khin Ba mound' relic chamber, from which a twenty-leaf golden Pāli text was unearthed, Janice Stargardt remarks that 'although many other relic chambers were discovered at Śrī Kṣetra, this was the only one to survive intact, and its contents exceeded – in number, quality of workmanship, and concentration of precious metals and stones – even the relic chamber of the Bhaṭṭiprolu stūpa in Andhra' (Stargardt, 'The Oldest Known Pali Texts', p. 200).

<sup>37</sup> The practice of Mahāyāna is compatible with any of the Vinaya schools, including the Theravāda, and brahmins played (and continue to play) an active role in South-East Asian 'Buddhist' societies, both court and common. The schools or religious groups should be regarded as interactive and complementary rather than mutually exclusive. For Avalokiteśvara in South-East Asia see Nandana Chutiwongs, *The Iconography of Avalokiteśvara in Mainland South East Asia* (Leiden: 1984) (especially Chap. 3 on Burma and Chap. 4 on Central Thailand) and Nandana Chutiwongs and Denise Patry

## The question of origins

The Theravādin *saṅgha* of Ceylon was divided into two main rival branches, the Mahāvihāravāsins and Abhayagirivāsins.<sup>38</sup> After more than a thousand years of contention for legitimacy and patronage, the former won out, and absorbed the monks and monasteries of the latter. Most regrettably for our purposes, the literature of the Abhayagiri, which included at least one chronicle of the school, was allowed (or perhaps encouraged) to disappear, with the result that no undisputed Pāli text of the school survives.<sup>39</sup> The Theravāda that we know today is the Mahāvihāra tradition, as settled by the time of the prolific commentator Buddhaghosa in the fifth century. The later Pāli literature of the sub-commentaries (*ṭīkā*s) and manuals, although subject to further development and a variety of influences, also belongs to the Mahāvihāravāsin lineage.

Both the Abhayagiri and Mahāvihāra schools maintained contacts with India: with Kāñcīpuram, Andhradeśa, and Magadha. Is there any evidence for the presence of either school in early South-East Asia? The canonical inscriptions – including the *Abhidhamma* ‘extracts’ – could belong to either the Abhayagirivāsins or the Mahāvihāravāsins, since both are believed to have transmitted a similar canon in Pāli, and both held broadly similar tenets and used a similar technical vocabulary.<sup>40</sup> It seems that the Abhayagiri also transmitted the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, or at least a similar text, since passages cited in the *Vimuttimaggā* (for which see below) have parallels in that work. The *nābādhakam yato dukkham* verses, known

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Leidy, *Buddha of the Future* (New York and Singapore: 1994); for brahmanism in the region see Daweewarn Dawee, *Brāhmaṇism in South-East Asia (From the earliest time to 1445 A.D.)* (New Delhi: 1982)

<sup>38</sup> Other branches, such as the Sāgaliyas, Dhammarucikas, or Jetavanīyas also existed, but seem to have been less enduring or influential.

<sup>39</sup> See Skilling ‘A Citation from the \**Buddhavaṃsa* of the Abhayagiri School’, pp. 165–175.

<sup>40</sup> The canons of the two schools were not identical – and is it not historically and humanly improbable (or even impossible) that two collections transmitted at separate monastic centres for centuries from an early date – the Abhayagiri was founded in the first century BCE – should be so? See the important references in Oskar von Hinüber, ‘Buddhist Law According to the Theravāda-Vinaya: A Survey of Theory and Practice’, *JABS* 18.1 (1995), pp. 36–38.

at present only from Mahāvihāra texts such as the *Visuddhimagga*, are given in citation, and are not original to the works in question: that is, they originate from an earlier text that may have been accepted by both schools.

The *Vimuttimagga*, a treatise associated with the Abhayagiri, was well-known outside of Ceylon (whether it was composed in that country or in India remains under debate). A comprehensive manual of practice and theory, composed by Upatissa (Skt. Upatiṣya) perhaps by the second century CE, it was translated into Chinese in 515. Interestingly, the translator, \*Saṃghabhara, was a *bhikṣu* of Funan (an early South-East Asian polity known from Chinese sources, and located by the *savants* in the deltaic regions of Cambodia).<sup>41</sup> The manuscript of the *Vimuttimagga*, along with the other texts translated by \*Saṃghabhara, was brought to China in 503 by another monk of Funan, \*Mandrasena.<sup>42</sup> Since none of the other texts brought from Funan are Theravādin, and some belong to the Mahāyāna,<sup>43</sup> the fact that the *Vimuttimagga* was among them attests only to the availability of that text in Funan: it cannot be interpreted as evidence for a (non-Mahāvihāra) Theravādin presence.<sup>44</sup> Since \*Saṃghabhara did some

<sup>41</sup> For the school-affiliation (and name of the translator and date of translation, about which there has been some confusion) see Skilling, 'Vimuttimagga and Abhayagiri', pp. 171–210.

<sup>42</sup> *Lidai sanbao ji*, Taishō 2034, Vol. 49, 98c, 6–7; *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, Taishō 2154, Vol. 55, 537c, 18–19. The *Annals of the Liang Dynasty* confirm that Funan was one of the countries that sent tribute in 503. I am grateful to Dr. Bhikṣuṇi Vinīta Tseng for checking the Chinese sources.

<sup>43</sup> The works are listed in Bunyiu Nanjio, *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka, the Sacred Canon of the Buddhists in China and Japan* ([Oxford: 1883] San Francisco: 1975), II §§ 101, 102; Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, *Le canon bouddhique en Chine: Les traducteurs et les traductions*, Tome I (Paris: 1927), pp. 414–418; *Répertoire du canon bouddhique sino-japonais* (Fascicule annexe du Hōbōgirin) (Paris-Tōkyō: 1978), pp. 267 (s.v. Mandarasen), 281 (s.v. Sōgyabara).

<sup>44</sup> The *Vimuttimagga* was also known in North India: the chapter on the *dhutaṇḍiga* was translated into Tibetan under the title *Dhutaṇḍanirdeśa* around CE 800, and long sections were cited by Daśabalaśrīmitra, a North Indian scholar, probably in the twelfth century, in a work preserved only in Tibetan translation: see Skilling, 'The Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛta-viniścaya of Daśabalaśrīmitra', pp. 3–23, Skilling, 'Theravādin Literature in Tibetan Translation', pp. 69–201, and Skilling, 'Vimuttimagga and Abhayagiri', pp. 171–210 for references.

of his translation work in the 'Funanese Pavilion',<sup>45</sup> and enjoyed the patronage of the Emperor, it seems that Funanese Buddhism was accorded some esteem.

(For insular South-East Asia, we have one clear piece of evidence: the inscription from Ratu Baka in central Java, dated CE 792, which refers to an 'Abhayagiri-*vihāra* built for the Sinhalese *saṅgha*'. On the mainland, but outside of our period, there is mention of an 'Abhayagiri' in the concluding Khmer portion of a Vajrayānist Sanskrit palaeograph, dated CE 1066, from the vicinity of Nakhon Ratchasima (Korat) in Central Siam.<sup>46</sup> The precise location of this Abhayagiri is unknown, and it is by no means certain that the toponym should be related to the Abhayagiri school: the inscription names only an 'Abhaya Mountain' [*giri*: without the word *vihāra*], where images of 'Buddhalokeśvara' and others were installed and later renovated.)

All told, there is no conclusive local evidence that the early Theravāda of South-East Asia was affiliated with either the Mahāvihāra or the Abhayagiri. We may also note the absence of references to South-East Asia of the period in the chronicles of Ceylon,<sup>47</sup> and reflect that in the great period of reform that swept the region in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the new ordination lineage was distinguished by the name *Sīhala-sāsana*. Might this not suggest that the old tradition did not associate itself with Ceylon?

It is therefore probably futile to try to trace the Theravāda of the period to either of the Ceylon schools. It is likely that Buddhism arrived in the area at an early date – perhaps even from the time of Soṇa and Uttara's mission to Suvannabhūmi during the reign of King Aśoka, as traditionally held. Whether this Buddhism belonged to the Theravādin lineage from the start, or whether that lineage asserted itself later, cannot be said (and what did the term Theravādin mean

<sup>45</sup> Bagchi, *Le canon bouddhique en Chine*, Tome I, p. 416.

<sup>46</sup> See Chirapat Prapandvidya, 'The Sab Bāk Inscription: Evidence of an Early Vajrayāna Buddhist Presence in Thailand', *JSS* 78.2 (1990), p. 12 (text line 32), p. 13 (tr.).

<sup>47</sup> See here Ray, 'Early Traces of Buddhism in Burma', p. 52. Sirisena remarks that 'Sri Lanka's close religious contacts with Burma started only from the eleventh century'; W.M. Sirisena, *Sri Lanka and South-east Asia: Political, Religious and Cultural Relations from A.D. c. 1000 to c. 1500* (Leiden: 1978), p. 58. His work offers a wealth of information – from chronicles, inscriptions – on the relations between Ceylon and South-East Asia but, as the title indicates, all from the later period.

in the pre-Buddhaghosa period, and outside of Ceylon?) – but there is no doubt that it evolved independently of the Ceylon schools. Over the centuries it would have undergone multiple influences, as monks (and perhaps nuns) from different regions of India criss-crossed the region, and as local monks travelled throughout the region and to different parts of India.<sup>48</sup> There is evidence suggestive of connections with Andhradeśa and the South, for example in the style of Buddha images and, possibly, layout of early Pyu *stūpas* and *vihāras*, such as those from Beikthano.<sup>49</sup> There is also evidence for contacts with North India: the use of Gupta idioms in Dvāravati Buddha images, and the practice of enshrining the *ye dhammā* verse or the *paṭīccasamuppāda* formula in *stūpas*, which was widespread throughout the North, but rare in the South<sup>50</sup> and

<sup>48</sup> If anything is clear from the time of our earliest records – the *Tripitaka* itself (e.g. the *Puṇṇovāda-sutta*, *Majjhima Nikāya* 145) – up to the present, it is that monks travelled, even in the face of adversity or danger. The subject is addressed by Vasubandhu, who in his *Vyākhyāyukti* gives in verse seven reasons why the Buddha travelled (note the technical term, known from the canon, *cārikāṃ carati*) and fifteen reasons why auditors (*śrāvaka*) did so: see Prapod Assavavirulhakarn and Peter Skilling, 'Vasubandhu on Travel and Seclusion', *Manusya Journal of Humanities* 2/1 (1999), pp. 13–24.

<sup>49</sup> It is intriguing that the *dukkhaṃ dukkhasamuppādaṃ* verse, inscribed at least twice in Siam, is also known (but in a lightly Sanskritic form) from an inscription from Andhra: see, for details, Skilling, 'A Buddhist Verse Inscription from Andhra Pradesh', pp. 239–46, and Skilling, 'New Pāli Inscriptions from South-east Asia', section I, pp. 123–133. The use of the Pallava script cannot in itself be cited as evidence, since that script was employed from an early date throughout insular, peninsular, and mainland South-East Asia, for secular and religious (both Brahmanical and Buddhist) records.

<sup>50</sup> For some southern examples in the Pallava script see A. Rea, 'A Buddhist Monastery on the Śaṅkaram Hills, Vizagapatam District', *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, 1907–8* (repr. Delhi: 1990), pp. 149–180 and Pls. LI–LXIV (and also Debala Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments* [Calcutta: 1980, first published December 1971], pp. 218–220). The inscriptions that I am able to decipher from the Stygian reproduction of the plates give the *ye dhammā* verse in Sanskrit. Rea describes the site as 'one of the most remarkable groups of Buddhist remains in the Presidency' (then in Madras, the site is now in District Visakhapatnam of Andhra Pradesh). Further south, at Gummadiurru (District Krishna) were found '127 clay tablets of the size of an eight-anna piece and bearing the Buddhist creed in Nagari characters of the late mediæval period' (*Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, 1926–27* [repr. Delhi: 1990], pp. 155–156; see also Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, p. 212).

Ceylon.<sup>51</sup> The *Telakaṭāha* verses suggest contacts with the latter country, as does, perhaps, a short and enigmatic Old Mon inscription from the Narai or Khao Wong cave in Saraburi province, dated to *circa* twelfth century BE (CE 550–650), which refers to an Anurādhapura.<sup>52</sup> Whether the reference is to the ancient capital of Ceylon or to a local site cannot be said, although the latter seems more likely: the important point is that the toponym seems to be otherwise known only from Ceylon.<sup>53</sup>

We should not regard the establishment and development of Buddhism in the region as a mere mechanical process. Rather, it was a human, and hence unpredictable, progress in which decisions were made and acted upon by individuals and communities. A single charismatic monk could attract followers and sponsors of status to his school; a single ruler could, whether for political, economic, or purely religious reasons, decide to favour a particular

<sup>51</sup> That the practice was not unknown to the late Ceylon Theravāda may be seen from the *Sāratthadīpanī* (a text some centuries younger than our examples from the field), which defines a *dharmma-cetiya* as '[a *cetiya*] built after depositing a book inscribed with conditioned arising, etc.': Mahāmakuṭa edition, Vol. I (Bangkok: 2511 [1968]), p. 263, ult *paṭiccasamuppādādikkhita potthakam nidahitvā katamā pana dhammacetiyaṃ nāma*. (I am grateful to the late U Bo Kay of Pagan for the reference.) We may compare the definition with Candragomin (sixth–seventh century CE?) as cited by Haribhadra (late eighth century) in his *Āloka* (U. Wogihara [ed.], *Abhisamayālaṃkāra'ālokā prajñāpāramitāvyākhyā* [Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1933], fascicle 2, p. 207, ll. 20–22): *yatra hi nāma puḍgalanairātmya-dyotikayā ye dharmā hetuprabhavā ity ādigāthayā adhiṣṭhito bhūbhāgaḥ stūpo mataḥ*. For some of the few *ye dharmā* inscriptions known from Ceylon, see Nandasena Mudiyanse, *Mahayana Monuments in Ceylon* (Colombo: 1967) pp. 29–30 (in Nāgarī, on images that Mudiyanse, with good reason, deems imported), 92–95 (in Sinhalese characters, possibly in Pāli), and 97. Ceylon is rich in deposited texts, but mostly in Sanskrit, and of *mantra*, *dhāraṇī*, or *Prajñāpāramitā*, rather than extracts from the Pāli canon: see Mudiyanse, *Mahayana Monuments in Ceylon*, Gregory Schopen, 'The Text on the "Dhāraṇī Stones from Abhayagiriya": A Minor Contribution to the Study of Mahāyāna Literature in Ceylon', *JIAS* 5.1 (1982), pp. 100–108, and Oskar von Hinüber, *Sieben Goldblätter einer Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā aus Anurādhapura* (Göttingen: 1984).

<sup>52</sup> *Charuk nai prathet thai* (Bangkok: 2529 [1986]) Vol. II, pp. 42–47.

<sup>53</sup> That is, no other references are given in Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, ([Oxford: 1899] Delhi: 1976), p. 37c or in G.P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, Vol. I, ([1937] New Delhi: 1983), pp. 83–85.



*saṅgha*.<sup>54</sup> Changing trade routes or political alliances could bring new patterns of patronage.

Perhaps because of the absence of indigenous information – of contemporary chronicles or histories – the Buddhism of early South-East Asia is all too often portrayed as an inanimate cultural package that was passively received from abroad. All the evidence, however, is against this. The Buddhism of the Chao Phraya plain was not a simple copy from Ceylon or India. From the time of the very first evidence, it already has a unique face, implying an earlier evolution for which no records remain. The surviving artefacts are expressions of a mature and refined culture, with special features like the large and ornate stone *dharmacakkas*; the plan of the *stūpas* or *caityas*, and the style of their stucco art; the style of the Buddha images; the rich terracotta art (the so-called votive tablets); and motifs that remain to be explained, such as the so-called Banaspati image. From this evidence we can only deduce that the Buddhism of the Chao Phraya valley is the flowering of a 'local genius'. The same may be said of the Buddhism of the Pyu, which had its own architecture and terracotta art, and local practices such as the urn-burial of people of status. The two realms were flourishing centres of Buddhist culture in their own right, on an equal footing with contemporary centres like Anurādhapura.<sup>55</sup>

To conclude, we may turn to Laos and Cambodia. Is there any evidence of early Theravādin activity in these countries? Very little information is available for Laos. In 1968 a standing stone Buddha in Dvāravātī style, 190 centimetres in height, was found at Ban Thalāt in Vientiane province. The image and the accompanying Mon inscription have been dated to the seventh–eighth centuries.<sup>56</sup> The finds suggest that the Mon Buddhism of the right bank of the Mekhong River (the Mun and Chi

<sup>54</sup> That a single monastic could make enormous and enduring contributions to a culture – in manifold aspects – may be seen from countries for which we have records. Atiśa and Bu ston spring to mind for Tibet, and Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi) for Japan.

<sup>55</sup> The situation was perhaps not much different from that of today, when the *Buddhisms* of the Mon, Burmese, Central Thai, Shan, Lanna Tai, Lao, and Khmer are each quite distinctive. We might also bear in mind that – from the point of view of Madhyadeśa – Ceylon, Andhra, and South-East Asia were equally foreign cultures, and that there is no valid reason to relegate the last-named to a lower rank. In a sense 'local' and 'foreign' are modern constructs: the South-East Asian cultures that adopted Indian cosmology did not hesitate to place themselves within Jambudīpa.

<sup>56</sup> Thao Boun Souk, *L'image du Buddha dans l'art lao* (Vientiane: 1971) p. 14 (with photograph); Votho Tinh, *Les origines du Laos* (Paris: 1983), pp. 42–43.

valleys) also spread to the left bank, but much more research needs to be done into the nature of the Buddhism of the middle Mekhong valley before anything more can be said.

In Cambodia – which is rich in structural remains and lithographs – no ancient Pāli inscriptions have been found, and scriptural extracts of the type discussed above are unknown, with one exception. This is an epigraph of two lines, engraved in small ‘pre-Angkorian’ letters on the back of a standing Buddha image (90 cm. in height) from Tuol Preah Theat in Kompong Speu province (now in the Musée Guimet).<sup>57</sup> The text reads:<sup>58</sup>

*ye dhammā hetuprabhavā tesaṃ hetuṃ tathāgato avaca  
tesaṃ ca yo nirodho evaṃvādī mahāsamano.*

The verse differs from the Pāli of the *Mahāvagga* (*Vinaya* I 40) in giving *hetuprabhavā* for *hetuppabhavā* and *avaca* for *āha*, and cannot be cited as evidence for a Theravādin presence.<sup>59</sup> Otherwise, the earliest Pāli inscription dates from CE 1308 – and thus belongs to the heyday of

<sup>57</sup> It is not without interest that the *ye dhammā* verse is also inscribed (in Pāli) on the back of a standing Dvāravatī-style Buddha image (196 centimetres in height) from Ratchaburi, dated to *circa* twelfth century BE (CE 550–650): see *Charuk nai prathet thai* (Bangkok: 2529 [1986]) I 72–74. Another Dvāravatī Buddha image with a Pāli *ye dhammā* inscription ‘en caractères préangkoriens peu soignés’ is in the Korat Museum: ‘Inscription sur une statue de Buddha du Musée de Korat’, in George Coëdès, *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, Vol. VII (Paris: 1964), p. 162. See also Peter Skilling, ‘Traces of the Dharma: Preliminary reports on some *ye dhammā* and *ye dharmā* inscriptions from Mainland South-East Asia’, *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* 90–91 (2003/2004), pp. 273–287.

<sup>58</sup> George Coëdès, *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, Vol. VII (Paris: 1964), p. 108. The image is illustrated in Pierre Dupont, *La statuaire préangkoriennne* (Ascona: 1955), Pls. XLV B and XLVI C. See also Peter Skilling, ‘Some citation inscriptions from South-East Asia’, *JPTS* XXVII (2002), pp. 159–175.

<sup>59</sup> Note that there are many examples of the *ye dharmā* verse in a mixed or Sanskritic Pāli from India, and that they have yet to be subjected to sustained linguistic and palæographic analysis. See Peter Skilling, ‘A Buddhist inscription from Go Xoai, Southern Vietnam and notes towards a classification of *ye dharmā* inscriptions’, in *80 pi śāstrācārya dr. prahsert na nagara: ruam pada khwam vijākāra dan charūk lae ekasāraporāṇa* (Bangkok: 21 March 2542 [1999]), pp. 171–187.

the 'Theravādin renaissance' in Rāmaññadesa, Burma, Central Siam, the Lanna Kingdom, and other northern principalities.<sup>60</sup>

There is certainly evidence of the presence of Buddhism in the early period: stone, metal, and wooden images of the Buddha,<sup>61</sup> of Maitreya,<sup>62</sup> and of Avalokiteśvara,<sup>63</sup> as well as occasional mention in Sanskrit or Khmer dedicatory inscriptions. Chinese sources record that monks travelled back and forth between Funan and the Middle Kingdom, but say nothing about their school-affiliation. The *Vimuttimagga* and other Buddhist texts, including some of the Mahāyāna, were sent to China from Funan in the early sixth century. The opening verses of the *Telakaṭṭha-gāthā* are known from an eighth century inscription from Prachin Buri, which may be said to belong to the Khmer cultural sphere. Furthermore, some of the early Buddha images of Cambodia are stylistically affiliated to those of Dvāravati. On the other hand, it is remarkable that in Cambodia there are no ruins of monumental brick *stūpas*, so common in Pyu and Mon areas, or even of smaller complexes of votive *stūpas*. Boisselier has noted that none of the ancient epigraphs refer to *stūpas*, and that none of the known *stūpa* remains are earlier than the twelfth century.<sup>64</sup> Nor is there any evidence of a practice shared by Pyu and Mon Buddhists: the mass-production from moulds of clay 'votive tablets'. Here too Boisselier remarks that these *prah patima* are not well-attested until the twelfth century.<sup>65</sup> In sum, while Buddhists were certainly active in Cambodia during the early period, it seems that the dominant ideology remained that of the brahmans, and that Buddhism or Buddhist culture did not flourish among the Khmer to the degree that it did among the Pyu and the Mon.

<sup>60</sup> George Coëdès, 'La plus ancienne inscription en pâli du Cambodge', in *Articles sur le pays khmer* (Paris: 1989), pp. 282–289 (= Études cambodgiennes XXXII, originally published in BEFEO XXXVI). The inscription is a royal record of a religious foundation, and not a scriptural extract.

<sup>61</sup> See Dupont, *La statuaire préangkorienne*, pp. 189–210.

<sup>62</sup> See the examples in Chutiwongs and Leidy, *Buddha of the Future*, pls. XXIX A and XXX A.

<sup>63</sup> For examples see Chutiwongs, *The Iconography of Avalokiteśvara in Mainland South East Asia*, Chap. 5, Chutiwongs and Leidy, *Buddha of the Future*, and Dupont, *La statuaire préangkorienne*, pls. XII B, XXII AB, XXVIII A, XXIX B, XXX B, and XXXI A.

<sup>64</sup> J. Boisselier, *Le Cambodge* (Paris: 1966, Manuel d'archéologie d'Extrême-Orient, Première Partie, Asie du Sud-Est, Tome I), p. 97.

<sup>65</sup> Boisselier, *Le Cambodge*, p. 300. For 'Saintes Empreintes' in Cambodia, see Boisselier, *Le Cambodge*, §§ 219, 256–57, 303, and Fig. 70.

Tripiṭaka in practice in the Fourth and Fifth Reigns:  
Relics and images according to Somdet Phra  
Saṅgharāja Pussadeva's *Paṭhamasambodhi Sermon*

with Prapod Assavavirulhakarn

Introduction

THE *TRIPITAKA* ALONG WITH ITS COMMENTARIES AND SUB-commentaries and related works such as handbooks and grammatical treatises was kept in the important monasteries of Bangkok from the beginning of the Ratanakosin period. Starting from the First Reign many sets were produced and distributed under the sponsorship of kings or of members of the nobility. The formal study of the *Tripitaka* was largely the province of monks and those associated with the court. But the *Tripitaka* was not simply an inert collection of manuscripts, known only to the elite. It was a living thing, and as a treasury of ideas it left its mark on many aspects of social life, from ritual to ethics to meditation practice, to literature, art, and education. The ideas and ideologies of the *Tripitaka* pervaded society and the lives of the faithful.

One of the main ways through which the *Tripitaka* left the library and entered society was through the sermon. The *Tripitaka* was mediated through the sermon, which adapted its ideas to suit circumstances and audiences. Sermons (described in Thai by forms of the Pāli word *desanā*, Sanskrit *deśanā*) were held regularly on

certain days of the lunar calendar, as well as on special occasions. Sermons were often lively social events, and good preachers were much in demand. It was not necessary to know Pāli, or to read the *Tripiṭaka*: people encountered the *Tripiṭaka*, and absorbed its ideas and narratives through the sermon as well as through other media such as mural paintings or verse versions of *jātakas*.

As an example of the sermon genre (or of one of the several sermon genres, the ‘royally authorized sermon’), we give here an excerpt from Supreme Patriarch Pussadeva’s *Paṭhamasambodhi Sermon*. The *Paṭhamasambodhi Sermon* is based on classical sources, such as the account of the division of the relics in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, amplified by later material from the commentaries and sub-commentaries, and, of course, the Pāli and Thai tellings of the *Paṭhamasambodhi* itself.<sup>1</sup>

Somdet Phra Saṅgharāja Pussadeva (Sa, BE 2346–2442 = CE 1803–1899) was one of the most significant figures of nineteenth century Siamese Buddhism. He was the first abbot of Wat Ratchapradit (Rājapraṭṭiṣṭha) in central Bangkok, a Dhammayutika temple founded by King Rāma IV. During the Fifth Reign, in 2436 (1893) he was appointed Supreme Patriarch (Saṅgharāja). Two of his works, the *Royal Chanting Book* (*Suat mon chabap luang*) and a longer Thai-language *Paṭhamasambodhi* are still in use today, and have been published in staggering numbers. The latter – a version in ten parts (*kaṇḍa*), originally published in the journal *Thammachaksu* (*Dharmmacakṣu*) – was edited by Prince Vajirañāṇavarorasa as the first section (*muat*) of *Thammasombat* (*Dharmmasampati*) in Bangkok era 124.<sup>2</sup>

During the Fourth Reign, when he held the rank of Phra Sāsanasobhana, Somdet Phra Saṅgharāja Pussadeva composed another work based on the *Paṭhamasambodhi*. This was the *Paṭhamasambodhi Sermon*, written to present to His Majesty King Rāma IV during the Royal Ceremony of Visākha Pūjā, which at that time was held throughout the month of Visākha. The sermon is divided into four parts, each part opening with introductory verses in Pāli (*ārambhakathā*). The four parts were delivered in the sixth lunar month as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Like the *Anāgatavaṃsa* and *Māleyyasutta*, the *Paṭhamasambodhi* is a genre or family of texts rather than a single text.

<sup>2</sup> See PVL 9.1–9.10

- Part 1: The account of the Birth (*Jātikathā*), on the fourteenth day of the waxing moon;  
 Part 2: The account of the Full Awakening (*Abhisambodhikathā*), on the fifteenth day of the waxing moon;  
 Part 3: The account of the Final Nibbāna (*Parinibbānakathā*), on the seventh day of the waning moon;<sup>3</sup>  
 Part 4: The account of the Distribution of the Relics (*Dhātuvibhajjanakathā*), on the eighth day of the waning moon.

Somdet Phra Saṅgharāja Pussadeva presented the sermon in four parts every year from the Fourth Reign into the Fifth Reign, until the procedure of the Royal Ceremony of Visākha Pūjā was revised and held on only one day, the fifteenth day of the waxing moon, which up to today is an official holiday. From then on a different version was used, since it was necessary to abridge the story of the *Paṭhamasambodhi* into a sermon in one part.

In his capacity of Head (*Sabhānayaka*) of the National Library (Ho Phra Samut Watchirayan), HRH Prince Damrong wrote an introduction to the second printed edition, sponsored by Mme Witsadanwinichay (Chan) and Mr. Kimchua for the funeral of their father, Mr. Ngiab, in the Snake Year 2460 (1917):<sup>4</sup>

The *Paṭhamasambodhi Sermon* counts as a royally authorized sermon (*phra thammathetsana chabap luang*) since it was composed to present to the king (*thaway thet*) and is a literary work of a Supreme Patriarch who is universally esteemed as a great scholar of this land of Siam. It is a praiseworthy work which should be preserved by being printed. I therefore had the first three parts published on the occasion of the funeral of my wife, Mom Cheuay (2404–2446 = CE 1861–1903), in the Rabbit Year BE 2446 (1903). The book was popular with those who received it, and monks used the sermon in Visākha Pūjā ceremonies, but there were complaints that it was incomplete, an unavoidable situation which I regretted. Fourteen years have gone by, and the original edition is now scarce. Since I have heard that there is a demand for the text it seems appropriate to print it again, but this time complete in all four parts. I therefore asked Phra Thepkawi of Wat Ratchapradit for the fourth part, *Dhātuvibhajanā*. Phra Thepkawi was a disciple of Somdet Phra Saṅgharāja, and had received it

<sup>3</sup> Note that the edition consulted misprints ‘7’ as ‘8’.

<sup>4</sup> We give a somewhat abridged translation.

directly from him. The present edition is an improvement over the first edition because it is complete.

The excerpt that follows is from Part 4 of the *Paṭhamasambodhi Sermon*, ‘The Account of the Distribution of the Relics’ (pp. 121–125). The translation of a Siamese sermon is no easy task, and it is hardly possible to do justice to the skilled composition of Somdet Phra Saṅgharāja Pussadeva with its elaborate phrasing, so sonorous in the Thai language. Hence our translation can only be an approximation.

We pick up the narrative from the point at which the brahman Doṇa has averted a war over the relics of the Buddha.

### Translation

[121] When the kṣatriyas and brahmins of the eight cities listened to the sweet speech (*madhurabhāṣita*) they agreed to act in harmony, and unanimously delegated the brahman Doṇa to preside over the division of the holy physical relics (*phra sārīrikadhātu*). When the Great Brahman Doṇa received the royal command, he took a measuring cup (*tumba*) and measured the holy physical relics, dividing them into eight equal portions for the kṣatriyas and brahmins of the eight cities. He then asked for the cup with which he had measured out the relics as an article of worship (*cetiya*). The kṣatriyas and brahmins agreed and presented it to him.

At that time the Moriya kṣatriyas from the country of Pippalivana learned that the Buddha had entered Nibbāna, so they sent a royal envoy to the Malla kṣatriyas to request a portion of the holy physical relics. The Malla kṣatriyas told the royal envoy from the country of Pippalivana, ‘There remains no portion of the holy body at this time, since we have already shared it out. You should take the holy ashes (*phra aṅgāra*) and enshrine them within a *stūpa* and pay respect and make offerings.’ The [distribution of the relics to the] kṣatriyas of the six cities and to the one Great Brahman made seven sites. When they had received a share of the holy physical relics they each invited [their share] back to their own lands where they built *stūpas* and enshrined [the relics] with a great festival and celebration. The Malla kṣatriyas of the city of Kusinārā also built a *stūpa*, enshrined the holy physical relics, and held a festival. Altogether there were eight sites with Holy [Physical] Relic *stūpas*, as has been described.

The Great Brahman Doṇa invited the measuring cup and enshrined it in a *stūpa* which he had erected for the purpose called the Tumba *Stūpa*. When it was completed he held a festival and celebration. The Moriya kṣatriyas from the country of Pippalivana invited the ashes to their city and enshrined them in a *stūpa* built for the purpose called the Aṅgāra *Stūpa*. When it was completed they held a festival and celebration with many kinds of worship.

[122] In that the Brahman Doṇa asked for and obtained the measuring cup and then installed it in a *stūpa* to be honoured and venerated, and the Moriya kṣatriyas from the country of Pippalivana invited the holy ashes and installed them in a holy *stūpa* which they built as a shrine, these two are models to show intelligent people (*pañḍitajana*) what sort of objects make suitable *paribhoga-cetiya*, comparable to the four Inspiring Sites. At the beginning of the first period there were holy *stūpas* at the ten shrine sites in this fashion.

At the time of the Parinibbāna, Somdet the Holy One, possessor of Blessings, revealed the four Inspiring Sites, that is, the place of birth from the womb, the place where the Lord Tathāgata realized unsurpassed true and full awakening, the place where the Lord Tathāgata set in motion the unsurpassed wheel of the Dharma, and the place where the Lord Tathāgata attained Parinibbāna without any remainder (*anupādisesanibbānadhātu*). These four sites are worth seeing and gazing at, that they may inspire a faithful son of family (*kulaputra*).

According to this principle we arrive at two kinds of shrine: the 'physical relic-shrine' (*dhātucetiya*) and the 'shrine by association' (*paribhoga-cetiya*). The eight portions of holy physical relics which the Brahman Doṇa distributed and which were then invited and established within *stūpas* as objects of homage and veneration, honour and offerings, are relic-shrines, while the Tumba *Stūpa*, the Aṅgāra *Stūpa* and the four Inspiring Sites are shrines by association.

The Buddha's mention of the four Inspiring Sites and the reference to the Tumba *Stūpa* and the Aṅgāra *Stūpa* lead intelligent people (*viññūjana*) to conclude that the bowl (*pātra*), robe (*cīvara*), and special requisites like the water-strainer (*dhamaṅkaraka*), etc., used by the holy truly and fully Awakened Lord [123], and the lodgings, seats, bed, hut, and residence, used by the holy Buddha Lord when sitting or lying down, etc., are all shrines by association as well.

After long ages had passed by, knowledgeable Buddhists (*buddhasāsanikapañḍita*) considered the strong benefits of reminders



which could produce bliss from taking the Buddha as an object of contemplation (*buddhāramaṇapīṭi*), etc., and therefore they created images in the form of the Buddha (*buddharūpapaṭimākara*) with durable and precious materials like silver, gold, and precious stones, etc., and set them up as focal points for worship (*pūjaniyasthāna*), in order to produce the lofty virtues of the unsurpassed recollection (*anussatānuttariyādhiguṇa*). The term for this is ‘shrine by designation’ (*uddesikacetiya*).

Herein, some knowledgeable people (*viññūjana*) are not able to make images of the Buddha, or have no liking for or inclination towards (*chandaruci-adhyāśraya*) images of the Buddha. They wish only to build *stūpas*, but are unable to find any physical relics, and therefore enshrine palm leaves inscribed with the word of the Buddha, the Dhamma of instruction (*buddhavacanapariyattidharmma*), such as [the formula of] dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) etc., and install them in place of relics, establishing a *stūpa* as an object of worship. This is called a ‘dhamma-shrine’ (*dhamma-cetiya*).

When we take all of the shrines into account, including those explained in the holy Pāḷi and in the commentaries and sub-commentaries, we get four types: the relic-shrine, the shrine by association, the dhamma-shrine, and the shrine by designation. The holy footprints (*roy phra pāda*) which the Lord Buddha revealed himself are shrines by association, while those which are made as replicas are shrines by designation.

The objects of worship (*pūjaniyavattthucetiyaasthāna*) – whether new ones which knowledgeable Buddhists are motivated to build or old shrines which have fallen into ruin which they restore [124] to their original state or improve and embellish – accomplish benefit for the gods and humans who see them, in that they give rise to inspiration and faith through the recollection of the virtues of the three gems as object of thought (*āramaṇa*). They are then able to accumulate the wholesome deeds of giving, keeping precepts, and mental cultivation (*dāna, sīla, bhāvanā*) to perfection in their mental streams for sake of exquisite and vast bliss in the favourable situation as a human and in the heavens in the future, to the end that they may increase and perfect wholesome conduct (*puñacariyā*) with regard to the wholesome path which turns away [from Saṃsāra: *vivaṭṭagāmī-kuśala*] and leads to Nibbāna. The [results of constructing the objects of worship] are entirely beneficial.

The Buddha originally permitted the installation of holy physical relics in a stūpa constructed at the intersection of four great roads, a central location which would enable large numbers of people to see and to venerate the stūpa enshrining the holy physical relics. The crowds of people who see it would believe in it and their minds would become settled and clear. It would act as a reminder to the throngs who see it to recollect the virtues of the Buddha. In the same fashion, the four Inspiring Sites are reminders to those who see them.

After the lapse of a long time, holy physical relics became scarce. People built many holy stūpas, some enshrining relics, some not. [Some people] inscribed the holy Dhamma of instruction (*phra pariyattidharmma*) – conditioned arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), the four truths of the noble (*ariyasacca*), the factors of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya*), and so on, which they held to be the true word of the Buddha – on silver plates, gold plates, stone slabs, or palm leaves, etc., and installed them within.

As for holy stūpas which do not enshrine genuine relics, it is simply that people desiring merit built them here and there out of their liking and inclination. If a person who sees it is convinced that there is a genuine relic inside and prostrates and venerates it with a clear and settled mind, this can give rise to merit because of the settled and clear state of mind that arises. When a person who sees a stūpa knows for certain [125] that it does not contain any holy relics, or, even if there are relics, doubts whether or not they are genuine, his mind does not become settled and clear. As for people who bring this or that, things like pebbles or stones, and pass them off as holy relics – there are numerous instances in different places throughout the land, to the point that people do not know what genuine relics are like.

Genuine relics are rare. We must investigate and examine them carefully in order to determine [whether or not they are genuine]. The stūpas erected here and there are already too numerous, and those who see them become indifferent and their minds do not become settled and clear. Holy physical relics can be transported wherever one wants, but the Inspiring Sites are immoveable (*asaṇharima*) and cannot be taken away. The bowl, robe, and requisites used by the Buddha are few. This is why the faithful resorted to erecting Buddha images (*buddharūpapaṭimākara*) as shrines by designation. The people who saw these examples and then built the image only think about building and accumulating merit so they built images – some small,

some large, with features and shape varying according to the skill of the artisans – which have become so widespread and numerous that they become indifferent, with the result that they do not achieve their purpose. Therefore the wise conceived of a Buddha image having exactly the same dimensions as the Sugata, or with reduced size but maintaining the proper proportions, so that it would be beautiful, intending it to function as a reminder which could cause the mind of the viewer to become settled and calm, so they would prostrate and venerate it with full trust. Shrines of the truly and fully awakened one (*sammāsambuddhacetiya*) have developed in various ways according to time and place and the goals and needs of the faithful, as has been explained.

This is the explanation of history of relics and shrines (*dhātu cetiya-vaṇsakathā*).

## The Sambuddhe verses and later Theravādin Buddhology

### 1. The Sambuddhe verses in Siam

A SHORT VERSE TEXT, ENTITLED SIMPLY *SAMBUDDHE* OR *Sambuddhe-gāthā*, is well known in Siam. In the *Royal Chanting Book*, it is one of the ancillary texts placed at the beginning of the *Seven Paritta* (*Sattaparitta*) – also known as the *Lesser Royal Paritta* (*Cularājaparitra*) or, in Thai, *Seven Protections* (*Jet Tamnan*) – and the *Twelve Paritta* (*Dvādasaparitta*), also known as the *Greater Royal Paritta* (*Mahārājaparitra*) or *Twelve Protections* (*Sipsong Tamnan*).<sup>1</sup> It is included in the various books of chants that are widely available, and in a Khom script palm-leaf manuscript in the collection of the Siam Society.<sup>2</sup> Since the *Seven* and *Twelve Paritta* belong to the liturgy of the

<sup>1</sup> *Suat manta chabap luang* (Bangkok: 13th ed., 2526 [1983]), pp. 3–4 and 32–33, respectively (the second occurrence is abbreviated). For the interpretation of *tamnan* as “protection” I follow Dhanit Yupho, who derives the word from the Pāli *tāṇa*, changed to *taṃnān* and then to *taṃnān*: see his *Anuphap phra parit* [*The Power of Paritta*, in Thai] (Bangkok: n.d.), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Oskar von Hinüber, ‘The Pāli Manuscripts Kept at the Siam Society, Bangkok: A Short Catalogue’, *Journal of the Siam Society* 75 (1987), § 52a, p. 46. The text given by von Hinüber, which might date to the latter part of the

Siamese order of monks (*saṅgha*), the *Sambuddhe* verses are familiar to or known by heart by many monks and novices. Here I give the Pāli of the *Royal Chanting Book*, followed by an English translation.

### 1.1. Pāli text

- [1] *sambuddhe aṭṭhavīsāṇ ca dvādasāṇ ca saḥassake  
pañcasatasahassāni namāmi sirasā ahaṃ  
tesaṃ dhammaṇ ca saṅghaṇ ca ādarena namāmi 'haṃ  
namakārānubhāvena hantvā sabbe upāddave  
anekā antarāyā pi vinassantu asesato*
- [2] *sambuddhe pañcapaññāsaṇ ca catuvīsatisahassake  
dasasatasahassāni namāmi sirasā ahaṃ  
tesaṃ dhammaṇ ca saṅghaṇ ca ādarena namāmi 'haṃ  
namakārānubhāvena hantvā sabbe upāddave  
anekā antarāyā pi vinassantu asesato*
- [3] *sambuddhe navuttarasate aṭṭhacattālīsahassake  
vīsatisatasahassāni namāmi sirasā ahaṃ  
tesaṃ dhammaṇ ca saṅghaṇ ca ādarena namāmi 'haṃ  
namakārānubhāvena hantvā sabbe upāddave  
anekā antarāyā pi vinassantu asesato*

### 1.2. Translation

- [1] With my head I pay homage  
To the 500 thousand, 12 thousand, and 28 Sambuddhas;  
To their Dhamma and their Saṅgha I respectfully pay homage.  
By power of [this] act of homage  
All misfortune is destroyed.  
May all variety of danger be allayed, without exception.
- [2] With my head I pay homage  
To the 1 million, 24 thousand, and 55 Sambuddhas;  
To their Dhamma and their Saṅgha I respectfully pay homage.  
By power of [this] act of homage  
All misfortune is destroyed.  
May all variety of danger be allayed, without exception.

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nineteenth century, agrees with that of the *Royal Chanting Book*, with a few minor orthographical variants and misprints.

- [3] With my head I pay homage  
 To the 2 million, 48 thousand, and 109 Sambuddhas;  
 To their Dhamma and their Saṅgha I respectfully pay homage.  
 By power of [this] act of homage  
 All misfortune is destroyed.  
 May all variety of danger be allayed, without exception.

## 2. The Sambuddhe verses in Burma

A number of recensions of the *Sambuddhe-gāthā* are said to exist in Burma. The “standard” recension consists of only the first verse of the Siamese version, with one extra line. Whether the remaining two verses are given in other recensions remains to be seen.<sup>3</sup> I transcribe here the sole printed version available to me, without any changes.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.1. Pāli text

- [1] *sambuddhe aṭṭhavīsaṇ ca | dvādasāṇ ca saḥassake ||*  
*pañcasata saḥassāni | namāmi sirasāmahaṃ ||*
- [2] *appakā vālūkā gaṇḍā | anantā nibbutā jinā ||*  
*tesaṃ dhammaṇ ca saṅghaṇ ca | ādarena namām’ ahaṃ ||*
- [3] *namakkārānubhāvena | haṃtvā sabbe upaddave ||*  
*anekā antarāyā pi | vinassantu asesato ||*

### 2.2. Translation

- [1] With my head I pay homage  
 To the 500 thousand, 12 thousand, and 28 Sambuddhas.

<sup>3</sup> The *Sambuddhe* verses are included in several manuscripts in German collections: see *Burmese Manuscripts*, Part 2, compiled by Heinz Braun and Daw Tin Tin Myint with an introduction by Heinz Bechert (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1985, VOHD Band XXIII, 2), §§ 194, 227, 358.

<sup>4</sup> My transcription is from a xerox-copy of a small book of *gāthās* for which I do not have any bibliographical data; the division of the verses into three sections follows this text (*ka*, *kha*, and *ga*). Ven. Dhammānanda Mahāthera of Burma, long resident at Wat Tamao, Lampang province, has confirmed orally that the version known to him consists of only the first verse of the Siamese version, and that it contains the extra line, which he describes as a “later addition”.

[2] The sands of the Ganges are few,  
The Conquerors [Buddhas] who have attained nibbāna are limitless:  
To their Dhamma and their Saṅgha I respectfully pay homage.

[3] By power of [this] act of homage  
All misfortune is destroyed.  
May all variety of danger be allayed, without exception.

The phrase *nibbutā jinā* indicates that the Buddhas belong to the past. The verses are very popular in Burma, where lay-followers often know them by heart. They are held to be highly efficacious in averting calamity, eliminating obstacles, and promoting welfare, and many stories are circulated about their miraculous power. The Sambuddhe Cetiya at Monywa on the Chindwin River, in Sagaing Division to the northwest of Mandalay, represents 512,028 Buddhas. It was apparently built less than one hundred years ago.

The Siamese verses pay homage to three groups of Buddhas, numbering 512,028; 1,024,055; and 2,048,109, respectively. As pointed out by von Hinüber, if the first group is  $x$ , the second is  $2x-1$ , and the third  $2(2x-1)-1$ . A question naturally arises: what is the significance of these rather large numbers of Buddhas, and from what text or texts are the numbers derived? The figures cannot refer to present Buddhas, since it is a firm tenet of the Theravādins that only one Buddha, in the present age Sakyamuni, can exist at one time.<sup>5</sup> The figures should therefore refer to past or future Buddhas. In order to suggest a possible explanation, and to put the question in proper context, we must first look briefly at the development of the theory of past and future Buddhas according to the Theravādin and other Buddhist schools.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See, however, Heinz Bechert, 'Buddha-field and Transfer of Merit in a Theravāda Source', *Indo-Iranian Journal* 35 (1992), pp. 95–108.

<sup>6</sup> For this subject, see J.Ph. Vogel, 'The Past Buddhas and Kāśyapa in Indian Art and Epigraphy', in *Asiatica, Festschrift Friedrich Weller* (Leipzig: 1954), pp. 808–816; I.B. Horner (tr.), *The Minor Anthologies of the Pāli Canon*, Part III (London: 1975), Preface to *Chronicle of the Buddhas (Buddhavaṃsa)*, pp. ix–xvii; Richard Gombrich, 'The Significance of Former Buddhas in the Theravādin Tradition', in Somaratna Balasooriya et al. (ed.), *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula* (London: 1980), pp. 62–72; Isshi Yamada (ed.), *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka: The White Lotus of Compassion*, Vol. I (London: SOAS, University of London, 1968), pp. 121–126.

### 3. The development of the theory of past Buddhas

#### 3.1. The common heritage

Through his own effort Sakyamuni achieved awakening beneath the *bodhi*-tree near Gayā, and thus became an awakened one, a Buddha. Not long afterwards, *en route* to Vārāṇasī, he met an ascetic (*ājīvaka*) named Upaka. Impressed by the Buddha's appearance, the latter asked, "Who is your teacher (*satthā*)?" The Buddha replied:

I have no teacher. There is no one like me;  
In this world with its gods I have no counterpart.  
I am the arhat in this world; I am the unsurpassed teacher;  
Alone I have become fully awakened;  
I have become cool and realized nibbāna.<sup>7</sup>

The Buddha claimed to have achieved awakening by himself, and to be the only Buddha in the world in his time. He did not, however, claim to have been the only person to have ever become a Buddha. A phrase referring to "those who were arhats, fully awakened Buddhas in the past ... those who will become arhats, fully awakened Buddhas in the future" occurs in several places in the *Tipiṭaka*.<sup>8</sup> In the *Gāraṇa-sutta*, Brahmā Sahampati speaks the following verses:

The Buddhas of the past, the Buddhas of the future,  
and the Buddha of the present, destroyer of much sorrow,  
dwelt, will dwell, and dwell paying respect to the Good Dhamma;  
this is a natural rule for Buddhas.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Ariyapariyesana-sutta*, *Majjhima-nikāya* 26 (PTS I 171.7).

<sup>8</sup> See *Samyutta-nikāya* (PTS I 140.1–5) (spoken by Brahmā Sahampati), *ye pi te bhante ahesuṃ atītaṃ addhānaṃ arahanto sammāsambuddhā ... ye pi te bhante bhavissanti anāgataṃ addhānaṃ arahanto sammāsambuddhā*, and *Sampasādanīya-sutta*, *Dīgha-nikāya* 28 (PTS III 99.17–100.5) (spoken by the Buddha).

<sup>9</sup> *Gāraṇa-sutta*, *Samyutta-nikāya* (PTS I 138–140); a (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādin version of the *sūtra* is found in Śamathadeva, *Abhidharmakośa-upāyikā-ṭīkā*, P 5598 (Vol. 118), *thu* 130b1–132a6; for Sanskrit of the verses only, see Franz Bernhard (ed.), *Udānavarga*, Vol. I (Göttingen: 1965, *Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden* X), XXI, 11–12. Other parallels exist in Chinese.



In the *Nagara-sutta*, the Buddha gives the following simile: a man travelling in the jungle discovers an ancient road travelled by the people of the past; he follows it, and comes to an ancient city, a royal capital. The Buddha explains that similarly he has discovered an ancient path travelled by the Buddhas of the past, that is, the noble eightfold path.<sup>10</sup>

It is thus clear that the concept of a plurality of past and future Buddhas is implicit to the early strata of the *Tipiṭaka*, not only of the Theravādins but also of other schools.

The earliest lists of past Buddhas give the names of six predecessors of Sakyamuni, making a total of seven Buddhas. Such lists occur in the *Dīgha-nikāya*: in verse in the *Āṭṭhāṇāṭṭiya-sutta*<sup>11</sup> and in prose in the *Mahāpadāna-sutta*,<sup>12</sup> as well as in a (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādin equivalent of the latter, the *Mahāvādāna-sūtra*.<sup>13</sup> The list also occurs in the *Vinaya* literature: in the Theravādin *Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga*,<sup>14</sup> in the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Prātimokṣa*,<sup>15</sup> *Śayanāsana-vastu*,<sup>16</sup> and

<sup>10</sup> *Nagara-sutta*, *Samyutta-nikāya* (PTS II 104–107). A Sanskrit version of a Sarvāstivādin lineage is found in the Central Asian *Nidānasamyukta*: see Chandrabhāl Tripāṭhī (ed. tr.), *Fünfundzwanzig Sūtras des Nidānasamyukta* (Berlin: 1962, *Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden* VIII), pp. 94–106; the *Vinaya* version of the Mūlasarvāstivādin school is lost in Sanskrit but preserved in Tibetan translation in the *Pravrajyāvastu*: see Helmut Eimer (ed.), *Rab tu 'byun ba'i gzi: Die tibetische Übersetzung des Pravrajyāvastu im Vinaya der Mūlasarvāstivādins*, Vol. II (Wiesbaden: 1983), pp. 281.4–289.

<sup>11</sup> *Dīgha-nikāya* 32 (PTS III 195.27–196.8).

<sup>12</sup> *Dīgha-nikāya* 14 (PTS II 2.15 foll.).

<sup>13</sup> The Sanskrit edition of this text is not available to me, but the relevant passage is cited in Tibetan translation by Śamathadeva, *thu* 102a8–103a3, from the *rtogs pa brjod pa chen po'i mdo*. Cf. also Étienne Lamotte, *La Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, Vol. I (Louvain: 1965), p. 535 and n. 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Vinaya* (PTS III 7–9).

<sup>15</sup> Anukul Chandra Banerjee (ed.), *Two Buddhist Vinaya Texts in Sanskrit* (Calcutta: 1977), p. 55.16.

<sup>16</sup> Raniero Gnoli (ed.), *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Śayanāsanavastu and the Adhikaraṇavastu*, (Roma: IsMEO, 1978, Serie Orientale Roma L), pp. 27–30.

*Pravrajyāvastu*;<sup>17</sup> in the Lokottaravādin *Mahāvastu*<sup>18</sup> and *Prātimokṣa*;<sup>19</sup> and in other texts of all periods and schools, too numerous to mention.

The seven Buddhas are named in inscriptions and represented aniconically on the monuments of Bhārhut and Sāñchī (*circa* second to first century BCE).<sup>20</sup> From the early centuries of the Christian Era they are depicted (sometimes along with Metteyya) in human form in the sculpture of Mathurā and Gandhāra,<sup>21</sup> and, during the Gupta period, in the murals of Ajanta.<sup>22</sup> Although tradition placed these Buddhas æons before Sakyamuni, it also held that certain sites in India were associated with three of his predecessors: the Nigali Sagar pillar of Aśoka (reigned ca. 272–236 BCE) records that the Emperor enlarged the *thūpa* (*thuba*) of Konakamana (Koṇāgamana) in the fourteenth year of his reign, and that he visited and worshipped it again at a later date,<sup>23</sup> while the Chinese pilgrims Fāxiān and Xuánzàng describe various sites in India connected with all three of Gotama's immediate predecessors.<sup>24</sup> Similar traditions developed in South-East Asia, for example in Burma, where the Shwedagon Pagoda is believed to enshrine relics of Sakyamuni and his three predecessors.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Nalinaksha Dutt (ed.), *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. III pt. 4 ([Calcutta: 1950] Delhi: 1984), p. 32.6. The same passage occurs in the *Samgharakṣitāvadāna*: P.L. Vaidya (ed.), *Divyāvadāna* (Darbhanga: 1959), p. 206.8.

<sup>18</sup> Radhagovinda Basak (ed.), *Mahāvastu Avadāna*, Vol. III (Calcutta: 1968), pp. 320 foll; five predecessors (omitting Śikhin) are given in verse at S. Bagchi (ed.), *Mahāvastu* Vol. I (Darbhanga: 1970), p. 240.14.

<sup>19</sup> Nathmal Tatia (ed.), *Prātimokṣasūtram* (Patna: 1975), pp. 36–37.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. John Marshall, *A Guide to Sāñchī* (Calcutta: 1955), pp. 57–58 and pl. ii; Alexander Cunningham, *The Stūpa of Bharhut* (repr. Varanasi: 1962), pp. 108–109, 113–116, and pls. xxix–xxx. The representation of the *bodhi* tree and inscription of Śikhin have not been found.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Alexander Coburn Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Ascona: 1959), pp. 198–199.

<sup>22</sup> J.Ph. Vogel, 'The Past Buddhas and Kāśyapa in Indian Art and Epigraphy', in *Asiatica, Festschrift Friedrich Weller* (Leipzig: 1954), p. 811.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. E. Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka* (Oxford: 1925), p. 165.

<sup>24</sup> Alexander Coburn Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Ascona: 1959), p. 198.

<sup>25</sup> Aung Thaw, *Historical Sites in Burma* (Rangoon: 1972), pp. 112–114. Only the three immediate predecessors who, like Sakyamuni, arose in the Auspicious

### 3.2. The Theravādin theory of past Buddhas

A study of the development of the Theravādin theory of past Buddhas must take into account two interrelated aspects: the number of past Buddhas referred to, and the nature and length of the bodhisatta's career during the many past lives in which he practised the perfections (*pāramī*) and aspired to enlightenment. The career is measured in two types of æon: the "[ordinary] æon" (*kappa*) and the "incalculable [æon]" (*asaṅkheyya*, *asaṅkhiya*). The texts give various definitions of the latter; here it should be seen as an extremely large number (in American comic book language, "zillions") of æons, which are themselves long enough to stretch the human imagination. It should also be noted that, except in the earliest phase, all of the past Buddhas were either associated with Sakyamuni himself when he was a bodhisatta, or are associated with certain types of bodhisattas in general. That is, the number of past Buddhas is never closed: a given figure always refers to the number of Buddhas honoured by Sakyamuni or a representative bodhisatta during a specific period of his bodhisatta career. The implications of this will be discussed in the concluding section.

(1) The earliest phase, which is the common heritage of all Buddhist schools, has been described above. It allows a plurality of past Buddhas, and names seven – Sakyamuni and his six predecessors – as in the *Dīgha-nikāya* and *Vinaya*.

(2) In the next phase, the *Buddhavaṃsa* names twenty-seven (24 + 3) past Buddhas; when Gotama is counted, there are twenty-five or twenty-eight. The same text,<sup>26</sup> along with the *Cariyāpiṭaka*,<sup>27</sup> the *Milindapañha*,<sup>28</sup> and the *Visuddhimagga*,<sup>29</sup> states that the bodhisatta's career lasts four incalculable æons plus one hundred thousand lesser æons. Both the number of Buddhas and the description of the career are unique to the Theravādins. The first two texts are canonical,

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Æon (*bhaddakappa*) could leave traces or relics; the earlier predecessors could not, since they arose in earlier æons.

<sup>26</sup> *Buddhavaṃsa* II, 1 (PTS 9).

<sup>27</sup> *Cariyāpiṭaka* I, 1 (PTS 1).

<sup>28</sup> *Milindapañha* (PTS 232–234, 289; Mm pp. 247.7 foll., p. 365 penult).

<sup>29</sup> *Visuddhimagga* (Mm II 100).

although modern scholarship holds them to be later additions; the *Milindapañha* dates over a number of centuries, from the second century BCE to the early centuries CE.<sup>30</sup> The *Visuddhimagga* was composed by Buddhaghosa in the fifth century. The theories most probably date to the beginning of the Christian Era, if not earlier.

(3) The *Suttanipāta-aṭṭhakathā* and *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* describe three types of bodhisatta, distinguished by the predominance of one of the three faculties of wisdom, faith, or energy. The length of the career of the first type of bodhisatta is as described in the preceding; that of the second is two times the first; of the third two times the second, except that the additional figure of one hundred thousand æons remains constant:

- (i) “strong in wisdom” (*paññā-adhika*), attaining enlightenment in four incalculable æons plus one hundred thousand æons;
- (ii) “strong in faith” (*saddhā-adhika*), attaining enlightenment in eight incalculable æons plus one hundred thousand æons;
- (iii) “strong in energy” (*virīya-adhika*), attaining enlightenment in sixteen incalculable æons plus one hundred thousand æons.<sup>31</sup>

The *Suttanipāta-aṭṭhakathā* is traditionally ascribed to Buddhaghosa (fifth century CE), although doubts have been expressed about his authorship.<sup>32</sup> The *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* is ascribed to Dhammapāla, who may have worked about the middle of the sixth century.<sup>33</sup> Neither text enumerates any Buddhas. In the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, also attributed to Buddhaghosa, the Buddha is presented as saying that “many thousands of Buddhas have lived by going for

<sup>30</sup> See K.R. Norman, *Pāli Literature* (Wiesbaden: 1983, Jan Gonda [ed.], *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. VII, fasc. 2), pp. 110–113.

<sup>31</sup> *Suttanipāta-aṭṭhakathā* (PTS I 47; Mm I 58–59); *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* (PTS 329), tr. by Bhikkhu Bodhi in *The Discourse on the All-embracing Net of Views* (Kandy: 1978), pp. 325–327. In the latter the three types are equated with the three individuals (*ugghaṭitaññu*, *vipaṇcitaññu*, *neyya*); see also François Martini (ed., tr.), *Dasabodhisatta-uddesa*, *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 36 (1936), pp. 335 (text), 367–368 (translation); Medhaṅkara, *Lokadīpakasāra* (Bangkok: National Library-Fine Arts Department, 2529 [1986]), pp. 553–554. For this theory see above, pp. 90–103.

<sup>32</sup> See Norman, *Pāli Literature*, p. 129.

<sup>33</sup> Norman, *Pāli Literature*, p. 137.

alms".<sup>34</sup> Much later, the theory of the three types of bodhisatta in the form given above was incorporated into Lanna works such as the *Paṭhamamūlamūli*.<sup>35</sup>

(4) The next phase is represented by such late Pāli works as the *Sotatthakī-mahānidāna*,<sup>36</sup> the *Sambhāravipāka*,<sup>37</sup> the *Mahāsampīḍanidāna*,<sup>38</sup> and the *Jinakālamāli*, and by Sinhalese works such as the *Saddharmālaṅkāra*.<sup>39</sup> The theory may have first appeared in the Ceylon of the Polonnaruwa period (eleventh–thirteenth centuries CE), but the question of its origins needs further study. Here the career of the first type of bodhisatta is expanded into three phases, according to the nature of his aspiration to enlightenment.<sup>40</sup> His career lasts altogether twenty incalculables plus one hundred thousand aeons.

- (i) aspiration by mind only, for seven incalculable aeons;
- (ii) aspiration by mind and speech, for nine incalculable aeons;
- (iii) aspiration by mind, speech, and body, for four incalculable aeons.

<sup>34</sup> *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā* (*Suddhodana-vatthu*) (PTS III 164.19), *anekāni hi buddhasahassāni piṇḍāya caritvā va jīvīmsu*.

<sup>35</sup> Anatole-Roger Peltier (ed., tr.), *Paṭhamamūlamūli* (Chiang Mai: 1991), pp. 8–9, 102–103. Note that both the French (p. 124) and English (p. 192) translations of the first passage give the wrong figure – 12 instead of 16 – for the last type. See also PVL 18.72.

<sup>36</sup> *Sotatthakī-mahānidāna*, Bangkok, 2526 [1983], Pāli text pp. 3–4. For this text see PLCS 2.252 and PVL 2.244.

<sup>37</sup> *Phra sambhāravipāka* (Thai translation), Vol. 1 (Bangkok: Rattanakosin Era 126), pp. 4 foll.; Supaphan na Bangchang, *Wiwathanakan wanakhadi bali sai phra suttantapidok thi taeng nai prathet thai* (Bangkok: 2533 [1990]), pp. 135–150. For this text see PLCS 2.224 and PVL 2.241.

<sup>38</sup> Handwritten transcription by Ven. Nāṇāvāsa, pp. 10–11 (I am grateful to Waldemar Sailer for supplying a copy); Supaphan na Bangchang, *Wiwathanakan wanakhadi bali*, pp. 150–157.

<sup>39</sup> See the translation or summary from that work in R. Spence Hardy, *A Manual of Buddhism* (repr. Varanasi: 1967), pp. 86–97. Cf. *Encyclopædia of Buddhism*, Vol. III, fasc. 3 (Colombo: 1973), pp. 359–360; N.A. Jayawickrama, *Epochs of the Conqueror* (London: 1968) p. xix.

<sup>40</sup> The three periods are mentioned in the *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* (sixth century), but not correlated with aeons: see Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Discourse on the All-Embracing Net of Views* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society), p. 313.

The texts give breakdowns of the number of Buddhas served in each æon, along with other details. In the *Jinakālamāli* (which does not give the total figure) the breakdown by chapter is as follows:<sup>41</sup>

<i>Manopaṇidhānakathā</i>	1	(Pūraṇadīpaṃkara, p. 5.24)
<i>Mahānidānakathā</i>	125,000	(p. 7.3)
<i>Atidūrenidānakathā</i>	387,000	(p. 9.3)
<i>Dūrenidānakathā</i>	27	(3 – excluding Dīpaṃkara – p. 9.15, plus 24, p. 19.32 <i>kassapo</i> <i>catuṇṇasatimo</i> )
Total:	512,028	

The North Indian scholar Daśabalaśrīmitra, writing probably in the twelfth or the thirteenth century, cites an as yet unidentified Theravādin source that gives an accurate account of the theory:<sup>42</sup>

The Ārya Sthāviras state that “Sakyamuni realized omniscience (*sabbāññutā*) after twenty great incalculable æons plus an additional one hundred thousand æons. Herein, as a bodhisatta, the Lord served 125,000 Buddhas for [the first] seven incalculable æons, aspiring for enlightenment by means of mental resolve alone (*bsams pa tsam nyid kyi*). For the next nine incalculable æons he served 387,000 Buddhas, engaging in the bodhisatta practices (*bodhisatta-cariyā*) and aspiring by means of mind (*citta*) and speech (*vācā*). For the next four incalculable æons he served twelve Buddhas, engaged in practices devoted to enlightenment, and aspired for enlightenment by means of body (*kāya*), speech, and mind (*manas*). For one hundred thousand æons the Lord, as a bodhisatta, served fifteen Buddhas, engaged in the practices of a bodhisatta, and completed all the secondary practices, by means of body, speech, and mind; at the culmination (*agga*) of the one hundred thousand æons the Teacher realized omniscience.”

<sup>41</sup> References are to A.P. Buddhadatta (ed.), *Jinakālamāli* (London: 1960).

<sup>42</sup> P 5865, Vol. 146, folio ño 38a4 foll. His work, *An Analysis of the Conditioned and the Unconditioned*, survives only in an anonymous Tibetan translation of a lost Sanskrit original: see Peter Skilling, ‘The Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛtaviniścaya of Daśabalaśrīmitra’, *Buddhist Studies Review* 4/1 (1987), pp. 3–23.

That the theory became popular is shown by the fact that it was incorporated into vernacular works in Sinhalese,<sup>43</sup> Burmese,<sup>44</sup> Khün,<sup>45</sup> and Lanna Thai.<sup>46</sup>

(5) The next phase is a logical development of the preceding: the theory of the three types of aspiration is applied to the remaining two types of bodhisatta. As before, the length of the career of the second type is twice that of the first, that of the third is twice that of the second, and the figure of one hundred thousand remains constant:

- (i) “strong in wisdom”, realizing omniscience in twenty incalculable æons plus one hundred thousand æons;
- (ii) “strong in faith”, realizing omniscience in forty incalculable æons plus one hundred thousand æons;
- (iii) “strong in energy”, realizing omniscience in eighty incalculable æons plus one hundred thousand æons.

I have not found this theory in Pāli sources. It is found in a number of Central Thai texts,<sup>47</sup> and in Lanna texts such as the *Paṭhamamūla*.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Cf. the introduction to the *Saddharma Ratnāvalīya*, composed by Dharmasena Thera in the thirteenth century: Ranjini Obeyesekere (tr.), *Jewels of the Doctrine* (Albany: 1991), p. 2. The concept is worked into the narrative in a manner that implies that it would be familiar to the readers.

<sup>44</sup> Not knowing Burmese, I have only one example to offer: P. Bigandet, *The Life or Legend of Gaudama*, Vol. I (repr. Varanasi: 1979), pp. 6–7, 16–17. This is a translation of a Burmese work entitled *Tathāgata-udāna* (Vol. I, Preface, p. xv) which is based on the *Mālālaṃkāra-vatthu* (see Vol. II, p. 149, n. 11, and p. 151).

<sup>45</sup> Sao Sāimöng Mangrāi, *The Pādaeng Chronicle and the Jengtung State Chronicle Translated* (Ann Arbor: 1981), pp. 99–100. There is some confusion in the figures.

<sup>46</sup> *Traibhūmi chabap lanna* (Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University, 2524 [1981]), *phuk ton*, pp. 1–14; *Tamnan Mūlaśāsanā* (Bangkok: 2518 [1975]), pp. 1–2, 17–18, etc.

<sup>47</sup> Nāgapradīp (ed.), *Sambhāravipākā* (Bangkok: 2504 [1961]), pp. 246–247; Phra Śrīāry pistār, kaṇḍ 5, folio 33a; [Somdet Phra Vanarat], *Phra Mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa* (Bangkok: 2504 [1961]), pp. 34–35; Phra Śrīvisuddhisobhaṇa (Vilāsa Nāṇavaro, P. Dh. 9), *Munināthadīpanī* (Bangkok: 2516 [1973]), pp. 37–46; Gaṇa Sahāydharm, *Phra Śrī-ariyamettraiy* (Bangkok: 2535 [1992]), pp. 8–10.

<sup>48</sup> *Paṭhamamūla*, in *Lokupattī Aruṇavatisūtra Paṭhamamūla Paṭhamakap lae Mūlatantraiya* (Bangkok: National Library-Fine Arts Department, 2533 [1990]),

(6) One final step could be taken, and it was: the number of Buddhas was described as limitless. In the non-canonical *Dasabodhisattuppattikathā*, the Buddha tells Sāriputta that “there have been limitless and countless (*anantāparimāṇā*) noble people in the world who have successively fulfilled the perfections and attained Buddhahood”.<sup>49</sup> A similar statement is found in the *Dasabodhisatta-uddesa*, where the Buddha tells Sāriputta that “there have been Buddhas without end (*buddhā anantā ahesum*): I would reach the end of my life before I reached the limit of the enumeration of Buddhas”.<sup>50</sup> The apocryphal *Ākāravatta-sutta* speaks of “Buddhas as many as the sands of many Ganges rivers”.<sup>51</sup>

Available archæological or epigraphic evidence for the development of the Theravādin theory is scanty and late. A Pāli inscription giving a verse list of the twenty-eight Buddhas and dating from the middle of the eleventh century was discovered at Thaton in Lower Burma;<sup>52</sup> the verses (known in Ceylon as the *Aṭavisi-pirit*) are incorporated without title into the *Āṭṭānāṭiya-paritta* of the *Twelve Paritta* in the *Royal Chanting Book*.<sup>53</sup> The twenty-eight Buddhas were in full vogue during the Pagan period (eleventh–twelfth century), whether in mural or sculptural art or on terracotta tablets.<sup>54</sup> In Lanna art, ornamented carved wooden stands (*phaeng*) were made to

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pp. 115, 152 (the text of the former passage is corrupt, and gives the figures 22, 4, and 80). The *Paṭhamamūla* is another version of the *Paṭhamamūlamūli* cited above; it is interesting that the two recensions incorporate different versions of the theory. For the origin myth presented in these and related texts, see Emmanuel Guillon, ‘The Ultimate Origin of the World, or the Mūlā Muh, and Other Mon Beliefs’, *Journal of the Siam Society* 79/1 (1991), pp. 22–30.

<sup>49</sup> H. Saddhatissa, *The Birth-Stories of the Ten Bodhisattas and the Dasabodhisattuppattikathā* (London: PTS, 1975), text p. 119, tr. p. 54. (The long introduction [pp. 1–53] gives a valuable survey of sources on past and future Buddhas, although I do not always agree with the Ven. author’s conclusions.)

<sup>50</sup> *Dasabodhisatta-uddesa*, text p. 297, tr. p. 337.

<sup>51</sup> Padmanabh S. Jaini, ‘Ākāravattārasutta: An “Apocryphal” Sutta From Thailand’, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 35/2–3 (July 1992), § 6, *anekāya gaṅgāya vālukupamehi buddhehi*.

<sup>52</sup> G. H. Luce, ‘The Advent of Buddhism to Burma’, in L. Cousins, A. Kunst, and K.R. Norman (ed.), *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner* (Dordrecht: 1974), p. 133. Cf. also n. 53 (p. 137), which needs confirmation and clarification.

<sup>53</sup> *Suat manta chabap luang*, p. 39.

<sup>54</sup> Thiripyanchi U Mya, *Votive Tablets of Burma*, Part I, pls. 10, 72, 108, 110; Gordon H. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagan*, Vol. III (New York: 1970), pls. 65–67.



hold numbers of small Buddhas: twenty-eight, or larger numbers.<sup>55</sup> Larger numbers of Buddhas are also found on clay tablets of the Pagan period, which depict rows of identical Buddhas totalling fifty or about one hundred figures.<sup>56</sup> Tablets with five hundred Buddhas are known in Siam.<sup>57</sup> Such tablets may well be related to the theories discussed above: one might even speculate that ‘fifty’ or ‘five hundred’ are abbreviated references to the first figure, 512,028, and the figure ‘one hundred’ to the second figure, 1,024,055. Tablets with fifty-five Buddhas from Wat Mahādhātu in Sukhothai<sup>58</sup> might represent the fifty-five Buddhas of the 1,024,055 of the second verse; like the twenty-eight of the 512,028, this would be a significant group with its own identity. But these interpretations are by no means certain: texts of about the same period extol the merit gained from reproducing the image of the Buddha, and may also have influenced the tablets.<sup>59</sup> An Old Burmese ink-gloss from Wetkyi-in Kubyauk-gyi at Pagan refers to “past or future Buddhas ... be they more in number than the grains in a heap of earth”. The Wetkyi-in Kubyauk-gyi has been tentatively dated to “not later than 1200 CE”.<sup>60</sup>

In a Burmese inscription from the Thahte Mokku temple at Pagan, dated 558 or 59 Sakka Era (1195 or 96 CE), the concept of a bodhisatta career lasting four incalculables plus one hundred thousand aeons is incorporated into the dedication. The editors note that “after the fall of Pagan the phrase becomes a *cliché*, many inscriptions beginning with [a similar phrase]. Here we have probably its first appearance

<sup>55</sup> *Muang Boran Journal* 14/2 (April–June 1988), pp. 93, 94; *Muang Nan: Boranakhadi, Prawatisat lae Silpa* (Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, 2530 [1987]), pp. 145, 226.

<sup>56</sup> U Mya, pls. 8, 36, and 43, 46, 107, 109, respectively; Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagan*, pl. 68.

<sup>57</sup> See *The Silpakorn Journal* 33/3 (July–August 1989), p. 8, found at Wat Chamadevi, Lamphun, dated to the tenth–twelfth century A.C.

<sup>58</sup> Illustrated in Piriya Krairiksh, ‘A New Dating of Sukhothai Art’, *Muang Boran Journal* 12/1 (January–March 1986), p. 42, fig. 14.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. verses in Richard F. Gombrich, ‘Kosala-Bimba-Vaṇṇanā’, in Heinz Bechert (ed.), *Buddhism in Ceylon and Studies on Religious Syncretism in Buddhist Countries* (Göttingen: 1978) pp. 299–302.

<sup>60</sup> Col. Ba Shin, K.J. Whitbread, Gordon H. Luce, et al., ‘Pagan, Wetkyi-in Kubyauk-gyi, an Early Burmese Temple with Ink-glosses’, *Artibus Asiae* XXXIII/3 (1971), pp. 195, 217 (for dating).

in Burmese.”<sup>61</sup> In literature a parallel phenomenon is seen in the Pāli *Jinamahānidāna*,<sup>62</sup> and in the Sinhalese *Saddharma Ratnāvaliya* and Lanna *Paṭhamamūla* and *Mūlaśāsanā* referred to above – the mention of the bodhisatta’s career is a formula and not an integral part of the text.

The *Sotatthakī-mahānidāna* is included in a list of books donated to a monastery at Pagan in 1442;<sup>63</sup> a verse from the same text, summarizing the four rebirths of the bodhisatta that directly preceded his first encounter with a Buddha is cited (with some variants) in a Pāli inscription from Bassein, dated to the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries.<sup>64</sup> The same text may also be referred to in a Sukhothai inscription from the first half of the fourteenth century, with reference to future Buddhas.<sup>65</sup> In the modern period, the theory is very much alive: in 1986 a temple called Cetiya Vihāra Sambuddhe enshrining 512,028 Buddhas was constructed in Mae Sot district, Tak, in imitation of the temple at Monywa in Burma referred to above.<sup>66</sup>

### 3.3. The theory of past Buddhas in other Buddhist schools

We have seen above that the concept of a plurality of past and future Buddhas and the list of seven past Buddhas are part of the common Buddhist heritage. In order to place the development of the Theravādin

<sup>61</sup> Pe Maung Tin and Gordon H. Luce, ‘Inscriptions of Burma, Portfolio I’, *Bulletin of the Burma Historical Commission* III (1963), pp. 102–107.

<sup>62</sup> *Jinamahānidāna* (Bangkok: National Library-Fine Arts Department, 2530 [1987], Vol. I, p. 1. See also PLCS 2.58 and PVL 2.243.

<sup>63</sup> Mabel Haynes Bode, *The Pali Literature of Burma* ([London: 1909] Rangoon: 1965), § 95, p. 104; Gordon H. Luce and Tin Htway, ‘A 15th Century Inscription and Library at Pagan, Burma’, in O.H. de A. Wijesekera (ed.), *Malalasekera Commemoration Volume* (Colombo: 1976) § 95, p. 229.

<sup>64</sup> Charles Duroiselle, ‘Bassein’, *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India* 1929–30 (repr. Delhi: 1990), pp. 158–160; cf. *Sotatthakīmahānidāna* verse 23. A similar verse is found in the *Sambhāravipāka* (Bangkok: S. Thammaphakdi, 2504), p. 28.

<sup>65</sup> *Prachumsilacharuk*, Vol. I (Bangkok: 2467 [1924]), p. 48, lines 38–39 of face 2, *mahānidāna*; Praset Na Nagara and A.B. Griswold, *Epigraphic and Historical Studies* (Bangkok: 1992), no. 10, pp. 371–372; introduction to *Sotatthakīmahānidāna*, pp. 9–10.

<sup>66</sup> Supamat Kasem, ‘A unique temple with half a million Buddha images’, *Bangkok Post*, Vol. XLI no. 235, Section Three, Monday, August 25, 1986.

theory in a broader context, I will briefly describe the theories of some other schools. In contrast to the theory of four (or the later figure of twenty) incalculables plus one hundred thousand æons of Theravādins, the basic figure of three incalculables was adhered to by the Vaibhāṣikas of Kashmir, the Mūlasarvāstivādins, the Sāṃmitīyas, and some Mahāyānists. (The Vaibhāṣikas and Mūlasarvāstivādins belong to the lineage of the school known in Pāli as Sabbatthikavāda. The Sāṃmitīyas are the Samitiyas of the Vajjiputtaka branch, labelled Puggalavādins by their opponents. The scriptures of most of the “eighteen Buddhist schools” (*aṭṭhārasa nikāyā*, *aṭṭhārasācariyakulāni*) are lost; therefore our information about the overall development of Buddhism in India is incomplete. In the present case, we have access to the texts of the schools mentioned above, plus those of the Lokottaravādin branch of the Mahāsaṃghikas for some points.)

### 3.3.1. The Vaibhāṣika and Mūlasarvāstivādin theory of past Buddhas

Daśabalaśrīmitra quotes a text of the Vaibhāṣikas of Kashmir, which describes Sakyamuni’s service to 75,000 Buddhas in the first incalculable æon, 76,000 in the second, and 77,000 in the third. Verses with the same figures are found in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins.<sup>67</sup> The three incalculable æons were followed by a period of ninety-one lesser æons during which Śākyamuni served a number of other Buddhas.<sup>68</sup> The *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinaya* gives a verse description of the bodhisatta’s past lives under various Buddhas, and the acts of worship or service that he performed for each; this is followed by a prose list of the names of sixty past Buddhas.

### 3.3.2. The Sāṃmitīya theory of past Buddhas

Daśabalaśrīmitra reports the theory of the Sāṃmitīya school as follows:

<sup>67</sup> Sman gyi gzi, P 1030, Vol. 41, ‘dul ba, ge 254b6 foll.

<sup>68</sup> Daśabalaśrīmitra 37b3 foll. For these sources, see the discussion in E. Obermiller (tr.), *History of Buddhism (Chos-hbyung)* by Bu-ston, Part I (Heidelberg: 1931), pp. 102–104. The figure ninety-one refers to the fact that Vipassin arose ninety-one æons before Sakyamuni.

According to the Sāṃmitīya school, “The present Sakyamuni served 77,000 Buddhas in the first incalculable, starting with the former Buddha Sakyamuni; in the second incalculable he served 76,000 Buddhas, and in the third incalculable he served 75,000, ending with the Buddha Indradhvaja. He then realized true and complete awakening (*samyaksambodhi*).”<sup>69</sup>

The Sāṃmitīya figures agree with those of the Vaibhāṣikas and Mūlasarvāstivādins, except that the order is reversed. The total is the same; they thus agree that as a bodhisatta Sakyamuni served 228,000 Buddhas over a period of three incalculable æons, to which the Vaibhāṣikas and Mūlasarvāstivādins add a period of one hundred æons (in general, but in the case of Sakyamuni only ninety-one).

### 3.3.3. The Lokottaravādin theory of past Buddhas

The Buddhology of the Lokottaravādins is given in two sections of the *Mahāvastu*.<sup>70</sup> Many past Buddhas are listed in succession by name; various details are given, including the relationship of some of them to Śākyamuni as a bodhisatta. Several texts or layers of text seem to be conflated, and it is difficult to reduce the mass of names and æons into a coherent system. There is, however, a list of sixteen past Buddhas (including Sakyamuni), similar to those found in the *Mahāśītavana-sūtra*, the *Mahākaruṇāpuṇḍarika-sūtra*, and the Chinese *\*Abhiniṣkramaṇa-sūtra*.<sup>71</sup> Elsewhere Sakyamuni tells Mahāmaudgalyāyana that as a bodhisatta he worshipped countless Buddhas.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Daśabalaśrīmitra 37b1.

<sup>70</sup> *Mahāvastu* I 32-44; III 300-331. For an English translation see J.J. Jones (tr.), *The Mahāvastu*, Vol. I (London: [1949] 1973), pp. 39-52; Vol. III (London: [1956] 1978), pp. 219-239.

<sup>71</sup> *Mahāvastu* III 318.9-319.3; *Mahāśītavana*, Derge edition of the Tibetan Kanjur no. 562, *rgyud pha*, 138b7 foll.; for the last two texts see Yamada, *Karuṇāpuṇḍarika*, p. 126, n. 2 and Jan Nattier, *Once upon a Future Time: Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline* (Berkeley: 1991), p. 83 and n. 70. The *Mahāvastu* and *Mahāśītavana* give sixteen Buddhas, including Sakyamuni. The *\*Abhiniṣkramaṇa* gives fifteen, the *Mahākaruṇāpuṇḍarika* fourteen, both excluding Sakyamuni, who is, needless to say, implied.

<sup>72</sup> *Mahāvastu* I 32.2; cf. also 39.15.

### 3.3.4. The Mahāyāna and past Buddhas

Adherents of the Mahāyāna accepted the literature of the Śrāvaka schools, subjecting it to new interpretations. They generally agreed that the bodhisatta's career lasted three incalculable æons; a second theory gives the figure thirty-three, while the great Tibetan scholar Bu ston Rinpoche discusses theories of three, seven, ten, and thirty-three as found in various Indian texts.<sup>73</sup> Numbers of past Buddhas are mentioned in the vast Mahāyāna sūtra literature. As seen above, the *Mahākaruṇāpūṇḍarika* lists fourteen past Buddhas; the *Lalitavistara* lists fifty-five (or, in a biography translated into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa, forty-eight);<sup>74</sup> both lists end with the well-known seven past Buddhas (who always retained their popularity in the Mahāyāna, as in the Śrāvaka schools). The *Bodhisattva-piṭaka* describes Sakyamuni's meeting with various past Buddhas,<sup>75</sup> and mention of individual Buddhas connected with Śākyamuni in the (often very distant) past are scattered throughout the Mahāyāna sūtra literature.

There are also lists of past Buddhas associated with Buddhas other than Śākyamuni. The longer *Sukhāvativyūha* lists eighty (in a Sanskrit recension) or fifty-three (in a Chinese translation) Buddhas who preceded Lokeshvararāja, under whom the future Buddha Amitābha made his vows as the bodhisattva monk Dharmākara.<sup>76</sup> Another fifty-three Buddhas of the far-distant past are named in the *Sūtra on the Contemplation of the Two Bodhisattvas, King of Healing and Supreme Healer*, translated into Chinese in about 424 CE.<sup>77</sup> The *Bhadrakalpika-sūtra* names one thousand past Buddhas connected with the bodhisattas who will become the one thousand Buddhas of the "Auspicious æon" (*bhadrakalpa*).<sup>78</sup> The names of another one thousand past Buddhas are invoked for protection in a sūtra translated into Chinese during the Liang dynasty (502–557).<sup>79</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Daśabalaśrīmitra 40b6 foll.; and Obermiller, *History of Buddhism*, pp. 119–127 respectively.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Yamada, *Karuṇāpūṇḍarika*, p. 126, n. 2.

<sup>75</sup> Quoted by Bu ston in Obermiller, *History of Buddhism*, pp. 125–127.

<sup>76</sup> Soper, *Literary Evidence*, pp. 200–201.

<sup>77</sup> *Foshuo guan yaowang yaoshang erpusa jing* (T 1161), tr. in Raoul Birnbaum, *The Healing Buddha* (Boulder: 1979), pp. 130–132.

<sup>78</sup> Dharma Publishing, *The Fortunate Æon: How the Thousand Buddhas Become Enlightened*, Vol. IV (Berkeley: 1986), pp. 1480–1733.

<sup>79</sup> *Guo qu zhuang yan jie qian fo ming jing* (T 447): Soper, *Literary Evidence*, 201–202, M.W. de Visser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan* (Paris: 1928), pp. 380–381.

But no list or lists were held to be authoritative, and there is no evidence that the Mahāyāna developed a single theory of past Buddhas. Even a single text such as the *Sūtra on the Contemplation of the Two Bodhisattvas* referred to above mentions in a single breath the seven Buddhas of the past, the fifty-three Buddhas, the one thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, and the thirty-three Buddhas.<sup>80</sup> (Such anomalies are only to be expected. The Mahāyāna was not a monolithic movement with a single geographical or historical centre; rather, it is a general name applied to diverse streams of thought that developed in far-flung areas of India over many centuries, united only by their exaltation of the bodhisattva ideal. Furthermore, some of these streams gave more emphasis to present Buddhas, such as Amitābha or Akṣobhya, or to “transcendental Buddhas”, such as Vairocana.) In his commentary on the *Abhidharmakośa*, dGe 'dun grub, the First Dalai Lama, states that “according to the Mahāyāna, [the bodhisattva] worshipped limitless Buddhas in each incalculable”.<sup>81</sup> A similar idea is found repeatedly in Mahāyāna sūtras, which mention innumerable Buddhas not only of the past but also of the present.

#### 4. The development of the theory of future Buddhas

##### 4.1. Future Buddhas and the Theravāda

We have seen above that, like the Buddhas of the past, the Buddhas of the future are referred to in the plural in the Pāli canon. Only one future Buddha, Metteyya, is named, and only in one place, in the *Cakkavattisihanāda-sutta*.<sup>82</sup> Later Theravādin texts such as the *Dasabodhisattuppatti-kathā*<sup>83</sup> and *Dasabodhisatta-uddesa*<sup>84</sup> give the names

<sup>80</sup> Birnbaum, *The Healing Buddha*, p. 133.

<sup>81</sup> Mdzod tik thar lam gsal byed (Varanasi: 1973), p. 270.1, *theg chen pas ni grangs med pa re re la yang, sangs rgyas dpag tu med pa la bsnyen bkur byas par bzhed do*.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. *Dīgha-nikāya* 26 (PTS III 75–76) and *Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā* (Nālandā ed. II 97).

<sup>83</sup> See H. Saddhatissa, *The Birth-Stories of the Ten Bodhisattas*. For this, the following work, and related literature, see Supaphan Na Bangchang, *Wiwathanakan wanakhadi bali*, pp. 190–204.

<sup>84</sup> See Martini, *Dasabodhisatta-uddesa*. The (unpublished) thesis of Pharn Wong-Uan, *Anāgatavaṃsa* (1980), gives a study, critical edition, and Thai translation of this work.

and “biographies” of ten future Buddhas, starting with Metteyya; the latter text promises that a person who worships the ten Sambuddhas will not be reborn in hell for one hundred thousand æons.<sup>85</sup> The *Sotatthaki-mahānidāna* mentions five hundred and ten bodhisattas who will become future Buddhas.<sup>86</sup> In the *Dasabodhisattuppatti-kathā*, the Buddha tells Sāriputta that the number of beings who will become Buddhas in future is limitless and countless (*anantāparimāṇā*), and states that he himself cannot count the future Buddhas.<sup>87</sup>

There is even less archæological evidence for the ten bodhisattas than for the twenty-eight or more Buddhas. A Sukhothai inscription from the time of King Līdayya (Mahādharmarāja I) dated 1361 refers to “Metteyya, etc., the ten bodhisattas”;<sup>88</sup> an Ayutthaya period chant lists their names.<sup>89</sup> They are depicted in eighteenth century Ceylonese painting at the Dambulla caves and at the Malvatta and Kulugammana Rājamaha Vihāras in Kandy District.<sup>90</sup> The wish to become a Buddha in the future occurs in inscriptions and colophons. A Pagan period terracotta tablet records the aspiration to become a Buddha of Thera Ānanda;<sup>91</sup> the Sukhothai period monk Śrīsaddhā performs a successful “act of truth” (*saccakiriya*), starting “If it is true that I shall attain omniscience and become a Buddha ...”.<sup>92</sup> King Līdayya also was “fully resolved to become a Buddha”.<sup>93</sup> Such aspirations could not be made if the number of future Buddhas was not held to be open.

<sup>85</sup> *Dasabodhisatta-uddesa*, text p. 334, tr. p. 367, *ime dasa ca sambuddhe yo naro pi namassati, kappasatasahassāni nirayaṃ so na gacchati*.

<sup>86</sup> *Sotatthaki-mahānidāna* v. 629 (text p. 96), *dasuttarā pañcasatā bodhisattā samuhatā*. I am not certain of the derivation here of *samuhata*, but the figure is clear. The phrase is spoken by the Buddha in answer to a question put by Ānanda, ‘How many [bodhi]sattas have you predicted?’

<sup>87</sup> *Dasabodhisattuppatti-kathā*, tr. p. 54, text p. 119.

<sup>88</sup> *Prachumsilacharuk*, Vol. I, p. 103: lines 12–13 of face 3, *ariyametteyyādīnaṃ dasannam bodhisattānaṃ ....* See also Prasert Na Nagara and A.B. Griswold, *Epigraphic and Historical Studies* (Bangkok: The Historical Society under the Royal Patronage of HRH Princes Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, 1992), no. 11, pt. 1, pp. 425–532 (repr. from *The Journal of the Siam Society* 61/1).

<sup>89</sup> Supaphan Na Bangchang, *Wiwathanakan wanakhadi bali*, pp. 195–196.

<sup>90</sup> H. Saddhatissa, *The Birth-Stories of the Ten Bodhisattas*, pp. 20–21 and plates I and II.

<sup>91</sup> Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagan* III, pl. 68, *ānandattherena kataṃ rūpaṃ | tena buddho homi*.

<sup>92</sup> Prasert and Griswold, *Epigraphic and Historical Studies*, p. 392.

<sup>93</sup> Prasert and Griswold, *Epigraphic and Historical Studies*, p. 496–497.

#### 4.2. Future Buddhas and other Buddhist schools

The cult of Metteyya (in Sanskrit, Maitreya) was accepted by all known Buddhist schools. I have not found any lists of future Buddhas in available works of the Vaibhāṣikas, Mūlasarvāstivādin, or Sāṃmitīyas. The *Bhaiṣajyavastu* and *Śāyanāsanavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinaya* name only one future Buddha, Maitreya.<sup>94</sup> In the first decade of the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Avadānaśataka*, the Buddha predicts the future Buddhahood of ten individuals, but these are only examples, and are not meant to make up a definitive list. The number of future Buddhas is open.

Daśabalaśrīmitra reports that “according to some, five Buddhas arise in this very ‘Auspicious Æon’ (*bhadrakalpa*); according to others, five hundred, and according to still others, one thousand”.<sup>95</sup> Interlinear notes in the Peking edition attribute the first theory to the Sthāviras, the second to the Sāṃmitīyas, and the third to the Mahāyāna.<sup>96</sup> While the first and last are amply confirmed by other sources, the ascription of five hundred Bhadrakalpa Buddhas to the Sāṃmitīyas cannot be confirmed. Three Sarvāstivādin texts in the Central Asian language of Uighur refer to five hundred Bhadrakalpa Buddhas. Two of these are Maitreya texts of the *Maitrisimit* class,<sup>97</sup> while one is a confessional text for laity.<sup>98</sup> Two commentaries by two different authors on two different sections of the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinaya* give the same figure. The *Vinayavastu-ṭikā*, a commentary on the *Vinayavastu* by the Sūtra Expert (*sūtradhara*) Kalyāṇamitra, states that “Fortunate Æon is a classification of time (*kālaviseṣa*): it is auspicious because in it five hundred Tathāgatas arise”. The

<sup>94</sup> *Bhaiṣajyavastu*, loc. cit., *Śāyanāsanavastu*, p. 30.

<sup>95</sup> Daśabalaśrīmitra 42b5.

<sup>96</sup> The notes are not found in the Derge edition (“Karmapa Reprint”, *dbu ma ha*, 139b6–7).

<sup>97</sup> Jan Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, n. 30, pp. 23–24, referring to Sinasi Tekin (ed., tr.), *Maitrisimit*, Vol. 1 (Berlin: Akademi Verlag, 1980), p. 44.11–16 (not seen); *Das Zusammentreffen mit Maitreya: die ersten fünf Kapitel der Hāmī-Version der Maitrisimit*, in Zusammenarbeit mit Helmut Eimer und Jens Peter Laut herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert von Geng Shimin und Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, Teil I (Wiesbaden: 1988), p. 75.

<sup>98</sup> Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, referring to her unpublished edition and translation of *Ksanti qilmaq nom bitig*, *An Uighur Confession Text for Laity*, 1974 (not seen).



*Vinayavibhaṅga-padavyākhyāna*, a commentary on the *Vinaya-vibhaṅga* by Vinītadeva, states that “a great Fortunate Æon is a beautiful Æon (*sundara-kalpa*), because in it 500 Buddhas arise”.<sup>99</sup> The *Qi fo fumu xingzi jing*, a recension of the *Mahāpadāna-sutta* of unknown school which was translated into Chinese between 240–254 CE, states that “in this *bhadrakalpa* there will be a full five hundred Buddhas”.<sup>100</sup> Since adherents of the five hundred Bhadrakalpa Buddhas would agree that four Buddhas, including Śākyamuni, have already arisen, this means that four hundred ninety-six Buddhas are yet to come, starting with Maitreya.

The *Bahubuddha-sūtra* of the *Mahāvastu* of the Mahāsāṃghika Lokottaravādins names only Maitreya,<sup>101</sup> but elsewhere the *Mahāvastu* states that one thousand Buddhas arise in the Auspicious Æon.<sup>102</sup> The names of one thousand future Buddhas are invoked in a sūtra translated into Chinese in the first half of the sixth century.<sup>103</sup> This figure was widely disseminated in the literature of the Mahāyāna, for example in such perennially popular sūtras as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika* and the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*.<sup>104</sup>

## 5. A solution to the Sambuddhe riddle?

Now, after a detour of several æons, we may return to the *Sambuddhe* verses. The texts agree that the Buddha Sakyamuni is an example

<sup>99</sup> P 5616, Vol. 122, 'dul 'grel vu, 85b7.

<sup>100</sup> Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*.

<sup>101</sup> *Mahāvastu* III 319.3, 323.4, 327.4, 328.4.

<sup>102</sup> *Mahāvastu* III 437.10. The text here is confused, and contains several lacunae. While the mention of one thousand Buddhas might be an interpolation, it is followed by an incomplete description of the extent of the radiance of a number of Bhadrakalpa Buddhas, past and future; this suggests that the later Lokottaravādins accepted the figure. The names of the future Buddhas do not agree with those given in the *Bhadrakalpika-sūtra*. See Jones' notes in *The Mahāvastu*, Vol. III, p. 322.

<sup>103</sup> *Wei lai xing su jie qian fo mingjing* (T 448): see de Visser p. 381.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Soper, *Literary Evidence*, pp. 200–202, Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, and references and discussion in Skilling, 'Buddhist Literature: Some Recent Translations' (particularly the review of *The Fortunate Æon*), *The Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 80.1 (1992), pp. 135–143.

of the first type of bodhisatta:<sup>105</sup> that is, his career lasted either four or twenty incalculable æons plus one hundred thousand æons. Since in traditional Buddhology the career of a bodhisatta or the acts of a Buddha are stereotyped – what applies to one applies to all – all bodhisattas of the first type should presumably, like Sakyamuni, encounter 512,028 Buddhas. That figure in the first verse may therefore represent either the number of Buddhas honoured by Sakyamuni, or by the first type of bodhisatta in general.<sup>106</sup> It follows that the figure 1,024,55 of the second verse could refer to the second type of bodhisatta, and the figure 2,048,109 of the third verse to the third type of bodhisatta, since the multiples are similar. In the (apocryphal) *Aruṇavatī-sutta*, the past Buddha Sikhī is said to have fulfilled the perfections for eight incalculable æons plus one hundred thousand æons; this means he was a bodhisatta of the second type.<sup>107</sup> In the *Jinakālamāli*, Dipaṃkara, Purāṇasakyamuni (plus several other past Buddhas), and Metteyya, the next Buddha, are described as bodhisattas of the third type. Thus the three figures of the *Sambuddhe* verses might well refer to the number of Buddhas encountered by the three types of bodhisattas of the past, present, and future. I have not, however, found a text to confirm this interpretation.

When and where were the *Sambuddhe* verses composed? At present I cannot suggest an answer. If the Burmese version, which refers to only 512,028 Buddhas, is the original, it could have been composed by the eleventh century, by which time the idea of the “longer career” lasting twenty incalculable æons seems to have appeared. Further research into Ceylonese, Burmese, Mon, and Shan sources, both epigraphic and literary, must be conducted before even an approximate date for the two higher figures can be suggested.

The tradition reported by such texts as the *Sotatthakīmāhānidāna* is the final and most developed theory of the Theravādins. The number of past Buddhas served by Sakyamuni as a bodhisatta surpasses that given by other Śrāvaka schools, as does the duration of his career,

<sup>105</sup> See, for example, *Jinakālamāli* 1.26–2.1, *amhākaṃ bhagavā kappasatasahassādhikāni cattāri asaṃkheyyāni pāramiyo pūretvā buddhabhāvaṃ patto paññādhiko nāma paññindriyassa balavattā*.

<sup>106</sup> Since the Burmese version gives only the first figure, and since the extra line places the Buddhas in the past, that version might refer only to the Buddhas honoured by Sakyamuni.

<sup>107</sup> *Aruṇavatī-sutta* in *Lokupatti Aruṇavatī* ... (see n. 44) p. 43.8, *sikkhī bodhisatto kappasatasahassādhikāni aṭṭha asaṃkheyyāni pāramiyo pūretvā* ....

even in its shortest and earliest form as four æons.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, the Theravādins adopted a theory of ten perfections (*pāramī*) against the six of Śrāvaka schools such as the Vaibhāṣikas, Mūlasarvāstivādins, Sāṃmitiyas,<sup>109</sup> and Lokottaravādins,<sup>110</sup> or of some Mahāyāna *sūtras* such as the *Prajñāpāramitā*. By classifying these under three grades they obtained a total of thirty,<sup>111</sup> again surpassing the figures given by other Śrāvaka schools, and also the Mahāyāna. It seems that on the matter of Buddhology the Theravādins were far from conservative: rather they may have been the most innovative of the known Śrāvaka schools. That this tendency began at an early date is shown by the fact the theories of four æons and thirty perfections occur in the canonical *Buddhavaṃsa*.

The three figures given in the *Sambuddhe* verses are not final, and the greatest figure of 2,048,109 is not the maximum number of Buddhas of either the past or the future. The figures only represent the number of Buddhas served by the three types of bodhisattas. In the first case, each of the 512,028 Buddhas would, during his own career, have served either 512,028, one million plus, or two million plus Buddhas, and each of those Buddhas would, in the course of their own quests for awakening, have done the same, in each case depending on the type of bodhisatta. The same may be said for future Buddhas. Thus the number of Buddhas implied by the *Sambuddhe*

<sup>108</sup> Note, however, that Vinītadeva's *Nikāyabhedopadaśana-saṃgraha* attributes to the Mūlasarvāstivādins a theory that "a bodhisatta attains [awakening] in from ten to thirty incalculable æons" (P 5641, Vol. 127, u 190a4, *byang chub sems dpa' ni bskal pa grangs med pa bcu phan chad nas sum cu tshun chad kyis 'grubo*). If this reference can be confirmed by other sources, it would suggest a development parallel to that seen in the Theravādin school.

<sup>109</sup> See Daśabalaśrīmitra 171a8, "great bodhisattas, after cultivating the six perfections for three incalculable æons ... realize awakening" (*byang chub sems dpa' chen po rnam ni skal pa grangs med gsum du pha rol tu phyin pa drug spyad pas ... yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas su 'gyur ro*).

<sup>110</sup> *Mahāvastu* III 302.3.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *Buddhavaṃsa* I 76–77 (PTS 6); *Apadāna* (*Buddhāpadāna*) (Mm XXXII 2.2). For a thorough study of the *pāramīs*, see HRH Princess Mahā Chakri Sirindhorn, *Dasapāramī in Theravāda Buddhism* (*Daśapāramī nai buddhaśāsanātheravāda*, in Thai) (Bangkok: 2525 [1982]), and 'Pāramī. A Buddhist Concept in the Thai Context', in François Lagirarde and Paritta Chalermpong Koanantakool (ed.), *Buddhist Legacies in Mainland Southeast Asia. Mentalities, Interpretations and Practices* (Bangkok: EFEO and Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, 2006), pp. 19–31.

verses stretches towards infinity in both past and future. This late Theravādin Buddhology is reflected in other chants, such as in the lines that follow the verses of homage to the seven Buddhas in the *Āṭānāṭiya-paritta*: *ete c' aññe ca sambuddhā anekasatakoṭayo*, “these and other Sambuddhas, many thousands of millions”.<sup>112</sup> The Burmese *Sambuddhe-gāthā* adds a line referring to limitless Buddhas, compared to whom the number of grains of sand in the Ganges River is insignificant.

The Theravādin theory seems to describe a full circle, from the open plurality of past and future Buddhas of the earliest texts to the open infinity of past and future Buddhas of the latest texts. The “infinity” of Buddhas is implied but unstated in the earliest, pan-Buddhist theory: in a *saṃsāra* that has no beginning or end there must arise in succession Buddhas without beginning or end. The “infinity” of Buddhas completes the idea of the earliest texts by expressing what was left unsaid. It does not contradict the various numbers of Buddhas, past or future, given by the Theravādin or other schools: such figures refer in all cases to specific groups of Buddhas in relation to other Buddhas or to certain periods of time (as, for example, the 512,028 Buddhas served by Sakyamuni), and are not in themselves final. The figures only make sense when the number of Buddhas is seen to be open.

Theravādin scholars are often uncomfortable about the later, developed Buddhology. Ven. Dhammānanda notes that the “longer career” of the bodhisatta – and hence the numbers of Buddhas given in the *Sambuddhe-gāthā* – need not be accepted, since it is not found in the *Tipiṭaka* or the *Aṭṭhakathā*; he further suggests that such theories do not conform to the *Mahāvihāra*, and might derive from the *Abhayagiri*. There is, however, no evidence for this. If I have described these theories as Theravādin in this article, it is because they are presented in Pāli works transmitted only (as far as we know) within the Theravādin Vinaya lineage. It is sometimes suggested that the theories derive from Mahāyāna influence, but the

<sup>112</sup> *Suat manta chabap luang*, pp. 21.2, 40.1. In the latter, the verse comes at the end of the *Āṭavisi-pirit* verses discussed above. Luce’s transcription of the last line of the Pāli, *etesaññeva sambuddhā anekasattako ...* (the text continues in old Mon) suggests that the inscription included this verse, which is not found in the Ceylonese versions available to me. This would date the verse to the eleventh century.

evidence is against this. The Buddhas arise serially, in succession: only one Buddha arises at a time; never, as in the Mahāyāna, do multiple Buddhas exist in the present. Only five Buddhas arise in the Auspicious æons. There is no hint of Mahāyāna doctrines such as the ten levels (*daśabhūmi*) of a bodhisatta or the three bodies (*trikāya*) of a Buddha, and the description of the career of a bodhisatta – whether as four incalculables plus one hundred thousand æons or more – or of the three types of bodhisatta are unique to the Theravādins, as are the numbers of past Buddhas, from the figure twenty-eight of the *Buddhavaṃsa* upwards. Furthermore, the Theravādin theories bear no formal resemblance to those of the other Śrāvaka schools. Direct copying or imitation of other Śrāvaka schools or of the Mahāyāna may therefore be ruled out.

Certainly, however, there would have been mutual inspiration, since no school existed in isolation. Some of the past Buddhas stand out as common to several lists. The theories of the different schools have a common origin in the sense that, during the several centuries on either side of the beginning of the Christian Era, there seems to have been a preoccupation with the past lives of the Buddha and the path to Buddhahood: that is, the bodhisatta career. During this period the bodhisatta theories of these schools, including the Theravādins, were formulated; during this period the Mahāyāna began to take shape – not as the initiator of the theories of the bodhisatta career, but as a result of the speculation on that subject.

At any rate, the *Sambuddhe* verses are concerned with power and protection, and not with philosophy or Buddhological speculation. Their efficacy derives from the large number of Buddhas invoked, and, although this is unstated, from the *pāramī* and *tejas* of Sakyamuni or other bodhisattas who honoured or will honour Buddhas of these numbers during the many æons of their bodhisatta careers. The concept of protection against calamity derived from the recitation of the name or epithets of the Buddha is an old one. It is enshrined, for example, in the ancient and canonical *Dhajagga-sutta*, a popular *paritta* in which the Buddha recommends the recitation of the *iti pi so* formula as a protection against fear. Other canonical *parittas* derive their power from the recitation of the names of *pacceka-buddhas*, as in the *Isigili-sutta*,<sup>113</sup> or of various deities, as in the *Mahāsamaya* and *Āṭānāṭiya*

<sup>113</sup> *Majjhima-nikāya* 116 (PTS III 67–71). Note that at the end the text seems to recommend that homage be paid “to these and other mighty *pacceka-buddhas*

*Suttas*, as do non-canonical *parittas* such as the *Mahādibbamanta* and the *Uppātasanti*. The power of texts like the *Ākāravatta-sutta* and the *Yot phra kantraipidok* stems from combinations of the *iti pi so* formula with the concept of *pāramī*.<sup>114</sup> The invocation of the “power of the name” occurs in Mahāyāna sūtras such as the sūtras on the one thousand past and one thousand future Buddhas referred to above (there is also a parallel sūtra on the one thousand present Buddhas). The *Names of 5,453 Buddhas*, a text preserved in Tibetan translation, names that many Buddhas, who are not placed in time or space; verses at the end promise protection.<sup>115</sup> The *Sambuddhe* verses may be unique in invoking the power of the largest number of Buddhas in the fewest words.

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... without limit” (PTS III 71.3, *ete ca aññe ca mahānubhāvā paccekabuddhā ... parinibbute vandatha appameyye*). I.B. Horner (*The Middle Length Sayings* III [London: 1967], p. 113), interprets the passage as “praise all these immeasurable great seers who have attained final nibbāna”.

<sup>114</sup> For these texts, and for *paritta* in general, see Peter Skilling, ‘The Rakṣā Literature of the Śrāvakayāna’, *Journal of the Pāli Text Society* XVI (1992), pp. 116–124.

<sup>115</sup> *Sangs rgyas kyi mtshan lnga stong bzhi brgya lnga bcu rtsa gsum pa*, P 928 (Vol. 36), *mdo zu*. The text, which has no translators’ colophon or *nidāna*, consists entirely of names, often long and awkward, in the formula “homage to ...”, concluding with 12 lines of verse spoken by the Buddha. The colophon to the Stog Palace edition (§ 95) notes that the transmission of the text was confused. A Chinese parallel (T 443) was translated in 594 CE. For the invocation of the names of the Buddha, see *Hōbōgirin* III 209–10 (Butsumyō).

## Praises of the Buddha beyond praise

THE RECOLLECTION OF THE BUDDHA ACCORDING TO THE *ITI PI SO* formula is an ancient practice, recommended by the Sakyan Sage himself in the *Dhajagga-sutta* of the *Sagāthavagga* of the *Samyutta-nikāya*.<sup>1</sup> The formula lists nine qualities of the Buddha, which came to be known as the *nava-buddha-guṇa*. It was recognized early on, however, that the qualities or virtues of the Buddha were without limit. The idea that the Buddha is beyond praise (*aparimāṇavaṇṇo*) is expressed in a stock passage uttered by several leading brāhmaṇas of the time, such as Soṇadaṇḍa, Kūṭadanta, and Caṅkī, each of whom is reported to declare:<sup>2</sup> ‘I have mastered only so many of the praises of

<sup>1</sup> *Samyutta-nikāya*, PTS I 218–220.

<sup>2</sup> *Soṇadaṇḍa-sutta* (*Dīgha-nikāya* 4, PTS I 117.14): *ettake kho ahaṃ bho tassa bhoto gotamassa vaṇṇe pariyāpuṇāmi, no ca kho so bhavaṃ gotamo ettakavaṇṇo, aparimāṇavaṇṇo hi so bhavaṃ gotamo*; also at *Kūṭadanta-sutta* (*Dīgha-nikāya* 5, PTS I 133.23) and *Caṅkī-sutta* (*Majjhima-nikāya* 95, PTS II 168.3). There does not seem to be any parallel passage in the Chinese version of the *Soṇadaṇḍa-sutta*: see Konrad Meisig, ‘Chung Têh King – The Chinese Parallel to the *Soṇadaṇḍa-Sutta*’, in V.N. Jha (ed.), *Kalyāṇa-mitta: Professor Hajime Nakamura Felicitation Volume* (Delhi: 1991), p. 55.

the respected Gotama, but this is not the full measure of his praises: the respected Gotama merits unlimited praise'.<sup>3</sup> This natural statement, which culminates a long eulogy of the Buddha, was later rephrased as a general principle: 'The Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, merit unlimited praise'.<sup>4</sup> In the *Apadāna*, Gatasañña Thera refers to the past Buddha Tissa as 'an ocean of unlimited virtues' (*anantaḡuṇasāgara*).<sup>5</sup> What had started out as a rather straightforward fact took on a mystical flavour.

The following passage shows how this concept was presented in Siam at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is taken from the *Traibhūmilokavinichayakathā*, also known as the *Traibhūmi chabap luang*, which was composed at the behest of Rāma I, the first king of the Chakri Dynasty, by Phraya Dharmapriṇā (Kaew) in CS 1164 or BE 2345, that is CE 1802.<sup>6</sup> The citation is from the beginning of

<sup>3</sup> 'And so far only do I know the excellencies of the Samaṇa Gotama, but these are not all of them, for his excellence is beyond measure': T.W. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Vol. I (London 1973 [1899]), p. 150; 'However much I might praise the ascetic Gotama, that praise is insufficient, he is beyond all praise': Maurice Walshe, *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha* (London: 1987), p. 128; 'To this extent I, sirs, know the good Gotama's splendour, but this is not the (full) extent of the good Gotama's splendour – immeasurable is the splendour of the good Gotama': I.B. Horner, *The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings (Majjhima-nikāya)*, Vol. II (London: 1975 [1957]), p. 358; 'This much is the praise of Master Gotama that I have learned, but the praise of Master Gotama is not limited to that, for the praise of Master Gotama is immeasurable': Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* (Kandy: 1995), p. 778.

<sup>4</sup> *Udāna-aṭṭhakathā* (Mm 524.1; PTS 415): *aparimāṇavaṇṇā hi buddhā bhagavanto*. See also *Majjhimaṇṇāsa-aṭṭhakathā* (PTS III 24), *Salāyatanavagga-aṭṭhakathā* (PTS III 49) and *Salāyatanavagga-tīkā* (ChS II 336) where we find *appamāṇavaṇṇā*.

<sup>5</sup> *Apadāna* (Nālandā ed. I 151; PTS 127).

<sup>6</sup> The Fine Arts Department (ed.), Phraya Dharmapriṇā (Kaew), *Traibhūmilokavinichayakathā chabap thi 2 (Traibhūmi chabap luang)* Vol. 1 (Bangkok: 2520 [1977]), pp. 15–16. For a brief note on the textual history of the *Traibhūmi* genre, see Peter A. Jackson, 'Re-interpreting the Traiphuum Phra Ruang: Political Functions of Buddhist Symbolism in Contemporary Thailand', in Trevor Ling (ed.), *Buddhist Trends in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), pp. 69–70. For Phraya Dharmapriṇā see H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, 'The Reconstruction of Rāma I of the Chakri Dynasty', in *Collected Articles by H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat reprinted from the Journal of the*



the first chapter (*paṭhamapariccheda*), on homage to the Three Gems (*kham namaskār phra ratanatray*). The prose is in Thai; the verses are in Pāli.<sup>7</sup>

The Holy (*phra*) Buddhaguṇa (virtues or qualities of the Buddha) are endless (*ananta*), vast (*vitthāra*), and wide, and their limit cannot be reached: it is beyond the ability of all of the deities, such as Indra or Brahma, to enumerate (*barrṇanā*) the Holy Buddhaguṇa to the limit or to the end. It is the same even for the Holy Omniscient Lord Buddha (*Phra Sabbaññū Buddha Chao*): he can enumerate his own holy qualities, but even he is unable to enumerate them to the limit and to the end. Though he may continue to enumerate them, his life-span (*phra janmāyu*) will be exhausted before [he can finish]: it is impossible to know the end or know the limit of the Holy Buddhaguṇa. The matter is suitably explained by these verses:

*sahassasīso<sup>8</sup> pi ce poso sīse sīse sataṃ mukhā  
mukhe mukhe sataṃ jivhā jivakappo mahiddhiko  
na sakkoti ca vaṇṇetum<sup>9</sup> nisesaṃ satthuno guṇaṃ.*

Even if a person had a thousand heads  
Each head with a hundred mouths,  
Each mouth with a hundred tongues –  
And even if he could live for an æon  
And possessed great supernormal power,  
He would still be unable to enumerate  
The virtues of the Teacher in full.

*buddho pi buddhassa bhaṇeyya vaṇṇaṃ  
kappam pi ce aññaṃ abhāsamāno*

*Siam Society* (Bangkok: 1969), p. 159 (originally published in *Journal of the Siam Society* XLIII-1, [1955]).

<sup>7</sup> I give in parentheses selected phrases that derive from Pāli or Sanskrit, in their Thai orthography. *Phra* (rendered here as ‘holy’), *chao* (rendered here as ‘lord’), and *somdet* (not translated) are frequently attached to the names or titles of objects or persons of respect in Thai.

<sup>8</sup> -*sīse Traibhūmi*: I follow here the Khmer citation (see below), to read -*sīso*.

<sup>9</sup> *vaṇṇetu Traibhūmi*: I follow here the Khmer citation, to read *vaṇṇetum*.

*khīyetha kappo ciradīgham<sup>10</sup> antare  
vaṇṇo na khīyetha tathāgatassa.*

If a Buddha were to speak in praise of a Buddha,  
Speaking nothing else for an æon's length,  
Sooner would the long-standing æon reach its end,  
But the praise of the Tathāgata would not reach its end.<sup>11</sup>

The first verse may be explained as follows: a man possessing great supernormal power (*mahiddhi-rddhi*) conjures up (*nṛmit*) a multitude of heads, one thousand in number. Each of these heads has one hundred mouths, and each of these mouths has one hundred tongues – this amounts to one hundred thousand mouths and to ten million tongues. The man has a long life-span, as long as one æon (*kappa*). If he does not engage in any other activity at all, but devotes himself only to the praise of the Holy Buddhagaṇa, throughout the day and throughout the night, until his æon-long life-span is exhausted – he would nonetheless be unable to enumerate the Holy Buddhagaṇa to the end or to the limit.

The second verse may be explained thus: Somdet the Holy Omniscient Lord Buddha has a long life-span of an æon; if he does not preach on any other subject at all, but, as in the previous example, preaches only on the Holy Buddhagaṇa of Somdet the Holy Omniscient Lord Buddha, throughout the day and throughout the night, and continues preaching until the end of that long stretch of time, to the limit of his æon-long life-span – the Holy Buddhagaṇa of Somdet the Holy Tathāgata the Ten-Powered One (*dasābala*) would not yet be exhausted.

<sup>10</sup> *Traibhūmi* only reads *cira-*, against the *cira-* of the *aṭṭhakathā* (see below).

<sup>11</sup> I take the translation from Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Discourse on the All-embracing Net of Views: The Brahmajāla Sutta and its Commentarial Exegesis* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1978), p. 330; cf. also translations in Peter Masefield, *The Udāna Commentary (Paramatthadīpanī nāma Udānaṭṭhakathā)*, Vol. II (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1995), p. 871; and in I.B. Horner, *The Clarifier of the Sweet Meaning (Madhurattavilāsini)* (London: The Pali Text Society, 1978), pp. 193–194. Horner did not understand the verse.

I have not been able to trace the origin of the first verse, which is also cited in Pāli in a text belonging to the 'Itipiso' genre, the *Itipisoratanamālā*.<sup>12</sup> The second verse, however, is well attested in classical Pāli commentarial literature, where it is cited without specific attribution in (at least) the following sources:<sup>13</sup>

- *Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā* (*Sumaṅgalavilāsini*), commenting on the *Soṇadaṇḍa-sutta* (DN 4);<sup>14</sup>
- *Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā* (*Sumaṅgalavilāsini*), commenting on the *Sampasādaniya-sutta* (DN 28);<sup>15</sup>
- *Majjhimaniikāya-aṭṭhakathā* (*Papañcasūdanī*), commenting on the *Caṅki-sutta* (MN 95);<sup>16</sup>
- *Udāna-aṭṭhakathā*, commenting on the third sutta of the *Jaccandha-vagga*;<sup>17</sup>
- *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* (twice);<sup>18</sup>
- *Apadāna-aṭṭhakathā*;<sup>19</sup>
- *Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā*;<sup>20</sup>
- *Dīghanikāya-ṭīkā* (*Linatthappakāsanā*) commenting on the *Brahmajāla-sutta* commentary.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See Francois Bizot and Oskar von Hinüber (ed.), *La guirlande de Joyaux* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1994, Textes bouddhiques du Cambodge 2), (text) p. 135, (translation) pp. 180–181. In the original version of this article I mistakenly described the text as 'Khmer'. It is, however, well-known in Siam (a fact not noted by Bizot and von Hinüber) in both manuscript and printed editions, and although its history has not been traced, it may well have been compiled in Siam.

<sup>13</sup> I have culled the references from the notes to the *Chattā Saṅgāyana* editions. The verse is usually introduced by *vuttaṃ h' etaṃ* (*vuttaṃ pi c' etaṃ*, *vuttaṃ c' etaṃ*, etc.).

<sup>14</sup> PTS I 288 (not seen); ChS [I] 257.8; Mm I 356.8; Nālandā ed. 315.25 (cf. comment in *ṭīkā*, ChS [I] 318.7–10).

<sup>15</sup> Mm III 80.8; PTS [III] 877 (not seen); ChS [III] 61 (not seen).

<sup>16</sup> Mm III 388.16; PTS III 423 (not seen); ChS III 289 (not seen).

<sup>17</sup> ChS 305, bottom; PTS 336; Mm 426.4. A similar statement is made in prose at Mm 542.1–4.

<sup>18</sup> ChS 9.1, 324.12; PTS 8, 332; BhB 13.8, 506.7.

<sup>19</sup> ChS II 91.17; PTS 388.

<sup>20</sup> PTS 135.9; BhB 250.1; ChS 163 (not seen).

<sup>21</sup> PTS I 65; ChS I 51.1.

The references show that the verse was well-known by the fifth century, the time of Buddhaghosa, as well as to the commentators Dhammapāla and Buddhadatta.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The idea of talking for an æon or more is found in the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra*: Étienne Lamotte, *L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti (Vimalakīrtinirdeśa)* (Louvain: 1962), pp. 257–258. Lamotte (n. 17) refers to a similar hyperbole in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*. See now Study Group on Buddhist Sanskrit Literature (ed.), *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa and Jñānālokāṅkāra: Transliterated Sanskrit Text Collated with Tibetan and Chinese Translations. Part II. Vimalakīrtinirdeśa: Transliterated Sanskrit Text Collated with Tibetan and Chinese Translations* (Tokyo: The Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism, Taisho University, 2004).

## 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 Filliozat<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction: Reflections on Jātaka literature

THE JĀTAKA IS ONE OF THE OLDEST CLASSES OF BUDDHIST literature.<sup>2</sup> As a genre it is unique to Buddhism: it is not found

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

<sup>2</sup> For *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 and Kahn), Vol. II ([Calcutta: 1933] New

in Jaina or Brahmanical literature.<sup>3</sup> There are specific *jātaka* texts such as the collection of verses included in the Theravādin *Khuddakānikāya* under the name *jātaka*, or the Sanskrit *Jātakamālā* collections, but beyond that the *jātaka* thoroughly pervades Buddhist literature, whether Śrāvakayāna or 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.<sup>4</sup> 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*.<sup>5</sup> 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 *Rāṣṭrapālāparipṛcchā-sūtra*.<sup>6</sup> The long recension of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts contains an interesting disquisition on the animal births of the bodhisattva from

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Delhi: 1991), pp. 113–156; K.R. Norman, *Pali Literature* (Wiesbaden: 1983), pp. 77–84; *Encyclopædia of Buddhism*, Vol. VI, Fasc. 1 ([Colombo]: The Government of Ceylon, 1996), pp. 2–23.

<sup>3</sup> There may be exceptions, such as Hemacandra, *Jaina Jataka or Lord Rshabha's Purvabhavas* (translated by Banarsi Das Jain [Lahore: The Punjab Sansk. Bk. Depot, 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.

<sup>4</sup> By 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.

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

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

the point of view of *prajñāpāramitā* thought.<sup>7</sup> 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, number 22) are names of Śākyamuni during his previous lives, his bodhisattva career related in the early *jātakas*.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> *Jātakas* are referred to in 'apocryphal' Mahāyāna sūtras like the *Prajñāpāramitā for Humane Kings who wish to Protect their States*.<sup>11</sup> 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, Bodhi Gayā, Amarāvati, and elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> The earliest surviving Buddhist painting, at Cave X at Ajanta, dated by Schlingloff to the second century BCE, depicts two *jātakas* – *Ṣaddanta* and *Śyāma* – along with the life of the Buddha and the legend of Udayana.<sup>13</sup>

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

<sup>8</sup> Hisao Inagaki (tr.), *Nāgārjuna's Discourse on the Ten Stages, Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā* (Kyoto: 1998, Ryukoku Literature Series V), p. 158.

<sup>9</sup> Inagaki, *Nāgārjuna's Discourse*, p. 152.

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

<sup>11</sup> Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism* (University Park [Pennsylvania]: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), pp. 246–247.

<sup>12</sup> Lamotte, *Histoire du bouddhisme indien*, pp. 443–446.

<sup>13</sup> Dieter Schlingloff, *Studies in the Ajanta Paintings: Identifications and Interpretations* (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1988), pp. 1–13, 64–72; Monika Zin,

*Jātakas* continued to be painted at Ajanta in the following centuries, and no doubt at other monuments that have long succumbed to the law of 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*' (*kinnarījātakākīrṇannānāci travirājitam*).<sup>14</sup>

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 and *in extenso* (*vitthārena*).<sup>15</sup> Later, in the early fifth century, Fāxiān 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'.<sup>16</sup>

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,<sup>17</sup> as well as in Nepal, or as *jātaka* murals donned the costumes of the local culture. The cave-temples along the Silk Route, such as those at Dunhuang, are rich in *jātaka* murals, especially in the early period. About one

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'The Oldest Painting of the Udayana Legend', *Berliner Indologische Studien*, 11/12 (1998), pp. 435–448.

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

<sup>15</sup> *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* (London: Luzac and Co., 1971, Sacred Books of the Buddhists, Vol. XXVIII), pp. 116–117 (translation), 234 (text).

<sup>16</sup> James 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.

<sup>17</sup> Léon 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 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1899), pp. 151–169; Lamotte, *Histoire du bouddhisme indien*, pp. 365–368.



hundred *jātakas*, some still unidentified, are depicted in relief on the lower galleries of great stūpa of Borobudur in Java, which dates to *circa* the ninth century.

*Jātakas*, originally transmitted in Prakrits, Buddhist Sanskrit, and Sanskrit, were translated into Central Asian languages like Khotanese, Tocharian, Uighur, and Sogdian.<sup>18</sup> Some of the first texts to be translated into Chinese were *jātakas*. One of the early translators was Kāng Sēnghuì, who was born in Giao Chí (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*,<sup>19</sup> which Tsukamoto describes as ‘Kāng Sēnghuì’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 ....<sup>20</sup>

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*

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

<sup>19</sup> *Liu tu chi ching*, \*Ṣaṭpāramitā-saṅgraha-sūtra (Korean Tripiṭaka 206, Taishō 152, Nanjio 143).

<sup>20</sup> Zenryū Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism from its Introduction to the Death of Hui-yüan* (translated from the Japanese by Leon Hurvitz), Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1985), pp. 151–163. For Kāng Sēnghuì see Robert Shih (tr.), *Biographies 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.

translated from Chinese sources into a European language.<sup>21</sup> 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, ascribed to Zhiqiān between 223 and 253, but more probably translated in the fifth century, generally agrees with the Sanskrit text which is represented by much later manuscripts.<sup>22</sup> The *Da zhidu lun*, a commentary on the longer *Prajñāpāramitā* translated by Kumārajīva at Cháng-ān in 404–405, is rich in 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.<sup>23</sup> Numerous *jātakas* are embedded in other works translated into Tibetan such as the *Vinaya*, the *Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish* (*mDo mdzañs blun*), *avadāna* collections, and Mahāyāna sūtras.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Édouard 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 Zhiqiān. Modern scholarship has questioned the attribution.

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

<sup>23</sup> Ārya Śūra's work and commentary (= Peking Kanjur, Ōtani Reprint, Vol. 128, nos. 5650, 5651) are conveniently printed in sKyes rabs so bži ba'i rtsa 'grel bžugs so, mTsho sñon mi rigs dpe skrun khañ, 1997. The root-texts of Ārya Śūra (Ōtani no. 5650) and Haribhaṭṭa (Ōtani no. 5652) are published in *bsTan 'gyur las byuñ ba'i sKyes rabs dañ rtogs brjod gces bsdus*, Mi rigs dpe skrun khañ, 1993. For the *jātaka* section of the Tanjur, see Tshul khriims rin chen, *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag*, Bod ljoñs mi dmañs dpe skrun khañ, 1985, 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* 1).

<sup>24</sup> See 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. Delhi: Sri Satguru, 1988); William Woodville Rockhill, 'Tibetan

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*,<sup>25</sup> Zhe chen 'gyur med Padma rnam rgyal's *mDo las byuñ ba'i gdam rgyud sna tshogs*,<sup>26</sup> or Padma Chos 'phel's summary of the *Avadānakalpalatā*.<sup>27</sup> The *jātakas* were one of the six basic texts of the bKa' gdams pas, the forerunners of the dGe lugs pas.

In the seventh century Yijing 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 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.<sup>28</sup> 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*.<sup>29</sup> The dramatization of

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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* (Tokyo: Reiyukai Library, 1981, *Studia Philologica Buddhica*, Monograph Series III).

<sup>25</sup> Printed in *bCom ldan 'das ston pa śākya thub pa'i rnam thar*, mTsho sñon mi rigs dpe skrun khañ, 1997, pp. 205–506.

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

<sup>27</sup> 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* (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1997). For the history of the *Avadānakalpalatā* in Tibet see Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp, 'Tibetan Belles-Lettres: The Influence of Dañḍin and Kṣemendra', in José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson (ed.), *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1996), pp. 401–402.

<sup>28</sup> See Jacques Bacot, 'Drimedkun: Une version tibétaine du Vessantara jātaka', *Journal Asiatique*, Sér. XI, tome IV (Sept.–Oct., 1914), pp. 221–305; 'Tchimekundan', in Jacques Bacot, *Trois mystères tibétains* (repr. Paris: l'Asiathèque, 1987), pp. 19–131 (citation from p. 23)., Sept.–Oct.:

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 133. For 'Drowazangmo' see Marion H. Duncan, *Harvest Festival Dramas of Tibet* (Hong Kong: Orient Publishing, 1955). For 'Vorvong and Sauriwong' see *Vorvong et Sauriwong* (Phnom Penh: Institut Bouddhique, 1971, *Séries de Culture et Civilisation Khmères*, Tome 5). 'Voravong' (Varavaṃsa) is no. 45 in the Thai National Library printed edition of the *Paññāsajātaka*. For the place

Nor *bzan* 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.<sup>30</sup> New year performances of plays, including *jātakas*, have been enacted in Tibet since at least the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>31</sup>

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).<sup>32</sup> *Jātakas* arrived, of course, with the *Tripitaka* texts brought from China. The Chinese 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.<sup>33</sup> *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 fourteenth century or to the fifteenth century.<sup>34</sup> In popular Japanese literature *jātakas* may be mentioned

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of Voravong in Southern Thai literature see the entry by Udom Nuthong in *Saranukrom Wathanatham Phak tai pho so 2529*, Vol. 8, pp. 3296–3302.

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

<sup>31</sup> R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 278.

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

<sup>33</sup> Schlombs, Adele (ed.), *Im Licht des Grossen Buddha: Schätze des Tōdaiji-Tempels, Nara* (Köln: Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst Köln, 1999), p. 194.

<sup>34</sup> Douglas E. Mills, 'Récits du genre *jātaka* dans la littérature japonaise', in Jacqueline Pigeot and Hartmut O. Rothermund (ed.), *Le Vase de beryl: Études sur le Japon et la Chine en hommage à Bernard Frank* (Paris: Éditions Philippe Picquier, 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 fourteenth century date for the *Sangoku Denki* is suggested by Mills (p. 165). Japanese scholars usually date the work to the fifteenth century.

in passing, as, for example, in *Soga Monogatari*,<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup>

### *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 archaeological evidence, starting from about the seventh 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.<sup>37</sup> Somewhat later are the so-called *śīmā* stones in North-Eastern Siam, which belong to a Mon culture which I call the 'Chi Valley culture'.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> See Thomas J. Cogan (tr.), *The Tale of the Soga Brothers* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1987), p. 86: reference to Dipamkara, 'Prince Sattva', and King Śivi.

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

<sup>37</sup> Piriya 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', *Silpākon* 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].

<sup>38</sup> See Piriya Krairiksh, 'Semas with Scenes from the Mahānīpāṭa-Jātakas in the National Museum at Khon Kaen', in *Art and Archæology 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

From Chinese sources we learn that Buddhism was established in the kingdom of Giao Chi in the Red River valley (the vicinity of modern Hanoi) by the first or second century. In the third century foreign monks resided in or passed through the area. We have referred above to Kāṅg Sēnghuì of Giao Chi, 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 Kāṅg Sēnghuì studied the text in Giao Chi and carried it with him to Nanking, where he did his work, or whether he obtained the text in China.

In 484 the King of Funan, Kauṇḍinya 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:<sup>39</sup>

Le bodhisattva pratique la miséricorde. Originellement, 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.

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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 Dvāravati culture. But I do not see any 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'.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Pelliot, 'Le Fou-nan', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* III (1903), pp. 249-303, especially pp. 257-270. The reconstruction of Sanskrit terms is Pelliot's.

It is with the flourishing of Theravādin Buddhist culture in the states of Pagan from the eleventh century and Sukhothai from the thirteenth 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*.

### 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 transmitted by the Mahāvihāra school, 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 that of the Mahāvihārin, 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 Mahāvihārin 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.)<sup>40</sup>

In his *Samantapāsādikā* Buddhaghosa defines *jātaka*, one of the nine component genres (*aṅga*) of the Buddha's teaching (*navariga-buddhasāsana*), as 'the five hundred fifty birth stories commencing with *Apaṇṇaka*'. This is not a definition of the term *jātaka* as such: rather, it

<sup>40</sup> There 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.

is simply an equation of the *jātaka-aṅga* with the classical Pāli *jātaka* collection. This deficiency has been pointed out by Jayawickrama:

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.<sup>41</sup>

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*.<sup>42</sup>

The narrative aspect is emphasized in the definition in the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*:<sup>43</sup>

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 garuḍa. Such are all the bodies one receives when one practises the Way of a bodhisattva.' This is *jātaka*.

<sup>41</sup> N.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* (London: Luzac and Co., 1962, Sacred Books of the Buddhists Vol. XXI), p. 102, n. 6.

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

<sup>43</sup> Kosho Yamamoto, *The Mahayana Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra: A Complete Translation from the Classical Chinese Language in 3 volumes, Volume Two* (Ube City: The Karinbunko, 1973–1975), p. 361.



For the later scholastic tradition, the *jātakas*, as accounts of the past deeds of the bodhisatta, are illustrations of the perfections, the *pāramī* or *pāramitā*. Adopted by the *pāramitā* ideology, the *jātakas* both 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 *Khuddaka-nikāya*, from chapters with one verse (*Ekanipāta*) up to the Great Chapter (*Mahānipāta*).<sup>44</sup> 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 *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'.<sup>45</sup> The recitation of the *Mahachat* was an important ceremony in pre-modern times and remains so today.<sup>46</sup> Another ceremony,

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

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

<sup>46</sup> The 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. Bangkok: Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, 27th May 1976). See also Phya Anuman Rajadhon, *Thet Mahā Chāt* (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, BE 2512 [1969], Thai Culture New Series no. 21), repr. in Phya Anuman Rajadhon, *Essays on Thai Folklore* (Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol, n.d.), pp. 164–177; Lucien Fournereau, *Bangkok in 1892* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 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* (Bangkok: The Prime Minister's Office, 2524 [1981]); Sathirakoses, 'Praphehi mi ngan thet mahachat', in *Praphehi tang tang khong thai* (Bangkok: 2540 [1997]), pp. 1–41;

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.<sup>47</sup> Recitation and enactment are threads in 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 nineteenth century.<sup>48</sup> There are numerous 'sermon' versions, such as *Mahachat klon thet* (or *Ray yao mahachat*),<sup>49</sup> and so on.<sup>50</sup> 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 *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.<sup>51</sup> Udom

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Chuan Khreuawichayachan, *Prapheni mon ti samkhan* (Bangkok: SAC Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, 2543 [2000]), Chap. 11; brief note at Term Wiphakphotchanakit, *Prawatsat isan*, (third printing, Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 2542 [1999]), p. 567 (reference courtesy Justin McDaniel).

<sup>47</sup> For Laos see Marcel Zago, *Rites et cérémonies en milieu bouddhiste lao* (Rome: Università Gregoriana Editrice, 1972, Documenta Missionalia 6), pp. 290–297, 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* (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, 2540 [1997]), pp. 150–158.

<sup>48</sup> *Kap* is *kāby*, Sanskrit *kāvyā*; *chan* is *chand*, Sanskrit *chandas*: the terms refer to Thai metres.

<sup>49</sup> *Sinlapawathanatham thai*, Vol. 3 (Bangkok: BE 2525 [1982]), pp. 163–165

<sup>50</sup> See for example *Mahachat 6 thamai 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.

<sup>51</sup> Sommai Premchit, 'Palm Leaf Manuscripts and Traditional Sermon', in *Buddhism in Northern Thailand*, The 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the World Fellowship of

Rungruangsri refers to 130 versions of *Vessantara-jātaka* composed by different authors.<sup>52</sup>

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) in Thai.<sup>53</sup> The recitation of *Māleyya* followed by the *Vessantara* is mentioned in an inscription from Pagan dated to CE 1201.<sup>54</sup> A Northern Thai text on *The Benefits of the Mahāvessantara-jātaka* states:<sup>55</sup>

Whoever ... wants to see the glorious Metteyya Bodhisatta, let him bring the following propitiatory elements, such as one thousand lamps, one thousand candles and joss-sticks, one thousand lumps of (glutinous) rice ... worship and listen to the *Mahāvessantara* sermon finishing it in one day with great respect ... his 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.<sup>56</sup> The sermons were presented in various ways, with great pomp and ritual,

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Buddhists (Chiang Mai: 1980), p. 83.

<sup>52</sup> Udom Rungruangsri, *Wannakam lanna* (second printing, Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University, 2528 [1985]), pp. 126–127.

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

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

<sup>55</sup> *Ānisaṅsa of the Mahāvessantara-jātaka* from Wat Nong Phaek, Tambon Nong Phaek, Amphoe Saraphae, cited in Premchit, 'Palm Leaf Manuscripts and Traditional Sermon', p. 86 (with some alteration).

<sup>56</sup> Did the recitation of the *Vessantara* have any connection with consecration of Buddha images? The *Jinakālamālīnī* (A.P. Buddhadatta (ed.), *Jinakālamālīnī* [London: The Pali Text Society, 1962], p. 120) reports that when the 'Sinhalese image' (*sihala-paṭimā*) 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

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 Mahavajirānātha offered the *Sakkapabba Chapter* in 2434 [1891] and Prince Krommaluang Nakhon Rajasima offered the *Chakasat Chapter*.<sup>57</sup>

The tradition of rendering of *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, seventy-second birthday).<sup>58</sup>

## 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.<sup>59</sup>

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both the *jātakas* and the life story empower the image with the *tejas* of the bodhisattva.

<sup>57</sup> See *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 (Kanjavanant) Flood, *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era: The Fourth Reign, B.E. 2394–2411 (A.D. 1851–1868)*, Volume Two: Text (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 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, *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era*, Vol. One (1965), pp. 73–76.

<sup>58</sup> *Thotsachat kham chan* (Bangkok: 2542 [1999]).

<sup>59</sup> Padmanabh S. Jaini (ed.), *Paññāsa-jātaka or Zimma Paññāsa (in the Burmese Recension)*, Vol. I, *Jātakas 1–25* (London: Pali Text Society, 1981, Text Series no. 172), p. vi.

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 HRH Prince Damrong Rajanubhab in the early twentieth century. The Northern Thai *Ṭṭakamālā* calls the *Paññāsa-jātaka* ‘the fifty births outside the *saṅgāyanā*’.<sup>60</sup> This might approach the concept of ‘non-canonical’, but the relation between text and *saṅgāyanā* is, in general, ambiguous and complex. This ambiguity 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’ (*saṅgītittayam anārūlham*). It is noteworthy that two of these texts are described as ‘*sutta*’: *Kulumba-sutta*, *Rājovāda-sutta*. In contrast, the *Sārasaṅgaha* rejects other texts, including Mahāyāna sūtras and Tantras, as ‘not the word of the Buddha’ (*abuddhavadana*).<sup>61</sup>

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.<sup>62</sup> 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 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

<sup>60</sup> A *Critical Study of Northern Thai Version of Panyasa Jātaka* (Chiang Mai: 2541), Introduction, p. 19.

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

<sup>62</sup> For 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.

traditions. There are far too many to enumerate here.<sup>63</sup> 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.<sup>64</sup> In his *Lan Na Literature* Udom Rungruangsri lists one hundred titles of Northern *jātakas* out of over two hundred registered by Harald Hundius.<sup>65</sup> Some are quite long, in ten or fifteen bundles (*phūk*). 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*.<sup>66</sup> This vast literature is outside the

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

<sup>64</sup> Sueppong Thammachat, *Wannakhadi Chadok (Jataka Literature)* (Bangkok: Odeon Store, 2542 [1999]), pp. 188–218. Many of these *jātakas* are described in *Saranukrom Wathanatham Thai* (Bangkok: 2542 [1999]), which devotes fifteen volumes to each of the four regions of modern Thailand (North, North-East, Centre, and South, with eighteen volumes for the last-named). For *Subin* see *Subin samnuan kao: wannakam khong kawi chao muang nakhon si thammarat* (Nakhon Si Thammarat: Nakhon Si Thammarat Teachers' College, 2520 [1977]). For the relation between Southern literature and that of other regions of Thailand see Udom Nuthong, 'Wannakam phak tai: khwam samphan kap wannakam thong thin eun', in Sukanya Succhaya (ed.), *Wannakhadi thong thin phinit* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2543 [2000]), pp. 77–95.

<sup>65</sup> Udom Rungruangsri, *Wannakam lanna*, pp. 141–143.

<sup>66</sup> H.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* (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 2512 [1969]), pp. 73–90; Vo Thu Tinh, *Phra Lak Phra Lam ou le Ramayana Lao* (Vientiane: Éditions Vithagna, 1972, Collection 'Littérature Lao', volume premier); Sahai Sachchidanand, *The Rama Jataka in Laos: A Study in the Phra Lak Phra Lam* (Delhi: B.R. Pub. Corp., 1996, 2 vols.). The Rāma story was also presented as a *jātaka* in Khotan: see Ronald E. Emmerick, *A Guide to the Literature of Khotan*, second edition (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1992, *Studia Philologica*

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-modern culture.<sup>67</sup>

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 *ānisaṁsa*, 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*,<sup>68</sup> *Chaddanta-paritta*,<sup>69</sup> and *Vaṭṭaka-paritta*.<sup>70</sup> The key verse of the latter, the *saccakiriyā*, 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,<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup> It has been suggested that 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 bodhisatta – even in his births as a peacock, an elephant, or a quail.

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Buddhica, Occasional Paper Series III), § 19.2, and ‘Polyandry in the Khotanese *Rāmāyaṇa*’, 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, ‘*Rāmāyaṇa*, *Rāma Jātaka*, and *Ramakien*: A Comparative Study of Hindu and Buddhist Traditions’, in Paula Richman (ed.), *Many Rāmāyaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 50–63.

<sup>67</sup> See Wajuppa Tossa, *Phya Khankhaak, The Toad King: A Translation of an Isan Fertility Myth into English Verse* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1996), for a North-Eastern ‘folk-jātaka’.

<sup>68</sup> *Jātaka* no. 159, which lies at the heart of the *Mahāmāyūrī-vidyārājñī*, which came to be included in the *Pañcarakṣā*.

<sup>69</sup> *Jātaka* no. 514, Vol. V, v. 121.

<sup>70</sup> *Jātaka* no. 35, *Cariyā-piṭaka* p. 31, *Jātakamālā* no. 16.

<sup>71</sup> *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.

<sup>72</sup> C.E. Godakumbura, *The Koṭavehera at Dedigama* (Colombo: The Department of Archaeology, 1969, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon*, Volume VII), pp. 40–42.

The non-canonical texts of South-East Asia are equally multifunctional. The Pāli *Uṇḥissa-vijaya* – a narrative related to the North Indian *Uṣṇīṣavijaya* – occurs in its own right as a protective chant, a *sūtra*, an *ānisaṁsa*, a *jātaka*, and a *Kham lilit* (Thai verse version), and is embedded in longer texts like the *Paramattha-maṅgala* and the *Mahādibamantra* (see p.35, note 26). The *Jambūpati-sūtra* contains a *jātaka* and an *ānisaṁsa*, and is incorporated in summary in ‘the *ānisaṁsa* of offering a needle’.

### *Paññāsa-jātaka*<sup>73</sup>

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 (*ānisaṁsa*). The truth-vow (*saccakiriya*) figures prominently. The hero, the bodhisatta, 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.<sup>74</sup>

Léon Feer was the first European scholar to discuss the *Paññāsa-jātaka*, in an article published in *Journal Asiatique* in 1875.<sup>75</sup> He was followed by Louis Finot, who in his classic *Recherches sur le littérature laotien*, published

<sup>73</sup> I 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 Tanabe Kazuko and the project of the ‘Paññāsa-jātaka Study Group’ at Ōtani University under the leadership of Shingyo Yoshimoto.

<sup>74</sup> The 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.

<sup>75</sup> Léon Feer, ‘Les Jātakas’, *Journal Asiatique*, 7<sup>e</sup> Sér., V (1875), pp. 417 foll.



in 1917, introduced the subject in some detail.<sup>76</sup> French scholars such as Terral[-Martini],<sup>77</sup> Deydier,<sup>78</sup> Schweisguth,<sup>79</sup> and Jacqueline Filliozat<sup>80</sup> have continued to make important contributions. In English, Dorothy Fickle produced a thesis, unfortunately not published, based largely on the National Library printed edition,<sup>81</sup> and Padmanabh S. Jaini published several articles followed by an edition and translation of the *Zimmè Paññāsa*.<sup>82</sup> In Thailand pioneering work has been done by Prince Damrong, Niyada, and others.<sup>83</sup>

*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).<sup>84</sup> I use

<sup>76</sup> Louis Finot, 'Recherches sur la littérature laotienne', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*, Tome XVII, fasc. 5 (1917), pp. 1–219.

<sup>77</sup> Ginette 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.

<sup>78</sup> Henri 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.

<sup>79</sup> P. Schweisguth, *Étude sur la littérature siamoise* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 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.

<sup>80</sup> These 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.

<sup>81</sup> Dorothy M. Fickle, *An Historical and Structural Study of the Paññāsa Jātaka* (University Park [Pennsylvania]: 1979) (doctoral dissertation consulted in the Siam Society Library).

<sup>82</sup> Padmanabh 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), pp. 533–558; 'The Apocryphal Jātakas of Southeast Asian Buddhism', *The Indian Journal of Buddhist Studies*, Vol. I, no. 1 (1989), pp. 22–39.

<sup>83</sup> For 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]).

<sup>84</sup> See for example the stray *phūk* 17 among the Siamese manuscripts at Asgiriya in Kandy: Jacqueline Filliozat, 'Catalogue of the Pāli Manuscript Collection in

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 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.<sup>85</sup> 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 *Koṭikarṇāvadāna* 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 which are the *Koṭikarṇāvadāna* and the *Pūrṇāvadāna*.<sup>86</sup>

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

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Burmese and Siamese Characters kept in the Library of Vijayasundararamaya Asgiriya: A historical *bibliotheca sacra siamica* in Kandy, Sri Lanka', *Journal of the Pāli Text Society* XXI (1995), p. 151 (Asgiriya Siamese 4).

<sup>85</sup> See Ginette Martini, 'Les titres des jātakas dans les manuscrits pāli de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* LI, Fasc. 1 (1963), pp. 79–93.

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

either Chinese version. The Mongolian, said to be translated from the Tibetan, has fifty-two tales against the fifty-one of the latter. Mair writes:<sup>87</sup>

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 bao ji*, a Buddhist tale collection compiled in the middle of the seventh century by Táng Lín, 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.<sup>88</sup>

The original order of the twenty-seven tales collected in the *Kara Monogatari* ('Tales of China'), a work of either the late Heian or the early Kamakura period (twelfth to thirteenth century), is not certain.<sup>89</sup> Similar discrepancies occur in the available versions of the *Dainihonkoku Hokekyōkenki*, a collection of 'Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sūtra' compiled by Chingen.<sup>90</sup> The *Paññāsa-jātaka* is not alone in being a fluid collection.

<sup>87</sup> Victor H. Mair, 'The Linguistic and Textual Antecedents of *The Sūtra of the Wise and Foolish*', *Sino-Platonic Papers*, number 38 (April, 1993), p. 15.

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

<sup>89</sup> Ward Geddes, *Kara Monogatari: Tales of China* (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona State University, 1984, Center for Asian Studies, Occasional Paper no. 16), p. 27.

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

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.<sup>91</sup>

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 Mahāvihārin *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 an example *Ādittarāja*, the first *jātaka* of the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa*.

*yadā bhonto supino me ti. idaṃ satthā jetavane viharanto attano  
pubbakatadānapāramim ārabba 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 simply an imitation of the classical *Jātaka* opening, which starts with a citation of the verse followed by the *satthā ... viharanto ... ārabba kathesi* formula.<sup>92</sup>

An even more striking point is that the verses of the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa* 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 *Samudaghosa-jātaka*.<sup>93</sup>

Pāli as in the Siamese and Khmer printed editions

<sup>91</sup> Fickle, *An Historical and Structural Study*, p. 10.

<sup>92</sup> The formula is also used in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, and a text or texts using a similar 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.

<sup>93</sup> Ginette Terral, ‘Samuddhaghosajātaka’, *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* XLVIII, 1 (1956), pp. 282–283.

*Taṃ sutvā bodhisatto anantaraṃ gāthāṃ āha:*

*Yadā pucchāmi brāhmaṇe taṃ pavuttiṃ suṇomi 'haṃ  
Taṇ c'eva me cintayato ummatako jāto mano  
Tasmā caḷeyyaṃ attānaṃ tava saṃgammakātaṇā  
Caḷetvā mātāpitāro āgato tava santike ti.*

Pāli as in Zimmè Paṇṇāsa

*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 mātāpitāro āgatāsmi tavantike ti. (21)*

In some cases verses found in one version of a story are not found in another version.<sup>94</sup> 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 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 of *Paññāsa-jātaka*, 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 *Lokanēyappakaraṇaṃ*, a long and important Siamese Pāli text, Jaini found twelve verses

<sup>94</sup> See Terral, 'Samudhaghosajātaka', pp. 276–279: Zimmè Paṇṇāsa verse nos. 11–13 have no counterparts in the Khmer/Siamese text, which is in prose.

paralleling the Thai National Library edition of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* and two verses paralleling the *Zimmè Paññāsa*.<sup>95</sup>

*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).<sup>96</sup> 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 have been translated from vernacular to Pāli. Such is, after all, the case with some of the classical narrative literature of Sri Lankan Theravāda. The *Dhammapada* stories were translated into Pāli from Sinhalese Prakrit in the fifth century, and then back into Sinhalese in an expanded version in the thirteenth century. The new Sinhalese version took on ‘an identity and life of its own’.<sup>97</sup>

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 fifteenth-century Chiang Mai monk Bodhiramṣi states at the beginning of his *Cāmadevivaṃsa* that it was translated from Thai (*deyya-bhāsā*). It is, therefore, a

<sup>95</sup> Padmanabh S. Jaini (ed.), *Lokaneyyappakaraṇaṃ* (London: The Pali Text Society, 1986), p. 203.

<sup>96</sup> The 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.

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

misconception to have a fixed idea of the Pāli as the ‘original text’, and the history of each text must be carefully examined.<sup>98</sup>

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

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, Wat Pho, 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.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>98</sup> 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* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 31–61.

<sup>99</sup> Geddes, *Kara Monogatari*, p. 45 (see also p. 46, where Geddes concludes that the ‘task of tracing the influences and sources ... appears hopeless’).

<sup>100</sup> The 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*

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*.<sup>101</sup> This collection was reprinted in two volumes in 2499 [1956].<sup>102</sup> It contains a total of sixty-one stories, without any arrangement into *vaggas*.<sup>103</sup> It is divided into a 'first part' with fifty stories (forty-eight in the first volume, two in the second) and a later part (*pacchimabhāga*) with another eleven stories followed by three short supplementary texts, the *Pañcabuddha-byākaraṇa*, *Pañcabuddhaśakarāja-varraṇā*, and *Ānisaṇṇa pha paṇsukula*.<sup>104</sup> 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 thirty-five manuscripts in the National Library,

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*et pālis*, 2<sup>e</sup> fascicule – manuscrits pālis (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1908), p. 175.

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

<sup>102</sup> *Paññāsajātaka chabap ho samut heng chat* (Bangkok: Sinlapabannakan Press, 2499 [1956]): Part I, *ka-ña* + 1040 pp., stories 1–48; Part II, stories 49–50 plus *Pacchimabhāga*, stories 1–11, followed by *Pañcabuddhabyākaraṇa*, *Pañcabuddhaśakarājavarraṇā*, and *Ānisaṇṇa pha paṇsukula*, 982 pp., with alphabetical list of titles at end, pp. *ka-kha*. I am grateful to Santi Pakdeekham 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, *Bahalaqāvi*, see Christian Velder (tr. in German) and Katrin A. Velder (tr. in English), 'The Striped Tiger Prince and Pahala, the Portly Cow', *Tai Culture*, Vol. V, no. 1 (June 2000), pp. 135–139.

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

<sup>104</sup> *Paññāsajātaka*, Part 28 (cf. Supaphan na Bangchang, *Wiwatthanakan vannakhadi sai phra suttantapidok ti taeng nai prathet 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.



by title and bundle (*phūk*).<sup>105</sup> 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 as *Paññāsa-jātaka*. That is, it is not clear at all what ‘complete set’ should mean.

There is a remark 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

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

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 *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, 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 [*dharmagati*], 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).<sup>106</sup> 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*.

<sup>106</sup> Cited in Niyada (Sarikabhuti) Lausunthorn, *Paññāsa Jātaka: Its Genesis and Significance to Thai Poetical Works* [in Thai] (Bangkok: 2538 [1995]), p. 133–134.

Important verse versions include the *Samuttakhot kham chan*, begun by Maharatchakhru (Mahārājagarū) in the court of King Narai (1655–1688), continued by King Narai himself, and completed by Supreme Patriarch Prince Paramanujit Jinavarorasa (1790–1853).<sup>107</sup> This story is well-known, and depicted in nineteenth 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 Thampreecha (Kaew) at the behest of King Rāma I: *Samudaghosa*,<sup>108</sup> *Sumbhamitra* (for which *Paññāsa-jātaka* is specified as source),<sup>109</sup> and *Bahalaḡāwī*.<sup>110</sup> One of the famous works of King Rāma II, the play *Sang thong*, is a dramatic version of the *Suvaṇṇasaṅkha-jātaka*.<sup>111</sup> Adaptations of *Sang thong* and other *jātakas* like of *Manoharā* and *Rathasena* continue to be performed,<sup>112</sup> and in 2001 *Sudhana-Manoharā* run in a popular television adaptation.

An understanding of *jātakas*, their interrelation, and their relation to the *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections is essential to the understanding

<sup>107</sup> See Thomas John Hudak, *The Tale of Prince Samuttakote: A Buddhist Epic from Thailand* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series Number 90); '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.

<sup>108</sup> *Traibhūmilokavinicchayakathā chabap ti 2 (Traibhūmi chabap luang)*, Vol. 1 (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, 2520 [1977]), 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 [1967]), p. 79.

<sup>109</sup> *Traibhūmilokavinicchayakathā chabap ti 2*, Vol. 1, p. 453, *phra sangkhitikachan (saṅgītikācārya) wisatchana wai nai paññāsajātaka wa ....* Does the reference to *saṅgītikācārya* suggest that for BrahyāDharmapriyā the collection had canonical status? To start with, this depends on one's definition of canonicity.

<sup>110</sup> *Traibhūmilokavinicchayakathā chabap ti 2*, Vol. 2, p. 304.

<sup>111</sup> See Fern S. Ingersoll (tr.), *Sang Thong: A Dance-Drama from Thailand written by King Rama II and the Poets of His Court* (Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 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).

<sup>112</sup> Dhanit Yupho, *The Khôn and Lakon: Dance Dramas presented by the Department of Fine Arts* (Bangkok: The Department of Fine Arts, 1963), pp. 121–135 (*Sang Thong*), 77–83 (*Manoh'rā*), 85–90 (*Rothasen*).

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 Prijā. Near the beginning the author states that he is translating from the *jātaka*, from the 'Fifty Births of the Bodhisattva' (*paññāsa-jāti-bodhisattva*).<sup>113</sup> 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 [BE 2404 = CE 1861/62] and again in CS 1225 [BE 2406 = CE 1863/64], the latter along with a *nisay*.<sup>114</sup> Lan Na collections drew on the rich local literature, the 'Lan Na *jātakas*', largely vernacular, referred to above.<sup>115</sup>

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

<sup>113</sup> *Sirivipulakitti*, in *Wannakam samai ayutthaya*, Vol. 3 (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, 2531 [1988]), p. 368.

<sup>114</sup> *Prachum phongsawadan* Vol. 10 (Bangkok: 2507 [1964]), pp. 86, 95, 96; David K. Wyatt (tr.), *The Nan Chronicle* (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1994), pp. 121–122.

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

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.<sup>116</sup>

But none of these is ‘complete’: the only complete manuscript is from Wat Sung Men, Sung Men district, 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 = CE 1836). It has recently been published in central Thai script.<sup>117</sup> 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:

*Kukkurajātakaṃ* the Kukkura-jātaka *patamānaṃ* which falls *paññāsajātaka* in the fifty births *paññāsajātakaṃ* the full fifty births *samattaṃ* is completed.

The titles of the fifty are very close in order and contents to the ‘Luang Prabang’ manuscript described by Finot,<sup>118</sup> but they are not quite identical.<sup>119</sup> 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.

The Wat Sung Men 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-*

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

<sup>117</sup> *A Critical Study of Northern Thai Version of Panyasa Jātaka* (Chiang Mai: 2541 [1998]), 1150 pp.

<sup>118</sup> Louis Finot, ‘Recherches sur la littérature laotienne’, *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient*, Tome XVII, fasc. 5 (1917), pp. 45–46.

<sup>119</sup> The ‘Luang Prabang’ manuscript itself is closer, but not quite identical, to Niyada’s list of fifty *jātakas* from the Institute for Buddhist Studies edition published in Vientiane (see below).

*vatthu*.<sup>120</sup> 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 *kaṇḍas* and *vaggas*:

No. 7	Candaghāta	Viriyakaṇḍo paṭhamo
No. 11	Magha	Mettāya kaṇḍo ... dutiyo
No. 14	Sonanda	Nekkhammakāṇḍo ... dutiyo
App. No. 5	Duṭṭharāja	Khantikaṇḍo ... chaṭṭho
No. 23	Campeyya	Silavaggo ... pañcamo.

If we correct *Mettāya* to *Mettā*, we see that the four *kaṇḍas* and one *vagga* all bear names of perfections, *pāramī*. This suggests that there may once have been a collection that selected the stories to illustrate the perfections, 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 *Nekkhamma*. 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 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.<sup>121</sup> 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.<sup>122</sup> 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.<sup>123</sup> The sites are traditional: for example forty-seven open in the Jetavana, three

<sup>120</sup> See Table II.

<sup>121</sup> For details see Niyada, *A Critical Study*, Introduction, p. 29 (which gives the figure 'twenty-four' but lists twenty-five).

<sup>122</sup> For details see Niyada, *A Critical Study*, Introduction, p. 29.

<sup>123</sup> Niyada, *A Critical Study*, Introduction, pp. 29–31: romanized here as Table I.

in the Nigrodhārāma, and one in the Veļuvana. 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).<sup>124</sup> 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 Niyada is divided into twenty-six sections or *kaṇḍa*.<sup>125</sup>

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* (*Suvatra-jātaka*) exist in vernacular versions,<sup>126</sup> while in the South there are versions of *Rotmeri* and other *jātakas*. The ubiquitous *Suvanṇasaṅkha* (*Sang thong*) is known in versions from the North-East and the South.<sup>127</sup> However, 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*, *Varavarṇa*, and other stories – I have not seen any reference to a Mon collection. All of this needs further research.

<sup>124</sup> 'Thai Yuan' is one of the several names for 'Northern Thai' (*kham muang, phasa lanna*).

<sup>125</sup> See Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, pp. 57–58. I assume the stories are in the local vernacular, Tai Khün.

<sup>126</sup> *Saranukrom wathanatham thai phak isan*, Vol. 4 (Bangkok: 2542 [1999]), pp. 1678–1682, 1684–1686, 1687–1694.

<sup>127</sup> *Saranukrom wathanatham thai phak isan*, Vol. 14 (Bangkok: 2542 [1999]), pp. 4762–4771.

## 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 Louis Finot and of Henri Deydier, the latter both for his published works and for an unpublished work to be 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.<sup>128</sup>

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 *Khana kammakar pracham sathaban kan suksa phutthasasana* (Committee of the Institute for Buddhist Studies) agrees closely in contents to Finot's list and to the Wat Sung Men collection.<sup>129</sup> I will call this edition the Institute for Buddhist Studies edition.<sup>130</sup> Like Finot's list and the Wat Sung Men *Paññāsa-jātaka*, the Institute for Buddhist Studies collection includes *jātakas* from the classical collection (fourteen 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'.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>128</sup> I am grateful to Jacqueline Filliozat for giving me a copy of the work.

<sup>129</sup> It is not clear to me how many volumes of the *Phra Chao Ha Hip Chat* were published. Niyada (*Paññāsa Jātaka*, p. 58, n. 1) refers to two volumes published in 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 Hip 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', '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.

<sup>130</sup> Note that my translation of the name of the Institute is tentative: I have been unable to find an official translation.

<sup>131</sup> Henri 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 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 regularly. There were also many palm-leaf manuscripts to be read at home.<sup>132</sup>

In his 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, the Institute for Buddhist Studies, the Wat Sung Men, the Institut Bouddhique, or the Zimmè *Paññāsa* 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,<sup>133</sup> 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.<sup>134</sup>

### 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.<sup>135</sup> Terral's study (1956) shows that the Khmer-script *Samuddaghosa-jātaka* differs

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the Wat Sung Men manuscript.

<sup>132</sup> Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, pp. 58–59

<sup>133</sup> Jacqueline Filliozat's Preface to Deydier forthcoming, p. 3.

<sup>134</sup> For one popular story see Thao Nhoy Abhaya, 'Sin Xay', in *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.

<sup>135</sup> See Fickle, *An Historical and Structural Study*, Table II, p. 17.

radically from the Zimmè *Paṇṇāsa* version.<sup>136</sup> But, while one of her manuscripts (K3) was *copied* in Cambodia, it is not clear whether K5 or any other manuscript *originated* from Cambodian or Siamese manuscript traditions. One manuscript (K4) has Siamese writing on the cover folios. In the National Library in Phnom Penh there is a *Paññāsa-jātaka* 'ban ton' in seventeen bundles,<sup>137</sup> 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).<sup>138</sup> Khmer translations of the same twenty-five were published separately between 1944 and 1962 under the title *Paññāsajātak samrāy*, also in five fascicules.<sup>139</sup> 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 *Paññāsajātak saṅkhep* (see Table IV for the contents).<sup>140</sup> The first twenty titles are the same and in the same order as those of the Institut Bouddhique edition. The first thirty-five titles are the

<sup>136</sup> She concludes: 'Notons que les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale 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] paṇṇāsa que nous ne connaissons, jusqu'à présent, que par l'exemplaire de Rangoun' ('Samuddaghosajātaka', p. 254).

<sup>137</sup> 'Fonds 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.

<sup>138</sup> *Ganthamālā*, Publications de l'école supérieure de pâli éditées par les soins de l'Institut Bouddhique X, *Paññāsajātaka*, 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.)

<sup>139</sup> Not seen: see Jacobs' bibliography (below, note 143), p. 209.

<sup>140</sup> Nhok Thèm, *Paññāsajātaka 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.)

same and in the same order as those of the Thai National Library edition, after which order and titles diverge.<sup>141</sup>

Non-classical *jātakas* were recast in popular verse narratives. Some of the stories are told in Auguste Pavie's *Contes du Cambodge*.<sup>142</sup> 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.<sup>143</sup>

#### 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.<sup>144</sup> 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.<sup>145</sup> 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 Burmese-script printed edition in 685 pages, published by the Hanthawaddy Press, Rangoon, in 1911. The Hanthawaddy edition does not give any information about the editor(s) or manuscript(s)

<sup>141</sup> Niyada (*Paññāsa Jātaka*, pp. 63–69) gives a list from the introduction to Fascicle 1 of *Paññāsajātak samrāy*. The first thirty-five agree in the main on contents and order with *Paññāsajātak saṅkhep*, after which they diverge.

<sup>142</sup> Auguste Pavie, *Contes du Cambodge* (Paris: Repr. Éditions Sudestisie, 1988).

<sup>143</sup> Judith Jacobs, *The Traditional Literature of Cambodia: A Preliminary Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). For mention of *Paññāsa-jātaka* see pp. 37 foll. and 50–51.

<sup>144</sup> A 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 Pāli 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 Fickle's sources all derive from the printed Hanthawaddy Press 1911 edition. No. 13 has two titles, *Suvaṇṇakumāra* and *Dasapañhavisajjana*.

<sup>145</sup> A 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).

consulted.<sup>146</sup> This 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,<sup>147</sup> which is available in English translation by Horner and Jaini.<sup>148</sup> The Hanthawaddy edition has recently been translated into Thai.<sup>149</sup>

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 *Paṇṇāsa*'. Is there any other, more formal title? The closing colophon gives the titles *Paṇṇāsajāt* (in the manuscript) and *Paṇṇāsapāli* (in the printed edition). A colophon at the end of each *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]-  
vago ... nitt̐hito.*

<sup>146</sup> It 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 *Paṇṇāsa*' 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).

<sup>147</sup> Padmanabh S. Jaini (ed.), *Paññāsa-jātaka or Zimmè Paṇṇāsa (in the Burmese Recension)*: Vol. I, *Jātakas* 1–25 (London: Pali Text Society, 1981, Text Series no. 172); Vol. II, *Jātakas* 26–50 (London: Pali Text Society, 1983, 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.

<sup>148</sup> I.B. Horner and 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).

<sup>149</sup> *Chiang Mai Paṇṇāsajātaka*, 2 vols. (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, 2540 [1997]), 698 pp. (Vol. I, stories 1–25, pp. 1–378; Vol. II, stories 26–50, pp. 379–698).

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-jātaka-saṅgaha* 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 *Ṭīṭakat samuiṇ*, an inventory of titles compiled in 1888 by U Yan (Mañ krī Mahāsiriṇṇeṇṇasū, 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 *Ṭīṭakat samuiṇ* lists two works of this title, a Pāli text and a *nissaya*.<sup>150</sup>

§ 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 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.<sup>151</sup> A palm-leaf manuscript containing a section of a Burmese translation in the Fragile Palm Leaves collection in Bangkok

<sup>150</sup> *Ṭīṭakat samuiṇ*, § 369 *jañ: maypaṇṇāsa-jāt*; § 898 *jañ: maypaṇṇāsa-jāt nissaya*. For the *Ṭīṭakat samuiṇ* see Oskar von Hinüber, *Handbook of Pāli Literature*, p. 3, and U Thaw Kaung, 'Bibliographies compiled in Myanmar', in Pierre Pichard and François Robinne (ed.), *Études birmanes en hommage à Denise Bernot* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1998, Études thématiques 9), pp. 405–406. I am grateful to Peter Nyunt for summarizing the relevant passages and to Dr. Sunait Chutindaranon for his comments.

<sup>151</sup> D.G.E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia* (fourth edition, Houndmills and London: Macmillan Press, 1981) (repr. 1985), p. 625.

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*.<sup>152</sup> 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 *Ṭṭakamālā* 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 *Ṭṭakamālā* reference be interpreted as a confirmation of the Burmese tradition that connects the *Pañṇāsa-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 introduction to the printed edition of the Wat Sung Men *Pañṇāsa-jātaka*, the *Ṭṭakamālā* was written down seventeen years later than Jaini's Wat Jetavana manuscript, which bears a date corresponding to 1808. All that the reference really tells us is that the collection was known to the unknown author of the *Ṭṭakamālā*.

Is there any truth, then, to 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) '*Pañṇāsa-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.

<sup>152</sup> The table of contents of the modern printed edition of the *Ṭṭakat samuiri* uses the nicknames, listing the root-text as 'Chiang Mai *Paṇṇāsa-jātaka*' and the *Nissaya* as 'Chiang Mai *Paṇṇāsa-jātaka-nissaya*'.

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.<sup>153</sup>

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 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 *Tripiṭaka* 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*)-

<sup>153</sup> For U Bo Kay's reaction to this story, see above, n. 144.

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 *ānisaṁsa*, the benefits that accrue from the practices and deeds of the faithful such as giving (*dāna*) and ethics (*sīla*). The stories glorify the bodhisatta. That is, they are expressions of the 'Theravādin cult of the bodhisatta' which is an outstanding feature of South-East Asian Buddhism, in which the bodhisatta acts as exemplar, transmitter of folk-wisdom, sanctifier, and embodiment of power and perfection.

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 (2538) 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 stories* 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*.<sup>154</sup> 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 that the story

<sup>154</sup> For the first two see Jaini, *Paññāsa-jātaka or Zimmè Paṇṇāsa*, 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.



took place nearby.<sup>155</sup> 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 thirteenth to fourteenth 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.<sup>156</sup>

Niyada has proposed before BE 1808 (CE 1265), the date of the Thawuthathamuti or Kusa-samuti inscription (for which see below). Classical Thai poems allude to several *jātakas*: the *Kamsuan khlong dan* alludes to *Samuttakhot* and *Sudhanu*, the *Dvādasamāsa* alludes to *Samuttakhot*, *Sudhanu*, and *Pācittakumāra*. *Nirat Haribhuñjaya*, dated to BE 2060 (CE 1517), alludes to *Rathasena*, *Sudhanu*, and *Samudaghosa*.<sup>157</sup> 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 there is a *Samudaghosa-jātaka* translated from Pāli into Thai Yuan by Phra Ratanapaññā.<sup>158</sup> 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 *Vatṭaṅguli-jātaka* (*Zimmè Paññāsa* no. 37, Bangkok

<sup>155</sup> Udom Nuthong, in *Saranukrom wathanatham phak tai pho so 2529*, Vol. 8, p. 3296.

<sup>156</sup> Fickle, *An Historical and Structural Study*, pp. 8–9.

<sup>157</sup> The references are given in Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, pp. 42–43.

<sup>158</sup> Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, pp. 36–37.

National Library no. 20).<sup>159</sup> The same story is told in the *Northern Chronicle* (*Phongsawadan Yonok*).<sup>160</sup> The *Chiang Mai Chronicle* dates from the beginning of the nineteenth century, although the section in question is based on ancient sources. The *Northern Chronicle* is even later, dating from the late nineteenth 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'.<sup>161</sup> Two other stories were known in fifteenth 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).<sup>162</sup>

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

<sup>159</sup> *Tamnan pun muang chiang mai chabap chiang mai 700 pi* (Chiang Mai: 2538), pp. 26–27; David K. Wyatt and Aroonrut Wichienkeo (tr.), *The Chiang Mai Chronicle* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1995), pp. 34–35; Camille Notton, *Annales du Siam*, Vol. III, *Chronique de Xieng Mai* (Paris: Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1932), p. 46.

<sup>160</sup> Phraya Prachakichakornchak, *Phongsawadan yonok [Bañśāvatāra yonaka] chabap ho samut heng chat* (Bangkok: repr. Khlang vitthaya, 2516 [1973]), pp. 260–261. I owe the reference to Anatole Roger Peltier, *Le roman classique lao* (Paris: PEFEQ, 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.

<sup>161</sup> Fickle, *An Historical and Structural Study*, p. 8; Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, pp. 37–38.

<sup>162</sup> Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, p. 36, referring to U San Tun.

where were the Wat Sung Men collection, the collections on which Finot's list, the Institute for Buddhist Studies version, 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 *Lokīpaṇṇāsajāt Nissaya*. Both references date to the end of the eighteenth century. There is no earlier evidence for the *collection*, although there is literary or inscriptional evidence for some *individual stories*. 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, Dvāravātī 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 certain *jātakas* were known at Pagan and at Sukhothai.<sup>163</sup>

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 *Tiṇapāla* remain 'uncollected'?<sup>164</sup> The *Sisora-jātaka* is described in its colophon as taken

<sup>163</sup> Niyada Lausoonthorn, "Paññāsa Jātaka': A Historical Study', in *Binicvarrnakarm (Collections of Academic Essays Based on Manuscripts)* (Bangkok: 2535 [1992]), pp. 172–180 (in Thai).

<sup>164</sup> For these titles see Suphapan, op. cit., Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, and *A Critical Study of Northern Thai Version*, Introduction, p. 21.

from the *Paññāsa-jātaka*, but is not included in any of the known collections.<sup>165</sup> Does this mean there are other collections, lost or still to be discovered? Why were important and well-known narratives such as the stories of the bodhisatta's self-sacrifice to the hungry tigress, or the bodhisatta's last female birth attached to the beginning of the *Mahāsampīḍanidāna*, *Sambhāravipāka*, and *Sotatthakīmahānidāna*, but neither included in *jātaka* collections, nor, it seems, circulated independently? Why was the number fifty chosen? The number does not seem to have any special mystical, cabalistic, historical, nor 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 the *Dasabodhisatta-uddesa*, *Lokaneyya-pakaraṇa*, *Jambūpati-sutta*, *Mahākappalokasaṇṭhāna*, etc. Useful preliminary studies of the language of individual texts have been made by Cœdès, Martini-Terral, Jaini, and others.<sup>166</sup>

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.

The *Paññāsa-jātaka* is not the only collection of narratives to circulate in South-East Asia: there exist other collections, which

<sup>165</sup> Niyada, *A Critical Study of Northern Thai Version*, Introduction, p. 22.

<sup>166</sup> See especially Terral, 'Samuddhaghosajātaka' (*Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* XLVIII, 1 [1956]), which compares several texts.

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 *Suttajātakanidānānisamsa*, for example, is an anthology of diverse Pāli texts drawn from diverse sources.<sup>167</sup> Other collections are the *Sotabbamālinī*, *Sammohanidāna*, *Sāvakaniḃbāna*, *Bimbāniḃbāna*, 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 bodhisatta 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 (*saṅgītiṃ anāropita*). That is, ‘Buddhavacana’ and ‘Tipiṭaka’ 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 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 [*phūk*].) Texts to be offered according to one’s month of birth include non-classical *jātakas* – *Sumbhamitta*, *Sudhanu*, *Padumakumāra* – alongside others from the

<sup>167</sup> For a list of contents see George Coedès, ‘Dhammakāya’, *Adyar Library Bulletin* XX.3–4 (1956), p. 252, n. 2.

‘Ten Jātakas’ (*Daśajāti*).<sup>168</sup> A similar connection between certain texts and the twelve-year cycle is found in Cambodia.<sup>169</sup>

## Conclusions

In this paper I have attempted to show the richness and complexity of the *Jātaka* and *Paññāsa-jātaka* traditions. A study 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 it is not included in the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa*’.

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 Khankhaak*, ‘The Toad King’ states:<sup>170</sup>

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

<sup>168</sup> Udom Rungreungsri, ‘Wannakam chadok ti mi laksana pen ‘lanna’”, pp. 51–52.

<sup>169</sup> Eveline 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.

<sup>170</sup> Wajuppa Tossa, *Phya Khankhaak, The Toad King: A Translation of an Isan Fertility Myth into English Verse* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1996), p. 134.

tradition attested in Lao manuscripts for other tales.<sup>171</sup> 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.

Table I

Contents of the *Wat Sung Men Paññāsajātaka*<sup>172</sup>

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>dānasilapārami</i> )
10.	Tulakapaṇḍita	Jetavana	Sacrifice of one's life ( <i>jīvitadāna</i> )
11.	Magha	—	—
12.	Ariṭṭha	Jetavana	Ariṭṭhakummāra
13.	Ratanapajjota	Jetavana	A monk who takes care of his mother
14.	Sonanda	Jetavana	Kiñcamāṇavikā
15.	Bārāṇasirāja	Jetavana	Perfection of giving ( <i>dānapārami</i> )
16.	Dhammadhajja	Veḷuvana	Devadatta
17.	Dukamma	Jetavana	Testing the teachings of one's father

<sup>171</sup> Peter Koret, oral communication, February 2001.

<sup>172</sup> I 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'.

18. Sabbasiddhi	Jetavana	The state of a miraculous person
19. Paññābala	Pasāda 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
22. Chaddanta	Jetavana	A young nun
23. Campeyya	Jetavana	Upasathakamma
24. Bahalagāvi	Jetavana	Gratitude to one's mother
25. Kapiṛāja	Jetavana	Acting to benefit one's relatives ( <i>ñātattthacariyā</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. Tissatheravattu	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. Sādinnaṛāja	Jetavana	An <i>upāsaka</i> who keeps the precepts
38. Siridhara	Jetavana	An <i>upāsaka</i>
39. Ajittarāja	Jetavana	Renunciation ( <i>cāgādāna</i> )
40. Vipulaṛāja	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. Suvaṇṇabrahmadatta	Jetavana	Perfection of giving ( <i>dānapāramī</i> )



46. Mahāpadummakummāra	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>dānapārami</i> )
49. Nalaka	Kosalajanapada	A sugarcane tree
50. Kukkura	Jetavana	Acting to benefit one's relatives ( <i>ñātattacariyā</i> )

Supplementary stories<sup>173</sup>

*1. Suvaṇṇamigga	Jetavana	A daughter of good family ( <i>kuladhitā</i> )
*2. Canda	Jetavana	Saving the lives of animals
*3. Sarabha	Jetavana	Solutions for a crow and a worm
*4. Porāṇakappilapurinda	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*

<i>Wat Sung Men no.</i>	<i>Title</i>
8.	Kuruṅgamiggajātaka
11.	Maghajātaka
20.	Dadhivāhanajātaka
21.	Mahissajātaka (Devadhammajātaka)
22.	Chaddantajātaka
23.	Campeyyajātaka
25.	Kapirājajātaka
28.	Kussarājajātaka
32.	Vaṭṭakajātaka
34.	Suttasomajātaka
49.	Nalakajātaka (Naḷapānajātaka)
50.	Kukakurajātaka
*1.	Suvaṇṇamiggajātaka

<sup>173</sup> The asterisks indicate that these are supplementary texts.

## Table III

List of the 25 *jātakas* published in five fascicles by l'Institut bouddhique, Phnom Penh

## Fasc. I

1. Samuddaghosa
2. Sudhana
3. Sudhanu
4. Ratanapajota
5. Sirivipulakitti

## Fasc. II

6. Vipularāja
7. Siricuḍāmaṇi
8. Candarāja
9. Subhamitta
10. Siridhara

## Fasc. III

11. Dulakapaṇḍita
12. Ādittarāja
13. Dukkammānika
14. Mahāsurasena
15. Suvaṇṇakumāra

## Fasc. IV

16. Kanakavaṇṇarāja
17. Vīriyapaṇḍita
18. Dhammasoṇḍaka
19. Sudassanamahārāja
20. Vaṭṭaṅgulirāja

## Fasc. V

21. Sabbasiddhi
22. Akkharalikhitaṭṭhala
23. Dhammikapaṇḍita
24. Cāgadāna
25. Dhammarāja

Table IV

List of *jātakas* contained in the Nhok Thèm's abridged edition, *Paññāsajātaka Saṅkhep*, published in one volume in 1963 by the Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences humaines of the University of Phnom Penh.<sup>174</sup>

1. Samuddaghosa
2. Sudhanakumāra
3. Sudhanukumāra
4. Ratanappajota
5. Sirivipulakitti
6. Vipularāja
7. Siricūḍamaṇi
8. Candarāja
9. Subhamitta
10. Siridhara
11. Dulakapaṇḍita
12. Ādittarāja
13. Dukkammānika
14. Mahāsurasena
15. Suvaṇṇakumāra
16. Kanakavaṇṇarāja
17. Viriyapaṇḍita
18. Dhammasoṇḍaka
19. Sudassanamahārāja
20. Vattaṅgulirāja
21. Porāṇakapilarāja
22. Dhammikapaṇḍita
23. Cāgadāna
24. Dhammarāja
25. Narajīva
26. Surūpa
27. Mahāpaduma
28. Bhaṇḍāgāra
29. Bahulagāvi
30. Setapaṇḍita
31. Puppharāja
32. Bārāṇasirāja
33. Brahmaghosarāja
34. Devarukkhakumāra
35. Salabha

<sup>174</sup> I am grateful to Olivier de Bernon for preparing Tables III and IV.

36. Sonanda
37. Devanda
38. Narajīvakaṭhina
39. Rathasena
40. Varanetta-varanuja
41. Saṅkhapatta
42. Sabbasiddhi
43. Siddhisāra
44. Sisoraṛāja
45. Supinakumāra
46. Suvaṇṇakacchapa (dī 1)
47. Suvaṇṇakacchapa (dī 2)
48. Suvaiṇṇavaṇsa
49. Sūryavaṇsavaraṇsa
50. Atidevarāja

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sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ  
kusalassūpasampadā  
sacittapariyodapanāṃ  
etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ

ye dhammā hetuppabhavā  
tesaṃ hetuṃ tathāgato āha  
tesaṃ ca yo nirodho ca  
evaṃvādī mahāsamaṇo

maṅgalaṃ lekhakānaṃ ca  
pāṭhakānaṃ ca maṅgalaṃ  
maṅgalaṃ sabbabhūtānaṃ  
bhūmibhūpatimaṅgalaṃ

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