

*Offprint from:*

ISSN 1343-8980

創価大学  
国際仏教学高等研究所  
年 報  
平成26年度  
(第18号)

Annual Report  
of  
The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology  
at Soka University  
for the Academic Year 2014  
Volume XVIII

創価大学・国際仏教学高等研究所  
東京・2015・八王子

The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology  
Soka University  
Tokyo・2015

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#: paper written in Japanese.

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## Vehicle (*yāna*) and Wisdom (*jñāna*) in the Lotus Sutra — the Origin of the Notion of *yāna* in Mahāyāna Buddhism\*

Seishi KARASHIMA

### Prologue

Relying on the studies of other scholars (especially Fuse 1934), the present author assumes that the Lotus Sutra consists of the following three strata:

**The first stratum:** from the *Upāya* (II) to the “Prophecies to Adepts and Novices” (IX) (KN 29~223). This stratum consists of the following two layers.

**(A) The first layer:** the *Triṣṭubh* (or *Triṣṭubh-Jagatī*) verses in the aforementioned 8 chapters. I also assume that most of these had been composed originally in the colloquial language of that time, namely Prakrit, and then transmitted orally, being rendered in Sanskrit later on.

**(B) The second layer:** the *Śloka* verses and prose in the aforementioned 8 chapters, except for the latter half of “Plant” (V).

**(C) The second stratum:** 11 chapters from the “Dharma Master” (X) to “Tathāgata’s Mystical Powers” (XX) (KN 224~394), as well as the “Introduction” (I) (KN 1~28) and “Entrustment” (XXVII) (KN 484~487). Probably the latter half of “Plant” (V) (KN 131.13~143.6), which has no parallels in Kumārajīva’s translation, also belongs to this stratum.<sup>1</sup>

**(D) The third stratum:** all other SP chapters (XXI~XXVI) (KN 395~483) and the latter half of the “*Stūpasamdarśana*” (XI) — , where stories about Devadatta’s previous life and a daughter of a dragon king are found (KN 256~266)<sup>2</sup>.

Though the precise ages of the compositions of these strata and layers are unknown, they were probably formed in the order, A, B, C and D (see above). However, it is unclear whether the prose in B or the verses and prose in C appeared earlier. The former might have been composed earlier, but, because it was easy to add or alter sentences in it, there is no guarantee that this is in its original form.

There are also exceptions. A part of the *Triṣṭubh-Jagatī* verses, which occur here

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\* I should like to thank Prof. em. Oskar von Hinüber and Peter Skilling, who read an earlier version of this article and made valuable suggestions. I am grateful also to Peter Lait for checking my English.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. note 4, (9).

<sup>2</sup> Kumārajīva’s translation (406 C.E.) had not contained this part originally, but after it was translated into Chinese later in 490 C.E., it was interpolated into the former’s translation in the 6th century (cf. Krsh 1992: 332 with references). An old fragmentary Central Asian Sanskrit manuscript from Farhād-Bēg Yailaki, dating back probably to the 5th or 6th century, lacks this part as well.

and there in C, could be as old as A. Also, the verses in the *Samantamukha* (XXIV) had been transmitted originally as independent hymns in praise of Bodhisattva Avalokitasvara/Avalokiteśvara, but were integrated into the Lotus Sutra in the fourth or fifth century C.E. Although this integration was thus late, they had been composed assumedly much earlier.

As I have demonstrated elsewhere<sup>3</sup>, the text of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* took shape in Northern India, though we can never exclude the possibility that the basis of *Prajñāpāramitā* thought was created in Southern India, such as in the Āndhra region where the Mahāsāṃghika school, with which this scripture is closely related, predominated, as is often maintained. On the other hand, from a linguistic point of view, I assume that the first stratum of the Lotus Sutra was probably composed elsewhere other than Northern India. The influence of *Prajñāpāramitā* thought is not seen in this, though it is evident in the later strata. Presumably, this sutra was transmitted to the Gandhāra region where it encountered *Prajñāpāramitā* thought and under its influence, the second stratum (C) was added. Much later on, when the holders of the Lotus Sutra met the beliefs in Avalokitasvara (an earlier form of Avalokiteśvara), Amitābha, Samantabhadra and in *dhāraṇīs*, the third stratum (D) was further included.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Karashima 2013.

<sup>4</sup> The following nine discrepancies between the first stratum and the later strata of the Lotus Sutra indicate that the former was not influenced by *Prajñāpāramitā* thought, though the later ones were composed under its influence.

(1) *caitya* vs. *stūpa*

The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (abbr. AsP) proclaims the worship of a *caitya*, containing a copy of the *Prajñāpāramitā* scripture, while denouncing the worship of *stūpas*, which hold relics of the Buddha. Similarly, in the second stratum of the Lotus Sutra, the worship of a *caitya*, with a copy of the Lotus Sutra inside it, is exhorted, while *stūpa*-worship is condemned. In contrast to this, in the first stratum of the same text, erecting *stūpas* and worshipping them, is described in positive terms, while the word *caitya* does not occur at all! Cf. Fuse 1934: 173ff., 274ff.

(2) “writing the scripture”

Throughout AsP, copying the scripture is exhorted as a meritorious practice — the expression “writing the scripture” occurs more than 90 times in the oldest Chinese translation (179 C.E.), whose original text might have dated back to the first century C.E. and composed probably in Gāndhārī. In the first stratum of the Lotus Sutra, however, the expression “writing” does not occur, while “writing the scripture” does repeatedly from the second one onwards. In this connection, it should be pointed out that the word *√likh* (“to draw; to write”) occurs 137 times throughout AsP. In the first stratum of the Lotus Sutra, however, it is used to in the meaning “draw (the Buddha-image)” in Chapter II, vv. 86, 89 and “(an employee of a rich man) writes (bills)” in Chapter IV, v. 15. Except for these, 45 other instances all occur in the meaning “copy (the scripture)” in the second and third strata. Also, the word *pustaka* (“book”) occurs 60 times throughout AsP. In the first stratum of the Lotus Sutra, it never occurs — the word *pustakarman* (“plastering”) appears in Chapter II, v. 85 —, while, in the second stratum, the words *pusta* and *pustaka*, both meaning “book”, occur 20 times. It is apparent, therefore, that the first stratum was originally *only* transmitted orally, while the second and third ones were written down. Cf. Fuse 1934: 144f.

(3) imaginary persons as the Buddha’s interlocutors

In AsP, Bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Maitreya appear frequently as the Buddha’s interlocutors throughout the text. The former appears only in Mahāyāna texts. Though the latter is referred to in the *Dīghanikāya* as Metteya as well, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Karashima 2013: 178), this occurrence must be an interpolation, made long after the formation of the Canon. In the first stratum of the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha’s interlocutors are his disciples, in other words, historical individuals, while in the second and third strata, imaginary persons, such as Mañjuśrī and Maitreya, appear in such roles.

(4) *kulaputra* and *kuladuhitṛ*

Thus, when we compare the present texts of the Lotus Sutra and the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* as a whole, the former is apparently of a later composition than the latter.

In AsP, the Mahāyāna terms *kulaputra* and *kuladuhitr*, literally meaning “son of good family” and “daughter of good family”, respectively, which designate lay followers of the Mahāyāna teachings, appears numerous times throughout the text — *kulaputra* 463 times, *kuladuhitr* 259 times. Both occur 264 times and 61 times in the Lotus Sutra as well. The latter term never appears in the first stratum. The word *kulaputra* occurs only once in a verse of “The Parable of the Burning House” in Chapter III, when the father addresses his sons — it has, therefore, no Mahāyānistic meaning —, while the reading in a Central Asian manuscript (O) differs completely: “*iha samti*” (KN 86.9; cf. Karashima 1992: 73~74). The term *kulaputra* with the Mahāyānistic meaning appears 6 times in two prose parts in the first stratum (Chapter VII, KN 183.8, 11; Chapter IX, KN. 218.8, 10, 219.1~2 [twice]). Thus, it occurs 6 times *only* in 11 lines (KN 183.8~11 and 218.8~219.2) out of 195 pages of the first stratum (KN. 29~223), which makes me wonder whether this is a later interpolation or not. Except for these 6, 258 other occurrences are found in the second and third strata.

(5) *dharmabhāṇaka*

The term *dharmabhāṇaka* (“preacher of the Dharma”) is characteristic of Mahāyāna Buddhism, though it appears *only* three times in Pali commentaries (Sp 925; Spk I 189, 297) and a few times in the extended version of the *Mahāvamsa*. A *dharmabhāṇaka*, which was probably a self-proclaimed title, should not be confused with *bhāṇaka* (“reciter-cum-holder [of the traditional āgamas or suttas]”), *dharmakathika* (“an [authorised] preacher of the teachings”), *dharmadeśaka* (*do.*) or *dharmadhara*, *-dharaka* (“an [authorised] holder of the teachings”). I assume that *dharmabhāṇakas* composed and proclaimed the early Mahāyāna scriptures. This word appears 37 times in AsP. In the Lotus Sutra, it occurs in one verse in the first stratum of the Lotus Sutra, Chapter II, v. 14 (KN 32.6), though a Central Asian manuscript (O) has *dharmadeśaka* instead. This word *dharmabhāṇaka* occurs once in the prose of the same stratum (Chapter VII, 184.4) as well. Except for these two instances, 58 other instances are all found in the later strata.

(6) *prajñāpāramitā*

The expressions *prajñāpāramitā* (KN 3.2, 333.1, 457.12) and “the six *pāramitās*” (KN 18.13, 142.7, 256.10 etc.) occur only in the later strata of the Lotus Sutra. In the older verses in *Triṣṭubh-Jagatī* metre, i.e. vv. 75~76 in Chapter II, the six virtues, namely *dāna*, *śīla*, *kṣānti*, *vīrya*, *dhārya* and *prajñā*, are listed. However, such a list is found also in Nikāya-Buddhist literature, e.g. the *Mahāvastu* (Mvu) III 226.3. In AsP, *prajñāpāramitā* is described as transcending the other five *pāramitās*, providing a basis for them, controlling, guiding and supporting them. This main idea of AsP is found in the second stratum in the Lotus Sutra (Chapter XVI, KN 332.11f.) as well.

(7) *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*

The notion and expressions of *anutpattikeṣu dharmeṣu kṣānti* / *anutpattikadharmakṣānti* (“the acceptance of [the principle of] non-arising *dharmas*”), which is thought to be a characteristic of *Prajñāpāramitā* thought, appear repeatedly in AsP (AsP[V] 139.29, 155.3, 169.13, 182.4, 202.12, 223.19, 255.20 = AsP[R] 280.17, 310.2, 339.18, 368.14, 408.8, 451.16, 517.13 = AsP[W] 575.8, 644.2, 692.8, 747.20, 799.3, 856.26, 978.9). The oldest (179 C.E.) and the later Chinese translations of AsP have parallel expressions as well (cf. Krsh 2010: 513). In the Lotus Sutra, the expression *anutpattikadharmakṣānti* occurs *only* in the second and third strata (KN 266.1, 327.4, 403.7, 419.6, 7, 437.1) and a similar expression *anutpattikī~ dharmakṣānti~* (*v.l. anutpattikadharmakṣānti*) occurs in the latter half of Chapter V “Plant” (KN 136.10), which belongs to the second stratum.

(8) *dhāraṇī*

The notion and expression of *dhāraṇī* appeared probably at first in Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures (cf. Mppś IV 1854~1864; Braarvig 1985). In AsP, the word occurs twice in the story of *Sadāprarudita* (AsP[V] 244.10, 252.6 = AsP[R] 494.9, 510.22 = AsP[W] 943.29, 959.8), which lacks parallels in the older three Chinese translations in both cases, while Kumārajīva’s one (408 C.E.) has its transliteration (T. 8, no. 227, 582a12. 陀羅尼); cf. Krsh 2011: 481, n. 380; 501, n. 589. In the Lotus Sutra, this word occurs 31 times, all of which are *only* from the second and third strata (e.g. KN 2.11, 263.4, 270.8, 327.5, 8, 330.3, 4 etc.).

(9) *punar aparam*

The expressions *khalu punar* and *punar eva*, both meaning “further, moreover”, occur throughout the Lotus Sutra, 149 times and 9 times, respectively. Their synonym *punar aparam*, which appears repeatedly in AsP (166 times), occurs in the Lotus Sutra only 12 times, all of which are found in the second and third strata, including the latter half of Chapter V “Plant” (KN 131.13) which belongs to the second stratum.

However, it does not mean that the first stratum of the Lotus Sutra came into existence after the *Prajñāpāramitā* text.

In my opinion, the twofold meaning of *yāna*, as we shall see later, in the Lotus Sutra quite possibly demonstrates that its language was not Sanskrit but Prakrit, which shows its antiquity.

Based on my own and other scholars' research, I now assume that many of the Buddhist sutras in the Northern tradition of both so-called Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism, created to be preached to common people and ordinary monks, were composed and transmitted in a colloquial language, namely Prakrit, until around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century C.E. and later, they were translated gradually into a more refined language, namely Sanskrit, probably from the third century onwards. This shift can be reflected very clearly in the Chinese translations, in which most of the early ones show that their original languages were colloquial, while the translations, made by Kumārajīva (early 5<sup>th</sup> century), demonstrate that their original language was Buddhist Sanskrit mixed with colloquial elements. The underlying language of the Chinese translations made by Xuan Zang in the 7<sup>th</sup> century was apparently (Buddhist) Sanskrit, though probably containing atypical colloquial elements. The extant (Buddhist) Sanskrit texts are, in other words, the result of constant sanskritisation, wrong back-formations, additions and interpolations over the centuries. This transition from Prakrit to Sanskrit has not been taken into serious account when doing research on Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures. Once we acknowledge that the earlier Mahāyāna texts were composed originally in colloquial languages, transmitted orally and not written down until afterwards, we may be able to uncover the true meanings of Buddhist expressions, which have been obscured by the sanskritisation of such texts.

The Lotus Sutra is one such early Mahāyāna scripture. By analysing discrepancies among readings in different Sanskrit manuscripts and the Sanskrit versions and Chinese translations by Dharmarakṣa (translated in 286 C.E.) and Kumārajīva (translated in 406 C.E.), I realised that the earlier the version was, the more colloquialisms they contained (or reflected as in the case of the Chinese translations). Also, the oldest layer (A) seems to have contained more colloquial elements than the later layer (B) and strata (C and D). The above-stated discrepancies probably resulted from different interpretations of colloquial forms, e.g. while a Central Asian Sanskrit manuscript reads *bho* ("you!"), others have *khalu* ("indeed"), both of which go back to the common Prakrit equivalent *ho*<sup>5</sup>. Another example is where the Sanskrit manuscripts read *bhavati* ("exists, is") or its colloquial form *bhoti*, Dharmarakṣa's translation reads 正覺 ("perfect enlightenment"), 佛道 ("Buddha's enlightenment; enlightenment") etc.<sup>6</sup>, indicating that the underlying text of this old Chinese translation was *bhodi*, a Gāndhārī equivalent to the colloquial word *bhoti* (< *bhavati*), which the Chinese translator understood

<sup>5</sup> E.g. KN 189.8. *khalu* / O *bho*; KN 457.8. *khalu* / O *bhoḥ* / H<sub>1</sub>(261). *ho*; KN 457.9. *khalu* / O *bhoḥ*; KN 469.9. *khalu* / O *bho*; KN 483.5. *khalu* / O *bhoḥ* etc. Cf. also Karashima 2001a: 212.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. KN 45.9. *bhonti* / Dr 70a23. 正覺 ("perfect enlightenment"); KN 46.3. *bhavanti* (O *bhonti*) / Dr 70b4. 佛道 ("Buddha's enlightenment; enlightenment"); KN 57.15. *utpādu* (v.l. °*da*) *bhoti* (Mss. °*tī*; O *bhonti*) / Dr 72c27. 興發聖道 ("produces divine enlightenment"); KN 63.2. *bhoti tatra* (O *tatra bhoti*) / Dr 73c26. 因斯覺了 ("therefore [he] was enlightened"); KN 99.4. *bhonti gocarās* / Dr 79c26. 行佛道 ("practises Buddha's enlightenment") etc. Cf. Krsh 1998: 144f.

mistakenly for *bodhi* (“enlightenment”).

Broadly speaking, there are two groups of Sanskrit manuscripts of the Lotus Sutra.

(I) The Gilgit manuscripts (D1, D2, D3, etc.), dating back to the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century, which, though not complete, still cover eighty percent of the entire text, and the manuscripts from Nepal and Tibet, of which the oldest ones date back to the middle of the eleventh century. These I call, as a whole, the Gilgit-Nepalese recension (abbr. **G-N rec.**).

(II) The second group consists of Central Asian manuscripts and fragments, dating probably between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, namely: (1) the so-called Kashgar manuscript (abbr. O), though purchased there, was actually discovered in Khādaliq, dating probably back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century; (2) a fragmentary manuscript, discovered in Farhād-Bēg Yailaki, now kept in the Oriental and India Office Collections in the British Library (abbr. F), dating probably back to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century; (3) fragments from various collections, such as Petrovsky (abbr. R), Otani (abbr. Lü), British Library (abbr. Or), Turfansammulung etc. These I call, as a whole, the Central Asian recension (abbr. **CA rec.**).

There are many cases, where the Gilgit-Nepalese recension reads *jñāna* (“wisdom”), while the Central Asian manuscripts have *yāna* (“vehicle”). Interestingly enough, this discrepancy is found frequently between the Sanskrit version and the Chinese translations as well. In this paper, we shall examine such instances, try to clarify the reason why these two completely different words interchanged and, further, consider the origin and development of the notion of *yāna* in the Lotus Sutra.

Also, in this paper, I shall quote from the Kern-Nanjio edition (abbr. KN), the *editio princeps*, which is still the best *even* a hundred years after its publication, although, strictly speaking, it is not a critical version, as it is based mainly on the collation of the six Nepalese manuscripts, to which Kern inserted readings of the so-called “Kashgar” manuscript (O) in a very arbitrary way.

## (1) The *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion among the Sanskrit recensions

### (1.1) *yāna* / *jñāna* in verse

KN 12.2. *buddhajñāna* / O *buddhayānā* (= Dr 64c11. 佛乘, Kj 3a21. 佛道)

KN 45.11. *bauddhasya jñānasya* (= Dr 70a26. 佛慧, Kj 8a2. 佛慧)

/ O *bodhasmi yānasmī*

KN 46.2. *varadasya jñāne* (= Dr 70b2. 佛以聖慧)

/ O *varabuddhayāne* (= Kj 8a7. 大乘)

KN 46.13. *bauddhasya jñānasya* (= Dr 70b18. 佛之深慧, Kj 8a20. 佛智慧)

/ O *bodddhasya yānasya*

KN 49.2. *yāna* (= O) (= Kj 8c1. 乘) / C3 *jñāna*; cf. Dr 71a2. 慧乘(*jñāna* and *yāna*)

KN 53.2. *bauddhasmi jñānasmī* (≠ Dr 71c24. 禪定智慧, Kj 9b2. 佛[無漏]智)

/ O *bodddhasmi yānasmī*

KN 90.12. *buddhāna jñānaṃ* (= Dr 78a13. 諸正覺慧)

/ O *buddhāna yānaṃ* (= Kj 15a7. 成得佛道 是乘)

KN 147.10. *buddhajñānaṃ* (= Kj 21a10. 佛無上慧, Dr 87a12. 決)

/ O, H<sub>5</sub>(298). *buddhayānaṃ*

KN 152.7. *jñānaṃ* (= Kj 21c9. 佛智慧) / O *yānaṃ* Cf. Dr 87c23. 人民 (*jana*)

KN 198.6. *sarvajñā-jñānasya* (= Dr 94b13. 一切敏慧, Kj 27b4. 佛一切智)

/ O *sarvajñā-yānasya*

KN 198.7. *sarvajñajñānā* (= Dr 94b14. 諸通慧, Kj 27b5. 一切智)

/ O, R<sub>2</sub>(No. 55, p. 133) *sarvajñayānaṃ*

KN 198.10. *sarvajñajñāne* (= Dr 94b19. 諸通慧, Kj 27b8. 佛慧)

/ O *sarvajñayānaṃ*; R<sub>2</sub>(No. 55, p. 133) (*sarvajñā*)*yāna*

### (1.2) *yāna* / *jñāna* in prose

KN 42.7. *sarvajñatā- ... tathāgatajñāna-*; O *sarvajñajñāna- ... tathāgatajñāna-* (Kj 7b11. 一切種智)

/ Or.15010/132 *recto* 3. (*tathāga*)*ayānaṃ sarvajñayānaṃ* (Dr 69c12. 諸通慧乘)<sup>7</sup>

KN 43.8. *buddhayāna-* (= O; Dr 69c22. 佛乘)

/ Or.15010/132 *verso* 4. *buddhajñā[na]-*<sup>8</sup>; Kj 7b28. -

KN 66.8. *buddhajñāna-* (= Dr 74b16. 佛慧, Kj 11c2. 佛慧) / O *buddhayāna-*

KN 78.8. *buddhajñāna-* (= Lü. B2 *verso* 1) (= Dr 75c26. 諸佛正慧, Kj 13a28. 佛智慧) / O, H<sub>5</sub>(283). *buddhayāna-*

KN 189.1. *ekam eva buddhajñānaṃ*

/ O *eka eva buddhayānaṃ* (= Dr 92c14. 一乘, Kj 26a15. 一佛乘)

KN 189.2. *buddhajñānaṃ* (= Dr 92c15. 道慧)

/ O *buddhayānaṃ* (= Kj 26a17. 佛道)

KN 189.9. *tathāgatajñānaṃ* (= Dr 92c28. 如來慧, Kj 26a21. 佛慧)

/ O, H<sub>6</sub>(306) *tathāgatayānaṃ*

### (1.3) *yāna* / *jñāna* in the Sanskrit recensions of the Lotus Sutra

The above-quoted instances tell us the following:

(1) Except for KN 12.2, all instances of this confusion are found in the first stratum of chapters, while there are no examples of this in the second and third strata. This is probably due to the fact that *yāna* and *jñāna* are not mentioned very much there, but another reason could be for example, differences of language between these two strata.

(2) Except for KN 49.2, all instances of the *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion occur between the Gilgit-Nepalese recension (G-N rec.) and the Central Asian one (CA rec.). Also, it is noteworthy that all the cases are of *jñāna* in the G-N rec. as opposed to *yāna* in the CA rec., while there are no examples of *yāna* in the G-N rec. as opposed to *jñāna* in the CA rec. — At present, I cannot think of a reason for this.

The two Chinese translations (Dr and Kj) agree at times with the G-N rec., while at other times with the CA rec. The readings of the two translations also differ from one another. In the next section, we shall see the *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion, focussing on the readings in the Chinese translations.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. BLSF II.1, p. 496.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. BLSF II.1, p. 497.



## (2) The *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion between the Chinese translations and the Sanskrit recensions

We have seen instances of the *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion in the Sanskrit recensions. Apart from the above-quoted cases, there are no examples of this in the Sanskrit version, while there are cases, in which the readings in question in the Sanskrit version differ from those in the Chinese translations.

### (2.1) The *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion in verse

#### (2.1.1) *yāna* / “wisdom”

There are two instances, where the Sanskrit version reads *yāna*, while K<sub>j</sub> has “wisdom”.

KN 91.12. *bauddhaṃ tu yānaṃ* / K<sub>j</sub> 15a20. 佛智慧 (“the Buddha-wisdom”); Dr 78b7. -

KN 203.6. *udīra-yāne* / K<sub>j</sub> 28a11. 大智 (“great wisdom”); Dr 96a15. 微妙寂靜 (cf. § 4.4)

#### (2.1.2) *jñāna* / “path” (= *yāna*) in verse

There are many cases, where the Sanskrit version reads *jñāna*, while the Chinese translations have *dào* 道, which is used as a rendering of *yāna* elsewhere<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, the original word of *dào* 道 in the following cases could have been also *yāna*.

KN 116.12. *jinasya jñānaṃ* / Dr 82c1. 最勝 … 道誼; cf. K<sub>j</sub> 18b23. 佛法寶藏

KN 117.5. *bauddhasya jñānasya* (= K<sub>j</sub> 18c1. 佛智慧) / Dr 82c7. 諸佛道誼

KN 145.10. *bauddhasya jñānasya* (= K<sub>j</sub> 20c14. 佛智慧) / Dr 86c10. 佛道

KN 145.11. *jñānaṃ idaṃ anuttaram* (= K<sub>j</sub> 20c16. 無上之慧) / Dr 86c12. 無上大道

KN 149.8. *jñānasya* / Dr 87b11. 佛之要道, K<sub>j</sub> 21b4. 大道

KN 154.7. *bauddhaṃ ... jñāna* / Dr 88a21. 諸佛道, K<sub>j</sub> 22a3. 佛道

KN 255.8 (in *Śloka* metre). *buddha-jñānasya* (= Dr 105a11. 佛慧) / K<sub>j</sub> 34b10. 佛道

KN 330.5. *uttamabuddhajñāne* / K<sub>j</sub> 44b21. 佛道; cf. Dr 115c23. 并越度生(?)

KN 334.3 (in *Śloka* metre). *buddhajñānaṃ anuttaram* (= K<sub>j</sub> 45a1. 佛慧)

/ Dr 116b12. 佛上道

KN 334.13 (in *Śloka* metre). *buddhajñānasya* (= Dr 116b22. 佛慧) / K<sub>j</sub> 45a10. 無上道

KN 335.2 (in *Śloka* metre). *buddhajñānasya* / Dr 116b26. 佛道; cf. K<sub>j</sub> 45a14. -

#### (2.1.3) *jñāna*, *yāna* / “vehicle”-cum-“wisdom” in verse

The Chinese renderings *huìshèng* 慧乘 (“vehicle-cum-wisdom”) and *dào huì* 道慧 (“wisdom of the path”) in Dr are probably cases of “double translations”, in which an Indic word was rendered twice in close proximity<sup>10</sup>.

KN 49.2. *yāna* (= K<sub>j</sub> 8c1. 乘), C3 *jñāna* / Dr 71a2. 慧乘 (“vehicle-cum-wisdom”)

KN 49.7. *yāne* (= K<sub>j</sub> 8c7. 佛道) / Dr 71a9. 道慧 (“wisdom of the path” or “path-cum-wisdom”)

*Zhì* 智 (“wisdom”) and *dàdào* 大道 (“the great path”) in the following sentence in K<sub>j</sub> are

<sup>9</sup> E.g. KN 46.11. *yānaṃ* / Dr 70b15. 佛道; KN 81.4. O *tathāgatayānaṃ* / Dr 76a24. 如來道; KN 49.7. *yāna* / K<sub>j</sub> 8c7. 佛道.

<sup>10</sup> A well-known example of a double translation is *yuányījué* 緣一覺 (“those, who perceive causation and oneness”), occurring throughout Zhì Qian’s translations, which indicates that either the original texts had read *praceā-buddha*, an attested Gāndhārī form of *pratyeka-buddha* / *pratyaya-buddha*, and that he understood *praceā* as having two meanings namely “one, single” (*pratyeka*) and “causation” (*pratyaya*), or that he misunderstood it in this way, when somebody else recited Indian texts to him.

presumably also a “double translation”:

KN 294.10. *anuttaram* .... *jñānam* (= Dr 110a22. 無上眞慧) / Kj 39c2. 無量智 佛之大  
道 (“infinite wisdom, [that is] the Buddha’s great path”)

## (2.2) The *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion in prose

### (2.2.1) *yāna* / “wisdom”

There is no instance in which the Sanskrit version reads *yāna* in prose, while its Chinese parallels have “wisdom”.

### (2.2.2) *jñāna* / “vehicle” “path” (= *yāna*)

KN 41.5. *sarvajñatā-* / O *sarvajñajñāna*<sup>11</sup> / Dr 69c12. 諸通慧乘 (“the vehicle of the wisdom of penetration”)

Here, *zhūtōnghuì* 諸通慧 in Dr is a rendering of *sarvajña*, while *shèng* 乘 (“vehicle” = *yāna*) corresponds to *jñāna* in O. In all other instances, the Sanskrit version reads *jñāna*, while its parallel in the Chinese translations is *dào* 道 (“path”):

KN 29.2. *buddhajñānam* (= Kj 5b25. 諸佛智慧) / Dr 68a1. 佛道 (“the Buddha-path”)

KN 312.1. *buddhajñāne* (= Dr 112c8. 道慧<sup>12</sup>) / Kj 41c17. 佛道 (“the Buddha-path”)

KN 323.9. *bauddhasmi jñānasmī* (= Dr 114c6. 佛道慧<sup>13</sup>) / Kj 43b15. 佛道 (“the Buddha-path”)

## (2.3) The *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion between the Chinese translations and the Sanskrit version

As we have seen above (§ 1.3), the *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion among the Sanskrit recensions occurs almost only in the first stratum of the Lotus Sutra, while the same confusion between the Sanskrit version and the Chinese translations is seen also in the second and third strata as well. Also, among the Sanskrit recensions, there is no instance of *yāna* in the G-N rec. as opposed to *jñāna* in the CA rec., though there are two cases in which the Sanskrit version reads *yāna*, while its Chinese parallel in Kj is *zhìhuì* 智慧 (“wisdom”) (§ 2.1.1). Instances of “double translations” in which the Chinese translators rendered an Indic word as “vehicle-*cum*-wisdom” are noteworthy and their backgrounds will be discussed later.

From this, a question naturally arises namely, why and how did *yāna* and *jñāna* become mixed up among the Sanskrit versions and between the Sanskrit version and the Chinese translations? Did the editors or scribes intentionally change *yāna* to *jñāna* or vice versa? If so, their intention to change these is unclear. Also, the instances of this confusion are quite widespread in the Lotus Sutra. I assume, therefore, they were not changed intentionally but confused due to the similarity of their pronunciation.

## (3) The *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion caused by phonetic development in Prakrit

### (3.1) *yāna*, *jñāna* > Pkt. \**jāna*/*jāṇa*

OIA. *yāna* (= Pā; Gāndhārī *yaṇa*) becomes *jāṇa* in Prakrit (Pkt.), while OIA. *jñāna* (> Pā. *ñāṇa*, Gāndhārī *ñāṇa*) develops into *ṇāṇa*, *nāṇa* or *jāṇa*.<sup>14</sup> Though Turner (CDIAL 5281 *jñāna*-) assumes that the development *jñāna* > Pkt. *jāṇa* took place under the influence

<sup>11</sup> = Kj 7b7. 一切種智 (“the wisdom embracing all modes, *i.e.* the wisdom of a *buddha*”).

<sup>12</sup> *Dào* 道 (“path”) of 道慧 corresponds to *buddha*. Dharmarakṣa translated *bodhi* and *buddha* as *dào* 道.

<sup>13</sup> *Fódào* 佛道 of 佛道慧 corresponds to *bauddha*. Cf. the preceding note.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Pischel: § 276.

of the verb *jānāti*, I assume the development *jñ-* > Pkt. *j(j)* might have occurred by itself.<sup>15</sup> There are traces of OIA. *jñāna* > Pkt. *\*jāna/jāna*, found in medieval and modern dialects, such as: Old Marathi *jāna* (see DOM, s.v.), Sindhī *jānu*, Panjābī *jāṇ*, Gujarātī *jāṇ*, Kashmiri *zān*, Newālī, Bengali, Hindī *jān* etc. (Turner, loc. cit.). To sum up, both *yāna* and *jñāna* became *\*jāna/jāna* in Prakrit.<sup>16</sup>

### (3.2) The reason for the *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion in the Lotus Sutra

At § 1.1, I have listed all the occurrences of this confusion in the verse section. These verses are presumed to belong to the oldest layer of the Lotus Sutra, and were, therefore, probably transmitted in Prakrit or in Sanskrit-cum-Prakrit. Except for KN 147.10 which is in Śloka metre, all other instances are verses in *Triṣṭubh-Jagatī* metre (≡ – ◡ – – ◡ ◡ – ◡ – ≡ or ◡ – ◡ – – ◡ ◡ – ◡ – ◡ ≡), in which the third, sixth, seventh and ninth syllables are required to be short. Except for KN 49.2, in all other instances, the word *jñāna* in question appears immediately after the third or ninth syllable, which means that as *jñ-* does not make metrical position, it must have been read as a single consonant, namely either *ñāṇa/ṇāṇa* or *\*jāna/jāna*. If we suppose that *ñāṇa* or *ṇāṇa* stood in those verses, it is difficult to explain why it was confused with *yāna*. However, if we surmise that *\*jāna* (or *jāṇa*) stood there, it is easy to explain the *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion, because *\*jāna* (or *jāṇa*) is also a Prakrit form of OIA. *yāna*. We may assume, then, in the earliest stage of the transmission of the Lotus Sutra, the Prakrit form *\*jāna* or *jāṇa* (< OIA. *jñāna*, *yāna*), which could mean both “vehicle” and “wisdom”, had stood in these places and that later, somebody back-formed it to *jñāna* (“wisdom”), while other redactors sanskritised it to *yāna* (“vehicle”).

The same applies to the *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion, which is found in the verses of the Sanskrit version and those in the Chinese translations, as we have seen above (§ 2.1). This confusion between the Sanskrit and Chinese versions also occurred in the prose section as well as in the chapters of the second stratum, as we have seen above (§§ 1.2, 2.2, 2.1.2, 2.1.3), which may indicate that the common Prakrit form *\*jāna* (or *jāṇa*) of *yāna* and *jñāna* was used until much later.

As in Gāndhārī, *yāna* became *yaṇa*, while *jñāna* became *ñāṇa*, the *yāna* / *jñāna* confusion could not have taken place in this Northwestern Indian dialect. Therefore, the old stratum of the Lotus Sutra, where this confusion is found, may not have originated in that region.

We have noted (§ 2.1.3) a few instances in which the Chinese translators rendered one word with a double meaning, such as “vehicle” and “wisdom”. Also, these examples

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *ājñā* > Pkt. *ajja*, *prajñā* > Pkt. *pajjā abhijñā* > *ahijja*; *vijñā* > *vijja*; *sarvajñā* > *savvajja*; *sujñāna* > *sujjāna* (cf. Pischel § 276); *jñānin* > *jāni*; *saṃjñā* > *saṃjā*. Cf. also *Siddhahemacandram Adhyāna* VIII, II 83. *ll jñō ñaḥ ll 83 ll jñāḥ saṃbandhino ñasya lug vā bhavati | jāṇaṃ | ṇāṇaṃ | savvajjo | savvaṇṇū | appajjo | appaṇṇū | daivajjo | daivaṇṇū | iṃgiajjo | iṃgiaṇṇū | maṇojjaṃ | maṇoṇṇaṃ | ahijjo | ahiṇṇū | pajjā | paṇṇā | ajjā | āṇā | saṃjā | saṇṇā ll kvacin na bhavati | viṇṇāṇaṃ |* (Pischel 1877: 53); BHSD, *a-jānaka*, *jānaka*; KN 115.5. *rājāna so naigama- / O sa rājīnāṃ jātina* (< *jñātin-*) *naigama-*. In the Jain text *Mahānisīha*, whose language is essentially Jaina Māhārāṣṭrī though blended with Ardhamāgadhī, we find a part, where *nāṇa* and *jāṇa*, both Pkt forms of Skt. *jñāna*, occur repeatedly side by side (Deleu / Schubring 1963: 51; translation 120f.).

<sup>16</sup> In the Jain text *Sūyagada*, § 1.1.1.18, there is a word *jāṇayā*, which is said to mean “Buddhists” (cf. MW, s.v. <sup>2</sup>*jānaka* “pl. the Buddhists”). Some relate this form to *yāna*, while others to *jñānaka*. Cf. Bollée 1977: 75.

indicate that in the underlying Indian texts, *\*jāna* (or *jāṇa*) had stood there, which could have meant both “vehicle” (Skt. *yāna*) and “wisdom” (Skt. *jñāna*). There are also quite a few instances in the Chinese translations, which indicate the translators’ confusion over these words and thus, show traces of the form *\*jāna* (or *jāṇa*) as originating from both OIA. *yāna* and *jñāna*. We shall see such examples in the next chapter.

#### (4) Traces of Pkt. *\*jāna* (“wisdom”) in the Chinese translations

##### (4.1) *jñāna* / *-jāna*

Dharmarakṣa often confused the genitive plural forms *-jāna*, *-jānaṃ*, *-jānām* of *-ja* with *jñāna*.

KN 23.4 (v). *prajāna uttamaś* (Kj 4b22.人中尊) / Dr 66b28. 智慧無上 (“wisdom is unsurpassed”)

KN 23.5 (v). *prajāna nāyako*; O *prajāna uttamo* (Kj 4b23.世尊) / Dr 66c1. 聖達無極 (“divine intelligence is infinite”)

KN 28.12 (v). *ātma<sub>j</sub>ānām* (Kj -[5b23]) / Dr 67c28. 吾我之想 (“notion of the self”)

KN 116.10 (v). *jinātma<sub>j</sub>ānām* (Kj 18b20. 爲菩薩) / Dr 82b27. 最勝慧誼 (“the meaning of wisdom of the Jina”)

KN 117.9 (v). *jinātma<sub>j</sub>ānām* (Kj 18c6. 爲諸佛子等) / Dr 82c13. 最勝所演 經身之慧 (“wisdom of the scripture which the Jina preaches”)

KN 193.1 (v). Mss. *sarva-prajāna<sub>m</sub> uttama*<sup>17</sup> (Kj 26c4. 皆當成佛道) / Dr 93b24. 皆得上慧 (“All attain the foremost wisdom”)

He most probably misunderstood *-jāna*, *-jānaṃ*, *-jānām* as Prakrit forms of *jñāna* and so rendered them as *zhìhuì* 智慧 (“wisdom”), *shèngdá* 聖達 (“divine penetration, divine intelligence”), *xiǎng* 想 (“notion”), *huì* 慧 (“wisdom”). Such examples indicate that he knew the Prakrit development *\*jāna* (or *jāṇa*) < *jñāna*<sup>18</sup>.

##### (4.2) *jñāna* / *jana*

There is one instance in which Dharmarakṣa rendered *jñāna* as “people” (= Skt. *jana*):

KN 23.6 (v). O, D1, N2. *koṭi-sahasra jñāne*<sup>19</sup> (Kj 4b24. 億 ... 佛智慧) / Dr 66c3. 億百千人 (“hundreds of billions of people”)

*Jñāne* stands immediately after the ninth syllable in the verse in *Triṣṭubh* metre and therefore, *jñ* does not make metrical position and must have been read as a single consonant. In the underlying text of Dr, therefore, *\*jāne* instead of *jñāne* might have stood here, and Dharmarakṣa could have misunderstood its stemming from Skt. *jana* (“people”).

##### (4.3) *jñāna* > *\*jāna* / *jhāna* < *dhyāna*

There are some instances in which *jñāna* and *dhyāna* were confused in the Sanskrit manuscripts and Dr:

KN 206.1 (v). *dhyāna-* (= O, R<sub>4</sub>[No.64], D[Toda 1988]; Kj 28b18. 禪) / Nepalese Mss.

<sup>17</sup> KN reads *sarvajinānam uttama* (≠ Mss.).

<sup>18</sup> All the above-quoted instances are from the verses in *Triṣṭubh-Jagatī*, and *-jāna*, *-jānaṃ* and *-jānām* stand immediately after the seventh or ninth syllable, which is required to be short. Dharmarakṣa, therefore, might have understood that *jñāna*~ had become *-jāna* etc. for metrical reasons.

<sup>19</sup> The other manuscripts read *uttami buddhajñāne* instead.



go back, the Prakrit form \**jāna* (or *jāṇa*) must have stood in place of *jñāna* and *yāna*, which must have caused the later confusion of *jñāna* (“wisdom”) and *yāna* (“vehicle”).

### (5) An instance of wordplay based on the Prakrit form \**jāna* (< *jñāna* and *yāna*) — Chapter III “Parable” of the Lotus Sutra

We have seen above that *jñāna* and *yāna* were pronounced as \**jāna* in the earliest stage of the transmission of the Lotus Sutra. There are also traces of wordplay of this double-meaning Prakrit form \**jāna* in the well-known “Parable of the Burning House” in Chapter III “Parable” (*Aupamyā-parivarta*) of the Lotus Sutra.

#### (5.1) “The Parable of the Burning House” in verse

I summarise here the parable described in these verses (KN 87.7f., vv. 71~84):

<sup>21</sup>“As expedient means for saving his children from the burning house, the father says to them: ‘Listen my sons, I have carts (*yānaka*)<sup>22</sup> of different sorts, yoked with deer, goats, and excellent oxen, lofty, great, and completely furnished’ (v. 71)<sup>23</sup>. On hearing of such carts (*yāna*), his children immediately rush out of the house, pushing each other out of the way (v. 73). The children ask their father for those vehicles of three kinds as he had promised (vv. 77, 78). As he possesses<sup>24</sup> a mighty treasury of gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, and numerous servants, he prepares vehicles (*yāna*) of one and the same kind<sup>25</sup> (v. 79). The carts (*ratha*) are made of precious substances, yoked with oxen<sup>26</sup>, most excellent, with benches and a row of tinkling bells, decorated with umbrellas and banners, and adorned with a network of gems and pearls, embellished with gold, covered all around with excellent cloth and fine

<sup>21</sup> I have modified H. Kern’s translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* (SP[tr.K] 86ff.)

<sup>22</sup> Kumārajīva translated this word as 珍玩之具 妙寶好車 (Kj 14b20; “precious toys, wonderful carriages adorned with beautiful jewels”), which indicates that he understood that the “carts” which the father has promised are not real ones but just toys. In fact, in the corresponding prose part of the Sanskrit text, he has promised his children various toys (*krīḍanaka*) such as ox-carts, goat-carts and deer-carts (KN 74.3f.). His children, on hearing of these (KN 74.8), rush out of the house and ask him for the toys (*krīḍanaka*), namely the promised ox-carts, goat-carts and deer-carts (KN 75.3f.). Probably what the father has promised, are toys, but being overjoyed with the rescue of his children, he gives them real ox-carts — this disparity between toys and real ox-carts makes this story all the more interesting.

<sup>23</sup> KN v. 71cd. *mṛgair ajair goṇavaraiś ca yuktā uccā mahantā samalamkṛtā ca*. Cf. O *ajārathā mṛgarathās ca yuktā uccā mahātā atha guṇayuktā*; H<sub>6</sub>(301) /// *thā mṛgarathakā* /// ; Lü A-5. verso 4. /// (*ha*)[*ntā*] *ṭha gonayukta*. Kj 14b21. 羊車鹿車 大牛之車 (“carts yoked with sheep, deer and big oxen”) is rather nearer to the Central Asian recension. Dr 77b14. 諸童瑕猥 ... 免濟大牆 (“My children are carefree and absent-minded, ... I shall rescue them [over?] the big wall”) is completely different from other versions.

<sup>24</sup> KN 88.11. *bhaveta*, while O reads *viditvā* (“Having realised [his being wealthy, he prepared vehicles of one and the same kind.]”).

<sup>25</sup> The reading KN 88.12. *upasthāyakā nekavidhānāyānā* is not supported by the manuscripts. Here, I quote readings in some older manuscripts: K *upasthāpe ekavidhāṃ sahāyānā*; Bj *upasthāpe-n-aikavidhān sa yānānā*; D1 *upasthāpe-d-aikavidhān sa yānānā*; D2 *upasthāpe ekavidhān sa yānānā*; O *upasthāpesy ekavidhā sa yānānā*; R<sub>2</sub>(No.47). /// *sa yānānā*. For the hiatus-bridgers -n- (Bj) and -d- (D1), cf. BHS §§ 4.64–65, RgsGr § 4.158, von Hinüber 2001: § 273. Cf. Tib. *bshon pa de yang rnam pa sna cig* (v.l. *gcig*) *byin*. For the meaning of *upasthāpe*, cf. BHS, s.v. *upasthāpayati*; CPD, s.v. *upaṭṭhāpeti*.

<sup>26</sup> KN 89.1. *ratnāmāyā* (v.l. *°ān*) *goṇarathā viśiṣṭāḥ* (v.l. *°ān*); O, R<sub>2</sub>(No.47). *ratnāmāyā* (R<sub>2</sub> *°as*) *so ratha kārayitvā* (“Having had a cart [or “carts”] of precious stones made, he ...”) = Kj 14c8. 以衆寶物 造諸大車 (“Using many precious substances, he had large carts made”)

white muslin. The jewelled carts (*ratha*) are yoked with white oxen, well fed, strong, of great size, very fine, and are attended by numerous persons. (vv. 80-83). When he gives those exalted (*viśiṣṭa*) carts (*ratha*)<sup>27</sup> to all his sons, they become excited, and go and play with them everywhere (v. 84).”

The parable ends here, after which the Buddha’s deeds, which are likened to those of this father, are described (KN 89.11f. vv. 85~95):

“In the same manner, I am the protector and father of all beings, and all creatures who, are captivated by the pleasures of the triple world, are my sons. This triple world is as dreadful as that house. This triple world is my domain, and those who are suffering in it from burning heat are my sons (vv. 85~87). As expedient means for saving (people) from numerous evils of the triple world, I tell them<sup>28</sup> of the three vehicles (*yāna*) (v. 89). Here are my sons who are endowed with the three kinds of knowledge and six transcendent powers (i.e. *śrāvakas*), *pratyekabuddhas*, and *bodhisattvas*, who do not retrogress (*avaivartika*) (v. 90). I am now showing the single Buddha-vehicle (*eka~ buddhayāna*) to them, who are equally my sons, by means of this excellent parable. Receive it! You shall all become *jinās* (v. 91). That (*tad*) is the wisdom (G-N rec. *jñāna* = Dr; O *yāna* = Kj)<sup>29</sup> of the *buddhas*, being the most excellent (*variṣṭha*), attractive, exalted (*viśiṣṭa*) in the world, sublime and to be revered (v. 92). (There are) powers, meditations, emancipation and many hundreds of *koṭis* of self-concentration, namely the exalted (*variṣṭha*) vehicle (*ratha*) with which the sons of the Buddha constantly enjoy. In playing with it they pass days and nights, fortnights, months, seasons, years, intermediate *kalpas*, nay, thousands of *koṭis* of *kalpas* (v. 94). This is the most excellent (*variṣṭha*) jewelled vehicle by which many *bodhisattvas* and disciples, who listen to the Sugata, go to the terrace of enlightenment, while enjoying themselves (v. 95).”

It is evident that the exalted (*viśiṣṭa*) carts (*ratha*), yoked with white oxen, which are described in verses 80~84, are likened to the most excellent (*variṣṭha*) Buddha-vehicle (*buddhayāna*), described in verses 91 and 93~95. Then, why does the expression “that (*tad*) is the wisdom of the *buddhas* (*buddhāna jñāna*), being the most excellent (*variṣṭha*) and exalted (*viśiṣṭa*)” in verse 92 suddenly occur? This comes immediately after the sentence “I am now showing the single Buddha-vehicle (*buddhayāna*)”, and thus “the Buddha-vehicle (*buddhayāna*)” is identified with “the wisdom of the *buddhas* (*buddhāna jñāna*)”. Where the G-N rec. (= KN) and Dr read “the wisdom of the *buddhas*” (*buddhāna jñāna*, Dr 諸正覺慧), O and Kj have “the vehicle of the *buddhas*” (*buddhāna yāna*, Kj 乘) instead. The latter reading, being consistent with the context, is seemingly better and more original. However, even the oldest Chinese translation by Dharmarakṣa (286 C.E.) reads “wisdom of the perfectly enlightened ones” (*zhūzhèngjué huì* 諸正覺慧) here, which agrees, therefore, with the G-N rec., hence we cannot conclude that the reading of *buddhāna jñāna* is a later

<sup>27</sup> KN (89.9) reads *varān*, while the older manuscripts O, D1, D2, K, Bj etc. have *rathān* instead. I adopt the latter.

<sup>28</sup> KN 90.5. *cāṣāṃ*; O *prāṇinām* = Dr 78a5. 衆生 (“sentient beings”), Kj 15a1. 諸衆生 (“sentient beings”).

<sup>29</sup> KN 90.12. *buddhāna jñānaṃ* (= G-N rec.; = Tib) = Dr 78a13. 諸正覺慧 (“wisdom of the perfectly enlightened ones”) / O *buddhāna yānaṃ* = Kj 15a7. 乘 (“vehicle”).

corruption.

The above-quoted verses in *Triṣṭubh-Jagatī* metre, which are assumed to be the oldest layer of the Lotus Sutra from the point of view of the development of Buddhist thought as well, must have been transmitted either in Prakrit or in Prakrit-cum-Sanskrit. *Jñ* in the phrase *buddhāna jñāna* in question in verse 92 stands immediately after the third syllable in the verse in *Triṣṭubh* metre and therefore, does not make metrical position and must have been read as a single consonant, that is to say that *buddhāna \*jāna* (or *jāna*) in place of *buddhāna jñāna* may have stood here originally. The redactor of an earlier text of the Gilgit-Nepalese recension might have sanskritised it to *buddhāna jñāna*, while that of the Central Asian recension sanskritised it to *buddhāna yāna*.

Then, which of the phrases “the wisdom of the *buddhas*” and “the vehicle of the *buddhas*” was originally meant by the expression *buddhāna \*jāna*? If we suppose that the former (namely *jñāna*) was meant by *\*jāna*, then it is out of context, as we have seen above. If we presume, however, the latter (namely *yāna*) was meant, it does not correlate very well with “powers, meditations, emancipation and many hundreds of *koṭis* of self-concentration” in the next verse, especially as “wisdom” is not listed with these attributes<sup>30</sup>. To sum up, neither *jñāna* or *yāna* fits the context very well. I assume that the above-quoted phrase *buddhāna \*jāna* in verse 92, which can mean both “the wisdom of the *buddhas*” and “the vehicle of the *buddhas*”, is an example of a double-entendre.

In Indian literature, “double-entendre”, a figure of speech, which can be understood in two different ways, is often employed. In Prakrit, where different Sanskrit word forms are combined in one and the same form, double-entendre is easier to utilise than in Sanskrit.<sup>31</sup> One of the most illustrative examples of a double-entendre in Buddhist literature could well be *attadīpa* and *dhammadīpa* in the *Mahāparinibbānasuttanta*<sup>32</sup>. The Buddha, having fallen sick and realising that death was not far off, said to Ānanda “*tasmāt ih’ Ānanda! attadīpā viharatha attasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā dhammadīpā dhammasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā*” (“Therefore, Ānanda, dwell with yourselves as your own island, with yourselves as your own refuge, with no other refuge; dwell with the Dhamma as your island, with the Dhamma as your refuge, with no other refuge.”)<sup>33</sup>. The word *dīpa* is understood as “lamp” in Sanskrit, while it means both “lamp” and “island” (Skt. *dvīpa*) in Pali. In fact, this word of the Buddha is interpreted as “lamp” generally in Northern Buddhism, while it is understood

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Kj 15a10. 諸力解脫 禪定智慧 (“powers and emancipations, meditations and wisdom”). Kumārajīva thus added “wisdom” here, which has no parallels in the Sanskrit versions nor in Dharmarakṣa’s translation either.

<sup>31</sup> For example, the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (3.3.137ff.) relates the following story: Long ago, there was a great sage namely Gautama, whose wife was more beautiful than any *apsara*. One day, Indra, being captivated by her beauty, seduced her, and she willingly succumbed. After discovering this through his magical powers, Gautama arrived on the scene. Being terrified, Indra immediately transformed himself into a cat (Skt. *mānjāra*, Pkt. *majjāra*). Gautama then asked his wife who was there. In colloquial language, she answered: “Here is just a cat (Pkt. *majjāra*).” Then, the sage, laughing, said, “Indeed it is your lover (*tvaj-jāra*)!” and put a curse on his unfaithful (*pāpaśīlā*) wife, condemning her to become a stone (*śilā*). He also placed a curse on Indra, saying “You are greedy for a vulva, so you shall have a thousand of them on your body!” The amusing part of this story lies in the word *majjāra*, which the wife used, meaning “cat” in Prakrit but, at the same time, means “my (*maj*) lover (*jāra*)” in both Sanskrit and Prakrit. Therefore, the sage said “your (*tvaj*) lover (*jāra*).”

<sup>32</sup> DN II 100.20f. = SN V 163.10f.

<sup>33</sup> SN(tr) 1644.



as “island” as a figurative expression for “footing, refuge”<sup>34</sup>, in Theravāda Buddhism, the *Mahāvastu*<sup>35</sup> and (*Mūla*)*Sarvāstivādins* texts<sup>36</sup>. Which of the two interpretations did the Buddha mean by *dīpa* has been long debated. I assume that he used this word as a double-entendre, namely “lamp” and “island” and Ānanda, hearing this word, must have understood this as such. Later, when the transmitters of Buddhist texts Sanskritised them, they had to choose between either Skt. *dīpa* (“lamp”) or *dvīpa* (“lamp”), relying on their understanding of the word. Thus, the double-entendre word *dīpa* was no more regarded as such.

In the Lotus Sutra, which has been one of the most popular Buddhist texts throughout Buddhist history, double-entendre and wordplay must have been used to attract ordinary people. I assume that *\*jāna* in verse 92 was originally intended as such.

A more significant matter is that, if a double-entendre of *\*jāna* is intended here, the whole “Parable of the Burning House” might originally have been based on this wordplay, namely: As the father gives the carts (*\*jāna < yāna*) of one and the same kind to his sons who have asked him for three kinds of carts (*\*jāna < yāna*); the Buddha teaches “the wisdom of the buddhas” (*\*jāna < jñāna*) to *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas* and *bodhisattvas* who have been seeking the three kinds of wisdom (*\*jāna < jñāna*). We shall next examine this assumption in the same parable found in the prose portion.

## (5.2) “The Parable of the Burning House” in the prose portion

The prose portion of Chapter III “Parable” (*Aupamyā-parivarta*) was composed assumedly later than the verses in the same chapter. Therefore, it is not clear whether *jñāna* and *yāna* still remained there in the same colloquial form, namely *\*jāna* (or *jāna*), or were phonetically similar enough for wordplay. However, if wordplay was really employed in the verse section, there must be traces of such in the prose portion as well, as it reiterates, in detail, the content of the verses.

### (5.2.1) Desiring *yāna* is likened to desiring *jñāna*

At KN 80.5ff., *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas* and *bodhisattvas* are likened to the children who ask their father for the three kinds of carts:

“Amongst them, there are those who, desiring to follow what they hear from others<sup>37</sup>, apply themselves to the teaching of the Tathāgata in order to comprehend the Four Noble Truths, and for the sake of their own *parinirvāṇa*. They are said to be those who, desiring the vehicle of the *śrāvakas* (*śrāvaka-yāna*), escape from the threefold world, just as some of the boys escaped from that burning house, desiring a cart

<sup>34</sup> Cf. MW, s.v. *dvīpa* “place of refuge, shelter, protection or protector”; cf. also Āyār § I 6.5.4. *se aṅāsāyae aṅāsāyamāṇe vajjhamāṇāṇaṃ pāṇāṇaṃ bhūyāṇaṃ jīvāṇaṃ sattānaṃ, jahā se dīve asaṃdīṇe, evaṃ se bhavati saraṇaṃ mahāmuṇī* (“But a great sage, neither injuring nor injured, becomes a shelter for all sorts of afflicted creatures, even as an island, which is never covered with water.” [Jacobi 1884: 61])

<sup>35</sup> Mvu I 334.12. *ātmadvīpā bhikṣavo viharatha anyadvīpāḥ ātmaśaraṇāḥ anyāśaraṇāḥ; dharmadvīpā anyadvīpāḥ dharmāśaraṇā anyāśaraṇāḥ*.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. MPS § 14.22. (*tasmād*) *Ānandātarhi mam(a vā)tyayād ātmadvīpair vihartavyam ātmaśaraṇair dharmadvīpair dha(rmaśaraṇair anyadvīpair anyāśaraṇaiḥ)*. The parallel phrases in the Chinese and Tibetan translations of the *Vinayavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādins* read “island” here as well. Cf. MPS, *loc. cit.*

<sup>37</sup> KN 80.6. *paraghoṣaśravānugamanam ākāṅkṣamāṇā* (= Tib); Burnouf translated as follows: “désirant suivre les directions qu’on entend de la bouche d’un autre” (SP[tr.B] 51); O reads *paramaghoṣaśravādhimuktā*; the Chinese translations read differently from the Sanskrit version (Dr 76a14f.; Kj 13b18f.).

yoked with deer (*mṛga-ratha*<sup>38</sup>).

There are other people, who, desiring wisdom without a teacher (*anācāryaka jñāna*), with self-restraint and tranquillity (*dama-śamatha*), apply themselves to the teaching of the Tathāgata in order to understand cause and effect for the sake of their own *parinirvāṇa*. They are said to be those who, desiring the vehicle of the *pratyekabuddha* (*pratyekabuddha-yāna*), escape from the threefold world, just as some of the boys escaped from that burning house, desiring a cart yoked with goats (*aja-ratha*).

There are other people, who, desiring the wisdom of the Omniscient One (*sarvajñā-jñāna*), the wisdom of the *buddhas* (*buddha-jñāna*), the wisdom of the Self-generated One (*svayambhu-jñāna*), wisdom without a teacher (*anācāryaka jñāna*), apply themselves to the teaching of the Tathāgata in order to understand the wisdom, powers and confidence of the Tathāgata (*tathāgata-jñāna*<sup>39</sup>-*bala-vaiśāradya*), for the sake of the welfare and happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare and happiness of many people, both gods and men, for the sake of the *parinirvāṇa* of all beings. They are said to be those who, desiring the great vehicle (*mahāyāna*; O *tathāgatayāna*)<sup>40</sup>, escape from the threefold world. Therefore, they are called *bodhisattva-mahāsattvas*. They are just like some of the boys, who escaped from that burning house, desiring a cart yoked with oxen (*go-ratha*).”

Thus, the three groups of boys, who desire carts (*ratha*) yoked with deer, goats and oxen, respectively, are likened to *śrāvakas*, who follow what they hear from others, to *pratyekabuddhas*, who desire wisdom without a teacher (*anācāryaka jñāna*) and to *bodhisattvas*, who seek the wisdom of the *buddhas* (*buddha-jñāna*). Also, the latter three are designated as those, who desire the vehicle of the *śrāvakas* (*śrāvaka-yāna*); those, who desire the vehicle of the *pratyekabuddhas* (*pratyekabuddha-yāna*); and those, who desire the great vehicle or the vehicle of the Tathāgata (*mahāyāna*; O *tathāgatayāna*) as well. As can be seen clearly in the descriptions of the *pratyekabuddhas* and *bodhisattvas*, desiring *yāna* (or *ratha*)

<sup>38</sup> In the following portion and KN 74.4, *mṛga-ratha*, *aja-ratha* and *go-ratha* are listed in this order in the G-N rec. (= KN), while, in O, the order differs, namely *paśu-ratha* (once *aja-ratha*), *mṛga-ratha*, *go-ratha*. Kumārajīva’s translation agrees with O: Kj 12c9, 13b21f. 羊車 ... 鹿車 ... 牛車. Dharmarakṣa translated “carts yoked with goats, horses and elephants” (Dr 76a18, 75b17. 羊車、馬車、象車), which probably agrees also with the reading of O. Skt. *mṛga* means “any wild animal” as well as “deer”. The translator might have understood it as a wild horse, and, at times, he mistranslated Skt. *go* as “elephant”: e.g. KN 89.7. *goṇā* / Dr 77c17. 象. The same parable is found also in Dharmarakṣa’s translation of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, *Xiuxingdaodi jing* 修行道地經 by name (T. 15, no. 606; 284 C.E.), where “elephants, horses and carts” are listed (226c2. 象、馬、車乘).

<sup>39</sup> KN 81.3. *tathāgatajñāna*-; O *tathāgatajñānadarśana*- = Dr 76a24. 大聖普見之慧 (“the great sage’s wisdom of universal insight”), Kj 13b26. 如來知見 (“the knowledge and insight of the Thus Come One”).

<sup>40</sup> KN 81.4. *mahāyānām* (= Kj 13b27. 大乘 “great vehicle”); O *tathāgatayānam* (= Dr 76a24. 如來道 “the path of the Thus Come One”).

is likened to desiring *jñāna*<sup>41</sup>.

### (5.2.2) *Mahāyāna* likened to *buddhajñāna*

At KN 78.6f., the father’s decision to give great vehicles (*mahāyānāni*) to his children is likened to the Buddha’s resolution:

“I am the father of these beings. I must save them from this mass of evil, and bestow on them the immense, inconceivable bliss of the Buddha-wisdom (G-N rec. *buddhajñāna*-; O *buddhayāna*-)<sup>42</sup>, with which they shall sport, play, and enjoy themselves.”

It is thus evident that the great vehicles (*mahāyānāni*), given by the father, are likened to “the Buddha-wisdom” (*buddhajñāna*) bestowed by the Buddha.

Also, KN 81.7f. relates as follows:

“As the father, considering that he possesses great wealth, finally gives his children one single superb cart (*udāra yāna*; singular!), so also the Buddha, considering that he possesses a great wealth of wisdom, power, and confidence (*mahājñānabala-vaiśāradyakośa*), and that all beings are his children, leads them to *parinirvāṇa* by means of nothing other than the Buddha-vehicle (*buddha-yāna*).”

This action of the Buddha is paraphrased more concretely as “he teaches all beings the Dharma which is connected with the wisdom of the Omniscient One (*sarvajña-jñāna*)”<sup>43</sup> and “he preaches the one single great vehicle (*mahāyāna*; O *buddhayāna*)”<sup>44</sup>. It is thus evident that the Buddha-wisdom (*sarvajña-jñāna*, i.e. *buddha-jñāna*), the Buddha-vehicle (*buddha-yāna*) and the great vehicle (*mahāyāna*) are used synonymously.

### (5.3) \**buddha-jāna*, meaning “Buddha-wisdom”, was sanskritised to *buddha-yāna*

To sum up, in the prose portion of Chapter III “Parable” (*Aupamyā-parivarta*), a clear comparison is made between the father’s giving *mahāyāna* to all his children, who desire the three kinds of *yāna*, and the Buddha’s bestowing one single *buddha-jñāna* to all beings, children of the Buddha, who desire the three kinds of *jñāna*.<sup>45</sup> This comparison between *yāna* and *jñāna* agrees with the double-entendre of \**jāna*, meaning both “vehicle” and “wisdom” as assumed in verse. Also, the confusion of *yāna* and *jñāna* occurs not only in verse (v. 92), but also in prose (see notes 42 and 43).

From the investigation, which we have carried out above, we may assume that there had been a double-entendre of \**jāna*, meaning both “vehicle” (*yāna*) and “wisdom” (*jñāna*),

<sup>41</sup> Here, as the words *jñāna* and *yāna* are used in nearly the same way, we could replace *śrāvaka-yāna*, *pratyekabuddha-yāna*, *mahāyāna* (*tathāgata-yāna*) with \**śrāvaka-jñāna*, \**pratyekabuddha-jñāna*, *mahājñāna* (*tathāgatajñāna*), respectively. A similar list is found in the *Sumaṅgala-Vilāsini*: Sv 100.10ff. *sāvaka-pāramī-ñāna*, *paccekabuddha-ñāna*, *sabbaññuta-ñāna*.

<sup>42</sup> KN 78.8. *buddha-jñāna*- (= G-N rec., Lü B-2 verso 1; Tib, Dr 75c26. 諸佛正慧, Kj 13a28. 佛智慧); O, H<sub>5</sub>(283). *buddha-yāna*-.

<sup>43</sup> KN 82.9. *sarvajñajñāna-sahagataṃ dharmam* (= Dr 76b12); cf. Kj 13c16. 大乘之法 (“the Dharma of the great vehicle”).

<sup>44</sup> KN 82.10. *mahāyāna*; O *buddhayāna* = Dr 76b14. 佛乘 (“the Buddha-vehicle”), Kj 13c17. 佛乘 (*do.*).

<sup>45</sup> In the parable, the father is said to be very rich and possesses such “great vehicles” (*mahāyānāni*) (KN 75.10ff.) and likened to the Buddha, who possesses rich wisdom (read *me jñāna* instead of *mahājñāna* [≠ Mss.]), powers and confidence (KN 81.12f.). The parallelism between the “vehicle” of the father and “wisdom” of the Buddha, also indicates a double-entendre of \**jāna* in this parable.

in the verse portion of this chapter, but later, when \**jāna* was sanskritised to *yāna* and *jñāna*, this wordplay became incomprehensible. Some traces of this double-entendre can, however, be seen in the confusion of *yāna* and *jñāna* as well as in the comparison between *yāna* and *jñāna*, described in the prose portion.

A significant fact is that the expression *buddha-yāna*, which was often interchanged with *buddha-jñāna* (cf. §1.1f.), does not explicitly mean a “vehicle” in the Lotus Sutra.<sup>46</sup> I assume, then, that the expression \**buddha-jāna*, meaning “Buddha-wisdom” (*buddha-jñāna*) originally, was sanskritised to *buddha-yāna* similar to *mahājāna* (“great wisdom”), which became *mahāyāna*. This, we shall examine later.

## (6) On *yāna* and *jñāna* used synonymously

### (6.1) Verses in Chapter II “Expedient Means”

The words *yāna* and *jñāna* are used synonymously in verses 54 and 55 (KN 46.11f.) in Chapter II “Expedient Means” (*Upāyakauśalya-parivarta*)

*ekaṃ hi yānaṃ dvitīyaṃ na vidyate tṛtīyaṃ hi nāivāsti kadāci loke /  
anyatr( ) upāyā puruṣottamānāṃ yad yānanānātv( ) upadarśayanti //54//  
bauddhasya jñānasya prakāśanārthaṃ (O boddhasya yānasya pravedhanārthaṃ<sup>47</sup>)  
loke samutpadyati lokanātha (O lokasmi utpadyati lokanāyaka)/  
ekaṃ hi kāryaṃ dvitīyaṃ na (O na dvitīya) vidyate  
na hīnayānena nayanti buddhā (O prāṇina) //55//*

“There is, indeed, just one vehicle; there is neither a second nor a third anywhere in the world, apart from the case in which the highest of men (i.e. the Buddha) uses expedient means to show that there is a variety of vehicles.

The Protector (O “the Leader”) of the world appears in the world to proclaim the Buddha-wisdom (O “to make the Buddha-vehicle known”). He has but one purpose, indeed, no second; the *buddhas* do not lead (living beings) (O [*Buddhas*] do not lead living beings) with an inferior vehicle.”

Probably, the colloquial form \**jāna* stood here originally in place of *yāna* and *jñāna*, as in the instances we have seen above and presumably, all occurrences of \**jāna* initially meant “wisdom” here, except in the case of \**hīnajāna* (> *hīnayāna*), which could have been intended, at first, as a double-entendre of “inferior wisdom” and “an inferior vehicle”.

### (6.2) A verse and the prose part in Chapter VIII “Prediction of Buddhahood for Five Hundred Disciples”

At the beginning of the prose part in Chapter VIII, it is said that Pūrṇa received a prediction of Buddhahood from the Buddha. In a corresponding verse in *Triṣṭubh* metre in the

<sup>46</sup> Other than Chapter III “Parable” (*Aupamyā-parivarta*), *yāna* explicitly means a “vehicle” *only* in verses 14–17 in the first chapter, which belongs to the second stratum of the Lotus Sutra (KN :10.11~11.4): “Thinking that ‘We wish to gain the vehicle. The best and most excellent vehicle in the threefold world is the Buddha-vehicle (*buddhayāna*)’, they donate horses, goats, palanquins adorned with jewels, carriages harnessed with four horses or those made of precious stones, wishing to attain enlightenment by doing so.” Here, it is said that the metaphysical *yāna* (a synonym of enlightenment) is to be obtained by physical *yāna* (carts, carriages, palanquins, horses or goats).

<sup>47</sup> *pravedhanārthaṃ* : A hyperform of *pravedanā*<sup>o</sup>.

same chapter, the following is said of Pūrṇa’s past and future lives:

“By preaching the most eminent and righteous Dharma, he brought thousands of *koṭis* of sentient beings to full ripeness (*pariṅpac*) for this supreme, foremost vehicle (*anuttara agra-yāna*), whilst purifying his own excellent field.” (KN 204.13f.: v. 11)  
 “(In future), he will always preach the Dharma confidently by means of thousands of *koṭis* of expedient means, and bring many beings to full ripeness (*pariṅpac*) for the wisdom of the Omniscient One (*sarvajña-jñāna*), which is free from depravities.” (KN 205.3f.: v. 13)

It is evident that *anuttara agra-yāna* and *sarvajña-jñāna* are used synonymously. Here again *-yāna* and *-jñāna* stand where a double consonant (*jñ*) does not make metrical position. Therefore, probably *\*-jāna* stood originally here in place of *-yāna* and *-jñāna* and meant “wisdom”.

### (6.3) Chapter VII “The Parable of the Phantom City”

The words *yāna* and *jñāna* are used synonymously also in both the verse and prose portions of Chapter VII “The Parable of the Phantom City”.

#### (6.3.1) Verses of Chapter VII “The Parable of the Phantom City”

In the concluding part of this chapter, the Buddha proclaims that:

“It is (simply) as expedient means of the *buddhas* that great sages teach the three vehicles (*yad yāna deśenti trayo maharṣī*). There is only one single vehicle, no second (*ekaṃ hi yānaṃ na dvitīyam asti*); but in order to make (sentient beings) feel relaxed, two vehicles are taught (*viśrāmaṅārthaṃ tu dvi yāna deśitā*). (v. 106)<sup>48</sup>

Therefore, I now tell you, O monks, call forth your utmost efforts in order to attain the wisdom of the Omniscient One (G-N rec. *sarvajña-jñāna*; O *sarvajña-yāna*)<sup>49</sup>; it is not time for rest (*nirvṛti*). (v. 107)

But when you have attained the wisdom of the Omniscient One (*sarvajña-jñāna*; O, R<sub>2</sub> *sarvajña-yāna*)<sup>50</sup> and the ten powers of the *jinas*, you will become *buddhas*, endowed with the thirty-two characteristic signs and have (true) rest. (v. 108)

Such is the teaching of the Leaders: in order to relieve (you), they speak of rest (*nirvṛti*); (but), having known<sup>51</sup> that (you) have become relaxed by the (provisional) rest, they lead all onwards to the wisdom of the Omniscient One (*sarvajña-jñāna*; O, R<sub>2</sub> *sarvajña-yāna*)<sup>52</sup>.” (v. 109)

These verses reveal that two forms of *yāna*, namely *śrāvaka-yāna* and *pratyekabuddha-yāna*, do not really exist but are merely devised by the *buddhas* as expedient means. The true *yāna* is one and single, namely *jñāna* of the Omniscient One. Thus, *yāna* and *jñāna* are used synonymously here. It is all the more evident from the fact that the Central Asian manuscripts read *sarvajña-yāna* instead of *sarvajña-jñāna* throughout these verses.

These verses in *Triṣṭubh* metre in Chapter VII belong to the oldest stratum like those in Chapter III, which we examined at § 5.1. The word *sarvajña-jñāna*- in verses 107c,

<sup>48</sup> KN 198.4. *tu dvi yāna deśitā* (= Dr 94b11. 故分別說, Kj 27b2. 說二); O *dvaya ekā hi yānanau*.

<sup>49</sup> KN 198.6. *sarvajña-jñāna* (= Dr 94b13. 一切敏慧, Kj 27b4. 佛一切智); O *sarvajña-yāna*.

<sup>50</sup> KN 198.7. *sarvajña-jñāna* (= Dr 94b14. 諸通慧, Kj 27b5. 一切智); O, R<sub>2</sub>(No. 55, p. 133) *sarvajña-yāna*.

<sup>51</sup> Read *jñātvāna* instead of KN 198.10. *jñātvā na*.

<sup>52</sup> KN 198.10. *sarvajñajñāne* (= Dr 94b19. 諸通慧, Kj 27b8. 佛慧); O, R<sub>2</sub>(No. 55, p. 133) *sarvajñayānam*.

108a, 109d stands at the beginning of the pada, which is scanned as  $\simeq - \simeq - -$ . Therefore, \**sarvajña-jāna*- had probably stood here previously, and it was later sanskritised to *sarvajña-jñāna*- (= G-N rec.) and *sarvajña-yāna*- (= CA rec.). Also, *yāna* in the expressions *ekaṃ hi yānaṃ* and *dvi yāna deśitā* in verse 106, stands where a double consonant (*jñ*) does not make metrical position. Therefore, probably \**jāna* had stood here originally in place of *jñāna* and it was later sanskritised to *yāna* incorrectly.

To sum up, *yāna* and *jñāna* are used synonymously in these verses, which may indicate that they were interchanged through their common colloquial form \**jāna*. Next, we shall examine the corresponding prose portion of the same chapter.

### (6.3.2) Prose portion of Chapter VII “The Parable of the Phantom City”

At KN 188.11f., the Buddha is likened to the leader of treasure hunters, who magically conjures up a city in the distance in order to enable his exhausted party to rest there and thus encourage them to keep going:

“In the same manner, the Tathāgata, the guide of all sentient beings, thinks thus: This expansive wilderness of defilements must be crossed. But, on hearing that the wisdom/vehicle of the Buddha (*buddha-jñāna*; O *buddha-yāna*)<sup>53</sup> is one and only, sentient beings will suddenly turn back and not proceed to the end with the thought that it is too difficult to attain the wisdom/vehicle of the Buddha (*buddha-jñāna*; O *buddha-yāna*)<sup>54</sup>.<sup>55</sup> Then, the Tathāgata, like the leader of the treasure hunters, knowing that they are weak-willed, in order to make them feel relaxed, teaches and proclaims expediently two stages (*bhūmi*) of *nirvāṇa*, namely the stage of the disciples (*śrāvaka-bhūmi*) and that of the *pratyekabuddhas* (*pratyekabuddha-bhūmi*). When sentient beings remain there, the Tathāgata will say (to them): ‘You have not accomplished your task; you have not done what had to be done. But behold, O monks, you are near the wisdom/vehicle of the Tathāgata (*tathāgata-jñāna*; O, H<sub>6</sub> *tathāgata-yāna*)<sup>56</sup>. See and consider that your *nirvāṇa* is not the true one. The three vehicles (*yānāni*) are expounded simply as the expedient means of the Tathāgatas.’”

If we interpret verse 106 in the light of its corresponding prose, we see that “The three vehicles are taught simply as the expedient means of the *buddhas*. Wisdom is one and only, that is the Buddha-wisdom. Simply in order to make people feel relaxed, the *buddhas* teach the stage of the disciples and that of the *pratyekabuddhas*.” Thus “the one single vehicle” (*eka yāna*) in verse 106 is replaced by “the one and only Buddha-wisdom” (*eka buddhajñāna*; O *eka buddhayāna*). It is, therefore, evident that *yāna* and *jñāna* were used synonymously, which is supported by the confusion of these two words between the readings in the G-N rec. and the CA rec. I assume that \**jāna*, meaning “wisdom”, had stood originally also in the above-quoted places in Chapter VII, and it was later sanskritised to *yāna*

<sup>53</sup> KN 189.1. *buddha-jñāna*; O *buddha-yāna* (= Dr 92c14. 一乘, Kj 26a15. 一佛乘).

<sup>54</sup> KN 189.2. *buddha-jñāna*; O *buddha-yāna* (= Kj 26a17. 佛道). Dr 92c15. 道慧 (“wisdom of the path” or “path-cum-wisdom”) is probably an example of a “double translation”.

<sup>55</sup> In the Central Asian manuscripts, there is an interpolated sentence: O *tena vaya(m a)pratibalaṃ buddhajñānam abhisamboddhum*, H<sub>5</sub>(285). // *m abhisambo* //; = Kj 26a17. 乃可得成佛 (“Ultimately one can attain Buddhahood.”).

<sup>56</sup> KN 189.9. *tathāga-jñāna* (= Dr 92c28. 如來慧, Kj 26a21. 佛慧); O, H<sub>6</sub>(306) *tathāgata-yāna*.

incorrectly in several cases.

**(6.4) \*jāna > jñāna, yāna**

As we have seen above, in Chapters II, VII and VIII of the Lotus Sutra, there are quite a few instances, which indicate that the words *yāna* and *jñāna* were interchangeable. Probably, the colloquial form \**jāna* (< *jñāna* “wisdom”) originally stood in these examples, and presumably it was later sanskritised to *jñāna* but also incorrectly to *yāna* in several cases.

**(7) Mahāyāna < mahājāna (i.e. mahājñāna)**

**(7.1) “One single jñāna. The three forms of jñāna are devised as expedient means.”**

As we have seen above, the *leitmotif* in the verses of the oldest stratum of the Lotus Sutra is “There is only one single *buddha-jñāna* / *buddha-yāna*, but the Buddha has explained it in a threefold way as expedient means.” The same can be said about enlightenment (*bodhi*) in the verses in *Triṣṭubh-Jagatī* metre:

“Remembering the former *buddhas* and their expedient means, (I thought): ‘I also shall explain this Buddha-enlightenment (*buddha-bodhi*) in the threefold way.’” (Chapter II, v. 118)

“The Tathāgata, who is fully aware of the deeds of all beings and individuals, preaches various forms of the Dharma, while indicating this best enlightenment (*agrabodhi*).” (Chapter IV, v. 62)

Thus, *yāna* and *bodhi* are used synonymously in the Lotus Sutra. The synonymity of *yāna* and *bodhi* in this scripture is confirmed by the fact that the latter verse quoted above was translated by Kumārajīva as “(The Buddha) preaches the one and sole Vehicle and Path as being three in accord with what the situation demands” (Kj 19a11. 於一乘道 隨宜說三) and also by the fact that *agrabodhim* in Chapter II, v. 104 (KN 53.12) has a variant reading *agrayānaṃ* (= O, D2, Bj, C3 etc. = Tib)<sup>57</sup>.

Also, from the following sentences, it is clear that *yāna* is used as a synonym of *parinirvāṇa*: in Chapter II, v. 105 (KN 53.14), the Buddha says “*Buddhas* preach the one *yāna*, that is the supreme tranquil state (*śāntabhūmi*)”, also in the prose of Chapter VII (KN 186.7f., 12f.), the Buddha says: “The *parinirvāṇa* of *tathāgatas* is *only* one; there is no second one other than *nirvāṇa* of *tathāgatas*”, “In this world, there is no second *yāna*, no second *parinirvāṇa*, needless to say a third. It is an expedient means that the Buddha teaches sentient beings such *nirvāṇa*.”

The word *yāna*, appearing in the old verses in the first stratum, does not mean “vehicle” nor “path”, which is confirmed also by the fact that this word is not combined with verbs such as “ride”, “go”, “proceed” etc., while, in the *Upaniṣads* and in Pali scriptures, the word *yāna*, meaning “path” in metaphysical contexts, is connected with verbs such as √*yā* (“to go”), √*ruh* (“to ride”), √*yuj* (“to yoke”)<sup>58</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Karashima 1992: 58.

<sup>58</sup> E.g. *Tāittirīyabrāhmaṇa* 3, 1, 2, 10. *sugair no yānair upayātām yajñam*; *Ṣaḍviṃśabrāhmaṇa* 5, 10, 2. *atha yadāsyāyuktāni yānāni pravartante*; Sn, v. 139. *so devayānam āruhya* (v.l. *abhiruyha*), *virajaṃ so mahāpathaṃ, kāmarāgaṃ virājetvā brahmalokūpago ahu*; Thī, v. 389. *sāhaṃ sugatassasāvīkā maggaṭṭhaṅgikayānāyāyini*; SN V 4.26f. *brahmaṃ vata bho yānam brahmayānarūpaṃ vata hoti ... (5.7) setā sudam assā yuttā honti ... (5.15f.) ariyassa aṭṭhaṅgikassa maggassa adhivacanam brahmayānaṃ iti pi dhammayānaṃ iti pi ... (6.16) niyyanti*

Thus, it is clear that *yāna* (or rather *\*jāna*), found in the old verses in the first stratum, is neither “a vehicle (by which one can attain enlightenment)” nor “a path (to enlightenment)”, but is enlightenment itself, namely “(Buddha-)wisdom”. In other words, it is not a means to arrive somewhere or attain something, but the purpose itself. In conclusion, I assume that such *yāna* (or rather *\*jāna*) did not mean “vehicle” but “wisdom” (= *jñāna*).

Therefore, the *leitmotif* of the Lotus Sutra must have been originally “There is only one single Buddha-wisdom, but the Buddha has explained it in the threefold way as expedient means.”

### (7.2) *Mahājāna* meant originally “great wisdom” (*mahājñāna*)

In the verses of the first stratum, the expression *mahāyāna* does not occur, though it was not impossible to incorporate this word (√ – – √) in a verse. Instead of this expression, *buddha-yāna* (Chapter III, v. 91), *agra-yāna* (Chapter III, v. 1; VIII, v. 11), *udāra-yāna* (“excellent *yāna*”; Chapter VIII, v. 2) are used in those verses. We have already examined the expression *buddha-yāna* in “The Parable of the Burning House” (see § 5.1). *Agra-yāna* in VIII, v. 11 is paraphrased as *sarvajñā-jñāna* (“the wisdom of the Omniscient One”) in a subsequent verse (Chapter VIII, v. 13). *Udāra-yāna* appears as an antonym of *hīna-yāna* (“inferior *yāna*”) — this contrast is replaced with that between *tathāgata-jñāna*, *sarvajñā-jñāna* versus *parīṭṭa jñāna* (“limited wisdom”). Also, where the Sanskrit version reads *udāra-yāna*, the Chinese translation by Kumārajīva has 大智 (“great wisdom”; 28a11) (see above § 2.1.1). Therefore, we may assume that *buddha-yāna*, *agra-yāna* and *udāra-yāna* were pronounced originally as *\*buddha-jāna*, *\*agga-jāna* and *\*udāra-jāna*, respectively, and could be understood both as “Buddha-wisdom”, “foremost wisdom”, “excellent wisdom” and as “Buddha-vehicle”, “foremost vehicle” and “excellent vehicle”.

As stated above, the word *mahāyāna* does not occur in the verses of the first stratum. The Buddhist term *mahāyāna* occurs first in the prose portion of “The Parable of the Burning House” in Chapter III, KN 81.4 (= K<sub>j</sub>; ≠ O *tathāgata-yāna* [= Dr]), 82.7 (= O, Dr, K<sub>j</sub>) and 82.10 (≠ O *buddha-yāna* [= Dr, K<sub>j</sub>]). Thus, there is only one instance (KN 82.7), where all versions read *mahāyāna*, while the same word, designating grand cart, which the father gives to his children, occurs several times in the same prose portion (KN 76.2, 3, 4, 6, 77.2, 79.3, 82.4). We may, therefore, assume that this Buddhist term was not well established in the first stratum of the Lotus Sutra.

As we have seen above (§ 5.3), there is a clear comparison between the father’s giving *mahāyāna* to all his children, who desire the three kinds of *yāna*, and the Buddha’s giving one single *buddha-jñāna* to all beings, children of the Buddha, who desire the three kinds of *jñāna*. From this fact, we may assume that the word *mahāyāna* was pronounced originally as *mahājāna* — this form does occur in later Buddhist inscriptions in the 9th to 12th centuries in East and Central India<sup>59</sup> —, and could be understood both as “great

*dhīrā lokamhā*; Mil 276.30. *iddhiyānam abhiruyha*. Cf. Gonda 1965: 59ff.

<sup>59</sup> IBInsc I, p. 150, Bodh-Gayā 36 (1157/1230 C.E.), l. 2. *parama-mahājānānuyāyinaḥ* (“a follower of the excellent *mahāyāna*”); *ibid.* p. 159, Chaṇḍimau 1 (10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries), l. 1. *do.*; *ibid.* p. 215, Tetravan 1 (1073 C.E.), l. 1. *do.*; *ibid.* p. 611, Gopālpur (Jabalpur) 1 (11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries), l. 1. *do.*; IBInsc I, p. 917, Sārnāth 111 (1058 C.E.), l. 8, 10. *mahājānānuyāyī*, l. 10. *mahājānānujāina*; Mitra 1998: 285 (9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> c. C.E.), l. 1. *pravara-mahājāna-jāyinaḥ Śākya-bhikṣor āryamūlasarvāstivādaparśadā-Vaṅga-ṣiṣayika-sthavira-Dharmmamitrasya*;



vehicle” and “great wisdom”, which made it possible to use this word as a double-entendre for the parable.

### (7.3) The Lotus Sutra elucidates “the equality of the great wisdom” (*mahājñāna-samatā*)

In fact, the expression *mahājñāna* (“great wisdom”) does occur in Chapter XI in the Central Asian Mss. and the Chinese translations of this sutra, which proclaims: “This sutra is a scripture which shows equality of the great wisdom (*mahājñāna*).” This very important fact has remained unnoticed, because this phrase lacks in the Nepalese manuscripts and, consequently, in modern editions which rely on them.

At the beginning of Chapter XI (*Stūpasamdarśana*), it describes how a *stūpa*, made of the seven precious stones, arose from the earth. It says that a voice, praising Śākyamuni for having expounded the Lotus Sutra, issued from that *stūpa*. In the Sanskrit manuscripts from Nepal and Tibet read here as follows — this part in the Gilgit manuscripts has not been discovered yet:

KN 240.3f. *sādhu sādhu bhagavañ Śākyamune subhāṣitas te 'yaṃ Saddharmapuṇḍarīko dharmaparyāyaḥ* (“Excellent, excellent, Lord Śākyamuni! You have well expounded this religious discourse of the Lotus of the True Dharma.”)

In contrast to this, in the Central Asian manuscript from Khādaliq, dating probably back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and a fragment dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the Lotus Sutra is defined as “an elucidation of the equality of the great wisdom”.

O *sādhu sādhu bhagavāṃ cChākyamune{r}* *yad imaṃ bodhisattvasaṃgrahaṃ mahājñāna-samatā-nirdeśaṃ sarvabuddha-pariḡrhitam dharmaparyāyaṃ deśayasi saṃprakāśayanti* (read °*kāśayasi*) (“It is excellent, excellent, Lord Śākyamuni, that you show and expound this religious discourse which is a compendium for *bodhisattvas*, an elucidation of the equality of the great wisdom, and which all *buddhas* embrace.”)

Lü(B-11.Recto 7) /// [*v]āṃ Śākyamuniṃ ya imaṃ bo[dhi]satva[ḥ] suṃ]grahaṃ mahājñāna-samata[ni](rde) /// (“[It is excellent], O Lord Śākyamuni, [that you show and expound this religious discourse which] is a compendium for *bodhisattvas*, an elucidation of the equality of the great wisdom, ...”)*

There are parallels in the Chinese translations:

Dr 102c3f. 善哉！善哉！世尊、安住！審如所言。道德玄妙，超絕無侶、慧平等一，猶如虛空，實無有異 (“Excellent! Excellent, O Śākyamuni, O Sugata! All what you have said is correct. The virtues of the [Buddha-]Path are deep, subtle and surpass all. Like the sky, (the) wisdom is impartial and alone, completely free from differentiation.”)

Kj 32b28f. 善哉！善哉！釋迦牟尼世尊！能以平等大慧教菩薩法，佛所護念《妙法華經》為大眾說 (“Excellent! Excellent, O Śākyamuni, O World-Honoured One, that you teach the *bodhisattvadharma* with impartial great wisdom, [and] preach the Lotus Sutra, which the *buddhas* keep in mind, to the great assembly.”)

From the third-century Chinese translation by Dharmarakṣa to the Central Asian Sanskrit manuscript of the 8<sup>th</sup> or early 9<sup>th</sup> century, the phrase “an elucidation of the equality of

Gupta 1965: 131, no. 30 (11<sup>th</sup> century). *pravara-mahājāna-jāyinaḥ*, *ibid.* p. 156, no. 166 (10<sup>th</sup> century), *do*.

the great wisdom” exists, while this is wanting in the Sanskrit manuscripts from Nepal and Tibet, dating from the middle of the eleventh century onwards. We may assume that this phrase existed from the beginning and it was deleted later.

I assume that *mahājñāna* (“great wisdom”) in this passage is none other than the repeatedly proclaimed *buddha-jñāna* (“Buddha-wisdom”), and that the term *mahāyāna* probably originated from *mahājñāna*.<sup>60</sup>

The most important fact, which we can deduce from this phrase, is that those, who composed and transmitted the Lotus Sutra, regarded this scripture as being “an elucidation of the equality of the great wisdom” (*mahājñāna-samatā-nirdeśam*).

In the *Suttanipāta*, which is regarded as retaining Śākyamuni’s teachings, not only he, himself, but also his disciples, such as Sāriputta/Śāriputra, are designated as *buddhas*. Śākyamuni proclaimed that anybody, who follows his teachings and his practices together with his mode of living, can become a *buddha*. However, much later, when he was deified, Buddhists came to think: “It was only Śākyamuni who could attain Buddha-wisdom. Nobody except for him can attain it, can become a *buddha*” and thus, the hierarchy of lay

<sup>60</sup> It is remarkable that Zhu Daosheng 竺道生 (355~434 C.E.), a disciple of Kumārajīva, wrote, in his commentary on the Lotus Sutra, concerning the meaning of *mahāyāna*, the following: “The theme of the scripture is ‘great vehicle’. ‘Great vehicle’ means impartial great wisdom. One begins with one good (deed) and attains supreme wisdom ultimately.” (X[1] 150, 396d18f. = X[2] 27, no. 577, 1b24f. 此經以大乘為宗。大乘者，謂平等大慧。始於一善，終乎極慧).

We find traces of the interpretation of *mahāyāna* as coming from *mahājñāna* in other texts as well: e.g. SuPP 19.18f. = SuPP(V) 10.26f. *katamac ca mahāyānaṃ? sarvaṃ jñānaṃ mahāyānaṃ* (“What is *mahāyāna*? Entire wisdom is *mahāyāna*.”); *Yogaratanmālā* 105.7f. *mahājñānāni mahāyānapraṇītā dharmāḥ* (“Great wisdom is produced from *mahāyāna*.”). Cf. Wangchuk 2007: 118.

The confusion of *mahāyāna* / *mahājñāna* is found also in other scriptures as well. Where the Sanskrit version of the *Daśabhūmikāsūtra* reads *mahāyāna* (Daśa-bh[K] 21.6; 145.2; = Śikṣānanda’s translation, T. 10, no. 279, 182a20, 200c19. 大乘; Śīladharma’s translation, T. 10, no. 287, 539a25, 561c10. 大乘; both in the Tang Dynasty), Dharmarakṣa’s translation has 大聖慧 (“great, sacred wisdom”; T. 10, no. 285, 462c8) and 無極大慧 (“supreme, great wisdom”; do. 484a10), and Kumārajīva’s translation reads 大智慧 (“great wisdom”; T. 10, no. 286, 501b29, 522c1; T. 9, no. 278, 545c27, 566a11). On the contrary, where the Sanskrit version of the same text has *mahājñāna* (Daśa-bh[K] 184.6), most Chinese translations read correspondingly 大慧 (“great wisdom”) and 大智慧 (do.), while Śīladharma’s translation has 大乘 (“the great vehicle”; T. 10, no. 287, 568c7). Also, in the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, where the Sanskrit version reads *mahājñāna*- (Gv 187.3, 473.2; Gv[V] 143.21, 372.4), the Chinese translations have 大乘 (“the great vehicle”; Buddhahadra’s translation, T. 9, no. 278, 713c21; Śikṣānanda’s translation, T. 10, no. 279, 424a15).

According to Tenshō Miyazaki’s study (2012: 79~80), the confusion of *mahāyāna* / *mahājñāna* is found also among the Chinese translations by Lokakṣema (T. 15, no. 626, abbr. Lk), by Dharmarakṣa (T. 15, no. 627, abbr. Dr) and the Tibetan one (Peking Kanjur [Pk], no. 882, Derge Kanjur, no. 216; abbr. Tib) of the *\*Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodanasūtra*:

Lk 389b4. 無極智慧 (“supreme wisdom”) / Dr 406c16. 大乘 (“the great vehicle”) / Tib, Pk, mdo Tsu 221a3. *ye shes chen po* (“great wisdom”)

Lk 389b9.- / Dr 406c23. 大乘 / Tib, Pk, mdo Tsu 221a7. *ye shes chen po*

Lk 389c1. - / Dr 407a20. 大乘 / Tib, Pk, mdo Tsu 222a6. *ye shes chen po*

Lk 389c17. 無極慧 (“supreme wisdom”) / Dr 407b5. 大乘 (“the great vehicle”) / Tib, Pk, mdo Tsu 222b8. *ye shes chen po*

Lk 398b22f. 摩訶若那——摩訶若那者無極慧 (“\**mahāñāna* — \**mahāñāna* is supreme wisdom”) / Dr 418b17. 大乘 (“the great vehicle”) / Tib, Pk, mdo Tsu 253b5. *theg pa chen po* (“the great vehicle”).

Moreover, Apple (2014: 161, n. 11) points out that towards the end of the *Avaiṣvartikacakrasūtra* (Peking Kanjur, no. 906; Derge Kanjur, no. 240), the Buddha declares to Ānanda an alternative title to the sutra as “the teaching on great knowledge” (*ye shes chen po bstan pa* = \**mahājñāna-nirdeśa*).

Buddhists, disciples, *pratyekabuddhas* and Śākyamuni Buddha was formed. This was the common-sense approach of the Buddhists — so-called Nikāya-Buddhism — at the time of the composition of the Lotus Sutra, and this belief is still held in Theravāda Buddhism.

Accordingly, in Abhidharma literature, wisdom is classified in a threefold way, namely the wisdom of disciples, of *pratyekabuddhas* and of the Buddha<sup>61</sup>; also the three classes of wisdom, namely the inferior, medial and superior, are identified with the threefold enlightenment, namely that of disciples, of *pratyekabuddhas* and of the Buddha<sup>62</sup>. Thus, in Nikāya Buddhism, wisdom was graded rigidly. As a complete antithesis to this doctrine, what the Lotus Sutra proclaimed originally was “There is only one single Buddha-wisdom, but the Buddha has explained it in the threefold way as expedient means.” In other words, “Everybody can obtain Buddha-wisdom equally and should aim at obtaining it.” This slogan was so to say a renaissance of the teaching of everybody’s possibility of becoming a *buddha*, which Nikāya Buddhism denounced.

The belief that “Everybody can obtain Buddha-wisdom equally and should aim at obtaining it” is what all so-called Mahāyāna scriptures proclaim. It is so to speak the commonsense approach of Mahāyāna Buddhism. However, in the second stratum of the Lotus Sutra, it describes how the “preachers of the Dharma” (*dharmabhāṇaka*), because of their proclaiming the Lotus Sutra, were harshly blamed, slandered for having composed *kāvya*s (i.e. the Lotus Sutra itself) and for propagating a heresy<sup>63</sup>. They, nonetheless, forbore all such insults, persecution, expulsion from monasteries, and undauntedly proclaimed the Lotus Sutra, which had been entrusted to them by the Buddha, without caring for their lives. Thus, it is evident that their belief was a very dangerous heresy in the eyes of the Buddhist authority of that time, which clearly indicates that the Lotus Sutra is the oldest text among the so-called Mahāyāna scriptures, which proclaim everybody’s possibility of becoming a *buddha*. If such a Mahāyāna doctrine had already spread widely, the *dharmabhāṇakas* of the Lotus Sutra would not have suffered such persecution nor needed such strong forbearance as repeatedly described in the second stratum of the text.

In conclusion, I assume that “Buddha-wisdom” had been designated also as “great wisdom” which was pronounced as *mahājāna* in a colloquial way at an earlier stage of the

<sup>61</sup> E.g. \**Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra*, T. 27, no. 1545, 516a4f. 佛智 … 獨覺智 … 聲聞智 (“the wisdom of the Buddha, of *pratyekabuddhas* and of voice-hearers”); *Vibhāṣāśāstra* T. 28, no. 1547, 448b5. 堪受聲聞智, 非佛智 (“[Śāriputra] was able to attain the wisdom of voice-hearers but not that of the Buddha”); cf. Sv 100.10ff. *sāvaka-pāramī-ñāṇa* ... *paccekabuddha-ñāṇa* ... *sabbaññuta-ñāṇa*.

<sup>62</sup> E.g. \**Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra*, T. 27, no. 1545, 662c11~21. 若以上智觀察彼者, … 證得無上正等菩提。若以中智觀察彼者, … 證得中品獨覺菩提。若以下智觀察彼者, … 證得下品聲聞菩提 (“One, who observes those [i.e. the great elements, *mahābhūtas*] with superior wisdom, ... realises unsurpassed, perfect enlightenment. One, who observes those with mediocre wisdom, ... realises the medium enlightenment of *pratyekabuddhas*. One, who observes those with inferior wisdom, ... realises the inferior enlightenment of voice-hearers”; = \**Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra*, T. 28, no. 1546, 218c27~29. 若以上智觀於緣相, 名佛菩提。若以中智, 名辟支佛菩提。若以下智, 名聲聞菩提). This idea is referred to also in the Lotus Sutra: Chapter V (“Plants”), vv. 61~62: “As an able teacher he shows the true law; he reveals supreme Buddha-enlightenment to him who is most advanced. To those of middling wisdom the Leader preaches a middling enlightenment; again another enlightenment he recommends to him who is afraid of the mundane whirl.” (SP[tr.K] 138).

<sup>63</sup> Chapter XII, the *Utsāha-parivarta*, KN 271~274; cf. Karashima 2001b.

development of the Lotus Sutra, and *mahājāna* could have been understood as “great vehicle” as well, and later it was interpreted incorrectly as *mahāyāna* (“great vehicle”), which was then adopted also by the composers of other scriptures so as to define a new concept of “Mahāyāna Buddhism”. Presumably, the wordplay on *yāna* / *jñāna*, through the use of the double-entendre word *\*jāna*, found in “The Parable of the Burning House”, may have given rise to this misinterpretation.

## **(8) The meaning of *mahāyāna* in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā***

### **(8.1) The difference between *mahāyāna* and *bodhisattva-yāna***

The term *bodhisattva-yāna* appears first also in the prose portion of “The Parable of the Burning House” in Chapter III: “As the father, having saved his children from the burning house, using expedient means, gives them great vehicles (*mahāyānāni*), in like manner, the Tathāgata, in order to liberate sentient beings from the triple world, shows the three vehicles, namely *śrāvaka-yāna*, *pratyekabuddha-yāna* and *bodhisattva-yāna*.” (KN 79.1ff.). Following this, at KN 80.5ff., *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas* and *bodhisattvas*, who seek *śrāvaka-yāna*, *pratyekabuddha-yāna* and *mahāyāna* (= K<sub>j</sub>; O *tathāgata-yāna* = Dr), respectively, are likened to those children, who ask their father for three kinds of carts (see § 5.2.1); and at KN 82.6f., it is said that the Tathāgata first displays the three vehicles as expedient means and afterwards, leads sentient beings to *parinirvāṇa* by means of *mahāyāna*.

Then, what is the difference between *mahāyāna* and *bodhisattva-yāna*? From the first sentence quoted above, it is clear that the latter is an expedient means. The second sentence tells us that what *bodhisattvas* seek is not *bodhisattva-yāna* but *mahāyāna*. In the prose portion of “The Parable of the Burning House”, the three vehicles are likened to the three kinds of carts, which the father promises to his sons, while *mahāyāna* is the one single, absolute, great vehicle. Therefore, *bodhisattva-yāna* and *mahāyāna* are completely different. As we have seen above, *yāna* of *śrāvaka-yāna*, *pratyekabuddha-yāna* and *mahā-yāna* was originally *\*jāna*, meaning “wisdom”, and the prose portion of the parable states that *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas* and *bodhisattvas* seek the wisdom of *śrāvakas*, wisdom of *pratyekabuddhas* and wisdom of *buddhas*. However, *yāna* of *bodhisattva-yāna* cannot be understood as “the wisdom of *bodhisattvas*”, because what they seek is not that but the wisdom of *buddhas*. The word *bodhisattva-yāna*, however, means “path, vehicle or practice of *bodhisattvas*”. For example, in Chapter XXII of the Lotus Sutra, “*Bhaiṣajyarāja*’s Former Lives”, those, who have set out in the *bodhisattva-yāna* and seek supreme enlightenment, are exhorted to follow the practice of Bodhisattva Sarvasattvapriyadarśana (the previous incarnation of *Bhaiṣajyarāja*), who ate and drank various kinds of incense and burnt his own body in order to revere the Tathāgata and the Lotus Sutra while, in his following life, burnt his arms so as to worship the Tathāgata’s *stūpa* (KN.414.10ff.). I assume that the term *bodhisattva-yāna* was formed, when *yāna* was no longer understood as “wisdom” but as “path, vehicle or practice (leading to enlightenment)”.

Also, with the advent of the term *bodhisattva-yāna*, the notion of the three *yānas* changed. As we have seen above, the *leitmotif* in the verses of the oldest stratum of the Lotus Sutra is “There is only one single *buddha-yāna* (or rather *\*jāna*), but the Buddha has

explained it in a threefold way as expedient means”, and the three *yānas* (or rather \**jānas*) are the wisdom of *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas* and *buddhas*. However, once *yāna* came to be understood as “path or vehicle (leading to enlightenment)” or “practices (for attaining enlightenment)”, the three *yānas* were accordingly seen as the three kinds of paths / vehicles / practices of *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas* and *bodhisattvas*.

### (8.2) The meaning of *mahāyāna* in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*

In the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (AsP), which is one of the earliest Mahāyāna scriptures, the term *mahāyāna* appears. However, unlike in the case of the Lotus Sutra, it is used there in the meaning of “vehicle, leading to Buddhahood” there, which is evident from the following sentences in Chapter I (AsP[V] 11.31~12.24 = AsP[R] 23.5~24.17 = AsP[W] 94.2~108.14):

<sup>64</sup>Subhūti asked the Lord: “Thus, O Lord, a *bodhisattva-mahāsattva* is armed with the great armour, has set out in the *mahāyāna*, and has mounted the great vehicle. However, what is that *mahāyāna*? How is one, who has set out in it, known? From where will that *mahāyāna* go forth? To where has it set out? Where will it stay? Who will go forth by means of this *mahāyāna*?” Then, the Lord replied: “‘*Mahāyāna*’ is a synonym of immeasurableness. It is immeasurable because of the infinitude (of its virtues). By means of the (six) *pāramitās*, one has set out in it. From the triple world, it will go forth. It has set out to where there are no objects (of the senses)<sup>65</sup>. It will stay in omniscience (*sarvajñatā*). A *bodhisattva-mahāsattva* will go forth.”

The Lord further said: “Thus a *bodhisattva-mahāsattva* is armed with the great armour and has mounted the *mahāyāna*.”

As the Lord explained thus, Subhūti said to him: “Because the *mahāyāna* is greatly vast as space, it will go forth, surpassing the world with its gods, men and *asuras*. As in space, so in this vehicle (*yāna*) there is room for immeasurable and incalculable beings. So is this *mahāyāna* for *bodhisattva-mahāsattvas*. Neither its coming nor going is not seen, nor its staying is not perceived. Thus one cannot recognise the beginning, end nor the middle of this *mahāyāna*. This vehicle is (constantly) identical. Therefore, the *mahāyāna* is called ‘*mahāyāna*’.”

Then, the Lord praised Subhūti: “So it is, O Subhūti! Thus is the great vehicle of *bodhisattva-mahāsattvas*. Having trained (*śikṣitvā*) therein, *bodhisattva-mahāsattvas* (of the past, present and future) have attained, do attain, will attain omniscience (*sarvajñatā*).”

Thus, in AsP, the term *mahāyāna* is defined as “vehicle, which go forth from the triple world” and “a means, leading to Buddhahood”, and means virtually all practices of *bodhisattvas*.

As in the Lotus Sutra, the expression “the one and single *yāna*” (*eka~yāna~*) is found in Chapter XVI of AsP as well (AsP[V] 159.1ff. = AsP[R] 319.11ff. = AsP[W] 657.8ff.):

<sup>64</sup> I have modified Conze’s translation of AsP (AsP.tr 9f. = AsP.tr.II 91).

<sup>65</sup> Read *yena nārambaṇaṃ* (= Tib. *mi dmigs pa gang yin pas*; T. 8, no. 228, 590b24. 彼無所著故) instead of *yena ārambaṇaṃ* (AsP[V] 12.8 = AsP[R] 23.16 = AsP[W] 104.17).

<sup>66</sup>Venerable Śāriputra criticised Venerable Subhūti, who maintained that there is no *dharma* which turns back from perfect enlightenment, in the following way: “According to Venerable Subhūti’s inference concerning *dharmas*, there is no *dharma* which turns back from perfect enlightenment. The Tathāgata defined three kinds of persons (i.e. *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas* and *bodhisattvas*) who belong to the ‘*bodhisattva-vehicle*’ (*bodhisattvayānika*). However, O Venerable Subhūti, there is no longer such distinction of these three, because according to your exposition, there should be only the one and single vehicle (for all of them), i.e. the *buddha-yāna*, the *bodhisattva-yāna*.”

In replying to this criticism, Subhūti said: “In terms of (ultimate) truth and constant nature, no *dharma* of a *bodhisattva* can be apprehended. Where do you, then, get the idea that ‘this one belongs to the vehicle of the disciples, that one to the vehicle of the *pratyekabuddhas*, that one to the great vehicle (*mahāyānika*)’? ...”

This utterance of Subhūti was applauded by the Lord.

Thus, in AsP, *buddhayāna* is equated with *bodhisattva-yāna*. Both the Lotus Sutra and AsP state: “There is only the one and single *yāna*”, but the latter says that “the means which leads to Buddhahood” is one and single, while the Lotus Sutra talks about the single Buddha-wisdom.

To sum up, *yāna* is used in the meaning of “vehicle, means, practises, leading to Buddhahood” in AsP. As we have seen above, in the Lotus Sutra, such meanings first occur in the prose part of the first stratum, explicitly in the case of *bodhisattva-yāna*. In other words, the usage of *yāna* in AsP is newer than that in the old verses in the first stratum of the Lotus Sutra.

In AsP, the word *mahāyāna* occurs 39 times, of which 36 appear in Chapter I. In the Sanskrit version, *mahāyāna* is found also once in Chapter VIII (AsP 95.13) and twice in Chapter XI (AsP 116.32, 118.5), but these three instances have no parallels in the Chinese translations between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, which tells us that they were interpolated much later. The expression *mahāyānika* (“belonging to the great vehicle”) occurs four times successively in Chapter XVI (AsP 159.7, 9, 11, 17), as quoted above. If the notion of *mahāyāna* were essential to AsP, the word would not have occurred in such an irregular way. Chapter I shows apparently a more developed philosophical phase than in other parts. As an introduction is usually written after the completion of an entire book, Chapter I of AsP is thought to have been composed at the very last stage of its compilation.

The following episode in this chapter demonstrates that the notion of *mahāyāna* had been originally heterogeneous to this scripture (AsP[V] 12.25ff. = AsP[R] 24.18ff. = AsP[W] 108.209ff.).

Having heard the dialogue between the Buddha and Subhūti on the definition of *mahāyāna* quoted above, the venerable Pūrṇa said to the Buddha: “Being asked about *prajñāpāramitā*, O Lord, this venerable Subhūti thinks that *mahāyāna* should be explained.”

Then, the venerable Subhūti said to the Buddha: “I, O Lord, did not speak of

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<sup>66</sup> I have modified Conze’s translation of AsP (AsP.tr 118f. = AsP.tr.II 198f.).

*mahāyāna* without regard for *prajñāpāramitā*.”

The Buddha said: “Yes, O Subhūti! You explained *mahāyāna* in line with *prajñāpāramitā*.”

Pūrṇa’s criticism that to relate *mahāyāna* with *prajñāpāramitā* was unreasonable, indicates that *mahāyāna* had been originally heterogeneous to *Prajñāpāramitā* thought.

On the other hand, the terms *bodhisattva-yāna* and its adjective *bodhisattva-yānika* occur 47 times throughout AsP, namely Chapters VI, VIII, X, XI, XVI, XXI, XIV, XXVI, XXVII. Therefore, this word was used more often than *mahāyāna/mahāyānika*, which appears virtually only in Chapters I and XVI.

Probably, the catchphrase of the oldest stratum of the Lotus Sutra that “Everybody can obtain Buddha-wisdom equally and should aim at obtaining it” gave rise to the terms \**buddha-jāna*, \**mahājāna* and so on, which originally had meant “Buddha-wisdom, great wisdom”, and when \**jāna* was sanskritised to *yāna* and *yāna* came to be understood as “vehicle, means, practises, leading to Buddhahood”, the new term *bodhisattva-yāna* was formed. I assume AsP adopted the notion of *yāna* with this meaning.

I assume that the text of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* took shape in Northern India<sup>67</sup>, while the first stratum of the Lotus Sutra was composed elsewhere. Later, the Lotus Sutra was transmitted to the Gandhāra region where it encountered *Prajñāpāramitā* thought and under its influence, the second stratum was added, while the notion of *mahāyāna* was adopted from the Lotus Sutra in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY, ABBREVIATIONS AND SIGNS

The abbreviations of the Sanskrit manuscripts and fragments of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, referred to in this article, are as follows:

Bj = Ms. formerly kept in the Library of the Cultural Palace of Nationalities (民族文化宮圖書館), Beijing (written in 1082 C.E.). A photographic edition: Minzu Wenhua Gong 1984; transliteration: Jiang 1988; Toda 1989~1991.

C3 = Ms. kept in the Cambridge University Library, Add. No. 1682

D1, D2, D3 = Gilgit Mss. of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* kept in the National Archives of India (New Delhi), the British Museum (London), and in the possession of Mr. M. A. Shah (Lahore). Facsimile edition and transliteration: Watanabe 1972~1975; Toda 1979; new facsimile edition: *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtram: Gilgit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from the National Archives of India: Facsimile Edition*, Tokyo 2012: Soka Gakkai, Institute of Oriental Philosophy; New Delhi: National Archives of India (Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series, 12)

D(Toda 1988) = Gilgit Ms. of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* in the Tucci Collection. Facsimile edition: Gnoli 1987; transliteration: Toda 1988.

F = the Sanskrit Manuscripts of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, discovered in Farhād-Bēg Yailaki, now kept under F.xii.7 in the Oriental and India Office Collections in the British Library; romanised in Toda 1983: 229~258.

H<sub>1-6</sub> = Readings of the Central Asian Manuscript fragments of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, romanised in Toda 1983: 261~320. They are classified into 6 groups according to the possessor of the fragments, i.e. :

- (1) the Otani Collection. (H<sub>1</sub> in this study)
- (2) the Petrovsky Collection (H<sub>2</sub> in this study)
- (3) the Stein Collection. (H<sub>3</sub> in this study)

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Karashima 2013.

- (4) the Stein and Le Coq Collections. (H<sub>4</sub> in this study)  
 (5) the Stein and Hoernle Collections, the India Office Library. (H<sub>5</sub> in this study)  
 (6) the India Office Library. (H<sub>6</sub> in this study)  
 (7) miscellaneous: the Petrovsky, the Turfansammulung, and the Hoernle Collections. (H<sub>7</sub> in this study)

Here in this study, numbers in small type, refer to the above-mentioned groups, while numbers in parentheses, refer to the pages in Toda 1983, e.g. H<sub>1</sub>(263), H<sub>7</sub>(319).

K = Ms. kept in the Tōyō Bunko, Tokyo (brought from Tibet by Rev. E. Kawaguchi) (written in 1069/70 C.E.). Facsimile edition: SMS; transliteration: Toda 1980~85.

Lü = *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Fragments from the Lüshun Museum Collection, Facsimile Edition and Romanized Text*, ed. Jiang Zhongxin, Dalian and Tokyo 1997: The Lüshun Museum and The Soka Gakkai.

N2 = Mss. kept in the National Archives of Nepal, Kathmandu, No. 3–678.

O = the so-called Kashgar manuscript of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, actually discovered in Khādaliq but purchased in Kashgar. Colour facsimile edition: *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (SI P/5, etc.): Facsimile Edition*, published by The Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Soka Gakkai, and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy, Tokyo 2013: The Soka Gakkai (Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series 13); transliteration: Toda 1983: 3~225.

R<sub>1-7</sub> = Readings of the fragments from the Petrovsky Collection found in Bongard-Levin 1985. These consist of 85 folios (including fragments), belonging to 7 different manuscripts of the SP. Here in this study, numbers in small type refer to these 7, while numbers in parentheses refer to the folios, e.g. R<sub>1</sub>(No. 2), R<sub>7</sub>(No. 85).

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ARIRIAB = *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism at Soka University*

AsP = *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*

AsP(R) = *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, ed. Rajendralala Mitra, Calcutta 1887~1888: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal (Bibliotheca Indica 110).

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Ms(s) = manuscript(s)

Mvu = *Le Mahāvastu*, ed. Émile Senart, 3 vols., Paris 1882~1897: Imprimerie nationale; repr.: Tokyo 1977: Meicho-Fukyū-Kai.

MW = Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford 1899: The Clarendon Press.

OIA = Old Indo-Aryan

Or = Oriental; Sanskrit fragments from Central Asia, now preserved at British Library; cf. BLSF

Pischel = Richard Pischel, *Grammatik der Prakrit-Sprachen*, Straßburg 1900: Karl J. Trübner (Grundriß der Indo-arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde I, 8).

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RgsGr = Akira Yuyama, *A Grammar of the Prajñā-pāramitā-ratna-guṇa-saṃcaya-gāthā (Sanskrit Recension A)*, Canberra 1973: Faculty of Asian Studies in association with Australian National University Press (Oriental Monograph Series 14).

SMS = *Sanskrit Manuscripts of Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* 梵文法華經写本集成. *Collected from Nepal, Kashmir and Central Asia*, comp. by Institute for the Comprehensive Study of the Lotus Sutra, Rissho University 立正大学法華經文化研究所, Tokyo: Publishing Association of Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Manuscripts 梵文法華經研究会, 12 vols., 1977~1982.

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SN(tr) = *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya*, by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Boston 2000: Wisdom Publications (Teachings of the Buddha).

Sp = *Samantapāsādikā*, Buddhaghosa’s Commentary on the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, ed. J. Takakusu and M. Nagai, 7 vols., London 1924~1947: PTS, <sup>2</sup>1966~1982 (Vol. 8: Indexes to vols. 1~7, compiled by Hermann Kopp, London 1977: PTS).

SP(tr.B) = *Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi. Traduit du sanskrit, accompagné d’un commentaire et de vingt et un mémoires relatifs au Bouddhisme*, par Eugène Burnouf, tome 1. Traduction et notes; tome 2. Appendice (Mémoires annexes), Paris 1852: Imprimerie Nationale; Nouv. éd. avec une préface de Sylvain Lévi, Paris 1925: Adrien-Maisonneuve (Bibliothèque Orientale Tome IX); repr.: Paris 1973: Adrien-Maisonneuve.

SP(tr.K) = *The Saddharmapuṇḍarīka, or The Lotus of the True Law*, translated by Hendrik Kern, Oxford 1884: Clarendon Press (The Sacred Books of the East, no. 21); repr.: Varanasi, Delhi, Patna 1965: Motilal Banarsidass.

Spk = *Sāratthappakāsinī*, Buddhaghosa’s Commentary on the *Samyutta-nikāya*, ed. F.L. Woodward, 3 vols., London 1929~37: PTS.

SuPP = *Suvikrāntavikrāmi-Pariprcchā Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtra*, ed. Ryūshō Hikata, Kyoto 1983: Rinsen Book Co. (*Rinsen Buddhist Text Series III*).

- SuPP(V) = *Suvikrāntavikrāmapariṣcchā nāma Sārdhadvisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, in: *Mahāyānasūtrasaṃgraha*, part 1, ed. P. L. Vaidya, Darbhanga 1961 (Buddhist Sanskrit Texts, no. 17), pp. 1~74.
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- v. / vv. = verse / verses
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- X(2) = *Wan Xinzuan Xuzang* 卍新纂續藏 = *Shinsan Dainippon Zoku Zōkyō* 新纂大日本續藏經, ed. Koshō Kawamura 河村孝照 *et al.*, Tokyo 1975~1989: Kokusho Kankōkai 国書刊行会, 90 vols.
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- ~ = stem of a word, e.g. *dharmā~*
- = except for letters, following or preceding the sign, the word is the same as the preceding one, e.g. *ratnāmayā* (v.l. ◦ān).
- \* = a hypothetical form which is not attested anywhere, e.g. \**snāru*
- α < β = the form α comes from β; e.g. *Gā. masu* < OIA. *madhu*
- /// = beginning or end of a fragment when broken
- = absence of the parallel(s)
- ≐ = α ≐ β: β is almost the same as α
- On *buddha* / Buddha etc.: In this article, “*buddha*” and “*jina*” apply to any unspecified one, while “*Buddha*” and “*Jina*” are conferred on an particular individual (e.g. the Buddha Śākyamuni)

2015 **New Publication** / 新刊案内

**Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia: The British Library Sanskrit Fragments (= BLSF)**  
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Volume III.1 & 2 (2015)

Contents:

Or.15003, 15007, 15008, 15009, 15015, Or.8212/60, *Ratnaketuparivarta*, Larger *Prajñāpāramitā* (Dunhuang Manuscript), *Vajracchedikā* Manuscript

Contributors:

Paul Harrison, Jiro Hirabayashi, Noriyuki Kudo, Jundo Nagashima, Sam van Schaik, Kenta Suzuki, Tatsushi Tamai, Chanwit Tudkeao, Klaus Wille

Published by

The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, Soka University (Tokyo, JAPAN)

Vol. III.1. ISBN 978-4-904234-09-9; Vol. III.2. ISBN 978-4-904234-10-5

Also available: Volumes I (2006) and II.1, 2 (2009)

**Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia: The St. Petersburg Sanskrit Fragments (= StPSF)**  
Editors-in-chief: Seishi KARASHIMA and Margarita I. VOROBYOVA-DESYATOVSKAYA

Volume I (2015)

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*Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, *Ajitasenavyākaraṇa*, *Avadāna* Anthology from Merv, *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*

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*Foreword* by Irena F. Popova

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Hiromi Habata, Jiro Hirabayashi, Seishi Karashima, Tensho Miyazaki, Jundo Nagashima, William B. Rasmussen, Safarali Shomakhmadov, Tatsushi Tamai, Margarita I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, Zhou Liquan

Published by

The Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RUSSIA)

The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, Soka University (Tokyo, JAPAN)

ISBN 978-4-904234-11-2

**Gilgit Manuscripts in the National Archives of India. Facsimile Edition (= GMNAI)**

General Editors: Oskar von HINÜBER / Seishi KARASHIMA / Noriyuki KUDO

Volume I (2014)

Vinaya Texts. *Edited* by Shayne Clarke

Published by

The National Archives of India (New Delhi, INDIA)

The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, Soka University (Tokyo, JAPAN)

ISBN 978-4-904234-08-2

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