

The Conceptions of Seeing the Buddha and Buddha Embodiments in Early Prajñāpāramitā Literature

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*ye māṃ rūpeṇa adrākṣur ye māṃ ghoṣeṇa anvayuh,
mithyāprahāṇaprasṛtā na māṃ drakṣyanti te janāḥ.*

*draṣṭavyo dharmato buddho dharmakāyas Tathāgataḥ,
dharmatā cāpy avijñeyā na sā śakyaṃ vijānitum.*

——— Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā [Gilgit]

諸以色觀我 以音聲尋我
彼生履邪斷 不能當見我

應觀佛法性 即導師法身
法性非所識 故彼不能了

——— 大般若波羅蜜多經第九能斷金剛分 玄奘

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Abbreviation

- ADP = *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (18000 stanzas)
AKBh = *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* (Pradan 1967)
AN = *Anguttara Nikāya* (tr. Woodward 1932)
AP = *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (8000 stanzas)
APDh = T 226 摩訶般若鈔經 (*Mo-he-ban-re Chao Jing*)
APG = *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* from Gāndhāra (Falk & Karashima 2012)
APK = *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* from the Kuṣāṇa period (Sander 2000)
APKj = T 227 小品般若波羅蜜經 (*Xiao-pin Ban-re-bo-luo-mi Jing*)
APL = T 224 道行般若經 (*Dao-xing Ban-re Jing*)
APN = *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* from Nepal (Mitra 1888, Vaidya 1960a)
APX(I) = T 220 (4) 大般若波羅蜜多經 第四會 [The fourth assemblage of the *Da Ban-re-bo-luo-mi-duo Jing*]
APX(II) = T 220 (5) 大般若波羅蜜多經 第五會 [The fifth assemblage]
APZh = T 225 大明度無極經 (*Da Ming-du Wu-ji Jing*)
AśAv = *Aśokāvadāna* (Vaidya 1959)
Bbh = *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (Dutt 1966)
BHSD = Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit dictionary (Edgerton 1953)
Dbh = *Daśabhūmikasūtra* (Rahder 1926)
DN = *Dīgha Nikāya* (PTS, tr. Rhys Davids 1899-1921, Walshe 1995)
DZDL = T 1509 大智度論 *Da Zhi-du Lun*
Gv = *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* (Vaidya 1960b, Suzuki & Idzumi 1953, Hori 2002)
KP = *Kāśyapaparivarta* (Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya & Kudo 2002, Stael-Holstein 1926)
Lal = *Lalitavistara* (Lefmann 1902)
LP = Large *Prajñāpāramitā*
LPC = One *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* fragment from Central Asia (Bidyabinod 1927)
LPDh = T 222 光贊經 (*Guang zan jing*)
LPG = *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* from Gilgit (Conze 1962, 1974, Zacchetti 2005)
LPKj = T 223 大品般若波羅蜜經 (*Da-pin Ban-re-bo-luo-mi Jing*)
LPM = T 221 放光經 (*Fang guang jing*)
LPN = *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* from Nepal = PSP & SSP
LPX(I) = T 220 (1) 大般若波羅蜜多經 第一會 [The first assemblage]
LPX(II) = T 220 (2) 大般若波羅蜜多經 第二會 [The second assemblage]
LPX(III) = T 220 (3) 大般若波羅蜜多經 第三會 [The third assemblage]
LSukh = *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* (Fujita 2011, tr. Gómez 2002)

MP = *Mañjuśrīparivartāparaparyāyā Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā* (700 stanzas)
MPM = T 232 文殊師利所說摩訶般若波羅蜜經 *Wen-shu-shi-li Suo-shuo Mo-he Ban-re-bo-lo-mi Jing*
MPN = Nepalese recension of MP (Tucci 1923, Vaidya 1962)
MPS = *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (Waldschmidt 1950-1951)
MPSp = T 233 文殊師利所說般若波羅蜜經 *Wen-shu-shi-li Suo-shuo Ban-re-bo-lo-mi Jing*
MPX = T 220 (7) 大般若波羅蜜多經 *Da Ban-re-bo-lo-miduo Jing* 第七會曼殊室利分
Neng-duan Jin-gang Fen [The seventh assemblage]
Mil = *Milinda-pañha-suttanta* (tr. Rhys Davids 1890-1894)
MN = *Majjhima Nikāya*
Msa = *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (Lévi 1907)
MŚ = *Madhyamakaśāstra* (La Vallée Poussin 1903)
MVBh = *Madhyāntavibhāga-kārikā-bhāṣya* (Nagao 1964)
MVK = *Madhyāntavibhāga-kārikā*
MW = *Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Monier-Williams 1899)
NS = *Nidāna Saṃyutta* (Tripāṭhī 1962)
PSP = *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (25000 stanzas) (Kimura 1986-2009, Dutt 1934)
PSS = *Pratyutpanna-buddha Saṃmukhāvasthita Samādhi Sūtra* (Tib. Harrison 1978b, tr. Harrison 1990)
PSV = *Pratītyasamutpāḍavyākhyā* by Vasubandhu (Tib. Peking Edition, No.5496)
PTSD = The Pali Text Society's Pali – English Dictionary (Rhys Davids & Stede 1921)
PW = St. Petersburg Sanskrit Wörterbuch (Böhtlingk 1855-1875)
RP = *Ratnaketuparivarta* (Kurumiya 1978)
SĀ = *Saṃyukta Āgama*
Saddhp = *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (tr. Kern 1884)
SaddhpC = Central Asian recension of Saddhp (Toda 1981)
SaddhpG = The Gilgit recension of Saddhp (Watanabe 1975)
SaddhpN = The Nepalese recension of Saddhp (Kern & Nanjio 1908-1912)
Samādh = *Samādhirājasūtra* (Vaidya 1961b, Dutt 1941, Régamey 1938)
SN = *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (PTS)
ŚSP = *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (100000 stanzas) (Kimura 2009-2010, Ghoṣa 1902)
SSukh = Smaller *Sukhāvavīryūha Sūtra* (Fujita 2011, tr. Gómez 2002)
Vim = *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (Takahashi 2006)
VP = *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*
VPA = *Vajracchedikā* discovered probably in the Bamiyan, Afghanistan (Harrison & Watanabe 2006, tr. together with VPG in Harrison 2006)
VPB = T 236a / T236b 金剛般若波羅蜜經 *Jin-gang Ban-re-bo-lo-mi Jing*

VPC = various Vajracchedikā manuscripts edited by Conze (1957)
VPDh = T 238 金剛能斷般若波羅蜜經 *Jin-gang Neng-duan Ban-re-bo-luo-mi Jing*
VPG = Vajracchedikā Found at Gilgit (Schopen 1989)
VPKh = Vajracchedikā Found in Dandān-Uiliq near Khotan (Harrison 2015)
VPKj = T 235 金剛般若波羅蜜經 *Jin-gang Ban-re-bo-luo-mi Jing*
VPM = Vajracchedikā manuscripts produced in Japan and China in the 18th century edited by
Max Müller (1881)
VPP = T 237 金剛般若波羅蜜經 *Jin-gang Ban-re-bo-luo-mi Jing*
VPX = T 220 (9) 大般若波羅蜜多經 第九會能斷金剛分 *Neng-duan Jin-gang Fen* [The
ninth assemblage]
VPY = T 239 佛說能斷金剛般若波羅蜜多經 (*Fo-shuo Neng-duan-jin-gang Ban-re-bo-luo-
miduo Jing*)

Eng. = English

Ch. = Chinese

G. = Gāndhārī

Ger. = German

Jp. = Japanese

Ms. = manuscript

P. = Pāli

PTS = Pāli Text Society, Oxford.

Skt. = Sanskrit

T = *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, ed. J. Takakusu and K. Watanabe, 100 vols.,
Tokyo, 1924-1934.

Tib. = Tibetan

Tib. Pk = *The Tibetan Tripitaka Peking edition: kept in the Library of the Otani University,*
Kyoto, Otani University, Kyoto

Tib. D = Tibetan Tripitaka, Derge edition, reproduced in A. W. Barber, ed., *The Tihetan*
Tripitaka: Taipei Edition, SMC Publishing Inc., Taipei.

v. = verse

§ = Chapter of this thesis

Introduction

After the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha, Buddhist communities became increasingly concerned with reestablishing his presence in our world. At the advent of the Common Era, this concern promoted the development of new Buddhist dogmas such as the cult of relics, the cult of statues, and meditation practices, as well as the notion of multiple buddha-fields, etc. (Schmithausen 2000). In doctrine, these respective practices are always associated with the topic of seeing the Buddha (related to the verbs deriving from the root √ *dṛś*). By way of contrast, the canonical texts of early Buddhism merely use the idea of “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha” in a metaphorical manner; that is, it does not literally designate visualisation practices. In the *Vakkali-suttanta*, for instance, the venerable Vakkali was sick and having been visited by the Buddha he expressed great remorse (*kukkucca*) and regret (*vippaṭisāra*) that he had not been able to go to see the Buddha himself. But the Buddha responded that his foul body (*pūṭikāya*), the Buddha’s physical body, was not worthy of being seen, and thereupon said the following words: “Vakkali! One who sees *dharma*, sees me. One who sees me, sees *dharma*.” (*yo kho Vakkali dhammaṃ passati so maṃ passati. yo maṃ passati so dhammaṃ passati*. SN III. 120). Then, Buddha gave Vakkali further instruction, detailing that form (*rūpa*) is impermanent (*anicca*). This statement shows us quite vividly that within somatic notions of the Buddha *rūpa* is regarded as inferior to *dharma*.

In this study, we will focus on conceptions related to seeing the Buddha and Buddha embodiment in the early Prajñāpāramitā literature, which represents the first step of the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism around the turn of Common Era. Prajñāpāramitā literature likely belongs to the core of the Mahāyāna canon; however, it is quite extraordinary in length and has a highly complex literary history. Our topic concerns a specific series within this larger group, including the original Prajñāpāramitā, later named the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (henceforth AP), the Larger Prajñāpāramitā (henceforth LP) and some condensed sūtras such as the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* (henceforth VP) and *Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā* etc.

1 Key terms and conceptions

The key word “seeing” in this study is not only limited to the terms stemming from √ *dṛś*, but also refers to some related notions, such as *buddhānusmṛti* (the recollection of the Buddha) and *buddhamanasikāra* (directing the mind towards the Buddha) etc., whose meanings include (but are not limited to) “seeing” within the early Prajñāpāramitā literature. These also relate to existential conceptions regarding the Tathāgata, such as *dharmatā* (the essence of *dharma*), *dharmadhātu* (the fundament of *dharma*) and *tathatā* (suchness), which are evidently inspired by the idea — “One who sees *dharma*, sees me. One who sees me, sees *dharma*” — in the aforementioned canonical text, as well as the conceptions related to the

embodiment of the Buddha(s), such as *dharmakāya*, **dharmadhātu(ja)kāya* (法性生身) etc.

Specifically, in this study I would like to sketch an outline of the historical development of these concepts based on the fragmentary pieces of textual evidence available. In the earliest phases of the Prajñāpāramitā tradition, the traditional metaphorical usage of “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha” is quite influential. In order to establish the authority of Prajñāpāramitā literature and to attract audiences, the authors connected the Prajñāpāramitā text, or significant tenets thereof, with the presence of the Buddha, thereby drawing power from the popular need to maintain the Buddha in the world. These ideological innovations demanded the development of rhetorical strategies, such as similes, metaphors or word plays, which were necessary to justify these connections. Even though a dramatic change in meaning is discernible on occasion, these innovations are not easy to identify because they are hidden within common expressions and exhibit only subtle changes in wording.

It was following the turn of the Common Era that more concrete elements of Buddhist thought and practice related to the Buddha image and visualisation became more popular among Buddhist communities. Concentrating on the passages related to this topic in early Prajñāpāramitā texts, we can indeed observe how these changes stimulated the innovation and development of Buddhist doctrine. In other words, the practice of visualisation came to play an increasingly important role from the early to the later phases of the development of Prajñāpāramitā literature. Some of the relevant major tenets may have also been influenced by other literature closely associated with the contents and geographical contexts of Prajñāpāramitā texts. Analysing the parallels between different traditions will help us to gain a better understanding of the development of Prajñāpāramitā literature and will also shed greater light on the historical context in which the composition of early Prajñāpāramitā literature occurred.

In this way, by approaching the topic of seeing the Buddha in early Prajñāpāramitā literature from several angles, it is possible to outline a dogmatic development from seeing in a purely metaphorical manner to the goal of obtaining an actual perception of the Buddha. Moreover, this development brought about a shift in the object of seeing – specifically, an increasing emphasis on the Buddha's physical body; namely, *rūpakāya* (form-body) or *janmakāya* (birth-body) together with the *dharmakāya* (*dharma*-body) developed from the old idea of “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha”. Doctrines related to the embodiment of the Buddha form a second focal area of this dissertation.

The widespread doctrine of the three-body (*trikāya*) of the Buddha – the *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya* (body of mutual enjoyment) and *nirmāṇakāya* (body of manifestation) – experienced a long process of development. These ideas can be traced back to an earlier somatic pair-model, the *dharmakāya* and *rūpakāya*, in Prajñāpāramitā literature. First, the *dharmakāya* is widely known as the omnipresent body, or “phantom body” (Harrison 1992a), from the later Mahāyāna perspective. Second, in Abhidharma texts the *rūpakāya* has some

distinctive features such as a golden hue or radiance, whilst after fourth century C.E., in such Mahāyāna treatises as *Mahāyānasūtralaṅkāra* or *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, we also see the *sambhogakāya* of the Buddha with infinite radiance, power, and an incalculable lifespan in the pure land. And finally, the *nirmāṇakāya* in Yogacāra and later Madhyamaka treatises is described as an illusory replica and visionary form of Buddhas or advanced bodhisattvas, created for the purpose of helping all beings.

However, this model is not so simple. As Harrison (1992a) has pointed out, in the canonical texts and in AP, there is no *dharmakāya* as the real “phantom body”. We also find that the term *dharmatā* occurs in the earliest versions of LP (cf. § 5.2), whereas in later versions it is replaced by the *dharmakāya*. In early Prajñāpāramitā literature, such an interpolation always occurs in the context of seeing the Buddha. Therefore, one may suppose that the occurrence of the *dharmakāya* as the phantom body can be explained, albeit not exclusively, by the fact that the meaning of seeing transformed from a purely metaphorical seeing to a real vision, and thus that the objects of seeing also switched from the abstract *dharma* / *dharmatā* to the more concrete *dharmakāya*. It may appear self-evident to take the form-body as a reference to the physical body of the Buddha, yet we should be aware that in early Buddhism seeing the physical body of the Buddha is criticized (as shown by the case of *rūpa* in the *Vakkali-suttanta* quoted above), and in the art historical and archaeological remains of early Buddhism, the figure of the Buddha is always absent. It is only after the Common Era that depictions of the physical body of the Buddha became generally popular, and even the focus of a meditation technique.

This study examines both the early occurrences of this pair-model in the context of seeing the Buddha and the terms *buddhānusmṛti* or its synonym *buddhamanasikāra* in Prajñāpāramitā literature. I shall demonstrate that the relevant records in the early Prajñāpāramitā literature occupy a crucial transitional position in the historical development of the embodiment of the Buddha, and that in these sources the switch in the manner of “seeing” contributes significantly to this transition.

2 The methodology and the doctrinal system of the main sources

Our topic - The conceptions of seeing the Buddha and Buddha embodiment in early Prajñāpāramitā literature - deals with a number of variant sources. The first issue we face is in defining the strata of early literature. The core texts in the Prajñāpāramitā doctrinal system date from the turn of the Common Era up until the 6th Century C.E. (Conze 1978:14). All the materials we deal with also roughly belong to this time period. These include a series of Ch. translations from the 2nd century C.E. to the 7th century C.E.; in addition to several Skt. manuscripts from Central Asia and Gilgit, which, although belonging to the latter end of this period, can also be taken as more or less reflective of early literary developments, in comparison, say, to the majority of the Skt. manuscripts from Nepal and Tibet, which are much later.

Relying on the early Ch. translations without considering their Indian origins is problematic. For instance, the translators of a text might add their own interpretations when selecting specific Ch. terms. Thus, if we do not have the early Indian witnesses, we should also check the passages in the late Skt. texts, whose concepts, in some cases, are in accord with the early Ch. translations. Equally a comparison between the early Ch. and late Skt. texts also produces variant readings and these may be attributed to new interpretations, or indeed to mistakes made during the processes of transmission and translation. One important strategy for affirming new interpretations is to check contemporaneous sources, particularly other early Mahāyāna texts, in order to ascertain if similar developments arise in the early and later recensions of other textual traditions.

(1) The primary sources of the early Prajñāpāramitā literature

Most of the full Skt. manuscripts are rather late and it is only the Gilgit Skt. LP and the Gilgit and Central Asia VP, in addition to a number of fragments from Gandhāra or Central Asia, which can be roughly dated to the early period. Many Ch. translations were made in this early period. Comparing their parallels with the Skt. text makes it possible to determine the *terminus ante quem* of certain terminologies and the concepts to which they refer. Any discrepancies between the Ch. translations and the Indian sources will be carefully handled through a diachronic analysis of the texts.

a) AP group

The title “8000 stanzas” (*Aṣṭasāhasrikā*) is a posthumous classification. Karashima (2011:1, n.1) supposes that the earliest Ch. translation by Lokakṣema dating to 179-180 C.E. was originally entitled *Prajñāpāramitā* (般若經), and later, by adding the name of its first chapter *Daoxing Pin* (道行品), the title was changed to *Daoxing Banre Jing* (道行般若經). Here I employ AP in reference to the different versions of this earlier Prajñāpāramitā text.

The earliest strata of Prajñāpāramitā literature, belonging to the Kuṣāṇa period (1st-3rd Centuries C.E.), were presumably first compiled in Gāndhārī (Karashima 2012). Fortunately we have some fragments of a Gāndhārī Prajñāpāramitā text (ed. Falk & Karashima 2012), which has marked commonalities with Lokakṣema’s translation. Yet, roughly contemporaneous fragments of AP, written in Kuṣāṇa Brāhmī and Skt. from Bāmiyān, now preserved in the Schøyen collection (edited in Sander 2000), do not differ significantly from the later Skt. edition that was based on a number of Nepalese manuscripts dating to the 11th and 12th centuries (Sander 2000:1).

Karashima classifies the different versions of AP into four groups: (1) the translations of Lokakṣema, Zhi Qian, Dharmapriya, and Gāndhārī fragments; (2) the translations of Kumārajīva and Xuanzang (II); (3) another translation of Xuanzang (I); and (4) the Nepalese AP, the translation of Shihu as well as other Tib. translations. Based on his classification, in

this study, the Ch. translations we deal with include:

APL: *Daoxing Banre Jing* 道行般若經 (T 224), translated by Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖 (Zhi Loujiachen) in 179 C.E.;

APZh: *Da Mingdu Wuji Jing* 大明度無極經 (T 225), retranslation based on APL by Zhiqian 支謙 (ca. 3rd Century C.E.);

APDh: *Mohe Banre Chao Jing* 摩訶般若鈔經 (T 226), translated by Dharmapriya 曇摩婢 (Tanmopi) or and Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 during the Former Qin Dynasty (351-394 C.E.);

APKj: *Xiaopin Banre Boluomi Jing* 小品般若波羅蜜經 (T 227), translated by Kumārajīva in 408 C.E.

APX(I) and (II): The fourth assemblage 第四會 and the fifth assemblage 第五會 of the *Da Banre Boluomiduo Jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經 (T 220), translated by Xuanzang 玄奘 in 660-663 C.E.

In an effort to trace the key concepts of these texts to an Indian origin, the later Skt. version, formed from the Skt. Nepalese manuscripts edited in Vaidya 1960a, can also serve as a useful point of comparison. Notably, Karashima (2011) has already applied a comparative method for the AP by juxtaposing its different versions and his work has proved rather useful for our research and for examining the concepts reflected by those variant witnesses.

b) LP group

Prior to 286 C.E. (i.e., the year in which the *Guang-zan Jing* 光贊經 was translated¹), AP was expanded into the “Larger Prajñāpāramitā” (so named by Zacchetti, henceforth LP). Conze observes that “the fully developed LP is mainly represented by three different versions, although the exact points of distinction reside for the most part in repetition: the *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (18000 stanzas, henceforth ADP), *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (25000 stanzas, PSP) and *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (100000 stanzas, ŚSP).” (Conze 1978:10). He suggests that folios 1-187v of the Gilgit manuscripts represent the PSP and that from folio 187v the text switches to the ADP. Zacchetti does not concur and argues rather that this Gilgit manuscript represents a whole version of LP. He categorizes the main Skt. sources of LP as follows: 1) the Gilgit manuscript of the LP, LPG, 2) the Nepalese recension of PSP, 3) the Skt. ŚSP, and 4) a wide range of fragments from Central Asia and Sri Lanka. (Zacchetti 2005:17-29).

¹ According to the historical record, the disciple of Zhu Shixing (朱士行), Farao (法饒) brought the first Skt. text from Khotan. 30 years later, it was translated by the Khotanese monk Mokṣala (無叉羅) (cf. T 2145 *Chu Sanzang Ji Ji* 出三藏記集, *Fanguang Jing Ji* 放光經記).

Due to the late dating of PSP, the fact it is a recasting of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* (edited in Kimura 1986-2009), as well as the late dating of ŚSP (Kimura 2009-), the present study treats the Gilgit manuscript, the Central Asia fragments, and the early Ch. translations as closer reflections of an early form of LP. The Ch. translations include the following:

LPDh: *Guangzan Jing* 光贊經 (T 222), translated by Dharmarakṣa in 286 C.E.;

LPM: *Fangguang Jing* 放光經 (T 221), translated by Mokṣala in 291 C.E.;

LPKj: *Dapin Banre Boluomi Jing* 大品般若波羅蜜經 (T 223), translated by Kumārajīva in 403-404 C.E..

LPX(I) (II) and (III): The first 第一會, second 第二會 and the third assemblage 第三會 of the *Da Banre Boluomiduo Jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經 (T 220), tr. by Xuanzang 玄奘 in 660-663 C.E. They corresponding to ŚSP, PSP and ADP respectively.

According to Karashima (2016:vii), the LPG is the single (almost) complete Skt. recension (of an original 307 folios, only 10 are missing) among the older versions currently available. It can be dated to the beginning of the 7th Century C.E. on the basis of the colophon (308r10ff, von Hinüber 1980:53-58 =2009:692-697), which matches the date arrived at on the palaeographic grounds (Gilgit-Bāmiyān type I).²

The Gilgit manuscript was partially edited by Conze (1962, 1974) and Zacchetti (2005), but a complete edition is yet to be realized. However, the high quality photos of LPG have been published in Karashima 2016, thus I edited several passages according to the needs of our study. Furthermore, there are still some missing folios (cf. Karashima 2016:vii); thus, in this study, we make cautious use of the PSP (edited in Kimura 1986-2007), alongside the help of any parallels in the early Ch. translations, as a supplement to our primary discussion on the historical development of the key concepts discussed above.

Posterior to the AP and LP, a series of shorter *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, consisting of condensed summaries of these larger texts, also appear (Conze 1978:11). However, due to the limits of our topic, we only take the following condensed *Prajñāpāramitā* into consideration:

c) VP group

Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā (VP) is one of the most popular *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, and many different versions exist. One Skt. manuscript, discovered by Aurel Stein in Dandān-Uiliq, near Khotan (henceforth VPKh), likely dates to around the beginning of the 6th century

² Karashima (2016: ix) also finds that the sequencing of the various witnesses, established through a comparison of the Gilgit manuscript dating back to the beginning of the 7th Century C.E., and the two Ch. translations that are closest to the Gilgit manuscript, Xuanzang (I) and (II), made between 660-663 C.E., is also in line with the variation of the readings: X (II) is lengthier than the Gilgit manuscript, while X (I) is more expansive than X (II).

(Karashima 2016:x) and in spite of it being incomplete, it contains a significant verse related to our topic (§ 5). This Ms. has been studied and edited by Harrison (2015).

The Gilgit Ms. of VP, (VPG) written in the Gilgit/ Bamiyan type I script, probably dates back to the 6-7th century C.E. The latest edition along with a translation into English is to be found in Schopen 1989. Another manuscript of the same script that was likely discovered in the Bamiyan area of Afghanistan (VPA) is now preserved in the Schøyen Collection (Ms. 2385; ed. Harrison & Watanabe 2006). Both VPG and VPB are incomplete, but fortunately they complement one another and have enabled the reconstruction of a hypothetical text “which was circulating in the area of Greater Gandhāra in the 6th and 7th centuries” (Harrison 2006: 133). Furthermore, Max Müller (1881) edited the manuscripts produced in Japan and China in the 18th century (VPM), and Conze (1974, VPC) “made an ‘amalgam’ edition combining the readings of Müller’s edition and the above-mentioned Central Asian and Gilgit manuscripts as well as the Tibetan translation.” (above cf. Karashima 2016:x).

There are six Ch. translations:

VPKj: *Jingang Banre Boluomi Jing* 金剛般若波羅蜜經 (T 235), translated by Kumārajīva in 402 C.E.

VPB: *Jingang Banre Boluomi Jing* 金剛般若波羅蜜經 (T 235a / b), attributed to Bodhiruci in 509 C.E.

VPP: *Jingang Banre Boluomi Jing* 金剛般若波羅蜜經 (T 237), translated by Paramārtha in 562 C.E.

VPDh: *Jingang Nengduan Banre Boluomi Jing* 金剛能斷般若波羅蜜經 (T 238) tr. by Dharmagupta 達摩笈多 in 592 C.E.

VPX: The ninth assemblage 第九會 *Nengduan Jingang Fen* 能斷金剛分 of the *Da Banre Boluomiduo Jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經 (T 220), tr. by Xuanzang 玄奘 in 660-663 C.E.

VPY: *Foshuo Nengduan Jingang Banre Boluomiduo Jing* 佛說能斷金剛般若波羅蜜多經 (T 239), tr. by Yijing 義淨 in 703 C.E.

d) MP group

Another condensed Prajñāpāramitā text, given the name *Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā* (700 stanzas), has no extant early Skt. Ms, and the Ch. translations are under the name of *Prajñāpāramitā spoken by Mañjuśrī*:

MPM: *Wenshushili Suoshuo Banre Boluomi Jing* 文殊師利所說般若波羅蜜經 (T 232), translated by Mantuoluoxian 曼陀羅仙 in the Liang Dynasty (502-557 C.E.) as an

independent Prajñāpāramitā sūtra, but also included as the fortieth sūtra in the *Mahā-ratnakūṭa-sūtra* (大寶積經).

MPSp: *Wenshushili Suoshuo Banre Boluomi Jing* 文殊師利所說般若波羅蜜經 (T 233), translated by Saṅghapāla 僧伽婆羅 during 506 - 520 C.E.

MPX: *The seventh assemblage: Manshushili Fen* 第七會曼殊室利分 of *Da Banre Boluomiduo Jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經 (T 220) in 660-663 C.E.

The title of all three Ch. translations refers to the central protagonist of the text, *Mañjuśrī*, on which basis we use MP as the text's abbreviation in this study.

The Nepalese manuscripts of MP (MPN) that correspond to the first half of the Ch. translations have been edited in Masuda 1930 (and later in Vaidya 1962). Tucci (1923) made an edition of another Nepalese Manuscript, paralleling the second half. With the help of the early Ch. recensions, we can thus cautiously investigate the old strata of this Skt. text.

(2) The relevant early Mahāyāna texts

External parallels found in other Mahāyāna texts may provide some assistance in explaining interpolations or deletions within the Prajñāpāramitā corpus and can further shed light on our understanding of the development of concepts within the tradition. The main sources (i.e., the complete Skt. and Ch. recensions) and the modern text editions related to our study are listed below.

a) *Pratyutpanna-buddha Saṃmukhāvasthita Samādhi Sūtra* (henceforth PSS)

There are four Ch. translations, some of whose exact dating remain unsolved:

- (1) T 418, *Banzhou Sanmei Jing* 般舟三昧經 (**Pratyutpanna samādhi sūtra*), translated by Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖 in 179 C.E.
- (2) T 419, *Bapo Pusa Jing* 拔陂菩薩經 (**Bhadrapdla-bodhisattva-sūtra*). Anonymous. Probably translated in late Han or soon after.³
- (3) T 417, *Banzhou Sanmei Jing* 般舟三昧經, traditionally attributed to Lokakṣema.⁴
- (4) T 416, *Dafangdeng Daji Jing* 大方等大集經, *Xianhu Fen* 賢護分 (*Mahāvaiṣṭhī mahāsaṃnipāta sūtra bhadrapāla parivarta*), translated by Jñānagupta in 594-595 C.E.

³ As reported by Harrison: it corresponds to the first six chapters of T 418, which “might lead one to suppose that in Han times a six chapter version of the PSS was in circulation. But more evidence is needed.” (Harrison 1978:41)

⁴ As stated by Harrison, this text could be an “anonymous abridgment of T 418, into which a long versified passage has been interpolated (*Taishō* Vol. 13, p. 898b 13-899a8)” (Harrison 1978:41)

A complete Skt. text of the PSS has not survived and only several small fragments are extant,⁵ including an unpublished Gāndhārī fragment. However, a Tibetan translation entitled *'Phags pa da star gyi sangs rgyas mngon sum du bzhugs pa'i ting nge 'dzin ces bya ba the pa chen po'i mdo* (=Ārya-pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra), made before the beginning of the ninth century and revised by Śākyaprabha and Ratnarakṣita, is preserved. It corresponds to *Peking Edition of the Tibetan Tripitaka*, Vol. 32, No. 801. Harrison (1978b) has compiled a critical edition thereof, based on the Derge, Narthang, Peking, and Lhasa witnesses .

b) *Kāśyapaparivarta* (henceforth KP)

There is only one, near complete Skt. manuscript of the *Kāśyapaparivarta*. It may have been copied in Khotan around the 7th-8th centuries C.E. and is now kept in St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies under the catalogue number SI P/2.⁶ The first edition of KP was made by Staël-Holstein (1926), and was later re-edited, together with several Skt. fragments, in Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, Karashima & Kudo 2002. The four Ch. translations of KP are compared with Skt. text in Staël-Holstein 1926:

- (1) T 350 *Foshuo Yirimonibao Jing* 佛說遺日摩尼寶經, translated by Lokakṣema in Late Han Dynasty.
- (2) T 351 *Foshuo Moheyan Baoyan Jing* 佛說摩訶衍寶嚴經. Anonymous. Probably translated in Jin Dynasty.
- (3) *Puming Pusa Hui* 普明菩薩會 in the Ch. 43 (vol.112) of T 310 *Mahā-Ratnakūṭa-sūtra* 大寶積經. Anonymous. Probably translated in Jin Dynasty.
- (4) T 352 *Foshuo Dajiashewen Dabaoji Zhengfa Jing* 佛說大迦葉問大寶積正法經, translated by Shihu 施護 in 985-986 C.E.

c) *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* (Saddhp)

According to Karashima (2015), the Skt. manuscripts of Saddhp can be divided into two groups: (I) The Gilgit-Nepalese recension (SaddhpG & SaddhpN), containing the Gilgit manuscripts, which date back to the 7th or 8th century and cover eighty percent of the entire text, and the Manuscripts from Nepal and Tibet, which date from the middle of the 11th century; and (II) the Central Asian recension (SaddhpC), consisting of several Central Asian manuscripts and fragments which probably date to somewhere between the 5th and 8th

⁵ One of them, Hoernle Ms. no.143, S.A.3, probably found in Khadalik in Central Asia, has been re-edited and translated by Harrison (1990:280-299).

⁶ Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, Karashima & Kudo 2002:vii.

centuries; namely, (1) the so-called Kashgar manuscript, which, though purchased there, was actually discovered in Khādaliq and dates to around the 8th century; (2) a fragmentary manuscript, discovered in Farhād-Bēg Yailaki and now kept in the Oriental and India Office Collections in the British Library, which probably dates to the 5th or 6th century; and (3) fragments from various collections.⁷

A critical edition Kern & Nanjio 1908-1912, which is frequently quoted, is mainly based on the Nepalese manuscripts of Saddhp. Three manuscripts that were found at Gilgit (SaddhpG-A, -B, -C) have been edited by Watanabe Shoko (1975); and an edition of the Central Asian manuscripts has been provided by Hirofumi Toda (1981).⁸

There are three full Ch. translations of Saddhp:

- (1) T 263 *Zhengfahua Jing* 正法華經 translated by Dharmarakṣa in 286 C.E.
- (2) T 262 *Miaofalianhua Jing* 妙法蓮華經 translated by Kumārajīva in 406 C.E., which is close to the Central Asia Kashgar manuscript.
- (3) T 264 *Tianpin Miaofalianhua Jing* 添品妙法蓮華經, translated by Jñānagupta 闍那崛多 and Gupta 笈多 in 601 C.E., which agrees more with the Nepalese manuscripts.

d) The Larger and Smaller *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha-sūtras* (henceforth LSukh and SSukh)

The latest critical edition of these two sūtras is Fujita 2011. It is quite helpful for us to check the variant readings in different manuscripts. For detailed information of the Nepalese manuscripts and fragments, as well as the Afghanistan fragments of the LSukh (totaling 39 copies) see Fujita 2011, pp.iii-xi. The Ch. translations, according to Fujita (2011, p. xvi), include:

- (1) T 362 *Amituo San-ye-san-fo-sa-lou-fo-tan Guodurendao Jing* 阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛檀過度人道經 translated almost certainly by Zhi Qian 支謙 in 222/223-228/253 C.E.
- (2) T 361 *Wuliang Qingjing Pingdengjue Jing* 無量清淨平等覺經, attributed to Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖, but was most likely translated by Bo-yan 帛延 in 258 C.E.
- (3) T 360 *Wuliangshou Jing* 無量壽經, attributed to Kang Seng-kai 康僧鎧 Saṃghavarman, but certainly a joint translation by Buddhahadra 佛陀跋陀羅 and Bao-yun 寶雲 in 421 C.E.
- (4) T 310 *Wuliangshou Rulai Hui* 無量壽如來會, translated by Bodhiruci 菩提流志 in 706-713 C.E.

⁷ Above cf. Karashima 2015:167.

⁸ For more information on the recent findings of the Central Asian fragments, cf. von Hinüber 2013.

(5) T 363 *Dasheng Wuliangshou Zhuangyan Jing* 大乘無量壽莊嚴經 translated by Faxian (法賢) in 991 C.E.

The Skt. texts of the SSukh mainly comprise the Siddham Texts found in Japan. The extant ones are dated after 18th century C.E., but Siddham texts were assumedly brought from China to Japan as early as the 9th century C.E., and gained currency in Japan probably from 12th century. Only one Central Asian fragment, dated to 7th or 8th century C.E. has been found (cf. Fujita 2011, pp. xxxvii-xlii.).

(1) T 366 *Amituo Jing* 阿彌陀經, translated by Kumārajīva ca 402 C.E.

(2) T 367 *Chengzan Jingtu Fo Sheshou Jing* 稱讚淨土佛攝受經, translated by Xuanzang in 650 C.E.

e) *Samādhirāja-sūtra* (henceforth Samādh)

The three chapters (VIII, XIX and XXII) of the *Samādhirāja-sūtra*, preserved in Paris and Cambridge, as well as their quotations in Mahāyāna treatises, were edited and translated by Régamey (1938). Of greater importance to our study is the Gilgit manuscript that is written in Gupta Brāhmī characters and probably dates to as early as 6th or 7th century C.E., edited by Dutt 1941 and then by Vaidya 1961b.

The two extant Ch. translations are as follows:

(1) T 639 *Yuedeng Sanmei Jing* 月燈三昧經, translated by Narendrayāsa 那連提耶舍 at 557 C.E. in the Northern Qi Dynasty.

(2) T 641 *Yuedeng Sanmei Jing* 月燈三昧經, translated by Shi Xiangong 釋先公 at 420-479 C.E. in the Song Dynasty of the Southern Dynasties.

f) *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* (henceforth Gv)

Gómez lists twelve extant Skt. manuscripts of the Gv (Gómez 1967:xviii-xx). The six Nepalese manuscripts preserved in London, Cambridge, Paris, Tokyo and Kyoto were used by Suzuki and Idzumi for their critical edition (Suzuki & Idzumi 1953). Vaidya used these six manuscripts plus another written in the Newari script (Vaidya 1960b). There are also some Turfan Skt. fragments edited by Hori 2002.

The extant Ch. translations include:

(1) T 294 *Foshuo Luomojia Jing* 佛說羅摩伽經, the first translation by the monk Sheng-jian, completed between 408 and 412 C.E. (T 294). Compared to the Skt. Gv, this is much shorter.

- (2) The final chapter *Rufajie Pin* 入法界品 of the T 278 *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* 華嚴經, translated by Buddhabhadra and his team between 418 and 420 C.E..
- (3) Again, the final chapter of the T 279 *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* 華嚴經, translated between 695 and 699 C.E., by Śikṣānanda and his team. According to Gómez (1967, xxvii), this translation differs from Buddhabhadra's only in a few minor details.
- (4) T 293 with the title **Acintya-vimokṣa-gocara-praveśana-samantabhadra-caryā-praṇidhāna* 入不思議解脫境界普賢行願品 was translated as an independent work by Prajñā, a Kashmiri monk, between 796 and 798 C.E.⁹

3 Outline of the Chapters

Based on the doctrinal system given above, we will outline the development of conceptions related to seeing the Buddha and the embodiments of the Buddha in early Prajñāpāramitā literature. This development will be examined in eight relatively distinct sub-topics, covered in eight chapters, and arranged roughly according to the dating of the primary sources. Due to the fact that we have quite limited recensions of the Prajñāpāramitā literature, it is challenging to draw a clear picture of the different stages in the history of its conceptions. However, upon gleaning sufficient evidence from the same textual strata of the Prajñāpāramitā tradition, or from contemporaneous sources of other traditions, we may begin to discern general and more specific tendencies.

The first four chapters of this study are predominantly based on passages in AP and LP that discuss seeing the Buddha, while the last four deal with the sources relevant to the interactions between seeing the Buddha and the theory of the Buddha bodies, which mainly occur in relatively later recensions of LP and the condensed Prajñāpāramitā sūtras, such as VP, MP, and so forth.

§ 1 *Dharmatā* and its synonyms

The thought “seeing *dharma* (= *pratītyasamutpāda*) is seeing the Buddha” became quite popular among Buddhist communities (Boucher 1991). In the *Nidāna Saṃyukta*, one formula “*utpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā sthitā eveyaṃ dharmatā ...*” indicates that the *dharmatā*, also referring to *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent origination), exists independently and regardless of whether a *tathāgata* has arisen in the world or not. In other words, the *dharmatā* or *pratītyasamutpāda* (together with the synonyms that always occur in the same context, such as *dharmadhātu* and *tathatā* etc.) is identified as the very existence of the Buddha, to the extent that the Buddha may be regarded as identical with *dharma*.

This idea was adopted in the early AP and it is even possible to identify imitations of the formula mentioned above. However, the notion of *pratītyasamutpāda* is changed to *śūnya*,

⁹ Consider the information given about Gv above, cf. Osto 1999:8.

ānimitta and *apraṇihita*, etc., which are regarded as key words of Prajñāpāramitā thought. Moreover, synonyms of *dharmatā* were also considered to be the unconditioned *dharma* (*asaṃskṛtadharma*) in certain Abhidharma schools, and this probably influenced their conceptual amalgamation with *bhūtaḥ* as the terms indicating “reality” in LP and, more widely, the ultimate truth in Mahāyāna philosophy.

§ 2 The cult of the Prajñāpāramitā text and rhetorical techniques

In AP, some word plays and similes appear in the context of associating the Prajñāpāramitā text with the Buddha. These associations draw power from the popular effort of maintaining the Buddha in our world and thereby establish the authority of the Prajñāpāramitā text. In particular, the identification of Prajñāpāramitā with the mother of Buddhas presents a rather interesting case: the idea that the Prajñāpāramitā text gives birth to all Buddhas is articulated through a series of rhetorical techniques, including similes, disguised displacements, and word plays etc. Furthermore, the Prajñāpāramitā text is sometimes equated with the Buddha, following the old expression “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha”. Notably, these rhetorical strategies, as forwarded by the proponents of the tradition, support the view that benefits may be accrued through any ritual actions related to the Prajñāpāramitā text. In other words, the rhetoric not only defends the authority of the text, but also justifies the religious practices relating to its cultic treatment.

§ 3 The Samādhi of the direct encounter with the present Buddhas and the Sadāprarudita story

Based on a series of textual parallels between the Sadāprarudita story attached to AP (compiled after the main body of AP) and the PSS (for the English translation of the Tibetan version: Harrison 1978b, and for Ch. version: Harrison 1998), one finds that the process of seeking for Prajñāpāramitā, as it occurs in the former story, imitates the course of practising *Pratyutpanna-buddha Saṃmukhāvasthita Samādhi* (the “*samādhi* of direct encounter with the present Buddhas”) in the latter text. In the course of this process, Sadāprarudita’s perception of the Buddha generally becomes more concrete and physical, and it ends with a meeting with the Dharma-preacher, Dharmodgata, who is, as stated in the story, treated as a Buddha. Furthermore, in this story, the unusual donations and respect given to the Dharma-preacher are more extreme than that found in the main body of AP, and in respect to this tone, the story is quite similar to PSS. In this way, the Sadāprarudita story provides us with strong evidence that the visualisation practice thriving in northwestern India influenced the development of Prajñāpāramitā literature.

§ 4 The ideal buddha-field and the soteriological function of seeing the Buddha

In AP, the Buddha-field of Akṣobhya, Abhirati, is regarded as the ideal Buddha-field. However, in the Sadāprarudita story the Dharma-preacher lives in a city called Gāndhāvātī

and the description of the city is quite similar to other portrayals of sacred places found in canonical texts; for instance, the description of the city Kusāvātī in the *Mahāśudassana-suttanta*; and similarly the buddha-field of Amitābha, Sukhāvātī, in the SSukh. Moreover, in LP we see that the bodhisattva vows for generating the bodhisattva's own buddha-field are quite similar to those made in LSukh. Thus, there is an apparent switch of the ideal buddha-field in early Prajñāpāramitā tradition from that of Akṣobhya, as found in the *Akṣobhyavyūha*, to that of Amitābha, described in the *Sukhāvātīvyūha*.

In these sources, vision plays a significant role in the soteriological theory and this is subsequently reflected in the particular modes of practice. In LP, *buddhānusmṛti* or its synonym *buddhamanasikāra*, which are related to visualisation in this context, are preparatory practices for a rebirth in other buddha-fields, thus coinciding with the model outlined in LSukh and SSukh. Alternatively, the bodhisattva can also arrive in other Buddha-fields through supernatural knowledge (*abhijñā*), or through directly perceiving the Buddhas in other buddha-fields.

§ 5 From *dharmatā* to *dharmakāya*

From this chapter on, the focus of our discussion turns to the embodiments of the Buddha and their relationship with seeing the Buddha. In AP, the term *dharmakāya* does not indicate the embodiment of *dharma*. If we compare the Skt. AP with the earliest Ch. translations, the sole occurrence of *dharmakāya* as a noun refers to “the corpus of *dharma*”. Similarly, in one of the earliest Ch. translations, LPM, we find *dharmatā* instead of *dharmakāya*, which appears in all later versions and was also interpolated into the famous verse concerning seeing the Buddha in VP.

This is by no means a coincidence. Indeed, *dharmakāya* developed from *dharmatā*, these being representations of the very existence of the Buddha in early canonical texts. This development was influenced by many factors: (a) the shift of the context from a metaphorical seeing to a realized perception, (b) the occurrence of *dharma* together with *rūpakāya*, and (c) the multiple meanings of *kāya*. The occurrence of *dharmakāya* also paved the way for the further development of the Buddha body theory, as found in Mahāyāna texts such as the Samādhi, Gv and the condensed Prajñāpāramitā texts, where the omnipresent body of the Buddha occupies a central position.

§ 6 The pair-model of the Buddha's embodiment associated with *buddhānusmṛti*

Notably, during the transmission of LP, the concept of the two bodies of the Buddha were interpolated into the context of seeing the Buddha in LP, as shown by virtue of the fact that they are totally absent in the earliest version. If we check other contemporaneous sources in different traditions, the two paired terms are given different names: *janmakāya*/ *dharmakāya* or *janmaśarīra*/ *dharmāśarīra*, seen mainly in the Sarvāstivāda tradition, and *rūpakāya*/ *dharmakāya* or *rūpaśarīra*/ *dharmāśarīra*, which is encountered in different traditions and

especially in Mahāyāna texts. In some of those sources, such as the Central Asian meditation manual and in the Mahāyāna text *Samādh*, perceiving the pair-model is even used as a component of the basic steps of the meditation process known by the name of *buddhānusmṛti*.

§ 7 *Buddhānusmṛti* in LP

A lengthy passage on the six recollections in LP, enumerates five types of objects of *buddhānusmṛti*. Together, these constitute a complex system that includes visualisation practices and recalling the merits or achievements of the Buddha. In contrast, the term *buddhānusmṛti* in canonical texts simply relates to the ten epithets of the Buddha. To gain a better understanding of this change, we need to further investigate the interpretations for recollecting the Buddha in the canonical texts and the treatises after the Common Era. This investigation will not be confined to texts related to recollection, because in early Buddhism the contents of the recollection of the Buddha are sometimes interchangeable with that of taking refuge and having faith (*prasāda*) in the Buddha, as well as attaining *śrota-āpattyaṅga* (attributes of the entrance into the stream).

§ 8 The *vajra*-like body in LP

One passage in LP provides us with a quite unique understanding of the Buddha body and the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha in comparison with the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* of the *Dīrgha Āgama*. In this passage, the Buddha's destroying his *vajra*-like body through *samādhi* creates relics to benefit more beings, since the relics can be widely distributed. In this way, the destruction of the physical body of the Buddha takes place by his own will, and therein stands in contrast to the emphasis laid on the impermanence of the Buddha body in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*. A description similar to this passage is found in Mātṛceṭa's work, the *Śatapañcāśakta*. In the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma, early Mahāyāna texts, and the Gandhārī Senavarma inscription (ca. 1st-2nd Centuries C.E), the body's being as solid as a *vajra* is also regarded as a special feature of the Buddha body associated with the enlightenment of the Buddha.

1. *Dharmatā* and its synonyms

The term *dharmatā* (essence of *dharma*) plays a significant role in the Prajñāpāramitā tradition. In the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (henceforth AP), *dharmatā* refers to three central terminologies of Prajñāpāramitā literature — emptiness, signless and wishless:

He thus contemplates the true nature (*dharmatā*) of those deep *dharma*s - through their emptiness (*śūnyatā*), or signless (*ānimitta*), or wishless (*apraṇihita*), or through their being un-affected, un-produced, without birth, without any positivity.¹⁰ (Karashima 2011:350-351, n. 81)

In the Larger Prajñāpāramitā, (henceforth LP) *dharmatā* often appears together with a series of synonyms such as *tathatā* (suchness¹¹), *dharmadhātu* (fundament of *dharma*¹²) and *bhūtaakoṭi* (end of existence¹³). As stated below, these concepts only occur very rarely in the canonical text and in consideration of these occurrences, such as that in the *Samyukta Āgama* (henceforth SĀ) in Skt. or *Samyutta Nikāya* (henceforth SN) in Pāli, one formula in particular is worthy of attention; it states: the *dharmatā* or *tathatā* etc. exist independently and regardless of whether a Tathāgata is born or not (see § 1.1). In other words, these terms can be regarded as the very existence of the Buddha (closely related to the idea about “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha”, also found in SĀ/ SN). This formula appears in the context of *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent origination), which represents the teaching of the Buddha in early Buddhism (see § 1.2).

¹⁰ *evam eteṣāṃ gambhīrāṇāṃ dharmāṇāṃ dharmatāṃ pratyavekṣamāṇaḥ śūnyatāto vā ānimittato vā apraṇihitato vā anabhisaṃskārato vā anutpādato vā ajātito vā abhāvato vā/* (Vaidya 1960a: 187)

This is in line with APL: “(The bodhisattva) observes these *dharma*s as empty, (without) signs, (without) wishes, (without) cognition, non-arising, (without) limit” (Karashima 2011:350-351, n. 81, tr. from T0224, p.459a15).

¹¹ *tathā* (such) with the abstract suffix *-tā* corresponds to such-ness.

¹² The translation of *dhātu* is problematic. The meaning of sphere or realm is likely a later development, and the early meaning of *dhātu* denoted the element that constitutes our phenomenal world, i.e., “Element, Urstoff”. It is also used in grammatical language as a verbal root (der Urstoff der Wörter, Verbalwurzel in PW III, p.155). As stated in § 1.5.2, the early Yogacāra treatises employ *dhātu* in the compound *dharmadhātu* as a synonym of *hetu* (cause).

Here I accept the translation of Lamotte as “fondement” (fondement pour l’existence des choses, *dharmasthitaye dhātuḥ* in Lamotte 1980 [V]: 2183). It has the meaning of cause or basis (that could be extended to realm) at the same time. (This understanding was arrived at thanks to a constructive discussion on *nirvāṇadhātu* in the seminar Nirvāṇa organized by Dr. Hiromi Habata in the winter semester of 2016/17)

¹³ The meaning of this term is discussed in § 1.6.

Based on the imitation of this formula in Prajñāpāramitā texts, I further suggest that the significant role of *dharmatā* and its synonyms in the Prajñāpāramitā tradition was influenced by the identification of *pratītyasamutpāda* with the teaching or the word of the Buddha (*buddhavacana*), and its equation with the Tathāgata in canonical texts (see § 1.3). This assumption can be also substantiated by further passages in AP that connect *dharmatā* or *tathatā* with the Tathāgata (see § 1.4).

Later in this chapter, we shall elaborate on how the synonyms of *dharmatā* came to indicate the “reality” in Prajñāpāramitā texts, or the ultimate truth in Mahāyāna treatises. This development is related to the debate on the category of *asaṃskṛtadharmā* (see § 1.5) and due to the special nature of this category, the term *bhūtakoti*, originally indicating *nirvāṇa*, is added to the list of the synonyms of *dharmatā* (see § 1.6).

1.1 The canonical passages concerning *dharmatā* and its synonyms

1.1.1 The *dharmatā* and the Nidāna Saṃyukta passages

In *Le Traits de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nagarjuna* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra), Étienne Lamotte summarises various lists of *dharmatā* synonyms found in early canonical texts (Lamotte 1980 [V]: 2182):

Saṃyutta, II: 25, l. 19–20: *dhātu, dhammaṭṭhitatā, dhammaniyāmatā, idappaccayatā*.

Saṃyutta, II: 26, l. 5–6: *tathatā, avitathatā, anaññathatā, idappaccayatā*.

Nidānasamṃyukta: 148: *dharmatā, dharmasthitaye dhātuḥ*.

Ibidem: 149: *dharmatā, dharmasthitatā, dharmaniyāmatā, dharmayathatathā, avitathatā, ananyathā, bhūta, satyatā, tattvaā, thatāthātā, aviparītātā, aviparyastatā, idaṃpratyatā, pratītyasamutpādānulomatā*.

Ibidem: 164: *dharmatā, dharmasthitaye dhātuḥ*.

Aṅguttaranikāya, I: 286, l. 7–8: *dhātu, dhammaṭṭhitatā, dhammaniyāmatā*.

Skt. Mahāparinirvāṇa: 168: *dharmatā, dharmasthitaye dhātuḥ*.

Śālistamba, éd. Sastri: 4, l. 5–7: *dharmatā, dharmasthititā, dharmaniyāmatā, pratītyasamutpādasamatā, tathatā, aviparītathatā, ananyatathatā, bhūtātā, satyatā, aviparītātā, aviparyastatā*.

Among these sources, two such passages from the *Nidāna Saṃyukta* (henceforth NS passages) have been identified by Étienne Lamotte and Kazunobu Matsuda (松田和信)¹⁴ as having particular significance:

¹⁴ Cf. Lamotte 1980 [V]: 2191 and Lamotte 1980 [V]: 2182-2183; Matsuda 2005.

The *dharmatā* formula also occurs in the Skt. version of the widespread *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (MPS 9.18), but it is presumed a late insertion for the reason that it does not appear in the Pāli or Ch. versions.

Passage A.

Nidāna Saṃyukta (NS) Sūtra 14 Pratītya¹⁵ = 雜阿含 296 = Pali SN, xii.20, Paccaya

(14.1) *pratītyasamutpādaṃ vo bhikṣavo deśayisye pratītyasamutpannāṃś ca dharmān | tāñ chr̥ṇuta sādhu ca suṣṭhu ca manasi kuruta bhāṣisye* | (14.2) *pratītyasamutpādaḥ katamaḥ | yadutāsmiṃ satīdaṃ bhavaty asyotpādād idam utpadyate | yad utāvidyāpratyayāḥ saṃskārā yāvat samudayo bhavati* | (14.3) *avidyāpratyayāḥ saṃskārā ity utpādād vā tathāgatānāṃ anutpādād vā sthitā eveyam dharmatā dharmasthitaye dhātuh* |

As for the dependent origination, I will show you, monks, the *dharmas* that have arisen dependently. Listen and attend closely, I will speak. What is dependent origination?

That is to say, being this, there is that (*asmiṃ satīdaṃ bhavati*); from the production of this, that is produced (*asyotpādād idam utpadyate*), namely, “the formations have ignorance as condition”, etc., up to ‘such is origin (of suffering)’¹⁶. As for “the formations have ignorance as condition” etc., whether Tathāgatas come forth or not, this *dharmatā*, the fundament for the stability of *dharma*, (*dharmasthitaye*¹⁷ *dhātuh*) persists.

Passage B.

Nidāna Saṃyukta (NS) Sūtra 17 Bhikṣu = 雜阿含 299, no Pāli parallel

(17.2) *kin nu bhagavatā pratītyasamutpādaḥ kṛta aho svid anyaiḥ* | (17.3) *na bhikṣo mayā pratītyasamutpādaḥ kṛto nāpy anyaiḥ* | (17.4) *api tūtpādād vā tathāgatānāṃ anutpādād vā sthitā eveyam dharmatā dharmasthitaye dhātuh* |

Was dependent origination made by the Lord or by someone else? Dependent origination, monks, was not made by me or by someone else, and, whether Tathāgatas come forth or not, this *dharmatā*, the fundament for stability of *dharma* (*dharmasthitaye dhātuh*), persists.

In these passages, we find the formula “*dharmatā* and its synonyms exist independently and regardless of whether Tathāgatas come forth in the world or not” (*utpādād vā tathāgatānāṃ anutpādād vā sthitā eveyam dharmatā dharmasthitaye dhātuh*). Therein, *dharmatā* and its synonyms evidently refer to *pratītyasamutpāda*, which occurs at the beginning of both passages. This formula (henceforth *dharmatā* formula) in the Pāli version is relatively

¹⁵ Ed. by C. Tripāṭhī 1962: 147-148.

¹⁶ This is the abbreviation of the twelve links of *pratītyasamutpāda* stated in the canonical texts.

¹⁷ In the dative form of *dharmasthiti* (stability of *dharma*).

different¹⁸: the synonyms include fundament (*dhātu*), stability of dharma (*dharmat̃hitatā*¹⁹), certainty of dharma (*dharmānīyāmatā*), and the state of having this as a cause (*idappaccayatā*).

1.1.2 *Tathatā* as a synonym of *dharmatā* representing *pratītyasamutpāda*

As pointed out by Lamotte, in LP and its commentary *Da Zhi-du Lun* (大智度論 T 1509, henceforth DZDL) the three terms - *tathatā*, *dharmadhātu* and *bhūtakoti* - are all regarded as synonyms of *dharmatā* (*Shixiang* 實相 in DZDL).²⁰ In DZDL, we see the following dialogue:

Question. — Pourquoi dans le système des Śrāvaka ne parle-t-on point de *Tathatā*, de *Dharmadhātu* ni de *Bhūtakoti*, alors que dans le système du Mahāyāna on en parle à plusieurs endroits?

Réponse. — Dans le système des Śrāvaka aussi, il y a des endroits où l'on en parle, mais ils sont très rares.²¹ (Lamotte 1980 [V]: 2190)

Here, the rare occurrence of the triad in canonical texts is mentioned. Together with *dharmatā*, they are taken from canonical texts and widely used in the Prajñāpāramitā tradition. Soon after this passage in DZDL, we read the quotation of the canonical source regarding *tathatā*, which is attributed by Lamotte (1980 [V]: 2192 n.1) to the *Bhikṣusūtra*, where the NS Passage B is found (cf. § 1.1). The translation for this passage is as follows:

[*Bhikṣusūtra*] – Ainsi, il est dit dans le *Tsa-a-han* (Saṃyuktāgama): ... Ou'il y ait des Buddha ou qu'il n'y ait pas de Buddha, la manière d'être des dharma (*dharmānām tathatā*), la nature des dharma (*dharmatā*), la stabilité des dharma (*dharmasthititā*) est éternellement.

À savoir que ceci étant, cela est (*yad utāsmiṃ satīdam bhavati*); de la production de ceci, cela est produit (*asyotpādād idam utpadyte*)... — Cette loi de production et de destruction

¹⁸ *uppādā vā Tathāgatānaṃ anuppādā vā Tathāgatānaṃ // t̃hitā va sā dhātu dhammat̃hitatā dhammanīyāmatā idappaccayatā*. (SN II. 25; xii.20, *Paccaya*)

¹⁹ Occurs here as a nominative abstract noun, in distinction to its Skt. counterpart.

²⁰ Lamotte 1980 [V]:2181. Although in DZDL *dharmatā* is reconstructed from the term *Shixiang*, there is much evidence to indicate that the translator Kumārajīva has used the term *Shixiang* to translate *dharmatā*, in compound together with *Zhufa*- (諸法 *sarvadharmānām*-), and also sometimes to translate *dharmasvabhāva* (cf. Karashima 2013: 346-347).

²¹ It is translated from the passage: 問曰：聲聞法中，何以不說是如、法性、實際，而摩訶衍法中處處說？答曰：聲聞法中亦有說處，但少耳。(T 1509, p.298a08-11)

(*utpādanirodhadharma*), qu'il y ait ou n'y ait point de Buddha, est éternelle. Tel est l'endroit où il est question de Tathatā.²² (Lamotte 1980 [V]: 2190-2192)

The *tathatā* in this quotation appears in the *dharmatā* formula; however, if we check the Skt. and Pāli sources, the term *tathatā* is not found in the corresponding *dharmatā* formula of the *Bhikṣusūtra* (no Pāli parallel), but rather in another passage in the Skt. and Pāli versions of the *Pratītyasūtra*, to which the NS **Passage A** belongs. Here we find a list of the synonyms for *pratītyasamutpāda*:

a) Pāli:

kho, bhikkhave, yā tatra tathatā avitathatā anaññathatā idappaccayatā—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, paṭiccasamuppādo. (SN, xii.20 *Paccaya*)

Thus, bhikkhus, there is suchness (*tathatā*), non-falseness (*avitathatā*), unaltered suchness (*anāññathatā*) and the state of having this as a cause (*idappaccayatā*): this is called dependent origination.

b) Skt.:

yātra dharmatā dharmasthititā dharmaniyāmatā dharmayathātathā avitathatā ananyathā bhūtaṃ satyatā tattvatā yāthātathā aviparītatā aviparyastatā idaṃpratyayatā pratītyasamutpādānulomatā ayam ucyate pratītyasamutpādaḥ (NS 14.6)

The essence of dharma (*dharmatā*), the stability of dharma (*dharmasthititā*), the certainty of dharma (*dharmaniyāmatā*), the suchness of dharma (*dharmayathātathā*), the non-falseness (*avitathatā*), the unaltered suchness (*ananyathā*), the reality (*bhūta*), the actuality (*satyatā*), the truth (*tattvatā*), the real state (*yāthātathā*), all encompassing (*aviparītatā*), all surrounding (*aviparyastatā*) and the state of having this as a cause (*idappaccayatā*) are in conformity with dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpādānulomatā*): this is called dependent origination.

Although the list of synonyms of *pratītyasamutpāda* in the Skt. text has been extended, the inserted terms *dharmatā dharmasthititā dharmaniyāmatā* etc. could be simply taken from the *dharmatā* formula discussed above. Furthermore, in the Skt. passage we see *tattvatā* corresponding to *tathatā* in the Pāli passage. The occurrence of the terms *dharmatā* etc. together with *tattvatā* (= *tathatā*) also suggests that they are regarded as the synonyms in NS.

²² According to the Ch. text:

如雜阿含中說 ...有佛無佛，諸法如、法相、法位常有。所謂是事有故是事有，是事生故是事生 ... 如是生滅法，有佛無佛常爾。是處說如。(T 1509, p.298a11-20)

1.2 The equation of the Buddha with his teaching and the *dharmatā* formula

If we want to gain a better understanding of the *dharmatā* formula, it is necessary to further scrutinize its background in the NS passages — the term *pratītyasamutpāda*, to which *dharmatā* refers, relates to the equation of the Tathāgata with his teaching, which is found in the SĀ/ SN and other canonical texts, as shown by Daniel Boucher (1991). In the SN III, 120, the Buddha states: “He who sees the *dhamma*, Vakkali, sees me; he who sees me, sees the *dhamma*.” Additionally in the Majjhima Nikāya, *dhamma* is identified with the *paṭiccasamuppāda*.²³ Furthermore, we read in the *Śālistambasūtra*, a text of some significance for *pratītyasamutpāda*: “He, monks, who sees the *pratītyasamutpāda* sees the dharma; he who sees the dharma sees the Buddha”²⁴ (Boucher 1991:2). This shows us that *pratītyasamutpāda* is regarded as the very existence of the Buddha. Noticeably, the *dharmatā* formula is also quoted in *Śālistambasūtra*; in other words, it is used in the same context with the equation between *dharma* and the Buddha.²⁵ The popularity of this identification is substantiated by the famous “*ye dharmā...*” verse, found abundantly in archeological sources.²⁶

Gethin (2004) summarizes six meanings of *dharma* / *dhamma* in canonical texts: (1) teaching, (2) good conduct or behaviors, (3) truth, (4) nature, (5) natural law and (6) mental or physical state or thing. The term *dharma* (= *pratītyasamutpāda*) in the formula “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha” has the third meaning “truth” (2004:518). Therefore, its abstract form *dharmatā*, which also indicates *pratītyasamutpāda*, is used in the sense of “truth” in the *dharmatā* formula.

²³ *yo paṭiccasamuppādaṃ pasta so dhammaṃ passati, yo dhammaṃ pasta so paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passati ...*(MN I:190-191). “He who sees the *paṭiccasamuppāda* sees the *dhamma*; he who sees the *dhamma* sees the *paṭiccasamuppāda* ...” (cf. Boucher 1991:17, n.4).

²⁴ *yo, bhikṣavaḥ, pratītyasamutpādaṃ paśyati sa dharmam paśyati, yo dharmam paśyati sa buddham paśyati* (*Śālistambasūtra*, La Vallée Poussin 1913:69)

²⁵ *pratītyasamutpāda iti kasmād ucyate? sahetukaḥ sapratyayo nāhetuko nāpratyaya [iti tasmāt pratītyasamutpāda] ity ucyate. tatra pratītyasamutpādalakṣaṇam saṃkṣepata uktam bhagavatā: idampratyayatāphalam, utpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā sthitaiveśā dharmānām dharmatā [iti yāvad yad idam] dharmatā dharmasthititā [dharmaparināmatā] pratītyasamutpādānulomatā tathatā avitathatā ananyatathatā bhūtataḥ satyatā tattvam aviparītataḥ aviparyasteti ||* (La Vallée Poussin 1913:73. cf. Matsuda 2005:129, n.9)

²⁶ As reported by Boucher, by the late Gupta period (ca. 6th-7th cent. C.E.), the tradition of locating the Buddha in his concrete presence and the tradition that identified him with his *dharma*, i.e. *pratītyasamutpāda* were completely integrated. After the sixth century, we begin to find deposited in stūpas clay tablets and miniature stūpas inscribed or stamped with the verse epitome of the *pratītyasamutpāda*: ‘*ye dharmā ...*’ (Boucher 1991:5).

Since *dharma* also has the meaning of “teaching”, correspondingly, as stated by Walser (2005), in the treatises after the common era, the term *dharmatā* is used to indicate the “word of the Buddha” (*buddhavacana*).²⁷ Therefore, the term *dharmatā* (= *pratītyasamutpāda*), in the *dharmatā* formula, could literally mean “the truth taught by the Buddha”.

Boucher has also identified the “developments that may have inspired the use of this verse epitome (*ye dharmā ...*) of the *pratītyasamutpāda* and its connection to consecrating *stūpas* as an alternative relic of the Buddha”, and he considers it as “one of the ongoing struggles within the Buddhist tradition: to maintain the presence of the all-too-absent Buddha” (Boucher 1991:1). In a similar way, it is my contention that the *dharmatā* formula – “*dharmatā* (= *pratītyasamutpāda*) exists independently and regardless of whether the *tathāgata* comes forth or not” – also became quite popular as a response to the absence of the Buddha following his *parinirvāṇa*. This function stems from the notion that the truth taught by the Buddha, here represented by *dharmatā* and indicating *pratītyasamutpāda*, was regarded the very existence of the Buddha and it was on this basis also that formula was further accepted by the Prajñāpāramitā tradition, albeit with a subtle variance.

1.3 The *dharmatā* formula in Prajñāpāramitā literature

At the beginning of AP, when the Buddha asks Subhūti to expound the Prajñāpāramitā to the bodhisattvas, it is thought by Śāriputra in his mind: Subhūti will expound the Prajñāpāramitā by his own power, or through the Buddha’s imposing might? In other words, the Prajñāpāramitā expounded by Subhūti is doubted, since it is not the teaching of the Buddha. This is explained by Subhūti with the following words:

tathāgatadharmadeśanāyā eva āyusman śāriputra eṣa niṣyandaḥ yat te kulaputropadiśantas tāṃ dharmatām dharmatayā na virodhayanti || (APN, Vaidya 1960a: 3)

It is just an outpouring of the Tathāgata’s demonstration of *dharma*. Whatever those sons

²⁷ Here I quote his statement as follows:

Sometime in the early centuries of the Common Era, a third criterion for textual authenticity was added: that it has to be “in accordance with truth” (*dharmatā*)... The criterion can be found in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* as well as in Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośa* and the commentary on it by Yaśomitra. ... Vasubandhu responds that their (opponent’s) response is not valid because ... (3) “it does not contradict *dharmatā*.” Yaśomitra comments as follows: “... *Nor does it oppose dharmatā* (means) the *dharmatā* which is dependent-origination.” The original says *na dharmatā bādhate*. It seems, however, that the definition was open to variation. In their discussion of the same criterion, the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, the *Bodhicāryāvatārapañjika*, and the *Netti Pakaraṇa* all use *avilomati*. (Walser 2005:109-110)

Thus, considering *dharmatā*, which represents *pratītyasamutpāda*, as the “word of the Buddha” was widely accepted among the different traditions in the early centuries of the Common Era.

of good family may expound as the nature of *dharma* (*dharmatā*), that they do not bring into contradiction with the actual nature of *dharma*.²⁸ (Karashima 2012:30-33)

In this passage it is noteworthy that the Prajñāpāramitā is not regarded as the direct speech of the Buddha, but it is associated with the term *dharmatā*, indicating that the Prajñāpāramitā is in line with the teaching of the Buddha.

Furthermore, in AP, the imitation of the *dharmatā* formula in NS passages can be found in the following case, in which the terms such as *dharmatā* and its synonyms are replaced by the plural form of *lakṣaṇa* (characteristic), referring to a series of core concepts of Prajñāpāramitā thought.

bhagavān āha - śūnyamiti devaputrā atra lakṣaṇāni sthāpyante / ānimittam iti apraṇihitam iti devaputrā atra lakṣaṇāni sthāpyante / anabhisamskāra iti anutpāda iti anirodha iti asaṃkleśa iti avyavadānam iti abhāva iti nirvāṇam iti dharmadhātur iti tathateti devaputrā atra lakṣaṇāni sthāpyante / ...evam etad devaputrāḥ / utpādādvā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā tathāivaitāni lakṣaṇāni sthitāni / tatkasya hetoḥ? yathaitāni hi sthitāni, tathābhūtāni tathāgatenābhisambudhya ākhyātāni / tasmād devaputrās tathāgatas tathāgata ity ucyate /²⁹ (Vaidya 1960a:135)

The Lord: The marks are fixed on to the fact that they are empty, signless, wishless, not brought together, not produced, not stopped, not defiled, not purified, that they are non-existence, Nirvana, the realm of Dharma (*dharmadhātu*), and Suchness (*tathatā*). ... O Gods. Independent of whether Tathagatas are produced or not, those marks stand out just as such. In accordance with what stands out just as such has the Tathāgata described their reality, after he had fully known it. Therefore is the Tathāgata called a “Tathāgata”. (Conze 1975a:177-178)

From the context we know the *lakṣaṇāni* (characteristics) here refer to concepts such as *śūnya(tā)* (emptiness), *ānimitta* (signless) and *apraṇihita* (wishless) etc. and, after a comparison with the early Ch. translations APL (T 224, p.450a21-b03) and LPKj (T 227, p. 558b28-c10) and Skt. versions, to *anabhisamskāra* (non-performance), *anutpāda* (non-

²⁸ Conze (1975a:83) inexactly translates this sentence as “thereafter nothing that they teach contradicts the true nature of *dharma*”.

The Gandhari text of this passage is also partly preserved:

tasagadadhammadeśāṇae eṣo neṣaṃdo ° yaṃ te kulaputra ◇ uvadiṣaṃti [1-09] + + + + [matae] + (APG1 Falk & Karashima 2012:32)

²⁹ The corresponding early Ch. translations APKj (T 224, p.450a21-b03) and APL (T 227, p.558b28-c10) read similarly, but have a shorter list of synonyms.

origination), *anirodha* (non-cessation), *asaṃkleśa* (non-defilement), *avyavadāna* (non-purification), *abhāva* (non-existing) are extended from “non-born in the Saṃskāra, non-existing and non-staying” (無生死所生、無所有、無所住) in APL, and “non-arising, non-origination, non-cessation and non-dependence” (無起、無生、無滅、無依) in APKj. But the synonyms of *dharmatā*, such as *dharmadhātu*, *tathatā* etc., appearing in the Skt. version, were added during the late transmission of AP. Although this example testifies to certain continuities from canonical texts to Mahāyāna texts, as stated above, the *dharmatā* formula in canonical texts is basically connected with the equation of the Buddha with his teaching, *pratītyasamutpāda*, in contrast to the AP, in which *śūnya*, *ānimitta* and *apraṇihita* are emphasised. Further inquiry into how this re-interpretation occurred reveals that the answer seems to have already been provided by the early Madhyamaka school.

This is evidenced in two verses of the *Madhyamakaśāstra* (hereafter MŚ) that closely parallel fundamental tenets of early Prajñāpāramitā thought. First of all, *pratītyasamutpāda* is understood as *śūnyatā* in the following verse:

*yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatām tāṃ pracakṣmahe /
sā prajñaptir upādāya pratipat saiva madhyamā // 24.18 //* (La Vallée Poussin 1903:503)

That which is the *pratītyasamutpāda*, we call emptiness.

This [*śūnyatā*] is a provisional term; it is indeed the middle path. (Boucher 1991:10)

Correspondingly, the verse of eight negations at the beginning of *Madhyamakaśāstra* also relate to *pratītyasamutpāda* (cf. Seyfort-Ruegg 2010:4).

*anirodham anutpādam anucchedam aśāśvatam /
anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam // 1.1 //* (La Vallée Poussin 1903:3)

There is no cessation, no origination, no annihilation, no permanence,
no identity, no difference, no coming and no going.

The relationship between this verse and *pratītyasamutpāda* is also testified by the following passage of LP, where a quite similar expression is used to interpret *pratītyasamutpāda*:

*katham ca pratītyasamutpādaṃ prajānāti? anutpādato pratītyasamutpādaṃ prajānāti.
evam anirodhato 'nucchedato 'śāśvatato 'nekārthato 'nānārthato 'nāgamato na nirgamataḥ
prapañcoparamataḥ śivaṃ pratītyasamutpādaṃ prajānāti. evaṃ pratītyasamutpādaṃ
prajānāti. (LPG, Conze 1974:66)*

And how does he wisely know conditioned coproduction? He wisely knows it as neither production nor stopping, neither cut off nor eternal, neither single nor manifold, neither coming nor going away, as the appeasement of all futile discoursings, and as bliss. (Conze 1975b:595)

Thus, these cases serve to elucidate how *pratītyasamutpāda* is formulated in early Prajñāpāramitā literature: its original context does not totally disappear but is reinterpreted with the above key words, such as *śūnyatā* etc., that frequently arise in later Mahāyāna discourse.

In LP the *dharmatā* formula occurs many times³⁰, and the basic form and structure is essentially identical with the *dharmatā* formula in NS passages. For instance, in the LPG, this expression is used to explain the *parabhāvaśūnyatā*:

(84R13)... *tatra katamā parabhāvaśūnyatāḥ? yā utpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā tathāgatānām* sthitaivaiṣā dharmasthititā · dharmatā dharmadhātu dharmaniyāmatā · tathatā · avitathatā* (84R14) *ananyatathatā · bhūtaakoṭiḥ iti hi yaiṣāṃ dharmāṇāṃ pareṇa śūnyatā // iyam ucyate parabhāvaśūnyatā //*³¹ (my edition based on the facsimile in Karashima 2016: 81)

What is the emptiness of other-being (*parabhāvaśūnyatā*)? Whether Tathagatas come forth or not, the stability of *dharma*, the *dharmatā*, the fundament of *dharma*, the certainty of *dharma*, suchness, non-falseness, unaltered suchness, and the reality limit (= cessation of existence, *bhūtaakoṭi*) are established; the emptiness beyond these *dharms* is called the

³⁰ (1) (*api tu khalu subhūte u*)*tpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā tathāgatānām sthitaiva dharmāṇāṃ (dharmatā) dharmasthititā dharmadhātu.* (ADP-1,p.153, l.10ff),
(2) *yasmāt tarhi śāradvatīputra utpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā tathāgatānām sthitaivaiṣā dharmāṇāṃ dharmatā tathatā avitathatā ...* (ADP-2:90, l.8ff),
(3) *yaiṣāṃ caturṇām āryasatyānām tathatā avitathatā dharmatā. dharmadhātur dharmaniyāmatā dharmasthitā. yad utpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā tathāgatānām sthita eva dhātur...* (ADP-2:119, l.25ff) (cf. Matsuda 2005:129, n. 9) Other relevant cases also see PSP, Kimura 1986 [II-III]:184 etc.

³¹ This LP passage also has a parallel in one Central Asia fragment, bearing a slight difference in the sequence of words:

tatra katamā parabhāvaśūnyatā yotpādāya vā tathāgatānām anutpādāya vā dharmāṇāṃ dharmasthititā dharmatā dharmadhātuḥ dharmaniyāmatā tathā ananyatathatāvitathatā bhūtaakoṭir iti yā cemeṣāṃ dharmāṇāṃ pareṇa śūnyasthititā | iyam ucyate parabhāvaśūnyatā | (LPC, Pl. I, 3/4)

emptiness of other-being.³²

Although in LP the term *dharmatā* and its synonyms re-arise in the formula, very likely they were already understood as *śūnyatā* etc., and their original meaning, *pratītyasamutpāda*, was forgotten or hidden during the development of Prajñāpāramitā literature. However, the equations of *dharmatā* or its synonyms with the Tathāgata that can be traced back to canonical texts were preserved in some passages of early Prajñāpāramitā literature.

1.4 Associating the Tathāgata with *dharmatā* and *tathatā*

1.4.1 The Tathāgata and the synonyms of *dharmatā* in the Sadāprarudita story

One passage of the Sadāprarudita story³³ in APN shows us the influence of the identification of the Buddha with his teaching on early Prajñāpāramitā literature. It has been quoted by Makransky as a key passage for identifying the Buddha with *dharmakāya* as opposed to *rūpakāya* (Makransky 1997:32). However, we should bear in mind that this passage is possibly a later interpolation due to its total absence in APL and in light of the term *dharmakāya* being absent in the corresponding passage of the Sadāprarudita story found in Mokṣala's translation of LP (see § 5.2).³⁴ Here I only quote a part of the passage that was translated by Makransky, including text (a) (= Passage 1 in Makransky 1997) and text (b) (= Passage 5):

a) Dharmodgata: Son of the family, Tathāgatas (the “thus come” or “thus gone”) certainly do not come from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere. For, indeed, thusness (*tathatā*) is unmoving, and the Tathāgata is thusness...

b) The Bhagvan has said that all *dharmas* are like a dream. And those who do not know all *dharmas* to be like a dream as explained by the Tathāgatas through [their] nominal body (*nāmakāya*) or physical body (*rūpakāya*), and imagine there is a coming or going of the Tathāgatas... But those who know all *dharmas* to be like a dream as they really are, as explained by the Tathāgata, they do not imagine a coming or going of any dharma, ... they know the Tathāgata by means of his real nature ... Those who know the real nature

³² The LPG and LPC passages are more close to the early Ch. translations, LPM (T 221, p.23b12-14) and LPKj (T 223, p.251a05-07), but the list of synonyms in LPM is shorter:

何等爲餘事空？有佛、無佛，法性法寂如，及爾眞際住如故...

What is the emptiness of other-being (*parabhāvaśūnyatā*)? Whether Tathagatas come forth or not, the *dharmatā*, *tathatā* and *bhūtakoti* stay as such.

³³ Two chapters of AP relate the story of the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita in search for the Prajñāpāramitā. For more information on the textual history of this story in AP, see § 3.

³⁴ The earliest available version of this passage is not in the different versions of AP, but in this earliest Ch. translation of LP, LPM. (T 221, p.145a11-b16)

(*dharmatā*) of the Tathāgata, they practice close to full enlightenment; they practice the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*). (Makransky 1997:33)

In these two passages, the Tathāgata is equated with *tathatā*. This latter is further explained as designating all *dharma*s that neither come nor go, and with the notion that the Tathāgata is known through his *dharmatā*. In fact seeing the Buddha through *dharmatā* appears many times in *Prajñāpāramitā* literature; nevertheless, in these passages the original meaning of *dharmatā* as *pratītyasamutpāda* in the canonical texts never appears. For instance, in one passage of LP we encounter the practice of recollecting the Buddha (Skt: *buddhānusrīti*) through *dharmatā*:

If a son or daughter of a good family wants to see the Tathāgatas, Arhats, Perfectly Awakened Ones in the ten directions, they, when coursing in the *Prajñāpāramitā*, should practice the recollection of the Buddha by means of *dharmatā*.³⁵ (It will be discussed in § 6.1)

In text (a), there is a case, similar to that which established a relationship between the Buddha and *dharmatā*, which assimilates *tathatā* with the Tathāgata. Makransky (1997:32-34) takes the identification of the Tathāgata with *tathatā* as a word play, and regards the *Sadāprarudita* passage as an important source for the embodiment of *dharma* in *Prajñāpāramitā* literature. However, it would be premature to make such a judgement, since the embodiment of *dharma* was still in its cradle during the composition of AP (cf. § 5).

Given that the whole passage in APL is absent, it is possible that the contents of text (a) was originally inspired by another passage found in the chapter “Showing the World” (*lokasaṃdarśanaparivarta*) that concerns the association between *tathāgata* and *tathatā* (here still no equation is concerned). In this instance, the synonyms of *tathatā* would have been subsequently inserted into the text (a). Notably, the imitation of the above *dharmatā* formula in AP is also found in the same chapter, “Showing the World”, which reveals that the connection between *tathatā* and the Tathāgata might well have taken its

³⁵ The LPG has missing paragraphs between folio 149 and 150, in which the current passage would fall. Here we can only offer a translation on the basis of a later passage from the PSP:

sacet kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā tān daśasu dikṣu tathāgatān arhataḥ samyaksaṃbuddhān icched draṣṭuṃ, tena kulaputrena vā kuladuhitrā vā prajñāpāramitāyāṃ caratā buddhānusrīti bhāvayitavyā dharmatayā. (PSP 1986 [II-III]:96)

In LPKj we can also find recollecting Buddha through *dharmatā*:

The son or daughter of a good family who practices *Prajñāpāramitā*, he/ she should also practice recollection of the Buddha through *dharmatā* (是善男子善女人行般若波羅蜜，亦應以法相修念佛三昧 T 223, p.292b14-15). But it does not correspond with the passage of the earlier Mokṣala translation.

inspiration from the *dharmatā* formula.

1.4.2 Associating *tathāgata* with *tathatā* in the chapter “Showing the World”

The long passage from Chapter 12 “Showing the World” (*lokasaṃdarśanaparivarta*) of AP (= Chapter 10 of APL = Chapter 12 of APKj) begins with a simile which states that Prajñāpāramitā, now personified, is the mother of Buddhas: the Prajñāpāramitā shows the Buddhas the world just like a mother shows her sons, and in turn the Buddhas will protect Prajñāpāramitā just as the sons protect their mother.³⁶ Then the question arises concerning how Prajñāpāramitā shows the Tathāgatas the world that is comprised of the five aggregates (*pañcaskandha*). The final answer to this question states that the Tathāgata knows the positive and negative statements dependent on the five aggregates³⁷ and through Prajñāpāramitā.

The positive and negative statements here refer to four alternative positions (*catuṣkoṭi*) in the early philosophical treatises of Buddhism, which are connected with the fourteen questions that “cannot be usefully answered and are to be set aside since, from the soteriological point of view, their solution can contribute nothing to progress on the path to Awakening” (Seyfort-Ruegg 2010:37-38). These unanswered questions include whether a *tathāgata* exists, does not exist, both exists and does not exist, or neither exists nor does not exist after death; whether the world is finite, infinite, both finite and infinite, or neither finite nor infinite; and whether the world is eternal, not eternal, both eternal and not eternal, or neither eternal nor not eternal; and two additional questions without four alternative positions: whether the soul (*jīva*) and the body are different or not different.

However, in the chapter “Showing the World”, these fourteen statements are regarded as incorrect views produced by beings who are dependent on (*-niśrita*) or refer to (*-gata*) the five aggregates. By way of example we quote an abbreviated rendering from Conze:

How has he discerned the dependence on the skandhas of those positive and negative statements (*unmiñjitanimiñjitāni*)? If we take such statements as – “The Tathāgata continues to exist after death”, “The Tathāgata does not continue to exist after death”, “The Tathāgata does and does not continue to exist after death”, “The Tathāgata neither does nor does not continue to exist after death” – then these statements refer to the *skandhas* only [and they have no basis in the true reality of the Tathāgata].³⁸ (Conze 1975a:176)

³⁶ This simile will be further discussed in § 2.2.

³⁷ *unmiñjitanimiñjitāni* XX-niśritāni vijñātāni; here XX = *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saṃjñā*, *saṃskārā*, *vijñāna*.

³⁸ This paragraph is partly preserved in the Aṣṭasāhasrikā fragments from the Kuṣāṇa period, edited by Lore Sander. (APK p.24-26) It is identical with the two early Ch. translations APL (T 224, p. 449c09-14) and APKj (T 227, p.558b04-06). (Karashima 2011:258 n.79-80)

Thereafter the Tathāgata stipulates the correct understanding as follows:

It is thanks to the perfection of wisdom that the Tathāgata knows those positive and negative statements for what they really are (*yathābhūta*). The Tathāgata cognizes the skandhas as identical with Suchness (*tathatā*). That is why He knows, thanks to perfect wisdom, those positive and negative statements for what they really are.³⁹ (Conze 1975a: 176)

Therefore, the fourteen questions that cannot be answered in early Buddhism are used in AP to interpret the nature of the *tathatā*, which, as with other synonyms of *dharmatā*, refers to such modes of Prajñāpāramitā thought as emptiness etc. This is more or less in line with the usage of *catuṣkoṭi* in early Madhyamaka philosophy, as already highlighted by Seyfort-Ruegg (2010:11):

...to say that something is neither A nor non-A (\bar{A}) does not represent an attempt on the part of the Mādhyamika to define some entity (*bhāva*, i.e. a thing possessing *svabhāva*) that is neither A nor \bar{A} (i.e. indeterminate), but rather a way of stating the Buddhist theory of conditionship in terms of the Madhyamaka doctrine of emptiness of own being (*svabhāvaśūnyatā*) and non-substantiality of all factors (*dharmanairātmya*). And both eternalism (non-destruction) and nihilism (non-production) are thus excluded as at the same time extreme and complementary positions based solely on dichotomizing conceptualization.

... the fact, or truth, of the interdependent origination of things is then referred to by the term *śūnyatā* “emptiness”, a designation not belonging to the object-language applied conditionally to this state of affairs. Such is accordingly the Middle Way⁴⁰.

Finally, the text concludes that the Tathāgata gets his name precisely because he was enlightened in respect to *tathatā*. Hence, the name of the Tathāgata is associated with, or reinterpreted through *tathatā*.

³⁹ Apart from the last sentence (*evaṃ hi subhūte tathāgata imāṃ prajñāpāramitām āgamyāprameyāṇāṃ asaṃkhyeyāṇāṃ parasattvāṇāṃ parapudgalāṇāṃ tāny unmiñjitanimiñjitāni yathābhūtaṃ prajānāti*), this passage is roughly in line with the two early Ch. translation (T 227, p. 558b08-12 and T 224, p.449c29-450a03) (Corresponding to Karashima 2011:261 n. 101-104) But “Lokakṣema mysteriously rendered *unmiñjita-nimiñjita* as ‘wishes to obtain’ (欲有所得)” (Karashima 2011:261 n.104)

⁴⁰ Here it refers to the verse (MŚ 24.18) quoted in § 1.3.

evaṃ cāśya lokasya darśanaṃ bhavati - evaṃ hi subhūte prajñāpāramitā tathāgatānāṃ arhatāṃ samyaksaṃbuddhānāṃ mātā jananī janayitrī | evaṃ hi subhūte tathāgatas tathatāṃ abhisambudhya lokasya tathatāṃ jānāti, avitathatāṃ jānāti, ananyatathatāṃ jānāti | evaṃ ca subhūte tathāgatas tathatāṃ abhisambuddhaḥ saṃstathāgata ity ucyate || (Vaidya 1960a:134)

It is thus that perfect wisdom instructs the Tathāgata in this world. It is thus that perfect wisdom is the mother of the Tathagatas, who has generated them. It is thus that the Tathāgata, after he has been enlightened as to Suchness, cognizes the Suchness of the world, its Non-falseness, its unaltered Suchness. And in consequence, just because he has been enlightened about Suchness [tathatā] is the Tathāgata called a “Tathāgata”. (Conze 1975a:177)

If we compare this passage with the early versions, the following differences can be identified: “*lokasya tathatāṃ jānāti” (= APL 知世間本無 = APKj 知世間如) in the early Ch. translation is expanded to “lokasya tathatāṃ jānāti, avitathatāṃ jānāti, ananyatathatāṃ jānāti” in the Skt. version, and these three terms can be found in the sentence concerning the synonyms of *pratītyasamutpāda* in the canonical text *Pratītyasūtra* that we mentioned in § 1.1.2. But, in a fashion akin to the case of *dharmatā*, connecting *tathāgata* with *tathatā* is, on the one hand, inspired by the permanent existence of *pratītyasamutpāda* (regardless of whether *tathāgata* comes forth in the world or not) and the view that “seeing *pratītyasamutpāda* is seeing the Buddha”, and, on the other hand, by the modification of the purport of *tathatā* on the basis of *pratītyasamutpāda* being reinterpreted as *śūnyatā*, *ānimitta* and *apraṇihita* etc., in accordance with novel Prajñāpāramitā thought (as stated in § 1.3).

1.5 The category of *asamskr̥tadharmā* and the terms concerning reality

1.5.1 The debate on categorizing *dharmatā* as *asamskr̥ta* in Abhidharma schools

The *dharmatā* formula presents *pratītyasamutpāda* as having a permanent existence, and this claim generated several new questions among some of the Abhidharma schools. As stated by Lamotte:

La question se pose de savoir si cette Dharmatā se ramène à un déterminisme abstrait ou continue une entité autonome, en d’autres termes, s’il faut la ranger parmi les *samskr̥ta* munis des trois caractères du conditionné (*samskr̥ta-lakṣaṇa*), à savoir: production (*utpāda*) disparition (*vyaya*) et durée-altération (*sthityanyathātva*) ... ou parmi les *asamskr̥ta* complètement exempts de ces mêmes caractères. (Lamotte 1980 [V]:2183)

According to Lamotte (1980 [V]:2183), the Abhidharma schools respond differently to this

issue: the Vaibhāṣikas of Madhyadeśa, the Uttarāpathakas, the Mahimsāsakas, the Pubbaseliyas, the Mahīśāsakas and the Mahāsaṃghikas accept *pratītyasamutpāda* or its synonyms as *asaṃskṛtadharmā* (unconditioned *dharma*). But the Ceylonese Theravādins accept only one *asaṃkhata*, and that is *nibbāna*. Subsequently they regard *paticcasamuppāda* merely as a rule rather than an entity. The Sarvāstivādins assume three *asaṃskṛtadharmā*: Space (*ākāśa*) and the two kinds of *nirvāṇa* (*pratisaṃkhyānirodha* and *aprasaṃkhyānirodha*), and therefore *pratītyasamutpāda* is not listed. The corresponding statement in *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* reads as follows:

Certain schools (*nikāyāntariya*)⁴¹ maintain that *pratītyasamutpada* is unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*) because the Sūtra says, “Whether the Tathāgatas appear or not, this *dharma* nature of the *dharma*s is unchanging.” This thesis is true or false according to the manner in which one interprets it (*tad etadabhiprāyavaśād evaṃ ca na caivam*). If one means to say that it is always by reason of ignorance (*avidyā*), etc., that the *saṃskṛtas*, etc., are produced, but not by reason of any other thing, and not without cause (*apratītyānayaḍ vā pratītya*); that, in this sense, *pratītyasamutpāda* is stable, and eternal (*nitya*), we approve. If one means to say that there exists a certain eternal *dharma*⁴² called *pratītyasamutpāda*, then this opinion is inadmissible. For *utpāda*, production or arising, is a characteristic of anything that is conditioned (*saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*, ii.45c); an eternal *dharma*, as arising or *pratītyasamutpāda* would be by supposition, cannot be a characteristic of a transitory or conditioned thing. (Pruden 1988:412-413)

Matsuda (2005) focuses on Vasubandhu’s attitude towards this issue based on two passages from the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* (henceforth AKBh) and from the *Pratītyasamutpādavyākhyā* (henceforth PSV), where the NS passages are quoted. According to the AKBh, “certain schools”⁴³ argue that the *pratītyasamutpāda* is *asaṃskṛta-dharma*, and this is criticized by Vasubandhu. Although Vasubandhu does not oppose the permanence (*nitya*) of *pratītyasamutpāda*, the argument that there is some sort of independent existence

⁴¹ According to the *Vyākhyā*, the Āryamaḥiśāsakas; according to the *Vibhāṣā*, TD 27: 116c57, the Vibhajyavādins; according to the *Samayabheda*, the Mahāsaṃghikas; according to the *Yü-chia lun chi* 瑜伽論記 the Mahāsaṃghikas and the Mahīśāsakas. *Kathāvatthu*, vi.2 (xi.7, xxi.7); (La Vallée Poussin 1925:185, cf. Pruden 1988 II:412)

⁴² Lamotte translates it as a certain special entity (*kiṃcid bhāvānantaram*).

⁴³ It is not given a concrete name. Matsuda argues that it is the opinion of the Mahīśāsakas (cf. Matsuda 2005:128), while in the Ch. translation of **Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra* (阿毘曇毘婆沙論 T 1546) a similar opinion is attributed to Vibhajyavāda 毘婆闍婆提 School (如毘婆闍婆提說緣起是無爲法 T 1546, p.92b10-b11).

(*bhāvānantara*) called *pratītyasamutpāda* is clearly refuted (2005:128). Additionally, in PSV there is one passage (PSV, 69a5-b3) dealing with a topic similar to that encountered in AKBh, where the three terms *dharmatā*, *dharmasthititā*⁴⁴ and *dharmaniyāmatā* are concerned. Whether these terms refer to the concepts of the truth (*Shinri gainen* 真理概念) is not declared in the text, and Matsuda supposes that *pratītyasamutpāda* here is merely the twelve links established in temporal sequence. With regard to this, in the *Vastusaṃgrahaṇī* (瑜伽論攝事分) of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, *dharmatā/pratītyasamutpāda* is also considered as a permanent causal sequence presented as a series of twelve sequential links (2005:129-131). Thus, he concludes that *pratītyasamutpāda* in these contexts only indicates the causal relationship of the twelve links established in the stream of time, rather than existence in space, interdependence, or any kind of truth (2005:131-132).

Interestingly, the **Satyasiddhiśāstra* (成實論) by Harivarman (3-4th Century C.E.), a disciple of Kumāralabdha of the Dārṣāntika school, posits a view akin to that of the AKBh, however, in this treatise, the *dharmatā* synonyms, together with the term *pratītyasamutpāda* and *bhūtaakoṭi*, fall into the category of *asaṃskṛta-dharma*. This position is attributed to certain anonymous “*śāstra*-preachers”:

Certain *śāstra*-preachers hold that *tathatā*, *dharmadhātu*, *bhūtaakoṭi* and *pratītyasamutpāda* etc. exist independently as *asaṃskṛta-dharma*.⁴⁵ (T 1646, p.289c11-12)

The occurrence of this *asaṃskṛta-dharma*s list in **Satyasiddhiśāstra* can be explained in the following way: based on the formula “*utpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā sthitā eveyaṃ dharmatā dharmasthitaye dhātuḥ*” from NS, *pratītyasamutpāda* and its synonyms like *dharmatā*, *dharmadhātu* etc. are taken by some Abhidharma schools (that are criticized by AKBh) as having a permanent existence and as falling into the category of *asaṃskṛta-dharma* found in **Satyasiddhiśāstra*; moreover, *bhūtaakoṭi* is regarded as being synonymous to *nirvāṇa*, which traditionally is regarded as *asaṃskṛta-dharma*.

1.5.2 Identifying the synonyms of *dharmatā* with “reality” in Mahāyāna

LP accepts the categorization of the three synonyms of *dharmatā* – *tathatā*, *dharmadhātu*, *bhūtaakoṭi* – under *asaṃskṛtadharma*:

(71r3)... *tatra katame asaṃskṛtā dharmāḥ </> yasya notpādo na vyaya nāstitasyān yathātvaṃ rāgaḥkṣaya doṣa(71r4)kṣayo mohakṣayaḥ, tathatā avitathatā ananyatathatā*

⁴⁴ In the discussion of *dharmasthititā* the NS Passage B is quoted. Matsuda translates *dharmasthititā* (stability of *dharma*) as certainty (確定性) of *dharma*.

⁴⁵ 亦有餘論師說別有如、法性、眞際、因緣等諸無爲法。

dharmatā dharmadhātu dharmaniyāmatā bhūtaḥ [h] </> *imaṃ ucyante asaṃskṛtā dharmāḥ* /⁴⁶ (my edition)

Then what are the unconditioned *dharmas*? They are non-production, non-disappearance, non-duration-change; destruction of desire, of aversion and of delusion; suchness, non-falseness, unaltered suchness; essence of dharma, fundament of dharma, certainty of dharma, cessation of existence. They are called unconditioned *dharmas*.

In distinction to the NS passages discussed above, *dharmadhātu* is absent in both the Pāli and Skt. versions (see § 1.1); yet, the term could be an extension of *dhātu*, which is found in these versions. *Tathatā* is also found in another passage of the *Pratītyasūtra* (see § 1.2) and is employed to indicate *pratītyasamutpāda*. However, the term *bhūtaḥ* is totally absent in the canonical text.

These terms are further regarded as concepts concerning “reality”⁴⁷: if we turn to Mahāyāna texts (in the broader sense) quoted by La Vallée Poussin and Lamotte, these synonyms of *dharmatā* also appear in the lists concerning the absolute or reality.⁴⁸ Here I only present some of these lists according to Lamotte (1944[I]:39, n.1):

- a) Saṃdhinirmocana: 28: *paramārtha, tathatā, dharmatā, dharmadhmatu, bhūtaḥ, vijñaptimātra, viśuddhālambana, svabhāvaniḥsvabhāvatā, dharmanairātmya, śūnyatā*.
- b) Lañkāvatāra: 192–193: *anirōdha, anutpāda, śūnyatā, tathatā, satyatā, bhūtaḥ, dharmadhātu, nirvāṇa, nitya, samatā, advaya*.
- c) Madhyāntavibhaṅga: 49–51: *tathatā bhūtaḥ cānimittam...sāsataḥ*;
- d) Mahāyāna-saṃgraha: 121: *prakṛtivyavasāna, tathatā, śūnyatā, bhūtaḥ, animitta, paramārtha, dharmadhātu*;

⁴⁶ It is only slightly different from the PSP:

subhūti āha: katame bhagavann asaṃskṛtā dharmāḥ? bhagavān āha: yeṣāṃ dharmāṇāṃ notpādo na nirodho nānyathātvam prajñāyate rāgaḥ doṣaḥ mohaḥ ca, tathatā avitathatā ananyatathatā dharmatā dharmadhātu dharmasthititā dharmaniyāmatā bhūtaḥ, ima ucyante asaṃskṛtā dharmāḥ. (PSP Kimura 2009a [I-2]: 27)

and very close to the early Ch. translation:

何等爲無爲法? 不生、不住、不滅、若染盡、瞋盡、癡盡、如不異、法相、法性、法位、實際。是名無爲法。(T 223, p.243a27-b03)

⁴⁷ Harrison (1992a:48) has briefly mentioned the synonyms in Prajñāpāramitā texts as designating “reality”.

⁴⁸ Lists concerning the “absolute” are cited by La Vallée Poussin in his translation of *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (1928) and further quoted by Lamotte (1944[I]:39, n.1).

The term *bhūtaḥ* can also be found in most of the lists. The representative statement concerning these synonyms in the early Yogācāra tradition can be found in *Madhyāntavibhāga-kārikā* (MVK) and *-bhāṣya* (MVBh).⁴⁹ One verse shows us quite clearly that the terms *tathatā*, *bhūtaḥ* and *dharmadhātu* are equivalents of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) or the highest truth (*paramārthatā*).

*tathatā bhūtaḥ cānimittaṃ paramārthatā /
dharmadhātuś ca paryāyāḥ śūnyatāyāḥ samāsataḥ* // I.14 //⁵⁰ (Nagao 1964:23)

The *tathatā* and *bhūtaḥ* are signless and the ultimate truth.

In the same manner, the *dharmadhātu* is also the teaching of emptiness.

In the corresponding prose part, we see the explanations for these terms.

[La Śūnyatā] est *Tathatā* parce que, non-changeante, elle demeure éternellement la même. Elle est *Bhūtaḥ* parce que, sans erreur, elle est exemption de méprise. Elle est *Ānimitta* parce que, détruisant les marques caractéristiques, elle est absence de toute marque. Elle est *Paramārtha* parce qu'elle est le domaine du savoir des saints. Elle est *Dharmadhātu* parce qu'elle est l'objet du savoir suprême et cause des dharma de saint en tant qu'elle est le support et le lieu d'origine des dharma de saint: ici *dhātu* a le sens de cause.⁵¹ (Lamotte 1980 [V]:2186, n.1)

In his *Trimśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*, Sthiramati adopts the understanding of *dhātu* as reason or cause in this passage,⁵² and more widely in the Yogācāra context, its synonyms can be also *hetu* (cause), *bīja* (seed) or *gotra* (lineage) (Schmithausen 1969, n.47, 58, 116).

⁴⁹ The *Madhyāntavibhāga-kārikā* is attributed to Asaṅga by the Tibetan tradition, but to Maitreya in other traditions. Its commentary, the *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*, is traditionally attributed to Vasubandhu.

⁵⁰ 略說空異門，謂真如實際，無相勝義性，法界等應知。(T 1600, p.465c13-14)

⁵¹ Translated from the following Skt. passage:

*ananyathārthena tathatā nityan tathāiveti kṛtvā | aviparyāsārthena bhūta-koṭiḥ viparyāsāvastutvāt |
nimitta-nirodhārthenānimittaṃ sarva-nimittābhāvāt | ārya-jñāna-gocaratvāt paramārthaḥ | parama-
jñāna-viśayatvād ārya-dharma-hetutvād dharma-dhātuḥ | āryadharmāṇāṃ tad-ālambana-prabhava
tvāt | hetv-artho hy atra dhātvarthaḥ* | (MVBh, Nagao 1964:23–24)

⁵² As Schmithausen (1969, n.58) writes:

bei Sthiramati — ähnlich wie *dharmadhātuḥ* im *Madhyāntavibhāga-(bhāṣya)* — als die „von üblen Einflüssen befreite Ursache der ‚heiligen‘ Gegebenheiten“ verstanden (*sa tvāsravavigata ity anāsravaḥ, āryadharmahetutvād dhātuḥ, hetvartho hyatra dhātuśabdaḥ*) (*Trimśikāvijñaptibhāṣya*).

This group of terms even play an important role in tantric rituals. For instance, in the short treatise of Advayavajra, the *Pañcākāra* (Fivefold Manifestation), the five Buddhas occupy the center and the four main points in the *maṇḍala*, the four goddesses, Locanā, Māmakī, Paṇḍaravāsīnī and Tārā, the intermediate points, while the fifth goddess as the partner of the chief Buddha-manifestation at the centre refers to *tathatā*, *śūnyatā*, *prajñāpāramitā* and *bhūtaakoṭi* etc.⁵³

As stated above, in contrast to the rare appearance of the synonyms of *dharmatā* in canonical texts, in the Mahāyāna context these terms constitute a group of core concepts that represent reality, the ultimate truth etc. We have observed a consistency in the Abhidharma schools and LP in respect to their presentation of *dharmatā*, its synonyms (related to SĀ/SN), and *bhūtaakoṭi* as *asaṃskṛtadharmā*. But what is the original meaning of *bhūtaakoṭi* and why is it included in the list of *asaṃskṛtadharmā*?

1.6 The original meaning of *bhūtaakoṭi* and its occurrence as the synonym of *dharmatā*

The term *bhūtaakoṭi* does not exist in the list of the synonyms of *dharmatā* in canonical texts, but it is found in a similar list representing reality in Mahāyāna texts. Explaining this discrepancy is a complex issue and can, I contend, primarily be attributed to the semantic multifariousness of *bhūtaakoṭi*. Consequently it is first demanded that we clarify the original meaning of *bhūtaakoṭi* and to that end the AP, and the application of the term therein, represents a good point of departure. Frederick J. Streng (1982:91) has classified *bhūtaakoṭi* (reality-limit) under four designations:

- (1) the boundary between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*
- (2) the inferior spiritual achievement of a Disciple (*śravaka*) and pratyekabuddha
- (3) the true nature of existence as emptiness (*śūnyatā*)
- (4) the ultimate reality-limit (*param bhūtaakoṭi*) that is informed by perfect wisdom and skill-in-means.

He further points out the contradiction inherent to these four types;⁵⁴ however, upon conducting a diachronic study that compares the Skt. text with different versions of Ch. translations, it can be observed that these apparent contradictions stem historically from semantic changes. Only the second sense is original (but misunderstood by Conze and Streng), whereas the fourth is first found in APKj and the first and third types creep into the presentations of AP and then APX in later stages. Although we do not have this term in

⁵³ Snellgrove 1987:208-209.

⁵⁴ According to Streng, the most dramatic shift is seen by comparing the use of the term , “reality-limit” as (1) and (4), however, the basic shift from (2) to (3), which is elaborated more precisely in the fourth usage where the term *param* (ultimate) is added to *bhūtaakoṭi* (cf. Streng 1982:91).

canonical texts, it does appear twice in a Gāndhārī commentary on canonical verses edited and translated by Stefan Baums in his dissertation (Baums 2009), which can aid us in understanding its earlier occurrences in Buddhist tradition.

As Lancaster has already pointed out,⁵⁵ there are ten references to *bhūtaḥkoṭi* in the Skt. text of the AP but only once do we find its translation in the Chinese as “original limit” (*ben ji* 本際), which is also the earliest Ch. translation of this term in the APL.⁵⁶ This occurs at a place in the text in which Māra makes the deeply trained Bodhisattva realize the “original limit”:

Furthermore, Subhūti! Once the power of the Māra is arisen, it makes the deeply trained Bodhisattva realize the original limit. Then he falls into the Śrāvaka and attains the Path of *Srotāpanna*. In this way the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva should know Māra’s deed.⁵⁷ (T 224, p.448b25-28)

The Bodhisattva who realises *bhūtaḥkoṭi* is strongly criticised in this passage, for its very apprehension is attributed to the influence of Māra. According to Streng’s (1982:91) model, this usage of *bhūtaḥkoṭi* falls under the second heading: the inferior spiritual achievement of a Disciple and Pratyekabuddha, also termed a “Hinayanist Nirvāṇa” by Conze (1973:321). Although this term is not found in the canonical text, the corresponding Gāndhārī form of *bhūtaḥkoṭi* appears in a Gāndhārī verse commentary - “Not wise: the end of existence is not known” (*ṇa vedago ṇa bhudakoḍi vidida* 9.191). In this commentary, the explanation given for the root term *vedaga-* (Pāli *vedagu-*) in the Pāli Niddesa⁵⁸ shows that here *koṭi-* meant “end” in the literal sense of “cessation”. Here I agree with his suggestion that the compound *bhudakoḍi* should be understood as a Tatpuruṣa meaning “end of existence” and it is clearly not used in a derogatory sense (Baums 2009:451-452). That is to say, the term plainly indicates “*nirvāṇa*”.

This is further supported by the fact that the term *bhūtaḥkoṭi* also occurs in another relatively early Ch. translation, the APDh. In this text, after the accomplishment of his merits, the bodhisattva ultimately realizes the *bhūtaḥkoṭi*:

⁵⁵ Cf. Lancaster 1975, collected in Williams 2005, vol. III:307

⁵⁶ The “original limit” (*Ben Ji* 本際) is the early translation of *bhūtaḥkoṭi*. There are three passages that contain this Ch. term; however, according to Karashima, other usages of the term *Ben Ji* refer to either (*saṅga-*)*koṭi* or (*apūrvā*)*koṭi* (Karashima 2010:27-28).

⁵⁷ 復次須菩提，魔事一起時，令深學菩薩爲本際作證，便墮聲聞中得須陀洹道。如是菩薩摩訶薩當覺知魔爲。

⁵⁸ *tehi vedehi jātijarāmarañassa antagato antappatto koṭigato koṭipatto pariyantagato pariyantappatto vosānagato vosānappatto [...] nibbānagato nibbānappatto.* (Nidd I 205.2-8)

Thus, Subhūti, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva who courses in the Perfection of Wisdom, and who is protected by skillful means, does not realize the original limit (本際 *bhūtakoti*) in the middle way. When his merits are matured, and the highest enlightenment is achieved, he becomes a Buddha because of the matured merits, and realizes the original limit. This Bodhisattva Mahāsattva is performing in the Perfection of Wisdom.⁵⁹ (T 226, p. 531c14-18)

Therefore, whether the term *bhūtakoti* specially refers to Conze's so-called "Hinayanist Nirvāṇa" is dubitable. It is more conceivable that the original meaning of *bhūtakoti* is "end/cessation of existence" suggested by Baums, which simply refers to *nirvāṇa*.

Streng regards the corresponding Skt. text of the APDh passage as being representative of "(4) the ultimate reality-limit (*param bhūtakoti*) that is informed by perfect wisdom and skill-in-means". The Skt. text is translated as follows:

In the same way a Bodhisattva who courses in perfect wisdom and who is upheld by skill in means, does not realise that farthest reality-limit (*bhūtakoti*) until his wholesome roots are matured, well matured in full enlightenment. Only when his wholesome roots are matured, well matured in full enlightenment, only then does he realise that farthest reality-limit. A Bodhisattva who courses in perfect wisdom, who develops perfect wisdom, should therefore contemplate and meditate on the deep true nature of those *dharma*s, but he should not realise it. (Conze 1975a:224-225)

This is more or less in line with the record found in APKj.⁶⁰ If we check the context of this passage in variant versions, we can discern subtle differences discrete to each. The passage occurs in Chapter 20 of Skt. AP (= Chapter 17 of APL = Chapter 10 of APDh = Chapter 18 of

⁵⁹ 如是，須菩提！菩薩摩訶薩行般若波羅蜜者，以爲漚和拘舍羅之所護持，自於本際不中道取證。成滿其功德，悉逮得阿耨多羅三耶三菩，於功德以成滿者得佛，能爲本際作證，是菩薩摩訶薩爲行般若波羅蜜。

⁶⁰ 如是，須菩提！菩薩行般若波羅蜜，方便所護故，不證第一實際。爲欲成就阿耨多羅三藐三菩提善根故。成就阿耨多羅三藐三菩提時，乃證第一實際。是故須菩提，菩薩行般若波羅蜜，應如是思惟諸法實相而不取證。(T 227, p.569a17-22)

In the same way, Subhūti, a Bodhisattva who courses in perfect wisdom and who is upheld by skill in means, does not realise the highest reality-limit (第一實際) for the sake of attaining the wholesome roots of the full enlightenment. Only when he attains the full enlightenment, he realizes that highest reality-limit. Thus, Subhūti, a Bodhisattva who courses in perfect wisdom should contemplate and meditate on the deep true nature of those *dharma*s in this way, and he should not realise it.

APKj). According to the earliest version, represented by APL, Śubhūti asks the Buddha: “what is entering into Emptiness, and what is holding the Samādhi of Emptiness?” (何等爲入空? 何等爲守空三昧? ⁶¹) The answer is that due to his compassion for all beings, the Bodhisattva makes use of *upāya* to avoid realizing Emptiness, while practising *Śūnyatā-samādhi* and “once he collects enough merits, he becomes a Buddha (功德盛滿便得佛⁶²)”(T 224, p.458b18-c22).

In the passage from APDh quoted above, the expression “(a Bodhisattva) can realize *bhūtakoti*” (能爲本際作證) is inserted just after “becomes a Buddha”, whereas in APKj “becomes the Buddha” is replaced by “realizes **parama bhūtakoti*” (證第一實際) in the corresponding position. There is certainly some argument here that *parama* is simply added to distinguish this *bhūtakoti* from the *bhūtakoti* realized by Disciple and Pratyekabuddha; however, this solution is complicated by the application of the terms *bhūtakoti*, *tathatā*, and *dharmadhātu* in LPKj (also translated by Kumārajīva) wherein they all represent Truth. Indeed in DZDL, the commentary to LP (also translated by Kumārajīva), we can see a more detailed and sequential classification for the realization of this Truth:

En outre, le Bodhisattva sait que dans le Vrai caractère des dharma (*bhūtalakṣaṇa* ou *dharmatā*), il n’y a ni dharma éternel (*nitya*), ni dharma heureux (*sukha*), ni dharma personnel (*ātmaka*), ni dharma réel (*bhūta*). Il abandonne aussi ces considérations sur les dharma (*dharmaparīkṣā*). La destruction (*nirōdha*) de toutes les considérations de ce genre est précisément la vraie Tathatā des dharma, le Nirvāṇa, la Non-production (*anutpāda*), la Non-destruction (*anirōdha*), la Non-naissance originelle (*ādyanutpannatava*)...C’est cela la Tathatā, vraiment et éternellement subsistante. Pourquoi cela? Parce que tel est le Dharmadhātu.

De même qu’en tout dharma matériel (*rūpin*) il y a une partie vide (*śūnyabhāga*), ainsi y a-t-il, dans les dharma, une nature de Nirvāṇa appelée Dharmadhātu. Dans les multiples artifices salvifiques (*upāya*) utilisés pour obtenir le Nirvāṇa se trouve aussi la nature de Nirvāṇa. Au moment où l’on réalise ce dernier, Tathatā et Dharmadhātu sont Bhūtakoti. (Lamotte 1980 [V]:2200-2201, translation based on T 1509, p.299a10-19)

A similar idea is exemplified more clearly in a letter written by the translator and Prajñāpāramitā expert Kumārajīva to the Chinese monk Huiyuan (*Kumārajīva Fa-shi Da-yi* 鳩摩羅什法師大義 T 1856):

⁶¹ Cf. T 224, p.458b18-19 .

⁶² Cf. T 224, p.458c21.

The real characteristic of all *dharmas* (諸法實相) is provisionally set as *tathatā*, *dharmadhātu* and *bhūtaḥkoṭi* ... Thus they are originally one thing, and named as three. The Truth is one, and distinguished as upper, middle and inferior, which is named as three levels. At the beginning it is *tathatā*, in the middle it is *dharmadhātu*, and at the end it is *bhūtaḥkoṭi*. *Bhūtaḥkoṭi* is upper, *dharmadhātu* is middle and *tathatā* is inferior. According to the ability of insight (*vipaśyanā*), there is distinction.⁶³ (T 1856, p.135c26-136a15)

On the basis of shared authorship we may therefore infer that the term *bhūtaḥkoṭi* in the passage of LPKj is not only a synonym of *nirvāṇa* (which should, as suggested in APDh, be avoided until the Bodhisattva's merits are completed) but also the highest level of the Truth, which could be actively pursued by the Bodhisattva. Perhaps therefore the compound *bhūtaḥkoṭi* would be understood best as a *karmadhāraya* and hence be translated with “true goal”, as suggested by BHSD and indeed supported by the Tibetan translation *yang dag pa'i mtha'* (Baums 2009:451). Such a development belongs to Streng's third type of *bhūtaḥkoṭi*; he writes:

By emphasizing the empty (*śūnya*) nature of all existence, including the experience of a reality-limit, there is a dramatic shift from using the term “reality-limit” to refer to the inferior realization by a Disciple to its use to indicate the true (that is, empty) nature of things. In at least three places the term “reality-limit” is used to indicate the true understanding of reality-limit as empty. (Streng 1982:92)

Although Streng does not adopt a diachronic analysis, his observation of the semantic shift is more or less appropriate. It is proved by a series of insertions and adaptations only seen in the versions dated later than APKj. In conducting a diachronic comparison of the cases attributed to the third type of *bhūtaḥkoṭi* by Streng, the work of Karashima (2011) proves quite helpful in this regard:

Passage I

Come here, son of a good family, do train yourself in just this Path of the Bodhisattvas, for as a result of this training, this coursing, this struggling you will surely quickly awake to full enlightenment. After that you will educate an infinite number of beings in the

⁶³ 諸法實相者，假為如、法性、真際……是故其本是一義。名為三如，道法是一。分別上、中、下，故名為三乘。初為如、中為法性、後為真際。真際為上、法性為中、如為下。隨觀力故，而有差別。

complete extinction of the substratum of rebirth, in other words, in the revelation of the reality-limit (*bhūtakoti*prabhāvanatāyām).⁶⁴ (APN, Conze 1975a:121)

This passage is in line with APX (I). However, it is absent in the old translations and APX (II), which represents a relatively early version of AP. (Karashima 2011:113 n. 665)

Passage II

Through the abundance of that karma beings who have not collected wholesome roots will find no satisfaction nor faith in this reality-limit. But those who find satisfaction and faith in it are people who have collected wholesome roots, well collected them.⁶⁵ (APN, Conze 1975a:155-156)

This passage is totally absent in the Ch. translations, even in both of Xuangzang's translations (Karashima 2011:213-214, n. 184).

Passage III

No living being is found in this perfection, because of the reality-limit.⁶⁶ (Conze 1975a: 152.3)

Karashima lists in a glossary all the parallels for this sentence of Lokakṣema's translation (Karashima 2010:29). Therefrom we glean that Lokakṣema uses the term "original non-existence" 本無 (T 224, p.444b07), normally corresponding to Sanskrit term *dharmatā* or *tathatā*, rather than *bhūtakoti*. In other translations we find quite different renderings: "the position (*koti*) of beings can not be perceived" (衆生際不可得 T 227, p.553b23) in APKj, "the real limit of beings can not be perceived" (有情實際不可得 T 220, p.887b22) in APX (II), and, exclusively to APX (I), "realizing *bhūtakoti*" (證實際 T 220, p.805b04). Therefore, the understanding of *bhūtakoti* as a kind of truth is only found in the later versions such as the Skt. text or APX (I), whereas it is totally absent from the old versions.

A similar situation arises in the case of the first type of *bhūtakoti*, named by Streng as "the boundary between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*":

⁶⁴ Translated from the following passage:

*atra hi tvaṃ śikṣamāṇaś caran vyāyacchamānaḥ kṣipram evānuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisambhotsyase / abhisambudhya cāparimitaṃ satvadhātum anuttare upadhisamkṣaye 'bhivineṣyasi yad uta bhūtakoti*prabhāvanatāyām iti || (Mitra 1888:105.3-6)

⁶⁵ *na hy anupacitakuśalamūlāḥ satvāḥ asyāṃ bhūyastvena bhūtakotyāṃ praskandanti prasīdanti || upacitakuśalamūlāḥ khalu punas te bhagavan sūpacitakuśalamūlāḥ kulaputrāḥ kuladuhitaraś ca veditavyāḥ yeṣāṃ asyāṃ bhūtakotyāṃ cittaṃ praskandati prasīdati ||* (Mitra 1888:215.13-17)

⁶⁶ *niḥsattvapāramiteyaṃ bhagavan bhūtakoti*tām upādāya | (Mitra 1888:206.8)

They have constructed all *dharmas* which yet do not exist. But while they construct all *dharmas* which yet do not exist, they neither know nor see the path which is that which truly is. In consequence they do not go forth from the triple world, and do not wake up to the reality-limit (*bhūtakoti*). For that reason they come to be styled “fools”. They have no faith in the true dharma.⁶⁷ (Conze 1973:87-88)

The expression “*na budhyante bhūtakotiṃ*” does not appear in older versions, such as APL and APKj, but in the APX (I) and (II) we read “do not realize *bhūtakoti*” (不覺實際⁶⁸). (Karashima 2011:17 n.128)

Therefore, we can conclude that the original meaning of *bhūtakoti* is simply *nirvāṇa*, the “end/ cessation of existence”. There is not sufficient evidence to substantiate any derogatory sense implicit in its usage; for instance “(2) the inferior spiritual achievement of a Disciple (*śrāvaka*) and *pratyekabuddha*” as suggested by Streng, since in the early translation of AP by Dharmapriya it is already realised by a Bodhisattva at the end of the path. Over the course of time the attitude towards this term becomes much more positive, and it is generally understood as the “true goal” or the “ultimate goal”, as found in Kumārajīva’s translations, which correspond to “(4) the ultimate reality-limit (*param bhūtakoti*)” of Streng’s classification. This latter usage may have been triggered by the term’s association with *dharmadhātu* and *tathatā* in LP. In the APX, however, the emphasis of its ultimate position in the sequence of the realization, as shown, for example, in DZDL, is also lost, and it becomes directly equated with the truth, as observed in the passages attributed to (3) and (1) by Streng. From my point of view, the shift from (2) to (4) is more straightforward and was quite probably caused by the combination of the three concepts in LP. The rare occurrence of *bhūtakoti* in canonical texts and its referring to *nirvāṇa* is also quite patently demonstrated in DZDL.⁶⁹

Summary

In sum, we have found that a series of concepts from the formula “*utpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā sthitā eveyaṃ dharmatā dharmasthitaye dhātuḥ*” in the Nidāna Saṃyutta became the representative terms for reality or ultimate truth in Prajñāpāramitā and other Mahāyāna literature.

⁶⁷ *te tān asaṃvidyamānān sarvadharmān kalpayante yathābhūtaṃ mārgaṃ na jānanti na paśyanti | yathābhūtaṃ mārgaṃ ajānanto 'paśyanto na niryānti traidhātukān na budhyante bhūtakotiṃ | tena te bālā iti saṃjñāṃ gacchanti || te satyaṃ dharmaṃ na śraddhadhati ||* (Mitra 1888:12-15)

⁶⁸ Cf. T 220, p.765c23-24

⁶⁹ Cf. Lamotte 1980 [V]:2195, tr. from T 1509, p.298a29-b07.

In canonical texts the synonyms of *dharmatā* merely refer to *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent origination). They can be associated with the intention of maintaining the Buddha in the world after his *parinirvāṇa*, as is implicit in the formula “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha” of the early Buddhism. The concepts are also regarded as the word of the Buddha (*buddhavacana*) in the treatises of different Buddhist traditions and the AP. When we turn to AP, the imitation of the *dharmatā* formula betrays its reference to the canonical texts in NS, from which *dharmatā* and its synonyms were derived, and reveals that the meaning of the synonyms of *dharmatā* shifted from *pratītyasamutpāda* to *śūnyatā* etc. Nevertheless, the connection of *dharmatā* and its synonyms with the existence of the Buddha is still preserved: *tathāgata* is reinterpreted through *tathatā*, which inspired the equation of *tathāgata* with *tathatā* found in the late versions of Sadāprarudita story, and in this same story and LP, we can find the expression for knowing or recollecting the Buddha by means of *dharmatā*.

Furthermore, in certain Abhidharma schools criticized by the Sarvāstivādins, *pratītyasamutpāda* is taken as a permanent and independent entity, and thus these synonyms of *dharmatā* fall into the category of *asaṃskṛta-dharma*, to which *nirvāṇa* normally belongs. Therefore the notion that *bhūtaakoṭi* is indicative of or equivalent to *nirvāṇa* in this list of *asaṃskṛta-dharma* may have influenced its being adopted in LP among the group of terms concerning “reality” together with the synonyms of *dharmatā*. Ultimately all came to represent central terminologies in Mahāyāna literature.

2. The cult of the Prajñāpāramitā text and rhetorical techniques

2.1 Previous studies on the cult of text and the methodological issue

We have examined how early Buddhist terms such as *dharmatā*, *tathatā* etc., came to represent “reality” or ultimate truth in Prajñāpāramitā and other Mahāyāna literature. In the case of these latter works, the terms were primarily regarded as the very existence of, or identical with the Buddha. In addition, there are other passages in Prajñāpāramitā literature, in which we also find evidence for a cult of the Prajñāpāramitā text, and in these instances certain rhetorical techniques further relate the very text itself to the Buddha.

Scholarly discussions on the cult of text can be traced to another debate concerning the frequent references to the stūpa in the early Mahāyāna texts. Considering this fact, Hirakawa (1963) understood stūpa sites to be the primary institutional bases of the early Mahāyāna. However, based on further textual evidence in Mahāyāna literature, Schopen (1975:170, 179) contrarily argues that early Mahāyānists rejected the veneration of the stūpa and relics, and then developed new sacred places where, he argues, the Mahāyāna sūtras were recited. He further observes that the places where people memorised, recited and taught sūtras, or indeed kept them in their written form, received the appellation “*caityabhūta*”⁷⁰.

In refutation of Schopen,⁷¹ Drewes (2007) argues that the comparison between the stūpa and the places where sūtras were recited is nothing but a simile. Indeed, this kind of rhetorical technique, by which these two ritual locations are assimilated, can be found in both Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna literature. For instance, one interesting case from a Mahāyāna text compares the Buddha-to-be in his mother’s womb with the relics in a stūpa (Drewes 2007:107-108).

Then, the person who may apply this rhetorical technique draws our attention. In another article, Drewes (2011) open up a new perspective on the composition of Mahāyāna texts by investigating internal evidence regarding a key figure entitled *dharmabhāṇaka* (*dharmapreacher*). Based on his discussion, in a more recent study Apple (2014) summarizes the argument as follows:

Indian Buddhist cultural understandings of textual discourses resulted in individual and group domestic worship of texts, the veneration of copies of sūtras owned by *dharmabhāṇakas*, and the veneration of *dharmabhāṇakas* as Buddhas who embodied the

⁷⁰ Normally the term *caitya* (shrine) can refer to a stūpa, to a *bodhimaṇḍa*, the place where Buddhas sit on the night they attain Buddhahood, or otherwise to locations associated with the lives of the Buddhas.

⁷¹ Schopen (2005) also characterizes his own early work (i.e., Schopen 1975) as a “. . . piece of juvenilia” (Schopen 2005:153 n. 118), and has recently provided further clarifications related to this topic (Schopen 2009, 2010, 2012) (cf. Apple 2014:25).

dharma texts that they recited... I will suggest for constructive consideration that the “cult of the book” was a cult of a certain type of textual culture that was both oral and written, and that, rather than being a stable or local cult phenomena, it was comprised of highly mobile and translocal textual communities who carried their object of veneration with them and kept such objects in domestic locations. (Apple 2014:26)

An analysis of the “worship of texts” (or the cult of texts) and the function of the Dharma-preacher in the course of a text’s transmission sheds new light on certain passages in early Mahāyāna literature that deal with stūpas. In these passages, the amount of merit produced through reciting, copying, and preaching Prajñāpāramitā texts is privileged above the merit acquired by paying respect and giving donations to stūpa and relics. As Apple demonstrates, the practitioners’ intention was to establish the “worship of texts” (or the cult of texts) and the authority of the agent of text, *dharmabhāṇaka*. Undoubtedly, the key figure was the *dharmabhāṇaka* (Dharma-preacher) associated with this textual culture, who – whether the text was composed in oral or written form – was the one who applies these rhetorical techniques.

In the remainder of this chapter, I would like to investigate some of the rhetorical techniques of the early Prajñāpāramitā literature. These principally include such devices as similes, metaphors, and word plays that seek to establish a nexus between the Prajñāpāramitā text and the Buddha. The original intention of these rhetorical techniques was to convey the legitimacy of early Prajñāpāramitā texts, and, at the same time, the authority of their reciter and teacher, the *dharmabhāṇaka*.

Any adequate analysis of these techniques must include a comparison of parallels between the early Ch. translations and the Skt. Nepalese version of AP. The latter is notably late, and thus quite detached from the original expository contexts in which arguments in favour of the cult of the Prajñāpāramitā text were initially forwarded. The former therefore may serve as a remedy to this issue.

Beginning first with the aforementioned *caityabhūta*. Schopen has highlighted this term in particular, primarily because it serves to connect *caitya* with the places where Mahāyāna sūtras are written or recited. However, in consideration of other examples from Ch. witnesses, it transpires that further conclusions may be drawn regarding the significance of this comparison. The term *caityabhūta* only appears twice in the Skt. APN. The first passage reads as follows:

Because this perfection of wisdom makes the spot of earth where it is into a true shrine (*caityabhūta*) for beings, - worthy of being worshipped and adored, - into a shelter for beings who come to it, a refuge, a place to rest and final relief.⁷² (Conze 1975a:105)

The term *caityabhūta* appears again just a few lines later:

The acquisition of the physical personality is thus the cause of the cognition of the all-knowing. As the sure foundation of that cognition it has, for all beings, become a true shrine (*caityabhūta*), worthy of being saluted respectfully, of being honored, revered and adored. After I have gone to Parinirvana, my relics also will be worshipped.⁷³ (Conze 1975a:106)

The simile underlying these two passages likens the Prajñāpāramitā (text) to the body of the Buddha and thus the place where the text is kept, recited, or written is correlated with the stūpa, in which the body/relic (the term *śarīra* can mean both) of the Buddha is contained. However, we cannot ignore the fact that neither of these two *caityabhūta* occur in the corresponding part of the early Ch. translations. According to Karashima (2011), the passage that should correspond to the first instance is absent in APL, APZh, APDh, and is only found in later versions; such as, APX(I), APX(II), Tib Pk, Tib D, and APKj; and in this latter text only the simple rather expression “this place is lucky” (是處則吉) arise. Similarly, the second instance of *caityabhūta* is also not found in APL, APZ, APDh, APKj, APX(II), but does occur in some later versions; including, APX(I), Tib Pk and Tib D (Karashima 2011:66 n.110; 68 n. 130). This illustrates that the term *caityabhūta* is likely a later interpolation and hence these examples should only be cautiously treated as reflective of the rhetorical techniques employed by early cult of Mahāyāna texts.

Therefore, in the following discussion I shall examine as many of the different versions as possible and especially the early Ch. translations, Gāndhārī sources, Central Asian fragments and Gilgit Skt. manuscripts.

2.2 The rhetorical strategies concerning the mother of Tathāgatas

Previous studies fail to consider an interesting word play embedded in the *caityabhūta* passages quoted above. These state that if the relic / body (*śarīra*) of the Buddha and the

⁷² *anayaiva hi kauśika prajñāpāramitayā prthivīpradeśaḥ sattvānāṃ caityabhūtaḥ kṛto vandanīyo mānanīyaḥ pūjanīyo 'rcanīyo 'pacāyanīyaḥ satkaraṇīyo gurukaraṇīyaḥ* (Vaidya 1960a:28).

⁷³ *evaṃ sarvajñajñānaḥetuko 'yam ātmabhāvaśarīrapratilambhaḥ sarvajñajñānāśrayabhūtatvāt sarvasattvānāṃ caityabhūto vandanīyaḥ satkaraṇīyo gurukaraṇīyo mānanīyaḥ pūjanīyo 'rcanīyo 'pacāyanīyaḥ saṃvṛtto bhavati | evaṃ ca mama parinirvṛtasyāpi sataḥ eṣāṃ śarīrāṇāṃ pūjā bhaviṣyati* | (Vaidya 1960a:29).

Prajñāpāramitā text are to be compared, the Prajñāpāramitā text should be regarded as the more important of the two. In APKj and LPG and the relevant argumentation for this position show the highest consistency:⁷⁴

APKj:

Kauśika! The Buddha is not attributed the name “Tathāgata” through his body, but from the fact that he has acquired *sarvajña* (all-knowledge). Kauśika! The Tathāgatas, who acquire the *sarvajña*, come forth from *prajñāpāramitā*.⁷⁵ (T 227, p.542b25-27)

LPG:

(142b7) ... *bhagavān āha · evam etat kauśikaivam etat* atra me prajñāpāramitāyāṃ śikṣamāṇena · sarvākārajñatānuprāptā nānena kauśikātmabhāva-śarīra-pratilaṃbhena tathāgatas tathāgata iti* (142b8) *saṃkhyāṃ gacchati · // sarvākāra-jñatā-pratilaṃbhena tathāgatas tathāgata iti saṃkhyāṃ gacchati · // yeyam kauśika sarvākārajñatā sā prajñāpāramitāniryātā ·* (my edition)

The Blessed One said: It is so, Kauśika, it is so; I here attained the *sarvākārajñatā* (knowledge of all forms) by means of practicing in the *prajñāpāramitā*. It is not from acquiring a physical personage (*ātmabhāva-śarīra*) that the Tathāgata is attributed the name “Tathāgata”. It is from acquiring *sarvākārajñatā* that the Tathāgata is attributed the name “Tathāgata”. This *sarvākārajñatā*, Kauśika, comes forth from the *prajñāpāramitā*.

Here, *sarvajña* (all knowledge) in APKj or *sarvākārajñatā* (knowledge of all modes) in LPG “comes forth from *prajñāpāramitā*”⁷⁶. This seemingly indicates the relationship between the ultimate goal and the basic practice of the bodhisattva, the *prajñāpāramitā*. However, the APL version of this passage clearly states that the body of Tathāgata comes forth, or is born from *prajñāpāramitā*:

The Blessed One said to Śakra, one does not become the Tathāgata through the body, but from the *sarvajñatā* (all-knowledge). The Tathāgata comes forth from the *prajñāpāramitā*,

⁷⁴ LP is extended from AP. Thus it still preserves certain contents of the early recensions of AP. Sometimes the degree of interpolation in LPG is even less than that in the late AP.

⁷⁵ 橋尸迦！佛不以身故名爲如來，以得薩婆若故名爲如來。橋尸迦！諸佛薩婆若，從般若波羅蜜生。In APX (T 220, vol.7, 775a03-06) it is extended to a longer passage.

⁷⁶ In this chapter I apply *prajñāpāramitā* as the basic practice of the bodhisattva, and Prajñāpāramitā as the Prajñāpāramitā text. But in the Skt. Prajñāpāramitā literature they are indeed not differentiated.

thus, Kauśika, the body of [the one who acquires] *sarvajñatā* comes forth from the *prajñāpāramitā*.⁷⁷ (T 224, p.432a15-17)

In the corresponding parallel in the APN,⁷⁸ after saying that “the all-knowledge of the Tathāgata, the Noble One, the Perfectly Awakened Buddha is born (*nirjāta*) from the perfection of wisdom” (*sarvajñatā tathāgatasyārhatāḥ samyaksambuddhasya prajñāpāramitānirjāta*), the following sentence – “the physical personality of the Tathāgata ... is the result of the skill in means of the perfection of wisdom” (*tathāgatasyātmabhāvaśarīrapratilambhaḥ prajñāpāramitopāyakaśālyanirjātaḥ*) – introduces the notion of “skill in means” (*upāyakaśālyā*) and also states that the body comes from *prajñāpāramitā*. It is very likely that the early recension uses *sarvajña* rather than *sarvajñatā* or *sarvākārajñatā*, designating both “all knowledge” and “the person who acquires *sarvajña*” (viz. the Tathāgata). Thus the sentence indicates that the Tathāgata (including his body) comes forth from *prajñāpāramitā*.

This unique description is not a singular instance. In several recensions of a later chapter in AP, “The proclamation of qualities” (*guṇaparikīrtanaparivarta*), we also learn that the relics (*śarīrāṇi*) come forth from *prajñāpāramitā*.

APN:

api tu khalu punar bhagavan itaḥ prajñāpāramitāto nirjātāni tathāgataśarīrāṇi pūjāṃ labhante | (Vaidya 1960a:48)

As come forth from this perfection of wisdom are the relics of the Tathāgata worshipped. (Conze 1975a:116)

APKj:⁷⁹

⁷⁷ 佛語釋提桓因：不用身舍利，從薩芸若中得佛。怛薩阿竭爲出般若波羅蜜中。如是，拘翼！薩芸若身從般若波羅蜜中出。

This reading is similar to that of APZh (T 225, 484a17-18) and APDh (T 226, 514b21-24).

⁷⁸ bhagavān āha - tasmāt tarhi kauśika nānenātmabhāvaśarīrapratilambhena tathāgatas tathāgata iti samkhyāṃ gacchati | ... yeyaṃ kauśika sarvajñatā tathāgatasyārhatāḥ samyaksambuddhasya, prajñāpāramitānirjātaisā | eṣa ca kauśika tathāgatasyātmabhāvaśarīrapratilambhaḥ prajñāpāramitopāyakaśālyanirjātaḥ ... samghaśarīraprabhāvanā bhavati | (Vaidya 1960a:29)

The English translation of this passage found in Conze 1975a:105-106.

⁷⁹ All the other early versions have the same reading: APL (T 224, 435c04-05) = APZh (T 225, 485b10) = APDh (T 226, 517b19-20).

Because the relics come forth from *prajñāpāramitā*, and they are cultivated by *prajñāpāramitā*, so the relics are worshipped.⁸⁰ (T 227, p.545a28-29)

That the phrase “the body of Tathāgata comes forth from *prajñāpāramitā*” occurs in different textual witnesses confirms its early origin and may be a notion quite unique to the Buddhists of the early Common Era. As we shall observe in § 5, the view that the physical body of the Buddha is the manifestation of a transcendent *dharmakāya* is a later development and so we should be hesitant in assuming that idea expressed by “the physical personality of Tathāgata comes forth from *prajñāpāramitā*” served as the exemplar for the later principle that related the *dharma*-body with the physical body.

An interesting feature of this quite unique statement is the presence of a series of rhetorical techniques, and in particular a word play. The first is to be found in the compound “*prajñāpāramitā-nirjāta*” in APN and its corresponding expression “*prajñāpāramitā-niryāta*” in LPG. In fact, in many early versions, we often see *-niryāta*,⁸¹ which, in the later versions, is replaced with *-nirjāta*. The likely explanation for this resides in the possibility that *prajñāpāramitā-niryāta* (from the root √ *i* ‘go’) and *prajñāpāramitā-nirjāta* (from the root √ *jan* ‘be born’) can both be Sanskritisations from the same middle Indic form — for instance in Gāndhārī: **prañaparamida-niyada*.⁸² With the help of BHSD of Egerton and several examples in the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, I suggest there are at least two meanings of the compound *prajñāpāramitā-niryāta* / *-nirjāta* of pertinence to our discussion:

a) go forth into *Prajñāpāramitā* (*nir* + √ *i*)

In APG, we also have one reference concerning “*prañaparamidae ñiyayae*”:⁸³

APG:

⁸⁰ 以舍利從般若波羅蜜生故，般若波羅蜜所熏故得供養。

⁸¹ Although (to my knowledge) we do not have other early Skt. fragments of AP in this regard, *prajñāpāramitā-niryāta* also occurs in one fragment of LP that is related to the chapter which, as with the passage quoted above, compares the respective merits of ritual practices directed towards a stūpa or the *Prajñāpāramitā* (Hori 1996:36-38).

⁸² According to the A Dictionary of Gāndhārī available online (https://gandhari.org/n_dictionary.php), *niyadi* corresponds to Skt. *niryāti* and Pāli. *niyyāti*.

⁸³ In another case of AP, *niya-* has the similar meaning:

Skt: *yo bodhisattvo mahāsattvo 'tra śikṣiṣyate, sa niryāsyati sarvajñatāyām* | (Vaidya 1960a:6)

G: ++ *sisatvo atra [śikṣisati sa niya]isati sarvañadae* (Falk & Karashima 2012: 54)

In the early Ch. translation, we also see the term achieves (*cheng jiu* 成就), which is quite close to the meaning of “adept in”: “The bodhisattva who studies in such a way can be adept in the all-knowledge” (APKj, T. 227, p. 538a9-10: 菩薩如是學者，能成就薩婆若).

[*tatra ho bhagava aiśpa suhuti amañtreti paḍi*] (1-03:) + + + + + + + + *mahasetvasa prañāparimidu aradhya yasa bosisatve mahasa[tv]e* (1-04:) + + + + [*mi*]dae *ṇiyayae* (Falk & Karashima 2012:28)

It parallels to one passage in APN:

tatra khalu bhagavān āyusmantam subhūtiṃ sthaviram āmantrayate sma - pratibhātu te subhūte bodhisattvānām mahāsattvānām prajñāpāramitām ārabhya yathā bodhisattvā mahāsattvāḥ prajñāpāramitā niryāyur iti (Vaidya 1960a:2)

The Blessed One said to the Venerable Sūbhuti, the Elder: Make it clear, Subhuti, to the Bodhisattvas, the great beings, in respect to *prajñāpāramitā*, how the Bodhisattvas, the great beings would enter into the *prajñāpāramitā*!

The last sentence with the optative form verbs G: *ṇiyayae* (opt. sg. 3) or Skt: *niryāyuh*⁸⁴ (opt. pl. 3) means “how bodhisattva(s) would go forth into perfect wisdom”. Here “go forth into” means “deeply practice”. Under the entry of *niryāta* in BHSD, Egerton suggests that *niryāta* be translated with “adept, perfected, perfectly skilled, in” (BHSD p.303, col 2). The expression “adept in *prajñāpāramitā*” probably refers to *sarvajñatā*, the higher stage of *prajñāpāramitā* and the ultimate goal of bodhisattva.⁸⁵

b) born from Prajñāpāramitā (*nir* + √ *jan*)

From the root √ *jan* (create, produce), *nirjāta* can mean “produced, originating, born” (corresponding to Tib. *yas skyes pa*, “born from”) (BHSD, p.301, col 1). This meaning is further associated with the important argument in AP that the *prajñāpāramitā* is the mother of the Buddha. The relevant example can be found at the beginning of the chapter XII “Showing the world” (*lokasaṃdarśanaparivarta*):

eṣā hi mātā janayitrī tathāgatānām arhatāṃ samyaksambuddhānām | asyāḥ sarvajñatāyā darśayitrī lokasya ca saṃdarśayitrī | atonirjātā hi subhūte tathāgatā arhantaḥ samyaksambuddhāḥ | (Vaidya 1960a:125)

⁸⁴ The term *niryāyuh*, which only occurs in this passage and its parallels, is the hybrid Sanskrit form of *nirayeyuh*.

⁸⁵ According to another piece of textual evidence from AP. APN recension reads:

aparipūrayamāṇaḥ prajñāpāramitām na niryāsyati sarvajñatāyām aparigrhītaṃ parigrhṇan | (Vaidya 1960a:4-5)

When he does not fulfill perfect wisdom, he cannot go forth to all-knowledge, so long as he remains one who tries to appropriate the essentially elusive. (Conze 1975a:8)

And the APN recension (T 227, p.537c8-9) is shorter: “When he does not fulfill the *prajñāpāramitā*, he cannot achieve the all-knowledge” (不具足般若，則不能成就薩婆若).

... she is their mother and begetter, she showed them this all-knowledge, she instructed them in ways of the world. From her have the Tathagatas come forth. (Conze 1975a:172)

The two meanings derive from different roots, but they would both be rendered in the presumed original Gāndhārī as **prañāpāramida-ñiyada*. In light of the compound's multiple meanings, it is not difficult to understand the argumentation of the passage quoted above (T227, p.542b25-27 = LPG:142b7-8), which can be simplified as follows:

The Tathāgata attains his name “Tathāgata” due to *sarvajñatā* (*sarvajñatā* = Tathāgata), rather than due to his physical body; Sarvajñatā (= Tathāgata) is adept in (= a) / comes forth from *prajñāpāramitā* (= b) and thus, the physical body of Tathāgata comes forth from *prajñāpāramitā* (= b).

Interestingly, the text also combines the two senses of *prajñāpāramitā*: a) the bodhisattva practice belonging to the six perfections (*pāramitā*), and b) the text itself under the name Prajñāpāramitā. When it says “*sarvajñatā* is adept in *prajñāpāramitā*”, the term “*prajñāpāramitā*” here refers to the bodhisattva practice, but when it states “*tathāgata* comes forth from Prajñāpāramitā”, Prajñāpāramitā can refer to the text itself, because in the context, the text, rather than *prajñāpāramitā* practice, is compared with the relics (this will be further discussed in § 2.5). This style of disguised displacement can be also found in the case in which *sarvajñatā* refers to “the all-knowledge” or “the person who attains all-knowledge”.

The mother of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni, Māyā, is recorded in a wide range of biographies of the Buddha, such as the *Lalitavistara*, *Mahāvastu*, etc. However, as stated above, the AP considers the *prajñāpāramitā* practice / Prajñāpāramitā text to be the true mother of all the Tathāgatas (deriving from the meaning (b) of the compound *prajñāpāramitā-nirjāta*). Indeed, on some occasions *prajñāpāramitā* is also called the mother of bodhisattvas:

svalakṣaṇasūnyatām upādāya mātā bhagavan bodhisattvānām mahāsattvānām prajñāpāramitā | (Vaidya 1960a:86)

She (*prajñāpāramitā*) is the mother of the Bodhisattvas, on account of the emptiness of own marks. (Conze 1975a:135)

This idea is widely accepted in the other Mahāyāna literature, for instance, in the seventh chapter of *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, the first verse is as follows:

prajñāpāramitā mātā bodhisattvāna māriṣa /

pitā copāyakaśalyaṃ yato jāyanti nāyakāḥ // (Takahashi 2006:79)

Prajñāpāramitā is the mother of bodhisattvas, friend,
And Skill in Means is the father, the guides (i.e. Buddhas) are born from there.

This notion also influenced the personification of Prajñāpāramitā as a female bodhisattva. The early representations of the Prajñāpāramitā are now lost and we only have examples that date later than 800 C.E. The earliest description of Prajñāpāramitā as a female bodhisattva in literature is found in **Dhāraṇīsamuccaya-sūtra* (陀羅尼集經 T 901), translated into Chinese before 625 C.E., which remarks on the female goddess of *prajñāpāramitā*, and on the mudrās, mantras, maṇḍala and ritual.⁸⁶ In fact, as stated above, the development of Prajñāpāramitā into a personified Bodhisattva originates from a word play.

2.3 The equation of the Prajñāpāramitā text and its preacher with the Buddha

The relationship between the Prajñāpāramitā text and the Buddha is not limited to a mother-son simile. In some places we also find a description that includes a direct and literal equation of the two. The intention of these statements is identical to those concerning the mother of the Buddha; that is, they establish the authority of the Prajñāpāramitā text by claiming its relationship with the Buddha.

Near the close of AP, in chapter XXXII “Entrusting” (*parīdanāparivarta*), the Buddha entrusts the Prajñāpāramitā text to Ānanda, and declares that it should be regarded as his substitute after his *parinirvāṇa*:

evam ukte bhagavān āyusmantam ānandam etad avocat: śāstā te ānanda! tathāgataḥ. paricarito 'smy ānanda! tvayā maitreṇa kāyakarmaṇā manaāpena, maitreṇa vākkarmaṇā manaāpena, maitreṇa manaḥkarmaṇā manaāpena. tasmāt tarhy ānanda! yathaiva tvayā mamaitarhi tiṣṭhato dhriyamāṇasya yāpayato 'smin samucchrāye prema ca prasādaś ca gauravaṃ ca kṛtam, tathaiva tvayā ānanda mamātyayād asyāṃ prajñāpāramitāyāṃ kartavyam ... (Vaidya 1960a:260)

The Lord: The Tathāgata is your teacher (*śāstr*), Ananda. You have ministered to me, Ananda, with friendly acts of body, acts of speech, acts of mind. Therefore then, Ananda, just as you have given affection, faith and respect to me as I am at present in this incarnation, just so, Ananda, should you act after my decease towards this perfection of wisdom. (Conze 1975a:299-300)

⁸⁶ For instance, one chapter titled “The method of depicting the great Prajñāpāramitā” (畫大般若像法, T0901, 805a29-c17) details how to depict the female bodhisattva Prajñāpāramitā and the relevant rituals.

The term *śāstr* is an epithet of the Buddha. The Skt. text is only slightly different from APL,⁸⁷ but the idea “respecting the Prajñāpāramitā is respecting the Buddha” is fundamentally the same. As is widely known, Ānanda plays a significant role in the transmission of the *buddhavacana* (the word of the Buddha). Serving as an indispensable authority at the first Buddhist council, Ānanda is reported to have recited the sūtras — thus all sūtras begin with “Thus have I heard”, and here “I” refers to Ānanda. Therefore, the episode in which the Buddha entrusted Ānanda the Prajñāpāramitā (text) indicates that the Prajñāpāramitā (text) should be also regarded as the teaching of the Buddha.

Furthermore, in the following passage in the chapter “Entrusting”, we also see a description of the ritual actions associated with the text:

*tathāgatāntikāvacarās te ānanda sattvā veditavyāḥ, ya enāṃ prajñāpāramita śroṣyanty udgrahīṣyanti dhārayiṣyanti vācayiṣyanti paryavāpsyanti pravartayiṣyanti deśayiṣyanty upadekṣyanty uddekṣyanti svādhyāsyanti likhiṣyanti satkariṣyanti gurukariṣyanti m ā n a y i ṣ y a n t i p ū j a y i ṣ y a n t y a r c a y i ṣ y a n t y a p a c ā y i ṣ y a n t i puṣpadhūpagandhamālyavilepanacūrṇacīvaracchatradhvajaghaṇṭāpatākābhiḥ, samantāc ca dīpamālābhiḥ, bahuvidhābhiḥ ca pūjābhir iti ||*⁸⁸ (Vaidya 1960a:260-261)

It should be known that those beings — who would hear this perfection of wisdom, take it up, study it, speaks of it, master it, engage in it, show it to others, display it, explain it, recite it and write it, and who would honour, revere, adore, respect, praise and worship this perfection of wisdom with heavenly flowers, incense, etc. — are living close to the Tathāgata.

⁸⁷ APL: 佛語阿難：汝敬我所語，敬我法。若敬愛承事我，汝自敬身於佛。汝有慈於佛。汝有孝於佛。一切恭敬於佛所。汝持是孝慈恭敬於般若波羅蜜中。

The Buddha said to Ānanda: You respect what I said and respect my Dharma. You esteem and serve me. You devote yourself to the Buddha. You have affection for the Buddha, You have filial affection for the Buddha. You (should) respect the Prajñāpāramitā with the same filial affection as you have for the Buddha. (Karashima 2011:534 n.216)

⁸⁸ This is in line with APKj: 阿難，若有書寫般若波羅蜜，受持、讀誦、正憶念，如所說行廣為人說，供養恭敬尊重讚歎華香乃至伎樂，當知是人離見佛，不離聞法，常親近佛。 (T 227, 586b28-c03)

In APL we only see: 汝見佛。不言：不見佛。“you (truly) see the Buddha. Nobody can deny it.” (= APZh, Karashima 2011:535 n.222) The ritual actions are not deal with and from the context we know it indicates the equation of Prajñāpāramitā with the Buddha.

Noticeably, the ritual actions of spreading and explaining the Prajñāpāramitā (text) to others are sanctified: one conducts those ritual actions just as one pays respect to the Tathāgata. In this way, the cult of the Prajñāpāramitā text is strengthened through the conceptual assimilation of Prajñāpāramitā with the Tathāgata.

According to one passage in the Skt. version of the Sadāprarudita story, the Dharma-preacher (*dharmabhāṇaka*) of the Prajñāpāramitā should be treated as the Teacher (Buddha).

evaṃ tvaṃ kulaputra pratipadyamāno nacireṇa prajñāpāramitāṃ śroṣyasi pustakagatāṃ vā dharmabhāṇakasya bhikṣoḥ kāyagatāṃ | yasya ca tvaṃ kulaputrāntikāt prajñāpāramitāṃ śṛṇuyāḥ śāstrisaṃjñā tvayā tatrotpādayitavyā | ... imāś tvayā kulaputrānuśaṃsāḥ paritulaṃyamānena dharmabhāṇake bhikṣau śāstrisaṃjñōtpādayitavyā |
(Vaidya 1960a:238-239)

When you progress like this, you shall before long be able to study the perfection of wisdom either from a book, or from the mouth of a monk who preaches dharma. And you should treat as the Teacher (= Buddha) that person from whom you may come to hear the perfection of wisdom... When you weigh up these advantages, you are bound to treat that monk who preaches dharma as the Teacher. (Conze 1975a:278)

The Sadāprarudita story of the oldest recensions (APL and APZh) lacks any parallels to this passage (Karashima 2011:468 n.255), although one parallel can be found in the APKj.⁸⁹ As we will see, the visualisation method of seeing the Buddha in the Sadāprarudita story in AP is quite different from the metaphorical “seeing” in the main body, and the extreme practice of donating to the Dharma-preacher also appears unique (see § 3). In fact, a likening of the Dharma-preacher with the Buddha does not occur in any other part of AP and this fits the direct context of the Sadāprarudita story in which extreme donations to the Dharma-preacher are advocated.

In sum, both the mother-son simile (viewing the Prajñāpāramitā as the mother of Tathāgatas) and the equation of the Prajñāpāramitā with the Teacher are instances of an argument for associating Prajñāpāramitā with the Buddha. That is not to say, however, that the cult of the Prajñāpāramitā text reflected by AP is limited to this argument: the text continues to declare

⁸⁹ APKj: 汝能如是，不久得聞般若波羅蜜。若從經卷聞，若從法師聞。善男子！汝所從聞般若波羅蜜，當於是人生大師想 ... 思惟如是功德利故，於法師所生大師想。(T 227, p.580b14-21)
When you progress like this, you shall before long be able to study the perfection of wisdom either from a book, or from the *dharm*-preacher. Son of the good family! For the one from whom you hear the Prajñāpāramitā, you should treat him as the Teacher (= Buddha) ... When you examine these advantages, you will consider the *dharm*-preacher as the Teacher. (Conze 1975a:278)
The reading is akin to that of APN.

that the people who engage in the ritual actions associated with the cult of text will be awarded with two benefits: one can attain extraordinary merit through actions such as hearing, holding, and spreading the Prajñāpāramitā text (in § 2.4); and one will also be protected by the Buddha and gods, who will obviate the danger of demons and other misfortune (in § 2.5). In those cases, we will later observe how certain rhetorical techniques are adopted for proving the benefits of the ritual actions related to the Prajñāpāramitā text.

2.4 Comparing the merit of Prajñāpāramitā with the relics and stūpas

Common to all Buddhist traditions is the fundamentality of merit (*puṇya*) for Buddhist ethics. Discussions of the creation of merit are hence abundant in Buddhist literature, and one of the most significant merit-making deeds constitutes paying respect to the three jewels: the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha. In Mahāyāna literature, as Tanabe (2004) notes, the means of producing merit are extended to a set of quite particular ritual actions. He writes: “since ritual involves magical power exceeding that of moral effort, the benefits are greater. The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, for example, describes the magnificent benefits that will fall on those who do no more than read, recite, copy, and uphold the sūtra” (Tanabe 2004:532).

If we examine the APN text (Chapters from I to XXXII) as a whole, such benefits of taking up, reciting, and writing the Prajñāpāramitā text are repeated in chapters III to XII more frequently than in the other chapters. In chapters III to XII, many discussions are devoted to comparing these ritual actions with other well-known beneficial religious practices: the text posits, for instance, that greater merits can be accrued through the rituals it forwards – regarding Prajñāpāramitā as the great secret lore (*vidyā*) and declaring its worldly benefits (III) – than others such as offering to stūpas (III) or relics (IV), or indeed as having more benefits than the other Buddhist teachings (V) etc. It goes further also in stating that one who criticizes the Prajñāpāramitā will go to hell (VII) and that one who is unable to correctly recite the Prajñāpāramitā text is under the influence of Māra (XI), etc.

The denigration of the meritorious efficacy of ritual actions related to the cult of relics (*śarīra*) in favour of those connected to Prajñāpāramitā is based on the idea that “the Tathāgata (or his body) comes forth/is born from Prajñāpāramitā (text)”. An especially distinctive example of such deprecation occurs in the case of worship towards the stūpa in Chapter III. Here the text states that “his merit will be greater even than that of all beings in great trichiliocosms countless like the sands of the Ganges, if each single being in them would build a Stupa, and if each one of them would build all those Stupas, and honor them for an aeon or the remainder of an aeon” (Conze 1975a:70-71). A similar description can be found in chapter IV. Here it is also said that if the Prajñāpāramitā is put on one side, and a

great trichiliocosm filled to the top with relics of the Tathāgata on the other side, then one should choose the perfection of wisdom⁹⁰ (Conze 1975a:95).

Obviously this is hyperbole and doubtless a rhetorical technique. In fact, in numerous Mahāyāna texts we see that the merit attained from the cult of text far exceeds that generated from the cult of relics. Yet today none of the living Mahāyāna traditions (China, Tibet, Japan or Korea) considers the Mahāyāna text to be more significant than the relics of the Buddha. This does not affect the fact that people devoted and indeed continue to devote themselves to ritual actions related to the cult of Mahāyāna text. A good example of this, resides in the fact that many extant manuscripts of Mahāyāna sūtras, such as the Sanghāṭa-sūtra, were not traditionally regarded as significant for their teaching but rather were presented as being particularly efficacious for producing merit by means of their dissemination.

The central purpose in convincingly arguing that such ritual actions are more beneficial than paying respect to the Buddha, and more generally in promoting the cult of Prajñāpāramitā text, is achieved by the application of rhetorical techniques, such as word plays, similes, or hyperbole, as stated above. By this means also, some merit-making activities that were widely accepted in early Buddhism were successfully transposed into Prajñāpāramitā discourse.

2.5 The protective function of the Prajñāpāramitā text

2.5.1 The Prajñāpāramitā text protected by the Buddhas

As stated in § 2.2, mixing the practice of *prajñāpāramitā* as a component of the bodhisattva path with the cultic practice towards the Prajñāpāramitā text could be regarded as a misguided displacement. This is testified by a the simile of a mother and her sons at the beginning of Chapter XII “Showing the world”,⁹¹ which says that the Buddhas are born from *prajñāpāramitā* and in turn protect it, just as sons would always come to see and protect their mother. Although *prajñāpāramitā* here does not clearly refer to the text, still, if we examine the wider context of this simile at the end of Chapter XI, we find the following:

⁹⁰ The reason is expounded as follows:

evam eva bhagavan maheśākhyahetupratyayabhūtā prajñāpāramitā | tathāgatasyārhatāḥ samyaksaṃbuddhasya sarvajñatāyā āhārikā | sarvajñatāyāś ca tathāgataśarīrāṇy āśrayabhūtāni | na tu tāni pratyayabhūtāni, na kāraṇabhūtāni jñānasyotpādāya | evam eva bhagavan sarvajñajñānahetukā tathāgataśarīreṣu pūjā kṛtā bhavati | (Vaidya 1960a:48)

In the same way, the perfection of wisdom is the real eminent cause and condition, which feeds the all-knowledge of the Tathāgata. The relics of the Tathāgata, on the other hand, are true deposits of all-knowledge, but they are not true conditions, or reasons, for the production of that cognition. As the cause of the cognition of the all-knowing the perfection of wisdom is also worshipped through relics of the Tathāgata. (Conze 1975a:95)

⁹¹ This passage is closely followed by an example with the compound “born from Prajñāpāramitā (√jan)” in § 2.2.

buddhaparigraheṇodgrahīṣyanti dhārayiṣyanti vācayiṣyanti paryavāpsyanti pravartayiṣyanti deśayiṣyanty upadekṣyanty uddekṣyanti svādhyāsyanti lekhaiṣyanty antaśo likhiṣyantīti | tat kasya hetoḥ? māro 'pi hy atra pāpīyān mahāntam udyogam āpatsyate antarāyakaraṇāya | tathāgato 'py arhan samyaksambuddha udyogam āpatsyate 'nuparigrahāyeti || (Vaidya 1960a:124)

Those who decide to learn, study and write this perfection of wisdom have been swayed by the Buddha's might, by his sustaining power, by his grace. For whereas Māra, the Evil One, will make great efforts to cause obstacles, the Tathāgata in his turn will send help. (Conze 1975a:252)

The early Ch. translation is quite similar in this regard:

[Despite these disturbances,] sons and daughters of a good family take up the Prajñāpāramitā, bear it in mind, recite, chant and read it. This is all by the grace of the Buddha's imposing dignity. Why can it not be disturbed by the Māra, the disturbances are all eradicated? It is upheld by *tathāgata-arhat-samyaksambuddha*.⁹² (T 224, p.448c16-19, cf. Karashima 2011:248 n.11)

Therefore, one important intention of the mother-sons simile is to claim that the Buddhas will also help practitioners who are reading, reciting, and practicing the Prajñāpāramitā text. Since attaining *prajñāpāramitā* is regarded as a significant practice for reaching salvation, the help sent by a Buddha can in turn guarantee the success of the practitioner in their career as a bodhisattva.

According to the passage, those who attain the Prajñāpāramitā text will be protected by the Buddhas from evil obstacles. A similar description can be also observed in some other passages. Here we only quote the English translation of the Skt. text:⁹³

The Lord: ... For it is in the nature of things that the Buddhas, the Lords, who stand, hold and maintain themselves in immeasurable and incalculable world-systems, should bring to mind and uphold everyone who teaches and studies this perfection of wisdom.

The Buddhas will bring him to mind and assist him. And it is quite impossible to cause an obstacle to someone who has been brought to mind and upheld by the Buddhas. ... They

⁹² 若善男子、善女人，取持學般若波羅蜜諷誦讀者，悉是佛威神。何以故？弊魔不能制令得斷，是者以爲怛薩阿竭阿羅呵三耶三佛之所制持。

It reads the same to APKj (T 227, 557b25-28).

⁹³ The parallels in APL (T 224, p.446a11-22), APZh and APKj (T 227, p.555a12-22) etc. are quite similar.

are known to the Tathāgata, they are sustained, and seen by the Tathāgata, and the Tathāgata beholds them with his Buddha-eye. (Conze 1975a:158-159)

According to this passage, the Buddhas of immeasurable and incalculable world-systems, who, with their Buddha-eye, see all aspects of everything, behold those who teach and study the Prajñāpāramitā. This, we are told, guarantees the practitioner's successful progress on the training of *prajñāpāramitā*.

In this way, to argue that the Tathāgatas are born from the Prajñāpāramitā not only highlights the merit produced by ritual actions directed towards the text but also asserts its protective function.

2.5.2 The Prajñāpāramitā text as an incantation

The protective function of the Prajñāpāramitā text is not limited to protecting people from the obstacles encountered while studying the text and some places in AP even advocated its protective function in the daily life, in a fashion quite similar to what we observe in the role of *dhāraṇī* texts for Tantric Buddhism.

In Chapter III, the Four Great Kings (*mahārāja*), Indra, Brahman and other gods promise that they will protect the people who take up and recite the Prajñāpāramitā text. By way of example I only quote the promise of protection made by the Great Kings:

*atha khalu catvāro mahārājāno bhagavantam etad avocan - āścaryam bhagavan yad imāṃ prajñāpāramitāṃ udgrhṇan dhārayan vācayan paryavāpnūvan pravartayan sa kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā yānatraye sattvān vinayati, na ca sattvasaṃjñāṃ utpādayati | vāyam bhagavaṃs tasya kulaputrasya vā kuladuhitur vā rakṣāvaraṇaguptiṃ saṃvidhāsyāmaḥ, ya imāṃ prajñāpāramitāṃ udgrahīṣyati dhārayiṣyati vācayiṣyati paryavāpsyati pravartayiṣyati ||*⁹⁴ (Vaidya 1960a:25)

The Four Great Kings: It is wonderful, O Lord, that those who take up, etc., this perfection of wisdom should discipline beings in the three vehicles, and yet not perceive any being. We, O Lord, will protect (*rakṣāvaraṇaguptiṃ saṃvidhāsyāmaḥ*) such a person. (Conze 1975a:103)

This protective function is always attributed to *dhāraṇī* texts; for instance, in the *Ratnaketudhāraṇī* we find the following passage:

⁹⁴ This reading is akin to the parallel in APL (T 224, p.431a25-27): “The Four Great Kings said to Buddha: we will protect the son or daughter of a good family who studies, holds and recites this perfection of wisdom”(四天王白佛言：我輩自共護是善男子、善女人學般若波羅蜜者、持者、誦者). Cf. APKj (T 227, p.541c26-28).

yaḥ kaścid bhagini rājā kṣatriyo mūrdhābhiṣikto janapadasthāmaprāpta imāḥ ratnaketudhāraṇīm pustake likhitvā dhārayiṣyati tasya rājñāḥ kṣatriyasya daśasu dikṣūdāraḥ kīrtiśabdaśloko 'bhyudgamiṣyati yāvad sarvaṃ rūpadhātum udāraiḥ kīrtiśabdair āpūrayiṣyati / anekāni ca devanāgayakṣagandharvakōṭinayutaśatasahasrāṇi tasya rājñāḥ kṣatriyasya prṣṭhataḥ samanubaddhā rākṣānuguptaye sthāsyanti / (Kurumiya 1978:39)⁹⁵

Sister, if a king, a kṣatriya, whose head has been consecrated (*mūrdhābhiṣikta*) and who has secured power over a kingdom, were to bear the *Ratnaketudhāraṇī* having written it on a manuscript, then the best tidings, fame and glory of that king and kṣatriya would emanate throughout the ten directions etc., and the sphere of form (*rūpadhātu*) would be filled by the best tidings and fame. Many uncountable thousand million *devas*, *nāgas*, *yakṣas* and *gandharvas* would stand close behind the Kṣatriya king for his protection.

Here, a kṣatriya (one of the four castes of Vedic society) king is said to receive protection from the gods as a product of his writing and bearing the *Ratnaketudhāraṇī*. As with the AP, protection in daily life is therefore afforded by gods rather than Buddhas.

A closely related matter in AP relates that people who perform ritual actions related to the Prajñāpāramitā text will “acquire and gain advantages here and now” (*drṣṭadhārmikān guṇān pratilabhate parigrhṇāti*). In other words, they will be given protection in daily life. The text declare, for instance, that Māra and his hosts will be unable to harm those who perform the ritual actions;⁹⁶ that a person who goes into battle, to the very front lines, will be protected

⁹⁵ It is quite close to the Ch. parallel (T 402, p.543c24-29).

⁹⁶ *yo hi kaścid devaputrāḥ kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā imāḥ prajñāpāramitām udgrahīṣyati dhārayiṣyati vācayīṣyati paryavāpsyati pravartayīṣyati, na tasya māro vā mārakāyikā vā devatā avatāraprekṣiṇyo 'vatāragaveṣiṇyo 'vatāraṃ lapsyante* | (Vaidya 1960a:25)

Māra and his hosts will be unable to harm those who take up this perfection of wisdom, who bear it in mind, preach, study and spread it. (Conze 1975a:103)

Similarly, the APL reads — If the son or daughter of a good family, who studies, holds and recites Prajñāpāramitā, the Māra and his hosts will not have opportunity (for a hostile approach). (若有善男子善女人，其有學般若波羅蜜者，其有持者，其有誦者，是善男子、善女人，魔若魔天終不能得其便。 T 224, p.431a16-19)

from death or injury if he recites the Prajñāpāramitā text;⁹⁷ and even that the place where the Prajñāpāramitā text is stored will be not harmed by men or ghosts.⁹⁸

Notably, the AP text names the Prajñāpāramitā as a great secret lore or incantation (Skt: *mahāvidyā*, APL: 極大祝, APKj: 大呪術): “Kauśika, the great incantation is the perfection of wisdom” (*mahāvidyeyam kauśika yad uta prajñāpāramitā*). After this, the early Ch. versions only mention an unsurpassed incantation (APL: 人中之猛祝, APKj: 無上呪術, **anuttarā vidyā*), while the parallel in Skt. APN is extended to a long list: “an incantation without measure (*apramāṇā ... vidyā*), a quite measureless incantation (*aparimāṇā ... vidyā*), an unparalleled incantation (*niruttarā ... vidyā*), an unsurpassed incantation (*anuttarā ... vidyā*), an unequalled incantation (*asamā ... vidyā*), an incantation which equals the unequalled (*asamasamā ... vidyā*) is this, the perfection of wisdom” (Vaidya 1960a:27). Notably, this reminds us that the mantra *oṃ gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā* in the *Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdya-sūtra* (henceforth Heart Sūtra) is named as *mahā-mantro mahā-vidyā-mantro 'nuttara-mantro 'samasamamantraḥ* (Conze 1967:152). The only difference in the Heart Sūtra is that the term *mantra* is adopted instead of *vidyā*.⁹⁹

The AP presents a positive attitude towards the secret lore. For instance, in one passage concerning the rebirth of an irreversible bodhisattva (*avinivartanīya-bodhisattva*), which is attributed to the advanced stage in the bodhisattva career, *vidyā* is regarded as one of the knowledges that are well studied by people where the irreversible bodhisattva is reborn:

Furthermore, when an irreversible Bodhisattva has definitely terminated his existence among the Gods, - whether they belong to the sphere of sense-desire, or the sphere of form, or the formless sphere, - he is reborn in just this middle region, in Jambudvīpa. For in the border countries there are only a few beings with a good knowledge of the arts, of poetry, of mantras, of secret lore, of the standard treatises, of portents and of the meaning of religion, but in the middle region they are reborn in abundance. But those who are

⁹⁷ Translation see Conze 1975a:104, corresponding to Vaidya 1960a:27. The earliest Ch. recension has a close description — Buddha said to Indra, “furthermore, Kauśika, the son or daughter of a good family who studies, holds and recites the Prajñāpāramitā ... even if he joins the battle, he will not be killed by a weapon.” (佛語釋提桓因: “復次, 拘翼。善男子善女人般若波羅蜜學者、持者、誦者...正使入軍, 不被兵” T 224, p.431c010-12)

⁹⁸ This refers to the first case concerning *caityabhūta* in § 2.1. In the old versions of the corresponding passage, the simile of *caitya* is not observable, but the place where the Prajñāpāramitā is held (APL: 般若波羅蜜所止處) is mentioned.

⁹⁹ This is also pointed out by Conze (1967:164-165) in his critical edition and study of the *Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdya-sūtra*. He quotes the Skt. parallel in the *Śatasahasrikā* (100,000 stanzas) as an example, and in this passage only the *mahāvidyā*, *anuttarā vidyā* and *asamasamā vidyā* are concerned, which are very close to the enumeration in the Heart Sūtra.

reborn in the border regions are at least reborn in the big towns. This is another mark of irreversibility.¹⁰⁰ (Conze 1975a:206)

As widely known, the middle region (*madhya-deśa*), including Magadha and Kośala etc., is supposed to be the place where the Buddha and chief disciples were born. By virtue of this connection, the early Buddhist tradition regarded rebirth in the border regions as one of eight wrong circumstances (Pāli. *atthakkhana*). However, this AP passage adds the big towns of border regions to the potential rebirth places for an irreversible Bodhisattva. This is quite similar to the situation of Gandhāra Buddhism around the turn of the Common Era, and thus this passage seems to serve as an apologetic for the authority of Buddhist communities in the border regions. It is possible that the popular religious practice related to incantation in Gandhāra influenced the acceptance and perhaps the very usage of incantations in Prajñāpāramitā literature.

The protective function of the Prajñāpāramitā text in AP gave rise to many further such developments in the Prajñāpāramitā literature. Because the recitation of the Prajñāpāramitā text in a public or private ritual was regarded as a method of purification and protection, the shorter texts, such as the Heart Sūtra or the *Adhyardhaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā*, were composed for the convenience of recitation by later Prajñāpāramitā traditions.

Summary

So far we have outlined the different rhetorical techniques at work in AP that served to establish the relationship between the Prajñāpāramitā and the Buddha and which, in turn, establish the authority of the Prajñāpāramitā (text). These devices – word plays, similes and misguided displacements, etc. (§ 2.2) – enabled, on the one hand, the identification of the Prajñāpāramitā as the mother of Buddhas, and, on the other, the equation of the Prajñāpāramitā with the Buddha, following the model of “seeing dharma is seeing the Buddha” (§ 2.3). In certain historical contexts of a posterior period, the similes were further extended to depict the Prajñāpāramitā as a female bodhisattva, or to establish the notion that the Prajñāpāramitā text was the *dharmakāya* of the Buddha.

We also detailed a series of ritual actions associated with the cult of text, such as taking up, reciting, and explaining the Prajñāpāramitā text, which repeatedly occur in roughly one

¹⁰⁰ *punar aparaṃ subhūte avinivartanīyā bodhisattvā mahāsattvāḥ kāmāvacarebhyo devebhyas cyutā rūpāvacarebhyā ārūpyāvacarebhyo vā devebhyas cyutāḥ santaḥ ihaiva madhyadeśe jambūdvīpe pratyājāyante | yatra sattvāḥ kalāsu kovidāḥ, kāvyesu kovidāḥ, mantreṣu kovidāḥ, vidyāsu kovidāḥ, śāstreṣu kovidāḥ, nimitteṣu kovidāḥ, dharmārthakovidāḥ | alpakāḥ pratyantajanapadeṣu pratyājāyante, yad bhūyastvena madhyadeśe pratyājāyante | ye 'pi pratyanteṣu janapadeṣu pratyājāyante, te 'pi mahānagareṣu pratyājāyante | ete 'pi teṣāṃ guṇāḥ saṃvidyante | ebhir api subhūte ākārair ebhir liṅgaṃ ebhir nimittaiḥ samanvāgato bodhisattvo mahāsattvo 'vinivartanīyo 'nuttarāyāḥ samyak sambodher dhārayitavyaḥ |* (Vaidya 1960a:167)

third of the AP. These ritual actions are emphasised in particular for their instrumentality in producing merit (§ 2.4) and their protective function (§ 2.5). The former goal was traditionally regarded as the impetus of the Buddhist ethic and soteriological praxis; whereas the latter function is described being central in the effort to “gain advantages here and now”, as with the later *dhāraṇī* texts. This reveals that passages related to the cult of Prajñāpāramitā text in AP were not only constituted by the rhetorical strategies, but that they also comprised a primary tenet of Prajñāpāramitā followers’ devotional practice.

Both rhetorically associating the Prajñāpāramitā text with the Buddha and emphasizing the practical benefits of holding and spreading the text contributed to a prolific diffusion of the text. Perhaps most significant is that these two methods are inseparable in this regard: arguing that the Tathāgata comes forth from the Prajñāpāramitā text demonstrates that the text has a higher significance than the stūpas and relics, whilst concurrently establishing the text’s apotropaic function. In this way, rhetorical techniques are not only used to establish the authority of the text, but they are also connected with ritual actions related to the Prajñāpāramitā text in daily life.

3. The Samādhi of direct encounter with the present Buddhas and the Sadāprarudita story

In the last two chapters we investigated several passages of AP that connected the word of the Buddha, the Prajñāpāramitā (text), with the very existence of the Buddha, or that defined the Prajñāpāramitā texts as the mother of the Buddha. In justification of this new interpretation, certain rhetorical techniques and word plays were employed to emphasise the importance of key tenets of Prajñāpāramitā teaching (such as emptiness, signless and wishless etc.) and attributes of the Prajñāpāramitā text. Similar strategies were also utilised to affirm an equally novel principle that understanding the Prajñāpāramitā teaching and reading and reciting Prajñāpāramitā texts could serve as an important mechanism for “seeing” the Buddha.

While this much is clear, less so is that the majority of AP describes only modes of the metaphorical “seeing” the Buddha, whereas passages that deal with literally “seeing” or encountering the Buddha as part of meditational practices, such as *buddhānusmṛti* or Buddha-visualisation etc., are quite rare. A prime example of the latter is the story of Sadāprarudita bodhisattva, covering the last two chapters of AP. Originally the narrative appears to have circulated as an independent text. This is deducible from its absence in several versions of AP and LP, but also due to it being the only narrative story in the Prajñāpāramitā tradition, quite different in style from the rest, that focuses on philosophical discourse.

The occurrence of Buddha-visualisation in the Sadāprarudita story may reflect the popularity of this practice among the followers of Prajñāpāramitā teaching at the beginning of the Common Era. In this chapter, I would like to point out some similarities in detail between the episodes of the Sadāprarudita story in the Prajñāpāramitā text and the process of the meditation practice described in the *Pratyutpanna-buddha Saṃmukhāvasthita Samādhi Sūtra* (henceforth PSS) (see § 3.3), which has not drawn enough attention in previous studies (see § 3.1).

These parallelisms reveal that the contents of the story in the Prajñāpāramitā text are closely linked to the PSS directly, or that they are based on the practice of the corresponding *samādhi*. To provide a better understanding of its composition and its practical background, I shall conduct a literary and historical analysis of this narrative (see § 3.4).

3.1 Previous studies on the Sadāprarudita story

Lancaster (1968, 1974) discusses the two versions of the Sadāprarudita story in Prajñāpāramitā texts and its parallel partly preserved in one early collection of Jātakas translated into Chinese, the *Liu-du Ji Jing* 六度集經 (T 152). The narratives encountered in Prajñāpāramitā texts can be grouped into two versions (with the supplement by Yang 2013:146):

Version I

This version is only found in two earliest Ch. translations of the AP:

- (1) Chapter 28-29 of APL
- (2) Chapter 28-29 of APZh

Version II

This version refers to a number of texts in Sanskrit, in Chinese and in Tibetan:

- (1) Chapter 30-31 of APN
- (2) Chapter 30-31 APKj
- (3) Chapter 30-31 APD
- (4) Chapter 30-31 APT
- (5) Chapter 88-89 of LPM
- (6) Chapter 88-89 of LPKj
- (7) Chapter 85-86 of LPT1¹⁰¹ (= ADSP)
- (8) Chapter 73-75 of LPT2¹⁰² (= PSP)
- (9) Chapter 77-78 of LPX (I) (= ŚSP)

Lancaster describes the process by which Sadāprarudita searches for the Prajñāpāramitā, as well as his dialogues with the Dharma-preacher of the Prajñāpāramitā, Dharmodgata, in different versions (Lancaster 1968:199–309 and 1974:83–90). Based on Lancaster's work, the general structure and the differences between the two versions of AP are summarized by Stephan Beyer (1977:329-340) as follows:

The episodic structure of **Version I**:

- (1) Sadāprarudita has two dreams that tell him to seek out the Law, but his initial quest is unsuccessful;
- (2) He has a vision of a deity who gives him instruction¹⁰³, but he is overcome with doubt;
- (3) He has a vision of a magically created Buddha who tells him of the land of Gandhavatī and of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata who lives there;
- (4) He enters into a *samādhi* wherein he sees the Buddhas of the ten directions;
- (5) He overcomes tremendous obstacles and makes great sacrifices on his quest for Gandhavatī;
- (6) He reaches the realm of Dharmodgata, hears the Law, and enters once more the

¹⁰¹ *Shes-rab-kyi pha-rol-tu phyin-pa khri-brgyad stong-pa*. Peking ed. No. 732.

¹⁰² *Shes-rab-kyi pha-rol-tu phyin-pa stong-phrag nyi-shu lnga-pa*. Peking ed. No. 731.

¹⁰³ This is not exactly what the text says. I suggest changing it to: “He hears the sound in the sky which gives him instructions”.

samādhi of episode (4).

Version II basically has the same structure but begins at episode (2) with a voice from the sky, and episode (6) consists in his asking Dharmodgata about the metaphysical implications of the *samādhi*: “Where do the Buddhas go?”

Beyer puts the episodes of Version I into three strata:

- (I) The involuntary visionary revelation (1-4).
- (II) The arduous quest for a magical buddha-field.
- (III) Reaching the buddha-field and hearing the Law.

Beyer’s main contribution to the discussion of the *Sadāprarudita* story is two-fold: he concentrates on the function of the visions in this text; and he associates this tripartite structure with a wide range of similar texts; including, the *Sadāparibhūta* story in *Saddhp* and the story of Queen *Vaidehī* in *Amitāyurdhyānasūtra* and *Dharmākara* in the *LSukh* (Beyer 1977:329-332).¹⁰⁴

A more recent study is to be found in the doctoral dissertation of Huang-Yi Yang (2013) from Sydney University. Yang focuses on the historical data in the different versions and attempts to make a more detailed philological study. She does not agree with the opinion that Version II stemmed from Version I (Yang 2013:145), but suggests, based on two significant segments in Version I which are missing from Version II,¹⁰⁵ that there is a (hypothetical) earlier version without the two segments and the lists of various *samādhi*, and that both version I and II stemmed from this urtext. The first segment, which corresponds to the first episode quoted above, will be also discussed in our study (cf. § 3.3).

3.2 *Pratyutpanna-Samādhi Sūtra* and its relationship to *Prajñāpāramitā* literature

The close geographical and textual relationship between PSS and AP is first reflected in the fact that the translator of the former, Lokakṣema, is the same of the first Ch. version of the latter. Notably, they were translated in the same year and probably before all other translations made by Lokakṣema.

As Harrison (1978a) notes, textual evidence suggests that PSS was significantly influenced by early *Prajñāpāramitā* thought. He examines a number of paragraphs that reveal its

¹⁰⁴ In addition, he connects the vision quest shared in this series of texts with non-Buddhist texts. However, this is beyond the scope of our present discussion.

¹⁰⁵ These two segments are: the incident of *Sadāprarudita* receiving revelations before he hears a voice in the air while in the wilderness, and the incident of *Sadāprarudita* receiving another teaching from *Dharmodgata* after he enters into various *samādhis* for the second time. (Yang 2013:149)

“resemblance in tone and content to much of the Prajñāpāramitā literature”, and argues that the “Pratyutpanna-sūtra embodies, inter alia, an interpretation of the *buddhānusmṛti* experience which has certain affinities with the Prajñāpāramitā” (1978a:51). He also focuses on one passage from PSS concerning the formulation: “Did these Tathāgatas come from somewhere? Did I go anywhere?” This question is linked with an episode from the Sadāprarudita story, in which we read the formula: “where did those Tathāgatas come from, and where have those Tathāgatas gone?” (1978a:46-48).¹⁰⁶

Furthermore, the idea of the mother of Buddhas or bodhisattvas related to our previous discussion (see § 2.2) can be also found in PSS:

Do you know, Bhadrāpala, that this meditation is the eye of bodhisattvas, is the mother of bodhisattvas, is the object of devotion of bodhisattvas, and is the origin of bodhisattvas?¹⁰⁷ (Harrison 1998:66)

As Harrison notes in the introduction of his edition and translation of the Tibetan PSS:

The two branches of the Mahāyāna went their own way, the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* and related sūtras hardly mentioning Śūnyatā while the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras in their turn pass over in silence the question of rebirth in Sukhāvatī and similar worlds. Accordingly, *buddhānusmṛti* or, more generally, encounters in meditation or otherwise with Buddhas, has quite different functions in the Prajñāpāramitā and Pure Land texts. The *Pratyutpanna-sūtra*, however, goes some way towards bridging this gap, for it propounds *buddhānusmṛti* in terms of the doctrine of Śūnyatā and at the same time refers to Amitābha. (Harrison 1978:39)

It is possible that the main body of AP was composed before PSS and that both derive from the same Buddhist community. However, as Karashima points out, the Sadāprarudita story was quite probably added later to the main body of the early AP, since APL mentions the cult of the *prajñāpāramitā* text, and some passages reveal that it was written down in the Gāndhāra area (Karashima 2012). This section shall demonstrate that the Sadāprarudita story was very likely influenced by PSS. I take the passages from APL as the example of Version I, and the Skt. text of APN for Version II. In PSS, we are concerned mainly with Chapter 2 “Practice”, and partly Chapter 15 “The Buddha Satyanāma” and Chapter 4 “Similes” in the Lokakṣema version. The parallels in the Tibetan translations of PSS will be also considered.

¹⁰⁶ This will be also discussed in § 3.3.

¹⁰⁷ 若曹知不，陀和，是三昧者是菩薩眼、諸菩薩母、諸菩薩所歸仰、諸菩薩所出生。(T 418, p.913c24-26)

3.3 Some similarities between Sadāprarudita story and *Pratyutpanna-Samādhi Sūtra*

The Sadāprarudita story is closely related to the PSS not only by virtue of containing the same *samādhi* but also by the very way it structures the course of seeking for Prajñāpāramitā, paralleling episodes 1-4 of Beyer's episodic structure. In the course of seeking for the Prajñāpāramitā, crying and joy occur alternately and roughly mark the beginning and the end of each episode. According to this principle, I redivide and generalise the first five episodes given by Beyer:

Episode 1: Sadāprarudita had two dreams that told him to seek out the Law, but his initial quest was unsuccessful.

Episode 2: He heard a sound in the sky, which gave him further instructions, but he was overcome with doubt.

Episode 3: He had a vision of a magically created Buddha who told him of the land of Gandhavaṭī and of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata, and then entered into a samādhi, wherein he saw the Buddhas of the ten directions. But waking up from the samādhi, he lost the vision of Buddhas and set out in search of the answer to the question: “where did the Buddhas come from and go towards?”

Episode 4: He wished to be sold in order to collect offerings for Dharmodgata, but this was hindered by the magic of Māra.

Episode 5: Wishing to test him, Indra manifested as a Brahman and asked Sadāprarudita to cut his body for sacrifice. When Sadāprarudita began to do so, he was prevented by a merchant's daughter, who thereafter led him to the place of Dharmodgata.

Based on their redivision, we present a comparison of the episodes and the course of seeking for Prajñāpāramitā as follows.

Episode 1:

(1) Good conducts in previous lives:

At the beginning of Version I, the Buddha expounds the reason why Sadāprarudita sought Prajñāpāramitā by way of elucidating the merit he had accumulated in previous lives, with an especial focus on his vow and donations to innumerable Buddhas (T 224, p.470c23-27). This episode is completely different from the beginning of Version II, where it raises the question: “how was the prajñāpāramitā sought by Sadāprarudita bodhisattva?” (*katham bhagavan sadāpraruditena bodhisattvena mahāsattveneyam prajñāpāramitā paryeṣitā?*¹⁰⁸)

¹⁰⁸ Cf. APN, Vaidya 1960a:238.

Chapter 4 of Lokakṣema's PSS is quite similar to Version I. There we find that the believer or practitioner of the *pratyutpanna-samādhi* has seen past Buddhas in his previous lives and earned merits under their instruction.

The Buddha said: "If anyone believes in this meditation, that person has seen past Buddhas in former lives. It is just for the sake of these believers that I therefore preach this meditation..."¹⁰⁹ (Harrison 1998:29)

The matter of good conduct in former lives is also explicitly mentioned in a parallel in the Tibetan PSS: "at some future time those *bhikṣus* who are highly discerning, have done their duty under former *Jinas* and have engendered wholesome potentialities" (Harrison 1990:57, 6G). Lokakṣema's PSS continues: "... these people have not made merit under just one Buddha ... they have all heard this meditation under a hundred Buddhas. If, when they hear this meditation at a future time, they copy, study, recite and keep the volumes of the sutra ..." ¹¹⁰ (Harrison 1998:30, akin to the Tibetan passage). In this context, we find a rhetorical strategy that the meditation (*samādhi*) is identified with the PSS text itself, just as the Prajñāpāramitā is identified with the Prajñāpāramitā text (cf. § 2.2). Therefore a praising of ritual actions towards the text in AP also occurs in PSS.

(2) The association with the dream

Whilst absent in Version II, Version I describes how the process of seeking out the Prajñāpāramitā is initiated by a dream:

At that time, the bodhisattva dreamed that the gods from Trayastriṃśa said to him: "In the past there was a Buddha called *tan-wu-jie-a-zhu-jie-luo* (? 曇無竭阿祝竭羅). After the bodhisattva heard about the name of the Buddha, he woke up. Upon waking up, he danced for joy, left his home, and went to a desolate place in the mountains. He abandoned his bodily (desire) without looking for anything. Then he cried very loudly and thought: As the result of my evil behaviors, I cannot see the Buddha, nor listen to his Teaching, nor

¹⁰⁹ 佛言: "有信是三昧者, 其人宿命曾見過去佛, 已用是故, 我為是信者說是三昧耳。..." (T 418, p.907c02-04)

¹¹⁰ 已其人不獨於一佛所作功德 ... 悉於百佛所聞是三昧, 却後世時聞是三昧者, 書學誦持經卷。 (T 418, p.907c17-20)

attain the *dharma* which bodhisattvas should practice.” Then the bodhisattva Sadāprarudita cried.¹¹¹ (T 224, p.471a10-16)

This is comparable with one passage from Chapter 15 of PSS, where the narrative’s setting is quite similar, but the names of the key figures variant:

The Buddha said: “Long ago in the past there was another Buddha by the name of Satyanama, a Tathāgata, an Arhat, and a Perfectly Awakened One. At that time there was a monk by the name of Varuna. After the Parinirvana of that Buddha, this monk was in possession of this meditation. I was then a king of the Ksatriya caste, and in a dream I heard about this meditation. On waking, I then went in search of the monk who possessed this meditation, and forthwith became an ascetic under him. I wished to hear this meditation once under this monk. I served the teacher for thirty-six thousand years, but because of the frequent occurrence of acts of Māra I did not once succeed in hearing it.”

¹¹² (Harrison 1998:99)

This description is the same as the Tibetan version of PSS (see Harrison 1990:185, 23W). Interestingly, this story in PSS is also similar to Sadāprarudita’s whole process of searching for the Prajñāpāramitā, in both Versions I, and II. What remains unique to PSS and Version I is that at the beginning of the story the endeavour to search for the teacher is initiated by an experience in a dream. Version II, in contrast, only briefly mentions the name of another Buddha, *bhīṣmagarjitanirghoṣasvara tathāgata*.

Furthermore, in Version I, the frustration first experienced upon seeing the Buddha, whose name was perceived by the bodhisattva, is explained as being the result of his own previous evil deeds; in comparison, in PSS, the same experience is attributed to the acts of Māra. It is noteworthy that the action of seeking in both Version I and PSS is caused by the intention of preserving the true teaching of the Buddha after his Parinirvāṇa. For both, therefore, a perturbation regarding the absence of the Buddha and the loss of his teaching are of primary concern.

¹¹¹ 時薩陀波倫菩薩於夢中，忉利天人語言：“前世有佛，名曇無竭阿祝竭羅。”是時，菩薩於夢中聞佛名即覺。覺已，即大歡喜踊躍，即棄捐家入深山中無人之處。棄身無所貪慕而大啼哭，自念言：“我惡所致不見佛不聞經，不得菩薩所行法。”是時薩陀波倫菩薩啼哭。

¹¹² 佛言：“乃往昔時復有佛，名薩遮那摩怛薩阿竭阿羅訶三耶三佛。時有比丘名和輪，其佛般泥洹後，是比丘持是三昧。我爾時作國王刹利種，於夢中聞是三昧，覺已便行求持是三昧。比丘即從作沙門。欲得於是比丘所一反聞是三昧。承事師三萬六千歲，魔事數數起不得一反聞。”(T 418, p.918c17-23)

The emotional change of bodhisattva Sadāprarudita is depicted in Version I, but it is not found in PSS. We may deduce that the presence of this narrative tenet in the former was quite obviously a strategy applied by a good story-teller to render the story more persuasive: portrayals of joy and sadness appear alternately, accompanying and therefore marking the progress of plot.

Episode 2:

Version II of the story begins with such an episode, in which a sound from the sky gives instruction to Sadāprarudita regarding how can one attain Prajñāpāramitā. In the two versions, the point of the instruction is two-fold, and in substance these two messages can be associated with the contents of PSS.

(1) The instruction on concentration

In both versions, the first instruction we encounter concerns mental concentration. Version I states one should go to the east undistracted by directions or by other emotional and sensory stimulants:

The voice answered the bodhisattva: Go to the east from here, don't take a rest. When you go, don't think of left, of right, of forth, of back, of upwards, of downwards, of going itself; When you go, don't think of danger, of joy; don't think of eating, of drinking; don't think of sitting, of walking on the path, of ceasing midway; don't think of lust, of anger, of ignorance ... Walking to the east and having abandoned all these thoughts, the one who conducts themselves entirely in this manner, is able to hear the Prajñāpāramitā before long.¹¹³ (T 224, p.471a23-b07)

The parallel passage of Version II also enumerates the list of distractions, albeit in a slightly different sequence, but again emphasis the practice of walking without paying attention to the direction:

And go in such a manner that you do not pay attention to the weariness of body (*kāyaklamatha*), to torpor (*styāna*) or sleepiness (*middha*), to food (*bhojana*) or drink (*pānīya*), to night (*rātri*) or day (*divasa*), to cold (*śīta*) or heat (*uṣṇa*). Do not settle your the mind anywhere, inside (*adhyātma*) or outside (*bahirdhā*); do not look left (*vāma*), right

¹¹³ 虚空中聲報菩薩言：從是東行莫得休息。汝行時，莫念左、莫念右、莫念前、莫念後、莫念上、莫念下、莫念行。行時，莫念恐怖、莫念喜、莫念食、莫念飲、莫念坐、莫念行道、莫念中止、莫念姪、莫念怒、莫念癡 ... 從是東行悉斷念已，作是行不缺者，令得聞般若波羅蜜不久。

/ south (*dakṣiṇa*), east (*pūrva*), west (*paścima*) or north (*uttara*), upwards (*ūrdhvam*), downwards (*ādha*), or towards any of the intermediate directions (*anuvidiśam*).¹¹⁴

Although the very possibility of walking without paying attention to directions may appear rather strange, such a negation is a quite regular formulation of Prajñāpāramitā. The basic intention of both Versions I and II is to articulate the principle of going as form of meditative concentration devoid of any thought. Turning to PSS, the mental concentration on the Buddha is emphasized in one passage:

The Buddha said to the bodhisattva Bhadrapala: “Any bodhisattvas whose thoughts are at present concentrated and directed towards the Buddhas of the ten quarters, will, if they possess mental concentration, achieve all the exalted practices of a bodhisattva. What is mental concentration? Through (a) compliance with the conditions for reflection on the Buddha, having one's thoughts directed towards the Buddha (*Buddhamanasikāra*); (b) having thoughts which are not disturbed, (c) thereby obtaining wisdom; (d) not giving up energy; (e) joining together with good friends in the practice of emptiness; (f) eliminating sleepiness; ...”¹¹⁵ (Harrison 1998:15)

This paragraph occupies a crucial position in the text as it stands at the very beginning of the chapter 2 titled “Practice”. In its Tibetan counterpart, this explanation regarding mental concentration (定意) is extended to 154 items, following the question: “what then is the *samādhi* called Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present?” The respective explanations quoted above correspond to numbers (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) + (6) and (8) of those given in the Tibetan witness (Harrison 1990:26, 2D).

Notably, this paragraph parallels a long versified passage in another version of PSS, T 417 (traditionally attributed to Lokakṣema, but it appears to be an abridgment of T 418 with some interpolations¹¹⁶). This versified passage serves as something of a brief introduction to the practice of the *pratyutpanna-samādhi*:

¹¹⁴ *tathā ca gaccha, yathā na kāyaklamathamānasikāramutpādayasi, na styānamiddhamānasikāramutpādayasi, na bhojanamānasikāramutpādayasi, na pānīyamānasikāramutpādayasi, na rātrimānasikāramutpādayasi, na divasamānasikāramutpādayasi, na śītamānasikāramutpādayasi, noṣṇamānasikāramutpādayasi / mā ca kvacīc cittam praṇidhāḥ adhyātmaṃ vā bahirdhā vā / mā ca kulaputra vāmenālokayan gāḥ, mā dakṣiṇena, mā pūrveṇa, mā paścimena, mottareṇa, mordhvam, mādhaḥ, mā ca anuvidiśamavalokayan gāḥ* / (Vaidya 1960a:238)

¹¹⁵ 佛告陀和菩薩：“若有菩薩所念現在，定意向十方佛。若有定意，一切得菩薩高行。何等爲定意？從念佛因緣，向佛念意不亂，從得點，不捨精進，與善知識共行空，除睡眠...” (T 418, p.904b24-28)

¹¹⁶ Cf. Harrison 1978:41.

Raise your mind single-mindedly, believe this teaching: according to (the name of the Buddha) that you have heard, recollect the direction (of that Buddha). Single-mindedness is appropriate, and cut down all the other thoughts ... Do not think of proceeding, do not think of retreating; do not think of front, do not think of back; do not think of left, do not think of right ... Do not think of hungry, do not think of thirst. Do not think of cold, do not think of heat. Do not think of suffering, do not think of happiness...¹¹⁷ (T 417, 898b13-22)

It is possible that this paragraph was composed in Chinese, since the form of the verse is distinct from any other text demonstrably translated from an Indian original. However, the high degree of similarity between the mental concentration in this paragraph, especially the practice of not focusing on directions, and the records in Versions I II (quoted above) do at least prove that the mental concentration seen in the Sadāprarudita story is not only associated with walking. The emphasis on mental concentration fits the context of meditation much better, and was very probably changed at some stage to the concentration on the Prajñāpāramitā, which replaced the original target of concentration, the figure of the Buddha.

(2) The instruction on paying respect to the *Dharmabhāṇaka*

Following the instruction quoted above in Version I, we reads as follows:

When the past buddhas walked on the bodhisattva path, they sought the Prajñāpāramitā in like manner. Having obtained the Prajñāpāramitā and having followed its teaching, one will attain enlightenment immediately. If one exerts oneself in this manner, he will immediately attain enlightenment.¹¹⁸ (T 224, p.471b07-10)

Version II of this episode extends the subject matter and contains an additional passage about paying respect to the Dharma-preacher (*dharmabhāṇaka*).¹¹⁹ In this instruction on paying respect to the Dharma-preacher, an explicit equation is made between the figure of the Dharma-preacher and the Teacher (*śāstr*, an epithet of the Buddha).

¹¹⁷ 立一念，信是法；隨所聞，念其方；宜一念，斷諸想...勿念進，勿念退；勿念前，勿念後；勿念左，勿念右；...勿念飢，勿念渴；勿念寒，勿念熱；勿念苦，勿念樂 ...

¹¹⁸ 過去諸佛行菩薩道時，索般若波羅蜜如是。得般若波羅蜜，隨其教者得佛疾。作是精進行者，當疾得佛。

¹¹⁹ This matter will be also be addressed in § 3.4.

Practicing in this way, you, good man, will hear the *prajñāpāramitā* before long, either from a book, or from the monastic Dharma-preacher. In his presence you may hear the *prajñāpāramitā*, and thereupon his designation as a Teacher should be generated by you.¹²⁰

This passage in the *Sadāprarudita* story is further supported by another passage, which defends the Dharma-preacher's acceptance and enjoyment of the offerings he may receive:

You should be aware of the action of *Māra*. It is the case, good man, that the evil spirit *Māra* interrupts the form, sound, smell, taste, and touch of the Dharma-preacher, the bodhisatva and great being, serving, satiating, and revering [the Dharma-preacher]. Overcoming them, [the Dharma-preacher] is served, satiated, and honored with skill in means. In this case, good man, you should not generate a thought of disapprobation (*aprasāda*) towards the monastic Dharma-preacher.¹²¹

In this passage, the offerings – some of them, being attributed to evil, presented as exceeding the limit of traditional Buddhist moral disciplines – are supposed to be enjoyed by the Dharma-preacher though skill in means (*upāyakauśalya*). Later, the injunction to obey the Dharma-preacher is again emphasised:

... Thus you, good man, observing the real principle of all dharmas and following the Dharma-preacher, will be soon adept in the *prajñāpāramitā*. Moreover you, good man, should be aware of the action of *Māra*. If, good man, the Dharma-preacher rebukes a good man aiming at *prajñāpāramitā*, he is not aware, and [even] in this case, good man, you should not make an opposition. Rather, though aiming at dharma, valuing dharma and having a non-downcast mind, the monastic Dharma-preacher should be followed.¹²²

¹²⁰ *evam tvam kulaputra pratipadyamāno nacireṇa prajñāpāramitāṃ śroṣyasi pustakatātāṃ vā dharmabhāṇakasya bhikṣoḥ kāyagatāṃ / yasya ca tvam kulaputra antikāt prajñāpāramitāṃ śṛṇuyāḥ śāstrsamjñā tvayā tatotpādayitavyā /* (Vaidya 1960a:238-239)

¹²¹ *mārakarmāṇi ca tvayā avaboddhavyāni / asti hi kulaputra māraḥ pāpīyān dharmabhāṇakasya bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya rūpaśabdagandharasasparśān upasaṃharati sevituṃ bhaktuṃ paryupāsituṃ / tāṃś cāsāv abhibhūya upāyakauśalyena parisevate bhajate paryupāste / tatra ca tvayā kulaputra dharmabhāṇake bhikṣau nāprasādacittam utpādayitavyam /* (Vaidya 1960a:239)

¹²² *...evam tvam kulaputra sarvadharmāṇāṃ bhūtanayaṃ pratyavekṣamāno dharmabhāṇakam anubadhnann acireṇa prajñāpāramitāyāṃ niryāsyasi / aparam api tvam kulaputra mārakarma samanvāhareḥ / sacet kulaputra dharmabhāṇakaḥ prajñāpāramitārthikaṃ kulaputram avasādayati, na samanvāharati, tatra tvayā kulaputra na prativāṇiḥ kartavyā / api tu dharmārthikenaiva dharmagauraveṇaiva anirviṇṇamānasena dharmabhāṇako bhikṣur anubaddhavyaḥ //* (Vaidya 1960a: 239)

The emphasis on giving donations to or strictly following the Dharma-preacher¹²³ in Version II is comparable with one passage in Chapter 15 of PSS, the chapter already mentioned in Episode 1, (2). We will continue this discussion in Episode 4 and 5, wherein we read that Sadāprarudita tries hard to prepare donations for the Dharma-preacher, and bodhisattva Dharmodgata.

Episode 3

This episode is essential to our focus on the visualisation of the Buddha, because it is the first time that the Buddha figure occurs in the story; rather than the gods in the dream or the sound from the sky, as in previous episodes. In this episode, many passages resemble the contents of PSS Chapter 2, entitled *Practice*.

(1) The quest for the exact way of seeking the Prajñāpāramitā

This part is a transitional passage between Episode 2 and 3, and is closely followed by the manifestation of the Buddha figure in Episode 3, (2). The passage in Version I is brief:

At that time, when Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita heard of this teaching, he danced very much for joy. He followed this teaching to walk to the east, and had no attachment at all in his mind. When he walked half of the way he had this in mind: ‘how long from here can I attain Prajñāpāramitā?’ After having this mind, he cried again.¹²⁴ (Karashima 2011:468 n. 258, 259)

Version II also contains the above passage but is followed closely thereafter by the following words:

... Stood there on this spot on the earth, weeping, wailing, crying, and lamenting, he thought thus: “At this spot I will spend one day and night, or two, three, four, five, six,

¹²³ Respecting the Dharma-preacher can be also found in other paragraph from PSS:

“Honor as you would the Lord of the World, the Dharma teacher

From whom you hear this meditation.” (Harrison 1998:43)

Equating the Dharma-Preacher to the Buddha is in line with what we have seen in the main body of AP (see § 2), but the emphasis of giving donation to Dharma-preacher can not be found in this part.

¹²⁴ 是時薩陀波倫菩薩聞是教法，倍踊躍歡欣。隨是教，即東行，心適無所著。行中道作是念：“去是幾所，乃當得般若波羅蜜？”作是念已住復大啼哭。(T 224, p.471b12-15)

seven days and nights. I will not pay attention to the weariness of body, torpor, food or drink, night or day, cold or heat, until I hear the *prajñāpāramitā* ...”¹²⁵

This emphasis of the mental concentration, and especially the duration of the concentration, is comparable with another passage of Chapter 2 in PSS, in which it is said that concentration on the Amitābha Buddha takes seven days until one sees him:

In the same way, Bhadrāpala, bodhisattvas, whether they be ascetics or wearers of white [laymen or laywomen], having learned of the Buddhafield of Amitābha in the western quarter, should call to mind the Buddha in that quarter. They should not break the precepts, and call him to mind single-mindedly, either for one day and one night, or for seven days and seven nights. After seven days they will see the Buddha Amitābha. If they do not see him in the waking state, then they will see him in a dream¹²⁶. (Harrison 1998:17-18)

The result of this striving is a vision of Amitābha during an awake or dream state. In the Sadāprarudita story, in comparison, the result of this continuous concentration is the manifestation of the Buddha in the sky.

(2) The manifestation of the Buddha figure

In Version I, the following passage concerns the manifestation of the Buddha:

The Buddha manifested himself in the sky, and stood there. Then he said: “well done, well done, what you seek is difficult. Since you exert yourself in this manner, you will soon attain Prajñāpāramitā. Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita, with folded palms, looked up at the magically conjured buddha whose golden body, possessing the thirty-two characteristics,

¹²⁵ *sa tatraiva pṛthivīpradeśe sthito 'bhūt / tatra rudan krandan śocan paridevamānaḥ evaṃ cintayati sma - asmin neva pṛthivīpradeśe ekaṃ vā rātriṃdivam atināmayiṣyāmi, dve vā, trīṇi vā, catvāri vā, pañca vā, ṣaḍ vā, sapta vā rātriṃdivānyatināmayiṣyāmi / na kāyaklamathanasikāram utpādayiṣyāmi / na styānamiddhamanasikāram utpādayiṣyāmi / na bhojanamanasikāram utpādayiṣyāmi / na pāṇīyamanasikāram utpādayiṣyāmi / na rātrimanasikāram utpādayiṣyāmi / na divasamanasikāram utpādayiṣyāmi / na śītamanasikāram utpādayiṣyāmi / noṣṇamanasikāram utpādayiṣyāmi, yāvan na prajñāpāramitāṃ śroṣyāmīti* / (Vaidya 1960a:239)

This passage is in line with the APKj (T 227, p.580c07-14).

¹²⁶ 如是，毘陀和，菩薩，若沙門、白衣，所聞西方阿彌陀佛刹，當念彼方佛。不得缺戒，一心念若一晝夜、若七日七夜。過七日以後，見阿彌陀佛。於覺不見，於夢中見之。(T 418, p. 905a14-17)

Not breaking the precepts and concentrating up to seven days and nights are also detailed in the Tibetan version (Harrison 1990:32, 3B).

emitted hundreds of millions of rays of light.”¹²⁷ (T 224, p.471b16-20)

In Version II the figure of the Buddha (*tathāgatavighraha*) also manifested, but without a description of the Buddha figure.¹²⁸ To compare, we can turn to the figure of the Buddha, as described in Chapter 2 ‘Practice’ of PSS, where, as in Version I, the thirty-two characteristic marks and the radiance of the Buddha are concerned:

The Buddha said: “Because of this calling to mind of the Buddha, these bodhisattvas will succeed in being born in the realm of the Buddha Amitābha. They should always call him to mind in this way: The Buddha's body is endowed with all the thirty-two marks, he radiates light, he is fine and upstanding beyond compare, in the midst of the assembly of monks he preaches the sutras, and the sutras he preaches are of indestructible form.”¹²⁹ (Harrison 1998:19)

The thirty-two marks can be also seen in other places in PSS (T 418, p.906b03-08). Of course, the characterization of the Buddha body as thirty-two marks occurs very often in Buddhist texts. However, the relevant passages in PSS and in Sadāprarudita story represent the earliest records related specifically to the visualisation of the Buddha body.

(3) Instruction on the land of Gāndhāvātī

To show Sadāprarudita how he should seek the Prajñāpāramitā, the manifested Buddha orally illustrates the country (city) Gāndhāvātī and the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata. He states that the country is comprised of seven jewels and that there are trees decorated with seven jewels. Seven rivers surround the city, where the lotuses are grown. None but the bodhisattvas live in the city, and among them Dharmodgata, who always preaches Prajñāpāramitā for the bodhisattvas, is the most honored (T 224, p.471c03-472a07 = APN p.240-241). The description of the country Gāndhāvātī is quite close to that of the Buddha-field in the smaller Sukhāvātīvūha (for a detailed study see § 4.1.2), where the trees, rivers etc. are concerned. In this Buddha-field, Amitābha preaches *dharma* for the bodhisattvas, just as Dharmodgata does in the country Gāndhāvātī. The presence of the Buddha-field in the Sadāprarudita story

¹²⁷ 上方虛空中化作佛，在空中立言：“善哉，善哉！如若所索者甚難。如汝作是精進者，今得般若波羅蜜不久。薩陀波倫菩薩叉手仰向視化佛，身有金色，身放十億光炎，身有三十二相。

¹²⁸ Cf. Vaidya 1960a:240.

¹²⁹ 佛言：“是菩薩用是念佛故，當得生阿彌陀佛國。常當念如是佛身有三十二相悉具足，光明徹照，端正無比，在比丘僧中說經。”(T 418, p.905b13-16)

The Tibetan text reads “endowed with the thirty-two marks of the Great Man and a body with a colour like gold, resembling a bright, shining, and well-set golden image” (Harrison 1990:37, 3F).

can also be linked with another fact; namely, that here, as with PSS, the Buddha-field is portrayed as being the result of meditational practice: the recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānusmṛti* 念佛):

In the same way, Bhadrapala, bodhisattvas hear about the Buddha Amitābha and call him to mind again and again in this land. Because of this calling to mind, they see the Buddha Amitābha. Having seen him they ask him what *dharma*s it takes to be born in the realm of the Buddha Amitābha. Then the Buddha Amitābha says to these bodhisattvas: If you wish to come and be born in my realm, you must always call me to mind again and again, you must always keep this thought in mind without letting up, and thus you will succeed in coming to be born in my realm.¹³⁰ (Harrison 1998:19)

Here the practice of calling the Buddha to mind / recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānusmṛti*) as an means to be reborn in the buddha-field of Amitābha is emphasized.

(4) Attaining the *samādhi* of “seeing the Buddhas of the ten directions”

Episode 3 continues with highlighting the joy Sadāprarudita felt after seeing the manifested Buddha. In version I, the corresponding passage contains the Samādhi “seeing the Buddhas of the ten directions” (*jian shi-fang zhu-fo san-mei* 見十方諸佛三昧):

Then the bodhisattva Sadāprarudita learned this teaching from the manifested Buddha and became pleased. As he became pleased and danced for joy, he immediately attained the samādhi of “Seeing of All Buddhas in the Ten Directions”....¹³¹ (Karashima 2011:479 n. 365)

In comparison, Version II adds a long list of other *samādhis* to this, and only the last two, the *samādhi* of “seeing *tathāgata*” (*tathāgatadarśana*) and the *samādhi* of “seeing all *tathāgatas*” (*sarvatathāgatadarśī*), are related to it (Vaidya 1960a:243).

Even in the latter version, the effect of staying in these *samādhi* is still a vision of the buddhas in the ten directions (*daśadiśi loke*), which reminds us of the *Pratyutpanna-buddha*

¹³⁰ 如是陀和，菩薩於是間國土聞阿彌陀佛，數數念。用是念故，見阿彌陀佛。見佛已從問：“當持何等法，生阿彌陀佛國？”爾時阿彌陀佛，語是菩薩言：“欲來生我國者，常念我數數，常當守念，莫有休息。如是得來生我國。”佛言：“是菩薩用是念佛故，當得生阿彌陀佛國。”(T 418, p.905b09-14)

A parallel is found in the Tibetan version (Harrison 1990:36, 3E-3F).

¹³¹ 爾時，薩陀波倫菩薩從化佛聞是教，即踊躍歡欣，用歡欣踊躍故，即得見十方諸佛三昧。(T 224, p.472a18 -0472a19)

Samṃukhāvasthita Samādhi (Samādhi of ‘direct encounter with the present Buddhas’), closely associated with the practice elaborated in PSS of the same name. Furthermore, the name of this *samādhi* occurs also in Chapter 2 of PSS:

The Buddha said: “By virtue of these *dharma*s of conduct one brings about the meditation and then masters the Meditation in Which the Buddhas of the Present All Stand Before One...”¹³² (Harrison 1998:17)

The passages following this again refer to the practice of concentrating for seven days, which is thus regarded as the requisite for attaining the *samādhi* according to both the PSS and Sadāprarudita story.

(5) Where do the Buddhas come from and go towards

In Version I, after the bodhisattva Sadāprarudita had woken up from the *samādhi*, he lost the vision of the Buddhas, and raised the important question: where did the Buddhas come from and go towards? Thinking this, he cried again and soon thereafter thought: “The Buddhas told me to go towards where Dharmodgata dwells.” Then bodhisattva Sadāprarudita followed this way.¹³³ (T 224, p.472a26-0472b01). A response to the question comes in Episode 5, after the bodhisattva Sadāprarudita met with bodhisattva Dharmodgata, to whom he explained his vision of the Buddha and in what the manifestation of the Buddha instructed him (connected with the Episode 3). Sadāprarudita then asks him the same question – “Where did the Buddhas come from and go towards?” – to which Dharmodgata replies:

“Emptiness” does not come from anywhere, nor does it go anywhere. “Signlessness” does not come from anywhere, nor does it go anywhere. A Buddha is the same; “Being without a place” does not come from anywhere, nor does it go anywhere. A Buddha is the same; “non-arising”... “Formlessness”... “illusion”... “mirage”... “A human being in a dream”... “Nirvāṇa”... “imagination”... “non-birth and non-growth”... “non-

¹³² 如是佛言：“持是行法故致三昧，便得三昧現在諸佛悉在前立。”(T 418, p.905a03-05)

The corresponding name “Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present” also occurs in the Tibetan version (Harrison 1990:31, 3A).

¹³³ 薩陀波倫菩薩從三昧覺，作是念：“諸佛本從何所來，去至何所？”作是思惟已，便復舉聲大哭。復作是念：“諸佛教我至曇無竭菩薩所。”薩陀波倫菩薩便從是去。

attachment”... “sky”... “sphere of the Teachings”... “The Beginning”...¹³⁴ (Karashima 2011:501- 504, n. 589-610)

The general contents of Version II are roughly the same. Although the ontological question and its answer appear to be profound and obscure, they can be elucidated when considered in light of the equation between Tathāgata and *tathatā*, as stated in one AP passage already discussed in § 1.4.1:

Dharmodgata: Son of the family, Tathāgatas (the “thus come” or “thus gone”) certainly do not come from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere. For, indeed, thusness (*tathatā*) is unmoving, and the Tathāgata is thusness ... (Makransky 1997:33)

The reinterpretation of Tathāgata through *tathatā* can be found in another part of AP, but its relationship with the visualisation of the Buddha is particularly emphasized in the Sadāprarudita story, as it was a vision of the Buddha’s image that initially inspired Sadāprarudita’s question. Notably, this same issue is also central to Chapter 15 of PSS, where it is again situated in the context Buddha visualisation:

If one wishes to see the Buddha then one sees him. If one sees him then one asks questions. If one asks then one is answered, one hears the sutras and rejoices greatly. One reflects thus: “Where did the Buddha come from? Where did I go to?” and one thinks to oneself: “The Buddha came from nowhere, and I also went nowhere.” One thinks to oneself: The Three Realms—the Realm of Desire, the Realm of Form, and the Realm of the Formless—these Three realms are simply made by thought.¹³⁵ (Harrison 1998:21)

The Skt. parallel of the formula “three realms are simply made by thought” in this passage has been identified by Harrison in the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* (abbr. Dbh): *cittamātram idaṃ yad idaṃ traidhātukaṃ* (Ryūkyō Kondō 1936:98). Emphasising *cittamātra* here renders a slightly distinct solution to the ontological question: whilst in the Sadāprarudita story, the

¹³⁴ 空本無所從來，去亦無所至。佛亦如是。無想本無所從來，去亦無所至。佛亦如是。無處所本無所從來，去亦無所至。佛亦如是。無所從生 ... 無形 ... 幻 ... 野馬 ... 夢中人 ... 泥洹... 想像 ... 無有生無有長 ... 無所適 ... 虛空 ... 經界(<果) ... 本端 ... (T 224, p.473c09-24)

¹³⁵ 佛言：“善哉！善哉，颺陀和！如是，颺陀和：色清淨，所有者清淨，欲見佛即見，見即問，問即報。聞經，大歡喜，作是念：‘佛從何所來？我為到何所？’自念佛無所從來，我亦無所至。自念三處 — 欲處、色處、無想處 — 是三處意所為耳...” (T 418, p.905c25-906a01)

The Tibetan parallel of the passage quoted above (Harrison 1990:42, 3L) is identical.

interpretation for the answer still reflects the classic Prajñāpāramitā or Madhyamaka philosophy, the PSS seems to include a forerunner to a more Vijñānavāda-type of thinking.

Episode 4

(1) The donation to Dharmodgata

After finding a solution to the ontological problem – “where do the Buddhas come from and go towards” – Sadāprarudita goes on an arduous quest for the ideal city Gandhavatī, where Dharmodgata dwells. In Version II, the quest begins with the following reflection:

With what kind of honoring gift should I now approach the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata? I am poor, and I do not have any garment, gold, Maṇi-gem, pearl, cat’s-eye, śaṅkhaśilā gem,¹³⁶ coral, silver, flower, incense, perfume, garland, fragrant ointment, aromatic powder, robe, umbrella, flag, bell, banner etc., with which I could express my respect and reverence for him ...¹³⁷

The parallel in Version I does not contain this long list of offerings and only cursorily mentions: “I do not have any precious and beautiful things, flower, perfume, life necessities etc.”¹³⁸ Then, as stated in both versions, Sadāprarudita decides to offer himself in order to gather sufficient property, with which he may make an offering to Dharmodgata. However, Māra thwarts his effort by making Sadāprarudita’s invitations to buy and his very figure imperceivable to the people surrounding him.

Similarly, one passage in Chapter 15 of PSS, coming after the passage that we quoted in the analysis of Episode 1 (2), emphasizes that the practitioner of the *pratyutpanna-samādhi* should “present the teacher with food and drink, with goods, with clothes, with beds and bedding, with a thousand myriad precious gems; make offerings to the teacher without begrudging anything.”¹³⁹ (Harrison 1998:99).

Episode 5

¹³⁶ Almost always placed between vaidūrya and pravāḍa (°la) cf. BHSD p.522, col 1.

¹³⁷ *kiyaḍ rūpayā nu khalv ahaṃ satkriyayā taṃ dharmodgataṃ bodhisattvaṃ mahāsattvaṃ upasaṃkrāmeyam? daridraś cāsmi / na ca me kiṃcit tathārūpaṃ vastraṃ vā ratnaṃ vā suvarṇaṃ vā maṇayo vā muktā vā vaidūryaṃ vā śaṅkhaśilā vā pravāḍaṃ vā rajataṃ vā puṣpaṃ vā dhūpo vā gandho vā mālyaṃ vā vilepanaṃ vā cūrṇaṃ vā cīvaram vā chatraṃ vā dhvajaṃ vā ghaṇṭā vā patākā vā saṃvidyate / kenāhaṃ dharmodgataṃ bodhisattvaṃ mahāsattvaṃ satkuryāṃ gurukuryāṃ.* (Vaidya 1960a:244)

¹³⁸ 亦無有珍琦好物，及華香持用 (T0224, p.472b4-5)

¹³⁹ 若飲食資用衣被床臥，千萬珍寶以用上師，供養於師無所愛惜。(T0418, 918c27-29)

(1) A unique Self-sacrifice

Then, the PSS passage quoted above is closely followed by an interesting description:

If you have nothing, you should go and beg for food, and offer it to the teacher. You should master this meditation at once, and not tire of it ... Setting aside these offerings, which are just not worth mentioning, you should always cut off your own flesh and offer it to the good teacher ... You should serve the good teacher as a slave serves his lord.¹⁴⁰ (Harrison 1998:99-100)

The theme of self-sacrifice is therefore quite vividly stated here and such an extreme form of offering to the *Dharma*-preacher, even when it consists of one's own flesh, is in line with Episode 5 of the Sadāprarudita story. In this episode, Sadāprarudita wants to sell parts of his own body but is prevented by Māra through magic. Then Śakra (Indra) wants to probe the faith of Sadāprarudita and thus, transforming himself into a Brahman, he requests that Sadāprarudita offer him his blood, flesh and marrow for sacrifice. Sadāprarudita happily accepts and then a brutal episode of self-sacrifice suddenly occurs:

He (bodhisattva Sadāprarudita) pierced both his arms. A great deal of blood flowed and he gave it to (the brahman). Then, he cut the flesh from the back of both his thighs and he gave it to him. Then, he broke his bones and gave him the marrow.¹⁴¹ (Karashima 2011:485 n. 426)

When he wanted to pierce his chest, a merchant's daughter, accompanied by five hundred female dancers and court ladies, stopped him and inquired as to the reason for this act. Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita said: "I desire to donate to the master. Therefore, I take out my blood, flesh and marrow to sell. I use it to donate to the master." (T 224, p.472b26-c05)

This unique mode of giving to the Dharma-preacher in Episode 4 and 5 of the Sadāprarudita story do not appear in other chapters of AP. Together with the passage we have discussed before (cf. Episode 1, (2), Version II), we may suggest that these episodes were inspired by the PSS passage quoted above (from Chapter 15 of PSS).

¹⁴⁰ ... 設無有者，當行乞食給師。趣當得是三昧，莫厭 ... 置是所供養者此不足言耳，常當自割其肌，供養於善師，常不愛惜身...當承事善師，如奴事大夫。(T 418, p.918c23-919a05)

The Tibetan version also talks about making offerings, cutting off parts of one's body, or serving the teachers as slaves serve their masters, etc., in order to obtain the *samādhi* (Harrison 1990:186, 23W).

¹⁴¹ 薩陀波倫菩薩即取刀自刺兩臂，血大出持與之。復割兩髀裏肉持與之。復自破骨持髓與之。適復欲自刺胸時 ... (T 224, p.472b26-29)

3.4 The practice and metaphor

As stated above, one can find a series of similar elements in the passages of PSS and the two versions of the Sadāprarudita story. These shared tenets are summarized in the following tables: parallels between Version I of Sadāprarudita story and PSS can be found in Table 3.1; those between Version II and PSS are shown in Table 3.2. Parallels from the PSS side are mainly located in Chapters 2, 4 and 15.

Table 3.1. Version I and PSS

	Episode 1		Episode 2		Episode 3					E. 4	E. 5
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(1)	(1)
Chapter 2			×			×	×	×	×		
Chapter 4	×										
Chapter 15		×								×	

Table 3.2. Version II and PSS

	Episode 2		Episode 3					Episode 4	Episode 5
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(1)	(1)
Chapter 2	×		×		×	×	×		
Chapter 4									
Chapter 15		×						×	

Apart from one single case related to Chapter 4 of PSS, the two versions are mainly connected with Chapter 2 “Practice” of PSS, and only two cases from Version I or II refer to a brief story in Chapter 15, which is quite similar to the setting of the Sadāprarudita story. Here we have, I think, sufficient textual evidence to prove that the course of searching for the Prajñāpāramitā in the Sadāprarudita story generally follows the model of the Buddha visualisation practice represented by the *Pratyutpanna Saṃmukhāvasthita Samādhi*.

Irrespective of the philosophical interpretations, the course of visualisation, as we have seen in the passages of Chapter 2 of PSS, can be summarised as follows: at the beginning of the meditation, the visualiser hears the name of a present Buddha (for instance, Amitābha Buddha in the west), and then he concentrates on the direction of that Buddha. He focuses on the Buddha over the course of seven days and nights, until the figure of the Buddha clearly arises in his mind.

Despite the overall structure of the practice being clear, there are still many unresolved issues. How can the practitioner hear the name of the present Buddha? How does he simply know what the present Buddha looks like? And why indeed is this meditation model adapted and remodeled into narrative form?

There are several possible solutions to these questions. In regards to hearing the name of a present Buddha, several place in AP communicate precisely how this occurs. In one instance, a practitioner declares the worldly benefits of Prajñāpāramitā; and the text stipulates that one in doing so will have a series of dreams: after dreaming of the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha, they hear the name of a Buddha in the region of a specific quarter:

udāraṇ ca buddhānāṃ bhagavatāṃ abhisambodhiśabdaṃ śroṣyati - amuṣyān diśi amuṣmin digbhāge amuṣmin lokadhātau amuko 'sau nāmnā tathāgato 'rhan samyaksambuddho bahubhir bodhisattvaśrāvakāṇāṃ śatair bahubhir bodhisattvaśrāvakasahasrair bahubhir bodhisattvaśrāvakaśatasahasrair bahubhir bodhisattvaśrāvakakoṭībhīr bahubhir bodhisattvaśrāvakakoṭīśatair bahubhir bodhisattvaśrāvakakoṭīśahasraiḥ bahubhir bodhisattvaśrāvakakoṭīśatasahasrair bahubhir bodhisattvaśrāvakakoṭīniyutaśatasahasraiḥ parivṛtaḥ puraskṛto dharman deśayatīti /¹⁴² (Mitra 1888:91.8-15)

He hears the sublime sound of the full enlightenment of the Buddhas, the Lords: “In this direction, in this part of the world, in this world system, under this name, a Tathāgata demonstrates dharma, surrounded and accompanied by many thousands of Bodhisattvas and Disciples, nay by many hundreds of thousands of niyutas of kotis of Bodhisattvas and Disciples.” (Conze 1975a:114)

The figure of the present Buddha is probably perceived before meditation. Around the same time in which PSS was composed, the practice of visualising the Buddha, following the teaching of Prajñāpāramitā texts, had gained some popularity in the Buddhist community. This is reflected by the addition of the Sadāprarudita story, which was itself inspired by PSS, to the main body of AP. The popularity of this practice was very likely triggered by the

¹⁴² This reading is close to the APKj: “Then one hears that, under a specific name, in a specific direction, in a specific country, the Buddha demonstrates the dharma surrounded and accompanied by many thousands of beings.” 又聞佛名某甲，佛於某方、某國、與若干百千萬億眾恭敬圍遶而為說法。(T 227, p.545a12-13) = APX(I) (T 220, 07, 781a08-10) = APX (II). The contents in earlier versions of the APL and APZh are slightly different: hearing a Buddha’s name does not occur and the text only states that one sees the Buddha demonstrating the Dharma in a specific direction and country: 但見某方某國土怛薩阿竭阿羅呵三耶三佛、若干百弟子、若干千弟子、若干萬弟子；怛薩阿竭阿羅呵三耶三佛在其中說法。(T 224, p.435b15-19).

thriving cult of the Buddha images and statues and indeed a relationship between making images and statues and attaining Samādhi can be found in many places of PSS:

If bodhisattvas possess a further four things, they quickly master this meditation. What are the four? First, they make an image of the Buddha or they make a picture, for the sake of this meditation...¹⁴³ (Harrison 1998:23)

You should make images of the Buddha, perfect in various ways and beautiful in various ways, with countenances as radiant as gold.¹⁴⁴ (Harrison 1998:24)

The PSS is, of course, not the only text that deals with the relationship between the practice of seeing the Buddha and the Buddha image. Another text of Indian origin, the **Vimuttimaggā* (解脫道論), expounds this connection as well: “As stated in **Sūtra-netripada*, if one wants to recollect the Buddha, he can pay respect to the Buddha image”¹⁴⁵ (T 1648, p. 426c06-08).

Before directly addressing the third matter regarding why this meditation was formulated into a narrative structure, it is important to first outline an underlying metaphor present in the Sadāprarudita story. In this narrative, Sadāprarudita’s ultimate objective of seeking the Prajñāpāramitā is not limited to gaining the Prajñāpāramitā text and teaching but also the one who teaches it, the bodhisattva Dharmodgata. Since both the Prajñāpāramitā and its Dharma-preacher are identified with the Buddha (cf. § 2.3), we may conjecture that this conceptual conflation also informed the practice of seeking the Prajñāpāramitā and the right Dharma-preacher, with both representing the final destination of the course of visualising the Buddha.

The process of meditation in PSS, begins with a perception of the Buddha on the basis of hearing the name of a present Buddha. It then proceeds to focus on the direction of the Buddha, seeing the image of the Buddha and finally leads to an encounter with the real present Buddha in his buddha-field. Comparatively for Sadāprarudita, being a bodhisattva at the advent of his career, the introduction to the course derives from a dream, which is followed by hearing a voice in the sky from a manifest Buddha that tells him the direction, or alternatively from a Dharma-preacher (regarded as the Buddha), and these events arise by virtue of his continuously striving on his hunt for the Prajñāpāramitā. His quest distinctly resembles the process of practicing the *samādhi*, whereby the object of his search becomes increasingly embodied and then, in its climactic phrase, is transformed into the Dharma-

¹⁴³ 菩薩復有四事，疾得是三昧。何等爲四？一者作佛形像若作畫，用是三昧故... (T 418, p. 906a24-26)

¹⁴⁴ 爲求是三昧者，當作佛像，種種具足種種姝好，面目如金光。(T 418, p.906b09-10)

¹⁴⁵ 如說修多羅涅槃底里句：若人欲念佛，其可恭敬如佛像處。

preacher in a quasi-buddha-field.

Paying respect to the Dharma-preacher in the Sadāprarudita story is not unique to AP, but its special mode of argumentation is striking: some parts (Version II, Episode 2, (2)) are composed as strong vindications of the Dharma-preacher as a donee, and others, such as the case in which Sadāprarudita even donates his own body (Episodes 4 & 5 of both version), support this ratification by placing an extreme onus on the follower to make donations. The powerful emphasis on the importance of the Dharma-preacher and the significance of donations to him perfectly integrate into the story. Assumedly, the composer of the Sadāprarudita story could be both a preacher of Prajñāpāramitā text, and an instructor of the Buddha visualisation at the same time. He was supposed to receive the offerings and respects from the followers, preach the Prajñāpāramitā to them, and help them encounter the present Buddhas, to be later reborn in their buddha-fields.

Summary

Accompanying the transmission of Prajñāpāramitā texts in Gandhāra, the practice of visualising the Buddha was also developed and was seen as an important way to reestablish Buddha(s) in the world. In § 1 and § 2, the argumentation “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha” was adopted in order to formulate core concepts such as *dharmatā*, *dharmadhātu* and *tathatā*, or as an apologetic to establish and reinforce the authority of the Prajñāpāramitā text. However, the traces of intertextuality between the Prajñāpāramitā and PSS illustrated in this chapter reveal that during the composition of the Sadāprarudita story, visualisation ultimately became the favored approach to accessing the Buddhas. Once established as a method, the quality of seeing was no longer limited to its earlier rhetorical function as a word play but was rendered a form of literal visionary experience.

In LP, the two bodies theory and the meditation technique entitled *buddhānusmṛti* (discussed in § 5-7) represent a hybrid form of practice, conjoining a visualisation of the Buddha’s body with the older notion that identified the Buddha with *dharma*. In contrast, visualisation in the Sadāprarudita story of AP remains disguised by the narrative and is not explicated as a concrete practice with a clear goal. The chapter 5 of this study shall detail the fascinating innovation of the two bodies theory; however, before proceeding therewith, it shall first discuss the relationship between seeing the Buddha and achieving a rebirth in other Buddha-fields, as described in LP. Therein, the goal of seeing the Buddha comes to be awarded a position of particular significance within the Mahāyāna soteriological system.

4. The ideal buddha-field and the soteriological function of seeing the Buddha

In the previous chapters, we have observed an equation in AP between the Prajñāpāramitā text, its teaching and the Buddha. This conflation gave rise to the idea that reading the text or understanding the teaching was equal to “seeing” Buddha. As a metaphorical mode of “seeing”, a series of rhetorical techniques were used to articulate it, and sometimes these are so deeply embedded in the philosophical flavor of the texts as to be nigh beyond the veil. Such hints, we demonstrated, are also found in respect to the practice of visualising the Buddha, which are equally rooted in the narrative covering the last two chapters of AP, representing the popularity of this meditation practice in Gandhāra at the beginning of the Common Era. As shall be presently elucidated, the remarkable silence on a real vision of the Buddha, excepting some records of the bodhisattva’s encounter with Akṣobhya Buddha that are scattered throughout AP, stands in contrast to LP, in which seeing the Buddha comprises a significant part of the bodhisattva path that is targeted towards being reborn in other buddha-fields.

As is well known, Akṣobhya is the Buddha of the eastern buddha-field, Abhirati. He was popular at the beginning of the Common Era, as indicated by such representative works as the *Akṣobhyavyūha*, which was translated into Chinese by Lokakṣema by 186 C.E. (T 313 阿闍佛國經 *A-chu-fo Guo Jing*).¹⁴⁶ Abhirati served as the ideal buddha-field for early Mahāyāna Buddhist communities. This is evidenced by an early Gāndhārī Mahāyāna sūtra, recently uncovered in Bajaur, eastern Afghanistan. As pointed out by Strauch (2010), the Abhirati described therein shares many features with the Abhirati portrayed in the *Akṣobhyavyūha*, which indicates presumably the wide currency of this model for an ideal buddha-field.

However, in slightly later Mahāyāna sources, the dominant model shifted to the ideal buddha-field Sukhāvatī, where the Buddha Amitābha dwells. Sukhāvatī and the Buddha Amitābha are particularly important in the East Asian Pure Land Buddhism.¹⁴⁷ Two of the three Pure Land Buddhism sūtras, which constitute the basic literature of Pure Land

¹⁴⁶ A later Ch. translation *Bu-dong Ru-lai Hui* (不動如來會) is one chapter of the large collection *Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra* (T310 大寶積經) tr. and ed. by Bodhiruchi (菩提流志).

¹⁴⁷ Pure Land Buddhism, one of the most widespread Buddhist traditions, has the roots in India and Central Asia, and flourished particularly in East Asia. Pure Land Buddhism focuses on the Buddha known as Amitābha (Infinite Light) or Amitāyus (Infinite Life), who dwells in Sukhāvatī (Realm of Bliss). This type of blissful place is labeled a “pure land” in the East Asian tradition.

Buddhism – the Larger and Smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha* (LSukh & SSukh)¹⁴⁸ – originate from India and are extant in ancient Indian, Chinese, Tibetan, and several Central Asian languages (for the versions concerned in this study, cf. Introduction). The earliest Ch. translations, numbered T 361 and T 362, date to ca. 3rd Century C.E., while that of SSukh, T 366, was translated by Kumārajīva in 402 C.E. Schopen (1977) has found that in amount of Mahāyāna literature “Sukhāvatī appears to have come to be thought of as the example par excellence of magnificence, loveliness, charm and splendor of place” (Schopen 1977:198). It indicates the popularity of the cult of Amitābha and Sukhāvatī in the Indian Mahāyāna community.

In this chapter, I shall first focus on passages that concern the ideal buddha-field in early Prajñāpāramitā literature, AP and LP, with the intention of determining their relationship with the cults of Akṣobhya and Amitābha (§ 4.1). Then, I shall explain how seeing the Buddha bridges the practitioners with the ideal buddha-field in LP; that is, how seeing the Buddha is associated with the soteriological goal (§ 4.2).

4.1 The ideal buddha-field in early Prajñāpāramitā literature

Jan Nattier has illustrated on several occasions (e.g., Nattier 2000, 2003) the switch from Abhirati to Sukhāvatī as the ideal buddha-field in early Mahāyāna thought. Even though it is certainly possible that the two emerged out of different regions or traditions, we are unable to clearly judge which is anterior to the other, but Nattier’s outline fits the Prajñāpāramitā tradition quite well.

In this section, I would like to concentrate on the ideal buddha-field described in early Prajñāpāramitā literature, and describe a similar switch from Abhirati to Sukhāvatī in the Prajñāpāramitā tradition. This shift can be observed on several occasions in textual sources belonging to the different phases of Prajñāpāramitā literature. Records of Akṣobhya’s Abhirati can be found in the bulk of AP (§ 4.1.1) and the ideal city Gandhavatī in the Sadāprarudita story of AP, which was composed comparatively later than the majority of the text, is similar to the description of Amitābha’s Sukhāvatī in SSukh. I argue, however, that these similarities are not indicative of direct intertextuality, and rather that they, directly or indirectly, derive from the same tradition (§ 4.1.2). Finally, I will point out that the ideal buddha-field and the bodhisattva vow in LP resemble that of LSukh (§ 4.1.3).

4.1.1 The records of the buddha-field Akṣobhya in *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*

In AP, several passages concerning the ideal buddha-field of Akṣobhya have been taken by Conze (1968:172-175) as having been awkwardly or mechanically inserted into the text. He states that “in the later part of the AP, however, names occur— sometimes in rather an abrupt

¹⁴⁸ The third Pure Land sūtra, the *Guān Wúliàngshòu Fó Jīng* (觀無量壽佛經 T 365, *the Sūtra of Visualizing Amitāyus Buddha*) was probably composed in Chinese and it exhibits some features of Central Asian meditation.

manner — which belong to a different tradition, that of the Buddha Akṣobhya” (1968:172). And their purpose, as further discussed by Schopen (1977:199), appears to be “to glorify the Buddha Akṣobhya by pointing out the qualities of his buddha-field and of the bodhisattvas who reside there”.

Conze also states, “a set of four additions can be inferred from the fact that the name of Akṣobhya occurs in them.” He further elaborates that one can identify additions first on the basis of the text’s cosmology, which, he argues, largely remained faithful to that of early Buddhism, and since proper nouns related to the cult of Akṣobhya cannot be found in early Buddhism, any such occurrences must therefore be regarded as later additions, and second that the content of such passages do not fit the primary philosophical and metaphysical purpose of Prajñāpāramitā literature (Conze 1968:172).

However, this argument has received some skepticism and criticism. Lancaster (1968: 316) first pointed out that “Akṣobhya passages...are all present in T 224 (the earliest Ch. translation), and although abbreviated, the names of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas are used.” In other words, we do not have enough textual evidence to support the view that the four instances related to the cult of Akṣobhya are in fact interpolations. Jan Nattier (2007) also criticized Conze’s opinion:

The gap between the subtleties of Prajñāpāramitā philosophy and the naïveté of devotion to a celestial Buddha or bodhisattva, which seemed so self-evident to Conze, would not have been obvious at all to (for example) the 7th century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hsüan-tsang, who was not only one of the leading scholars and translators of the Prajñāpāramitā literature of his day, but also one of Maitreya’s most fervent devotees. (Nattier 2007:50)

If not interpolations, the four passages related to Akṣobhya should perhaps therefore be understood as perfect reflections of the ideal buddha-field in the early Prajñāpāramitā tradition. By comparing the four AP passages in the earliest Ch. version, the APL of Lokakṣema, with the *Akṣobhyavyūha*, it is possible to trace the point at which the cult of Akṣobhya was introduced into Prajñāpāramitā literature to the 2nd century C.E. Our comparison of these passages¹⁴⁹ shall focus on some special proper nouns that are quite uncommon to other Buddhist source, as well as the context in which the proper nouns occur. Together these examples substantiate a direct relationship between the *Akṣobhyavyūha* and AP.

1) The prediction of Bhāgini

¹⁴⁹ The English translation of the Chinese passages of APL is conducted based on the edition and the partial translation in the footnotes made by Karashima (2011).

The first passage selected by Conze (Mitra 1888:365-369) details the prediction of the Ganges Goddess, Bhāginī. In one paragraph of its Chinese parallel in APL, the Ganges Goddess is said to be reborn in the buddha-field of Akṣobhya as a man during the starlike aeon (*tārakopama-kalpa*):

Blessed One: This laywoman (upāsikā) Gaṅgā will become a buddha, “Golden Flower Buddha” (*suvarṇapuṣpa*) by name, in a future period, the starlike aeon. After this laywoman has deceased here, she will cease to be a woman, she will become a man. He will be reborn in the buddha-field of the Tathāgata Akṣobhya. He will then pass from the buddha-field of Akṣobhya to another buddha-field, continuously from one to one without ending. Just like the Cakravartin passes from palace (*prāsāda*) to palace, his feet never touching the earth from his birth to death. In the same way, this upāsikā passes from buddha-field to buddha-field, and he is never deprived of the sight of the Tathāgata.¹⁵⁰ (T 224, p.458a17-23, translation modified from Karashima 2011:340-341)

Here, notably, the comparison of the movement of the Cakravartin from palace to palace with the movement of the bodhisattva from buddha-field to buddha-field in this paragraph can be also found in *Akṣobhyavyūha*:

... When the Tathāgata Akṣobhya practiced in the bodhisattva path in the past, he saw the Tathāgatas in all his lives. He constantly led the holy life (*brahmacarya*) in all his lives. That is the way that the Akṣobhya bodhisattva passes from buddha-field to buddha-field, always choosing the world, in which the Blessed One dwells, to be reborn.” The Buddha said to Śāriputra, “just like the Cakravartin attains the power over the world, he passes from palace to palace, and his feet never touch the earth. At the place where he arrives, he himself always enjoys the five kinds of entertainment for his whole life.”¹⁵¹ (T 313, p. 754c01-07)

The motifs of moving of from buddha-field to buddha-field, and of neither being separated from Buddha (*avirahitāni buddhair bhagavadbhis*) nor from seeing the Buddha (*avirahitā*

¹⁵⁰ 佛言：“是恒(<怛)竭優婆夷，却後當來世——名星宿劫，是中有佛名金華佛——是優婆夷後當棄女人身，更受男子形，却後當世阿閼(<閼)佛刹。從阿閼佛刹去，復到一佛刹。從一佛刹復生一佛刹。如是無終極。譬如遮迦越王從一觀復遊一觀，從生至終足不蹈地。是優婆夷從一佛刹復到一佛刹，未嘗不見佛。”

¹⁵¹ ... 阿閼如來昔行菩薩道時，世世見如來。一切常奉梵行，世世亦作。是名阿閼菩薩從一佛刹復遊一佛刹，所至到處日常見諸天，中天生於彼。” 佛言舍利弗：“譬如轉輪王得天下，所從一觀復至一觀，足未曾蹈地。所至常以五樂自娛得自在至盡壽。”

tathāgatadarśanena), are also described in the passage's Skt. counterpart in APN¹⁵². Although the simile of the Cakravartin is not present in APN, the expression “lead the holy life” (*brahmacaryam carisyati*) in APN is in line with the *Akṣobhyavyūha* passage above. Thus, the description of the movement of the Ganges Goddess in AP resembles that of the bodhisattva Akṣobhya, which is the model of the bodhisattva career for one who desires to be reborn in the buddha-field of Akṣobhya.

2) The Buddhas proclaim the name of the Bodhisattva who dwells in perfect wisdom

A further passage (Mitra 1888:449.12-453.5) given by Conze concerns the Bodhisattva Ratnaketu. The meaning of *ketu* can be “banner or mark”, thus *Ratnaketu* is translated as *bao-chuang* (寶幢 treasury banner) and *rin po che'i tog* (treasury top ornament) (cf. Kaneko 2009), whereas in the earliest Ch. translation APL we see *bao-ying* (寶英¹⁵³). The translation of the parallel of that passage in APL is given as follows:

Just like now (*etarhi*) I proclaim and exult over (*deśayāmi, udānam codānayāmi*) the name of the the Bodhisattva Ratnaketu. In a similar way, the Buddhas in other buddha-fields just now also proclaim and exult the name of those Bodhisattvas who practice perfect wisdom in my buddha-field.¹⁵⁴ (T 224, p.467c01-04, translation modified from Karashima 2011:430)

¹⁵² *evam ukte bhagavān āyusmantam ānandam etad avocat - iyam ānanda gaṅgadevā bhaginī anāgate 'dhvani suvarṇapūṣpo nāma tathāgato bhaviṣyati ...buddho bhagavāṃl loka utpatsyate, tārakopame kalpe 'nuttarāṃ samyaksaṃboddhim abhisambhotsyate | ... akṣobhyasya tathāgatasyārhatāḥ samyaksaṃbuddhasya buddhakṣetre abhiratyāṃ lokadhātāv upapatsyate | tatra copapannā akṣobhyasya tathāgatasyārhatāḥ samyaksaṃbuddhasyāntike brahmacaryam carisyati | tataś cyutā satī buddhakṣetrād buddhakṣetram saṃkramiṣyati avirahitā tathāgatadarśanena | tato 'pi buddhakṣetrād buddhakṣetrāṇi saṃkramiṣyati | yāny avirahitāni bhaviṣyanti buddhair bhagavadbhis tatra tatra saṃkramiṣyati |* (APN, Vaidya 1960a:181 = PSP, Kimura 1990 [IV]:190 -191)

The Lord: This Goddess of the Ganges, Ananda, will, in a future period, become a Tathāgata, “Golden Flower” by name...In the starlike aeon he will appear in the world and know full enlightenment.... He will be reborn in Abhirati, the buddha-field of the Tathāgata Akṣobhya, in whose presence he will lead the holy life. After his decease there he will pass from buddha-field to buddha-field, never deprived of the sight of the Tathāgata. He will go on passing from buddha-field to buddha-field, from here to there, always choosing those in which he is not without the Buddhas, the Lords. (Conze 1975a:219-220)

¹⁵³ Here *ying* 英 indicates “ornament attached to the spear”.

¹⁵⁴ 佛語須菩提：“譬若我今讚歎說羅麟(>蘭?)那枝(<杖)頭(<那)佛。”佛復言：“今我刹界中菩薩行般若波羅蜜，十方諸佛今亦讚嘆說行般若波羅蜜菩薩，亦復如是。” (text edition cf. Karashima 2011:430)

In this section the Buddhas name the bodhisattva Ratnaketu, whilst in the Skt. version¹⁵⁵, we find that the name of the bodhisattva Śikhin occurring along with it (cf. Kaneko 2009:170). The bodhisattva Ratnaketu is one of Akṣobhya's followers, as stated in *Akṣobhyavyūha*:

Just as the bodhisattva Akṣobhya is armed with amour (*saṃnaha-saṃnaddha*), the bodhisattva Ratnaketu also follows the practice of bodhisattva Akṣobhya. Śāriputra! The suit of amours worn by uncountable bodhisattvas cannot be compared with that of the bodhisattva Akṣobhya.¹⁵⁶ (T 313, p.754b2023)

In both the AP and *Akṣobhyavyūha*, Ratnaketu is thus the representative bodhisattva in pursuit of Akṣobhya's previous bodhisattva career.

3) A short narrative note about the prediction of Avakīrṇakusuma

Another passage (Mitra 1888:457-458) includes one paragraph concerning the name of the Buddha, Avakīrṇakusuma (Scattered Flowers). Its APL version is as follows:

The Blessed One: Those one hundred and sixty monks, Ananda, will in a future period, the Starlike aeon, attain Buddhahood and bear the same name Avakīrṇakusuma. They all will

¹⁵⁵ The Skt. recension in APN reads:

tad yathāpi nāma subhūte aham etarhi ratnaketor bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya, śikhino bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya nāma ca gotraṃ ca balaṃ ca varṇaṃ ca rūpaṃ ca parikīrtayamānarūpo dharmam deśayāmi, udānam codānayāmi apareṣāṃ ca bodhisattvānām mahāsattvānām, ya etarhi akṣobhyasya tathāgatasyārhatāḥ samyaksambuddhasyāntike brahmacaryaṃ caranti |... (Vaidya 1960a:222)

Just here and now I demonstrate dharma, and I proclaim the name, etc., of the Bodhisattva Ratnaketu, and of the Bodhisattva Śikhin. I exult over them, and also over the other Bodhisattvas who just now lead the holy life with the Tathāgata Akṣobhya. ... (Conze 1975a:449-450)

¹⁵⁶ 如阿閼菩薩摩訶薩所彼僧那僧涅，寶英菩薩摩訶薩，亦從阿閼菩薩學行。舍利弗！無央數菩薩，不能及知阿閼菩薩所被僧那僧涅。

have the equal numbers of disciples. They all will live for the same length of time, i.e. one hundred thousand years.¹⁵⁷ (T 224, p.468b09-12)

Diwakar Acharya (2010) has investigated some early fifth to late sixth century Nepalese inscriptions as evidence for the cult of Mahāyāna buddha-fields. As stated by him, the name of future Buddha Avakīrṇakusuma and Suvarṇapuṣpa (Golden Flowers) in AP can be associated with *Akṣobhyavyūha*, and also with the inscription on a *caturvyūha-caitya* from Tyagal Tol, in the Patan district of the Kathmandu valley.

In one inscription (on the western side of the *caitya*)¹⁵⁸ he observed a triad of the Buddha Samantakusuma (Flowers all round) together with the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Susthitamati and noted that this can also be found in the introductory section of LP (Acharya 2010:51).¹⁵⁹ He further notices that Avakīrṇakusuma, found in AP “as the name given to a large group of future Buddhas” (as the paragraph we quoted above), is almost synonymous with Samantakusuma. Furthermore, the future Buddha Suvarṇapuṣpa in AP is also described in a similar way to Samantakusuma in the inscription:

¹⁵⁷ 佛告阿難：“是百六十比丘及諸天，當於是波羅劫中作佛，皆同一字，字遍辰那拘尼摩。作佛時，比丘僧數各各等，壽命亦各各等，其壽各十萬歲。”

The corresponding passage in APN (Vaidya 1960a:226) reads as follows:

The Lord: Those six thousand monks, Ananda, shall in a future period, in the Starlike aeon, know full enlightenment, and after that demonstrate dharma to beings. They all shall bear the same name. With Avakīrṇakusuma for their name, these Tathagatas shall be teachers in the world. They shall all have an equal congregation of disciples. They shall all live the same length of time, i.e. twenty thousand aeons. (Conze 1975a:458)

Some details in the parallels in APKj (T 227, p.577b29-c03), APL and APN vary. For instance, there are six hundred monks in APKj, in contrast to six thousand in APN, and one hundred and sixty in APL; and also the lifespan is twenty thousand aeons in both APKj (二萬劫) and APN (*viṃśatikalpasahasrāṇi*), in contrast to hundred thousand years (十萬歲) in APL.

¹⁵⁸ 1) *saddharmaratnakusumastavakācitāṅgam buddhaṃ samantakusuman namatābhjavatīyām*

2) *mañjuśrīyam paramadharmavidāṇ kumāraṇ nityaṇ ca susthitamatiṇ karuṇaikatānam*

[O people,] you must bow to the Buddha Samantakusuma in the world of Abjavatī, whose limbs are covered with bunches of the precious flowers of the True Dharma, to Mañjuśrī [Bodhisattva], the prince who knows the Dharma best, and to Susthitamati [Bodhisattva], whose mind is fixed on compassion eternally. (Acharya 2010:42-43)

¹⁵⁹ ... just like the world system Padmāvatī, the Buddha-field of the Tathāgata Samantakusuma, where Mañjuśrī the Crown Prince resides, and the Bodhisattva Susthitamati, and other very powerful Bodhisattvas. (*tad yathāpi nāma padmāvatī lokadhātuḥ samantakusumasya tathāgatasya buddhakṣetraṃ yatra mañjuśrīḥ kumārabhūtaḥ prativasati susthitamatiś ca bodhisattvaḥ anye ca mahaujaskā bodhisattvāḥ*. PSP, Dutt 1934:17)

There is a slight difference that in LP the buddha-field of Samantakusuma is called Padmāvatī, but in the inscription the buddha-field is called Abjavatī for the sake of metre (Acharya 2010:51).

While the Buddha Samantakusuma is described in our inscription as having his limbs covered with bunches of flowers of True Dharma, Suvarṇapuṣpa is also described as a future Buddha in a similar fashion in the AP: Sākyamuni shines a “golden” smile when Sister Gaṅgadevā appears in his assembly. When Ānanda asks why he is smiling, he tells that Sister Gaṅgadevā will become the Buddha Suvarṇapuṣpa in the future, and relates the name of the future Buddha with the lady’s brahmacarya vow under the Buddha Dīpaṃkara, and her act of covering the latter with golden flowers. (Acharya 2010:51)

The cases listed above serve to demonstrate that the description of the Buddha Samantakusuma in both the inscription and LP, and that of the future Buddhas Avakīrṇakusuma and Suvarṇapuṣpa in AP, seem to have a quite similar purport. Acharya further refers to another similar name of the Buddha, “Golden Lotus” (*Suvarṇapadma 羞洹那洹波頭摩), in one passage of *Akṣobhyavyūha*:

At the time of *parinirvāṇa*, Akṣobhya will predict the bodhisattva Gandhahastin’s (Fragrant Elephant) attainment of Buddhahood, and Gandhahastin will be named “Golden Lotus” Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Awakened One.¹⁶⁰ (T0313, p.760b28-c02)

Even though we do not have exactly the same Buddha name in the AP and *Akṣobhyavyūha* respectively, in this passage, the successor of Akṣobhya, Gandhahastin, to whom Akṣobhya will issue a prophecy (*vyakarana*) predicting his future attainment of Buddhahood, also occurs in one AP paragraph stated below.

4) The chapter with the title Akṣobhya

¹⁶⁰ 阿闍佛般泥洹時，有菩薩摩訶薩名衆香手，當授是衆香手菩薩決，號曰羞洹那洹波頭摩如來無所著等正覺。

The parallels in T 313 (p.760b28-c2) and in T 310 (p.109a15-17) read the same, and the “Golden Lotus” corresponds to *jin-lian* 金蓮 and *xiu-huan-na bo-tou-mo* 羞洹那洹波頭摩 (G **suvaṃṇa-paduma*) respectively.

In the chapter on Akṣobhya (Mitra 1888:464-474), also mentioned by Conze, there is a passage concerning the bodhisattva Gandhahastin.¹⁶¹ Its parallel in APL is as follows:

These are the qualities of [the Bodhisattva's] practicing in perfect wisdom if even for the length of a snap of the finger. How much greater will the qualities be of one who holds the perfection of wisdom daily? The Bodhisattva Gandhahastin practices in such a way. Bodhisattva Gandhahastin is the most honorable one in the buddha-field of the Tathāgata Akṣobhya.¹⁶² (T 224, 470a10-14)

In this paragraph of APL, the bodhisattva Gandhahastin follows the bodhisattva career of Akṣobhya, and he is regarded as the most honorable of those in Akṣobhya's buddha-field, thus mirroring the records¹⁶³ in the *Akṣobhyavyūha* where Gandhahastin is the successor of Akṣobhya.

Considering the close relationship between the *Akṣobhyavyūha* and APL we are able to suggest that the former work, or the tradition to which it belongs, was a key influence in the composition of the early recension of AP. Table 4.1 lists all the proper nouns related to the cycle of Akṣobhya, based on Conze's list of the Skt. proper nouns belonging to the cycle of Akṣobhya found in AP, in comparison with their Ch. counterparts:

¹⁶¹ *ime 'pi subhūte guṇāḥ, ime 'py anuśaṃsā bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya prajñāpāramitāyāṃ carataḥ, ...tadyathāpi nāma subhūte gandhahastino bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya ya etarhy akṣobhyasya tathāgatasyārhatāḥ samyaksaṃbuddhasyāntike brahmacaryaṃ caratīti* (Vaidya 1960a: 233-234)

These are the qualities and advantages of a Bodhisattva who courses in perfect wisdom... as for instance the Bodhisattva Gandhahastin who just now leads the holy life in the presence of the Tathāgata Akṣobhya. (Conze 1975a:273)

¹⁶² 行般若波羅蜜菩薩，如兩指相彈頃間，功德如是。何況一日守般若波羅蜜者？行當如是撻陀訶盡菩薩。撻陀訶盡菩薩，在阿闍佛刹最尊第一。

¹⁶³ Cf. the quotation above: T 313, p.760b28-c02.

Table 4.1. proper nouns related to the cult of Akṣobhya

APN	APL T 224	APKj T 227	Akṣobhyavyūha T 313	T 310
Akṣobhya	阿閼佛	阿閼佛	阿閼佛	阿閼佛
Tāra-kopama kalpa	星宿劫 波羅劫	星宿劫	陂陀劫	—
Suvarṇapuṣpa (Tathāgata)	金華佛	金花 (佛)	—	—
—	—	—	羞洹那洹波頭摩 (如來)	金蓮如來
Avakīrṇa-kusuma (Tathāgata)	漚辰那拘尼摩	散花	—	—
Ratnaketu (Bodhisattva)	羅麟(>蘭?)那枝 (<杖)頭(<那)佛	寶相菩薩	寶英菩薩	寶幢菩薩
Śikhin (Bodhisattva)	—	尸棄菩薩	—	—
Gandhahastin (Bodhisattva)	捷陀訶盡菩薩	香象菩薩	衆香手菩薩	香象菩薩

So far we have seen considerable textual evidence demonstrating the association between AP and the cult of Akṣobhya. Yet perhaps the most distinctive feature of Akṣobhya's buddha-field, Abhirati, has been described by Jan Nattier in her article on the Indian origin of pure land Buddhism scriptures. She writes:

Abhirati is an ideal place to make progress on the Buddhist path, for it is extremely easy to attain arhatship there. Some devotees attain awakening on the first occasion when they hear the Buddha preach; others require as many as four such lectures before attaining nirvāṇa, advancing one step at a time through the four stages of sainthood, from stream-enterer to arhat. The fact that members of the latter group are considered “slow learners” in Abhirati makes it clear that arhatship is within the reach of everyone who is reborn there. (Nattier 2003a:185)

Although, as Nattier has revealed, the *Akṣobhyavyūha* possesses a greater number of earlier elements from canonical texts and began to flourish at the beginning of the Common Era, in the later Mahāyāna tradition, Sukhāvātī ultimately ascended to pole position in the list of popular buddha-fields. This is also the case in the Prajñāpāramitā tradition specifically: the

bodhisattva vows for creating their own buddha-field in LP are closer to *Sukhāvatīvyūha* than *Akṣobhyavyūha* (see § 4.1.3). Before we inspect this issue more closely, we shall first turn to the landscape of the city Gāndhāvātī in Sadāprarudita story in AP, which is close to that of Sukhāvatī in the Smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha* (abbr. SSukh).

4.1.2 The city Gandhavatī as a “semi-buddha-field” in the Sadāprarudita story

The city Gandhavatī in the Sadāprarudita story is the place where the Dharma-preacher Dharmodgata dwells and thus is the ultimate destination in Sadāprarudita’s search for the Prajñāpāramitā (see § 3). The text describes the landscape of this city (see below) in a similar fashion to the buddha-field in SSukh. Due to Gandhavatī possessing what may be described semi-pure-land features, one could be led to assume that its portrayal here was influenced by *Sukhāvatīvyūha* literature. The picture is a little more complicated, however, and in this section, I shall demonstrate the city Gandhavatī occupies something of a transitional position between the ideal sacred place in early Buddhism canonical texts, such as the city Kusāvātī in *Mahāsudassana-suttanta* (DN 17), and the ideal buddha-field *Sukhāvatī*, found in the SSukh. In this regard, Kotatsu Fujita (藤田宏達) has already pinpointed the parallels between SSukh and Pāli canonical texts (including the *Mahāsudassana-suttanta*). Based on his study (Fujita 1970a), I would like to further show their similarities to the description of the city Gandhavatī in the Sadāprarudita story of AP. The four close parallels in this regard are listed below.¹⁶⁴

a) The field is surrounded by walls and trees etc.

The description of the landscape of city Gandhavatī begins with the walls and trees surrounding the city. The Eng. translation of the Skt. paragraph from APN is given by Conze (1975a) as follows:

There, five hundred leagues away from here, is a town called Gandhavati. It is built of the seven precious things. It is twelve leagues long and twelve leagues broad, and enclosed by seven walls, seven moats and seven rows of palm trees. (Conze 1975a:279)

As is shown below, this paragraph closely parallels the description of Sukhāvatī in SSukh and Kusāvātī in *Mahāsudassana-suttanta* (the textual similarity between SSukh and *Mahāsudassana-suttanta* at this point has not been given in Fujita 1970a):

¹⁶⁴ The relevant references in AP parallel to the these texts are underlined, and, following the work of Fujita (1970a), the texts in the SSukh (changed to the newest edition, Fujita 2011) parallel to the Pāli texts are marked in italics.

Table 4.2

The city Gandhavatī of Sadāprarudita story in APN	Sukhāvatī in SSukh	The city Kusāvatī of <i>Mahāsudassana-suttanta</i>
asti kulaputra itaḥ pañcabhir yojanaśatair gandhavatī nāma nagarī saptaratnamayī, <u>saptabhiḥ prākārair</u> <u>anuparikṣiptā</u> , saptabhiḥ parikhābhiḥ <u>saptabhistālapaṅktibhiḥ</u> <u>anuparikṣiptā</u> (Vaidya 1960a:240)	punar aparaṃ śāriputra sukhāvatī lokadhātuḥ <u>saptabhir vedikābhiḥ</u> <u>saptabhis tālapaṅktibhiḥ</u> kaṅkiṇījālais ca samalaṃkṛtā samamṭato ' <u>nuparikṣiptā</u> citrā darśanīyā caturṇām ratnānām / (Fujita 2011:84.15-18)	Kusāvatī, ānanda, rājadhānī <u>sattahi pākārehi</u> <u>parikkhittā</u> ahosi... Kusāvatīyā, ānanda, rājadhānīyā catunnam vaṇṇānam dvārāni ahesuṃ... Kusāvatī, ānanda, rājadhānī <u>sattahi</u> <u>tālapantīhi parikkhittā</u> ahosi. (DN II.170)

b) The lake

The description of the lake in APN reads as follows:

Each park has eight lotus ponds, called Bhadra, Bhadrattama, Nandi, Nandottama, Kshama, Kshamottama, Niyata and Avivaha. (Conze 1975a:280)

This description relates to the Sukhāvatī in SSukh and a series of Pāli parallels listed by Fujita (1970a, case 30):

Table 4.3

The city Gandhavatī of Sadāprarudita story in APN	Sukhāvatī in SSukh	Parallel in Fujita 1970a
ekaikasmimś codyāne 'stāvastau <u>puskarinyo</u> yad uta bhadra ca nāma, bhadrattamā ca nāma, nandā ca nāma, nandottamā ca nāma, kṣamā ca nāma, kṣamottamā ca nāma, niyatā ca nāma, avivāhā ca nāma (Vaidya 1960a: 241)	<u>puskarinyah</u> <u>aṣṭāṅgopetavāriparipūrṇā</u> <u>ḥ samatīrthikāḥ</u> <u>kākaṇṭhikāḥ</u> (Fujita 2011:85.1-3)	<u>pokkharanī</u> pūrā (or puṇṇā) udakassa samatittikā kāpeyyā (MN III. 96; SN II. 134; V.460; AN III.28)

c) The lotus

The description of the lotus in Gandhavatī is translated by Conze as follows:

... (all the ponds) covered with beautiful blossoms, each of the size of a cartwheel, fragrant, - blue, yellow, red and white. (Conze 1975a:280)

This paragraph closely parallels the two paragraphs quoted by Fujita (1970a, case 31):

Table 4.4

The city Gandhavatī of Sadāprarudita story in APN	Sukhāvatī in SSukh	Parallel in Fujita 1970a
<p>sarvāsu tāsū <u>puskarinīsu</u> saptaratnamayāni vicitrāṇi darśanīyāni utpalapadmakumuda- puṇḍarīkāṇi jātāni, yaistad udakaṃ saṃchāditam / sarvāṇi ca tāny utpalapadmakumuda- puṇḍarīkāṇi śakaṭacakrapramāṇapariṇā hāni sugandhāni <u>nīlāni</u> <u>nīlavarnāni</u> <u>nīlanidarśanāni</u> <u>nīlanirbhāsāni</u>, <u>pītāni</u> <u>pītavarnāni</u> <u>pītanidarśanāni</u> <u>pītanirbhāsāni</u>, <u>lohitāni</u> <u>lohitavarnāni</u> <u>lohitanidarśanāni</u> <u>lohitanirbhāsāni</u>, <u>avadātāni</u> <u>avadātavarnānyavadātānid</u> <u>arśanānyavadātānirbhāsān</u> i / (Vaidya 1960a:240)</p>	<p>tāsū ca <u>puskarinīsu</u> santi <u>padmāni jātāni nīlāni</u> <u>nīlavarnāni</u> <u>nīlanirbhāsāni</u> <u>nīlanidarśanāni</u> / <u>pītāni</u> <u>pītavarnāni</u> <u>pītanirbhāsāni</u> <u>pītanidarśanāni</u> / <u>lohitāni lohitavarnāni</u> <u>lohitanirbhāsāni</u> <u>lohitanidarśanāni</u> / <u>avadātāny</u> <u>avadātavarnāny</u> <u>avadātānirbhāsāny</u> <u>avadātānidarśanāni</u> / <u>citrāni citravarnāni</u> <u>citrānirbhāsāni</u> <u>citrānidarśanāni</u> śakaṭacakra- pramāṇapariṇāhāni / (Fujita 2011:85.10-15)</p>	<p>rūpāni <u>nīlāni</u> <u>nīlavannāni</u> <u>nīlanidassanāni</u> <u>nīlanibhāsāni</u> <u>pītāni</u> <u>pītavannāni</u> <u>pītanidassanāni</u> <u>pītanibhāsāni</u> <u>lohitakāni</u> <u>lohitakavannāni</u> <u>lohitakanidassanāni</u> <u>lohitakanibhāsāni</u> <u>osadhītārakā odātā</u> <u>odātavannā</u> <u>odātānidassanā</u> <u>odātānibhāsāni</u> (DN II. 110-111; III.260-261, 287; MN II.13-14; AN I. 40-41; IV. 305-306, 349; V. 61-62)</p>

d) The bells waved by the wind

Finally, another passage concerning the decorations of the trees reads:

And on each coping grows a tree, made of the seven precious things, laden with various fruits, also made of precious things. All around, between each tree and the next, hangs a string, also made of precious substances. A network of small bells is fastened on the strings, and thus surrounds the entire city. When stirred by the wind, the small bells give out a sweet, charming and delightful sound ... (Conze 1975a:279)

Part of this passage has parallels in both the SSukh and *Mahāsudassana-suttanta* given by Fujita (1970a, case 32):

Table 4.5

The city Gandhavatī of Sadāprarudita story in APN	Sukhāvatī in SSukh	The city Kusāvatī of <i>Mahāsudassana-suttanta</i> / Parallel in Fujita 1970a
sarvasmiṃś ca khoḍakaśīrṣe saptaratnamayo vṛkṣo jāto nānāvicitrai ratnamayaiḥ phalaiḥ phalavān sarvataś ca khoḍakavṛkṣād ratnamayaṃ sūtraṃ dviṭīyaṃ khoḍakavṛkṣāntaram avasaktam sarvāvatī ca sā nagarī sauvarṇena kiṅkiṇījālana praticchannā / tasya ca <u>kiṅkiṇījālasya</u> <u>vāteneritasya valgur</u> <u>manojño rañjanīyah śabdo</u> <u>niścarati</u> (Vaidya 1960a: 240.)	punar aparaṃ śāriputra tatra buddhakṣetre <i>tāsāṃ</i> <i>ca tālapaṅktīnāṃ teṣāṃ</i> <i>ca <u>kaṅkiṇījālānāṃ</u></i> <i><u>vāteritānāṃ valgur</u></i> <i><u>manojñah śabdo niścarati</u></i> / (Fujita 2011:87.8-10)	a) tesāṃ tālapantīnaṃ vāteritānaṃ saddo ahosi vaggu ca rajanīyoca kamanīyo ca madanīyo ca (DN II. 171) b) tesāṃ <u>kimkinikajālānaṃ</u> <u>vāteritānaṃ saddo ahosi</u> <u>vaggu ca rajanīyoca</u> kamanīyo ca madanīyo ca (DN II. 183)

Thus, the textual evidence clearly shows us that both the buddha-field Sukhāvatī and the city Gandhavatī closely resemble some descriptions of sacred places in canonical texts, including the city Kusāvatī in the *Mahāsudassana-suttanta*.

Harrison (2003) regards the description of the Sukhāvatī landscape as an early or proto-Mahāyāna visualisation associated with *buddhānusmṛti*. The long-winded descriptions suggest that the text is not to be read but performed, and the listener is provided with detailed instructions for an elaborate visualisation to that end. In this regard, as further stated by Gethin (2006:93-102), the similar description of the city Kusāvatī in *Mahāsudassana-*

suttanta could also have served as an important source for the visualisation of the ideal sacred space in early Buddhism.

Gethin also reads the *Mahāśudassana-suttanta* as a mythic narrative of the Buddhist path: the outer city is described as the place for the household life in the sphere of desire (*kāma-dhātu*), while the Palace of Dhamma is the place for the celibate and spiritual life (*brahma-cariya*) of an ascetic. The rooms of the palace are for the practice of meditation (*jhāna*) and to enter them is the conceptual equivalent of being able to enter the sphere of pure form (*rūpa-dhātu*). Having practiced *dāna* and *sīla*, the king, Mahāśudassana, moves from the outer city to the inner Palace of *Dhamma*. Then he practices *jhāna* and the *brahma-vihāras*, after which he meditates on the impermanence of all conditioned things (2006:92-93).

Given that the *Sadāprarudita* story was already composed before 179 C.E. (the date that APL was translated, *terminus ante quem*), the landscape of Gandhavatī represents an early stage in which this typified description of a sacred space was accepted in non-canonical texts.¹⁶⁵ In addition, as discussed in § 3, the interesting process that *Sadāprarudita* undergoes in his search for *Prajñāpāramitā*, i.e. the narrative of the bodhisattva career of *Sadāprarudita*, imitates the model of visualisation in the practice of *pratyutpanna-samādhi*. This dynamic is in line with Gethin's observation concerning the relationship between narrative and meditation. In this regard, it appears to me that the imitation of the name of the city (Kusāvatī > Gandhavatī)¹⁶⁶ probably indicates that the composer of the *Sadāprarudita* story might have been aware of the *Mahāśudassana-suttanta*.

However, the origins of Gandhavatī should by no means be sought for exclusively in Kusāvatī. As is shown by the parallels above, we also find a description of Gandhavatī that does not parallel that of Kusāvatī in the *Mahāśudassana-suttanta*. Moreover, the Trayastriṃśa heaven is mentioned twice in APL, which also indicates another source for Gandhavatī as being a) just like the palace of Indra on the Trayastriṃśa heaven (譬若忉利天上帝釋宮殿¹⁶⁷); and b) just like the place for entertainment **nandavat* (難檀桓) in the Trayastriṃśa heaven (譬如忉利天上難檀桓戲盧¹⁶⁸). This name of this heaven can be associated with a description similar to that of Gandhavatī that is found in Chapter 9 of the *Da Lou-tan Jing* (大樓炭經 T 23), and the proper noun in the second, **nandavat*, is also

¹⁶⁵ In Lal, for instance, it is adopted as the surroundings of the bodhimaṇḍa of the Buddha in the chapter “Going towards the bodhimaṇḍa” (*bodhimaṇḍagamanaparivarta*). And in the *Da Lou-tan Jing* (T 23 大樓炭經) and its parallel *Shi-ji Jing* (世紀經) in the Ch. Dīrgha Āgama (長阿含經 T 1), it occurs repeatedly in the description of different sacred places.

¹⁶⁶ Additionally, as stated in § 4.1, the buddha-field of Samantakusuma in LP is called *Padmāvatī*, and in the inscription it bears a similar name, *Abjavatī*.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. T 224, 471c17.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. T 224, 471c18-19.

found in the sentence: “To the east of Trayastrimśa, there is a place for entertainment called **nandavatī*” (忉利天東出有遊戲處，名曰難檀桓¹⁶⁹).

In contrast to the uncertainties stated above, the relationship between the Sadāprarudita story in AP and SSukh is more patent. As we have discussed in § 3, the composition of this Sadāprarudita story was influenced by PSS, in which the cult of Amitābha occupies a significant position, and the cult of Amitābha is also a central topic of SSukh. Later, I will also point out in § 4.2 that the precise mode of recollecting the Buddha detailed in SSukh is quite akin to that found in PSS; the only notable modification is a shift in focus from visualisation to recitation. In light of the close relationship between the Sadāprarudita story and PSS, the description of the city Gandhavatī as the culmination of the quest for the Prajñāpāramitā could well be regarded as a “proto-buddha-field” or “semi-buddha-field”, already current prior to the period in which the buddha-field Sukhāvatī, the ultimate goal of recollecting the Buddha Amitābha, had been devised in SSukh. In sum, the city Gandhavatī represents something of a transitional stage in the description of the sacred place, occupying a space in between formulations in canonical texts, such as the city Kusāvatī, and later texts concerning the buddha-field Sukhāvatī.

4.1.3 The ideal buddha-field and bodhisattva vow in the Larger Prajñāpāramitā

One LP passage pertaining to purifying the buddha-field (*buddhakṣetram paśodhayati*) includes a description of the ideal buddha-field that is to some extent analogous to the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* and *Akṣobhyavyūha*. Notably the sensual enjoyments of beings in this buddha-field are organised according to the five qualities of desire (*pañcakāmaṇa*), which correspond to the first five of the six sense objects (*ṣaḍāyatana*): vision (*rūpa*), hearing (*śabda*), olfaction (*gandha*), taste (*rasa*), and touch (*spraṣṭavya*). Here I take vision as an example:

evaṃ śīle kṣāntau vīrye dhyāne prajñāyāṃ, yāvat sa ātmanā ca trisāhasramahāsāhasraṃ lokadhātum saptabhi(r) ratnaiḥ paripūrya tṛbhyo ratnebhyo dānaṃ dadāti, tasyaivaṃ bhavaty, anena me kuśalamūlena saptaratnamayaṃ buddhakṣetram bhavatu. (LPG, Conze 1974:103-104)

He himself perfects a great trichiliocosm which is made of the seven jewels, and then gives it as a gift to the Triple Jewel. And he thinks to himself: “May I through that wholesome root have a buddha-field made of the seven treasures!”¹⁷⁰ (Conze 1975b: 618-619)

¹⁶⁹ Cf. T 23, p.292a25-26.

¹⁷⁰ This reading is in line with the earliest Ch. version LPM (T 221, p.136a22-26).

This passage describes a practice of offering alongside making a bodhisattva vow. The first component, offering the seven jewels that comprise the three-thousand great thousand worlds, can be also found in *Akṣobhyavyūha*:

Therefore, for the son or daughter of a good family, who will be reborn in the buddha-field of Akṣobhya through donating the seven jewels that fill the three-thousand great thousand worlds, he or she should make donation in a joyful manner. In this way, he or she can peacefully pass to that buddha-field.¹⁷¹ (T 313, 759a24-26)

However, the most distinctive feature of the LP passage is that the reward for the donation is not a rebirth in Abhirati, as stated in *Akṣobhyavyūha*; rather, the bodhisattva will generate his own buddha-field with similar qualities, the buddha-field made of the seven jewels. In the same way, the bodhisattva also vows that his buddha-field will have heavenly and charming sounds (*divyāś śabdāḥ*), heavenly scents (*divyā gandhāḥ*), the most excellent foods (*śatarasāni bhojanāni*) and heavenly touch (*divyāḥ sparśāḥ*) in the context of the other four qualities of desire. The vows concerning the five qualities of desire then conclude as follows:

Moreover the Bodhisattva thinks to himself, “may I by my good intentions alone bestow upon the Buddhas and Lords, their disciples and all beings agreeable sense pleasures of the five kinds!” And when he has had this idea he thinks to himself, “as a result of this wholesome root, when I have known the supreme enlightenment in that buddha-field, the fivefold agreeable sense pleasures will be manifested to the whole community of the disciples and to all beings just as a result of their wishing for them.”¹⁷² (Conze 1975b:619)

Subsequently, the passage continues with the vow related to the sixth sense object, *dharma*. This category includes such concepts as entering the four trances (*dhyāna*), the four unlimited meditations (*apramāṇa*), and practising the thirty-seven *dharma*s, which act as 37 wings to enlightenment (*saptatṛṃśati-bodhipakṣya-dharma*) etc. (LPG, Conze 1974:104.24-33).

¹⁷¹ 以是故，善男子善女人以七寶滿三千大千世界布施，得生阿閼佛刹者，其人當歡喜與，便安隱至其佛刹。

¹⁷² Translated from the following passage:

punar aparaṃ Subhūte bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya-evaṃ bhavati. manoratha-saṃkalpāḥ eva iṣṭān pañcakāmaguṇāṃ Buddhānā(m) Bhagavatāṃ śrāvakānāṃ sarvasattvānāṃ ca-upanāmayeyaṃ. tasyaivaṃ jānataḥ evaṃ bhavaty, anena kuśalamūlena tatra buddhakṣetre 'nuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisambuddhasya sarvaśrāvaka(saṃgha)sya sarvasattvānāṃ ca manorathasaṃkalpenaiva iṣṭāḥ pañcakāmaguṇāḥ prādurbhavanti. (LPG, Conze 1974:104.16-22)

This reading is in line with LPM (T 221, p.136b05-08).

In spite of the fact that this specific description of the ideal buddha-field, where the six sense objects are concerned, resembles some contents in LSukh and *Akṣobhyavyūha*, the contextual structure of the bodhisattva vows is actually much closer to the Dharmākara's bodhisattva vows in LSukh. Those vows are quite famous in the East Asian Pure Land tradition. Nattier discusses the distinction between the bodhisattva vows of the *Akṣobhyavyūha* and *Sukhāvatīvyūha*:

This distinction is underscored when we examine the content of the vows made by these two bodhisattvas, for in the *Akṣobhyavyūha* the future Akṣobhya vows to undertake ascetic practices in life after life. The beauty of the realm of Abhirati is presented as the by-product of the merit he has acquired by engaging in these activities, not as the result of a conscious plan. In the larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, by contrast, Dharmākara's vows (here only twenty-four in number, in contrast to the forty-eight found in the fifth-century version of the text) deal primarily with the features of his future buddha-field and with the means by which his devotees will gain access to rebirth there. The future Akṣobhya's vows, in sum, refer to traditional elements of the bodhisattva path, while the future Amitābha's vows focus on the creation of a "pure land" itself. (Nattier 2003a:190)

As we have seen in the previous LP passage concerning the six sense objects, the intention of creating one's own buddha-field is clearly present at the end of each of the six bodhisattva vows, and is portrayed as the result of the corresponding good deeds.

The bodhisattva vows of Dharmākara in LSukh include the perfect features of the future buddha-field, which include a series of promises to his devotees. If he cannot achieve those perfect features, he make a the negative vow: "may I not awaken to unsurpassable, perfect, full awakening (if)..." (*mā tāvad ahamanuttarāṃ samyak sambodhim abhisambudhyeyam*). Correspondingly, we find a similar statement at the end of the LP passage: "It is thus that the Bodhisattva purifies the buddha-field. He does not know the supreme enlightenment until all those intentions are fulfilled" (*sa tāvad anuttarāṃ samyak sambodhiṃ na abhisambudhyate. yāvan neme sarva abhiprāyā paripūryante*. LPG, Conze 1974:105.1-2)¹⁷³. Therefore, the fact that the LP's bodhisattva vows include a conscious plan for the bodhisattva's own future buddha-field might demonstrate that the LP was influenced by the bodhisattva vows in LSukh.

It is important to note that Akṣobhya's Abhirati is regarded as the ideal buddha-field in the earliest layers of the Prajñāpāramitā tradition, such as in the main body of AP; in contrast, the bodhisattva vows directed to creating one's own buddha-field in LP are infused with the characteristics of the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*. This shift of preference (as observed in the

¹⁷³ It reads the same to its parallel in LPM:

是爲菩薩能淨佛土。菩薩行道滿足諸願，諸願不具終不止行。(T 221, p.136b08-14)

Akṣobhyavyūha to *Sukhāvatīvyūha*) in the Indian Mahāyāna tradition in general is also pointed out by Nattier:

... Akṣobhya appears to be better represented than Amitābha in scriptures translated prior to the beginning of the third century ... in scriptures translated from the late third century onward, however, the relationship between Akṣobhya and Amitābha is reversed, for no new scripture devoted wholly to Akṣobhya is ever translated ... during this same period of time that we see a proliferation of references to Amitābha in Indian Mahāyāna texts... (Nattier 2000:79-80)

As Schopen points out, the increasing popularity of *Sukhāvatīvyūha* is also shown by a series of references to the presence of Sukhāvatī as a “generalized religious goal” in Skt. Mahāyāna literature. Several religious practices unrelated to the cult of Amitābha, such as hearing the name of another Buddha (Schopen 1977:180), giving gifts to monks (Schopen 1977:181), and hearing, preserving and reciting some Mahāyāna texts different from the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* etc. (Schopen 1977:182-189), are also regarded as efficacious for producing a rebirth in Sukhāvatī in these references. If this correspondence holds true, then the LP passage would have far-reaching consequences for the chronology of the acceptance of Sukhāvatī as a generalized religious goal and the role of Prajñāpramitā literature in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Schopen suggests “we could ... probably push the upper limit of our period back as far as the 5th century A.D. and perhaps even to the 4th century” (Schopen 1977:180). However, the *terminus ante quem* of LP, the date of its earliest Ch. translation, can be traced back to late third century, which is consistent with the date given by Nattier (2000:79-80) in the quotation above.

4.2 The soteriological function of recollecting or seeing the Buddha

When speaking of rebirth in Sukhāvatī in the context of the East Asian Pure Land tradition, recollecting the Buddha (Ch. *nian-fo* 念佛 or Jp. *nembutsu* 念仏) is regarded as a particularly important means for achieving this goal. If we compare the Skt. SSukh with the widespread **Amitābha-sūtra* (T 366 阿彌陀經 *A-mi-tuo Jing*), translated by Kumārajīva, the term *nian-fo* corresponds to two Skt. terms with identical meaning: *buddhānusmṛ-* and *buddhamanasikṛ-* (Izumi 1939:105; Fujita 2001:131-132).¹⁷⁴

One passage from *Milinda-pañha-suttanta* quoted in Izumi 1939 shows the relationship between calling the Buddha to mind and the rebirth among the gods:

¹⁷⁴ For the multiple meanings of *buddhānusmṛti*, cf. § 7.

*Rājā āha: Bhante Nāgasena, tumhe evaṃ bhaṇatha: yo vassasataṃ akusalaṃ kareyya, maraṇakāle ca ekaṃ Buddhagataṃ satim paṭilabheyya so devesu uppajjeyyāti; Etaṃ na saddahāmi.*¹⁷⁵ (Mil. 80.17-20)

The king said: “Your people say, Nāgasena, that though a man should have lived a hundred years an evil life, yet if, at the moment of death, thoughts of the Buddha should enter his mind, he will be reborn among the gods. This I don’t believe.” (Mil 3.7.2, Rhys Davids 1890 [I]:123-124)

This passage clearly deals with the notion of a mental recollection connected with Buddha (*buddhagataṃ satim*), rather than the practice of a recitation. This association between a mental concentration on a sacred figure proceeding death with a rebirth in a heavenly realm is by no means limited to Buddhist sources. As stated by Stephan Beyer (1977:333), in the *Bhagavadgītā*, *anusmṛti* is a contemplative activity, the iconographic visualisation of the god, conducted just at the moment of death, with the aim of joining the god after death. This model is, to some extent, similar to the SSukh text:

Śariputra, those sons or daughters of good families who will hear the name of the blessed Amitāyus, the Tathāgata, and then will bring it to mind, and will keep in mind without distraction for one night, or two, or three, four, five, six, or seven nights — they will be met by the Tathāgata at the moment of their death. When the moment of death approaches for one of these sons or daughters of good families, Amitāyus the Tathāgata, surrounded by an assembly of disciples and at the head of a host of bodhisattvas, will stand before this son or daughter, and this son or daughter will die with a mind that is free from distorted

¹⁷⁵ The Ch. parallel in *Na-xian Bi-qiu Jing* (那先比丘經 T 1670) reads the same (T 1670, 701c22: 王又問那先：卿曹沙門言，人在世間，作惡百歲，臨欲死時念佛，死後者皆生天上。我不信是語).

views. After they die, they will be reborn in the Land of Bliss, in the buddha-field of Amitāyus the Tathāgata.¹⁷⁶ (Gómez 2002:19)

This passage is quite remarkable in that it states Amitābha (=Amitāyus¹⁷⁷) appears before a dying individual who has practiced the recollection of the Buddha for seven days, and that if his mind is not reversed (*aviparyastacitta*), he will be born (*upapatsyate*) in Sukhāvātī after his passing (cf. Fujita 2001:138-141). This notion appears in several other texts: the LSukh also states the continuous practice of recollecting Buddha leads to the appearance of Amitābha Buddha in a dream or before death (T 360, p.272b15-c10); and the PSS also seemingly refers to the same practice: “... the Buddha Amitābha says to these bodhisattvas: If you wish to come and be born in my realm, you must always call me to mind again and again, you must always keep this thought in mind without letting up, and thus you will succeed in coming to be born in my realm ...” (Harrison 1998:19).¹⁷⁸ Moreover, the practice of continuously recollecting Buddha for seven days and nights can be found in PSS:

In the same way, Bhadrapala, bodhisattvas, whether they be ascetics or wearers of white [laymen or laywomen], having learned of the Buddhafield of Amitābha in the western quarter, should call to mind the Buddha in that quarter. They should not break the precepts, and call him to mind single-mindedly, either for one day and one night, or for seven days and seven nights. After seven days they will see the Buddha Amitābha. If they do not see him in the waking state, then they will see him in a dream. (Harrison 1998:17-18)

For these sources, a vision of the Buddha was thus seen as a direct result of practising *buddhānusmṛti* (holding the image in one's mind). As a matter of fact, the term *buddhānusmṛti* in early Mahāyāna literature more widely is always used as a synonym of

¹⁷⁶ Translated from the Skt. SSukh:

yaḥ kaścic chāriputra kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā tasya bhagavato 'mitāyusas tathāgatasya nāmadheyam śroṣyati śrutvā ca manasikariṣyati / ekarātram vā dvirātram vā trirātram vā catūrātram vā pañcarātram vā ṣaḍrātram vā saptarātram vāvikṣiptacitto manasikariṣyati / yadā sa kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā kālāṃ kariṣyati tasya kālāṃ kurvataḥ so 'mitāyus tathāgataḥ śrāvakaśamghaparivṛto bodhisattvagaṇapuraskṛtaḥ purataḥ sthāsyati / so 'viparyastacittaḥ kālāṃ kariṣyati ca / sa kālāṃ kṛtvā tasyaivāmitāyusas tathāgatasya buddhakṣetre sukhāvatyām lokadhātāv upapatsyate / (Fujita 2011:89.4-13)

The corresponding passages in Kumārajīva translation reads the same:

舍利弗，若有善男子善女人，聞說阿彌陀佛，執持名號：若一日，若二日，若三日，若四日，若五日，若六日，若七日，一心不亂。其人臨命終時，阿彌陀佛與諸聖衆，現在其前。是人終時心不顛倒，即得往生阿彌陀佛極樂國土。(T 366_12.0347b10-15)

¹⁷⁷ On these two names, Amitābha and Amitāyus, cf. Karashima 2009.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. T 418, p.905b08-16. This passage has been discussed in § 3.3 Episode 3 (3).

buddhamanasikāra, indicating both 1) continuously calling to the Buddha to mind, and 2) continuously reciting the name of the Buddha (Cf. § 7).

4.2.1 Recollecting Buddha for rebirth in other buddha-fields

Bearing these insights in mind, we can now turn to some further passages in LP, which provide similar descriptions to the texts quoted above. First, let us take a look at the continuous practice of *buddhamanasikāra* in LPG:

(200V1)... *sa tathāgatān arhataḥ* (200V2) *samyaksambuddhān ārāgayati. darśanāya ca yatra lokadhātuṣu tiṣṭhanti dhīyamte yāpayanti tatra copapadyante · ākā<ṃ>kṣamāṇāś ca tatropapattum ebhir manasikāre rātrn-divaṃ viharati · yad uta buddhama(200V3)nasikāraiḥ*. (my edition, based on the facsimile in Karashima 2016: 197)

He propitiates the Tathagatas, Arhats, Perfectly Awakened Ones. For the sake of seeing (them), he is reborn in those worlds in which the Tathagatas exist, live, and spend time. Desiring to be reborn (there), he dwells in directed thought for a night and day, namely, with directing the mind towards the Buddha (*buddhamanasikāra*).

This usage of *buddhamanasikāra* shares some similarities with the previously discussed instances related to Sukhāvatī. Here *buddhamanasikāra* is regarded as the approach for the purpose of rebirth in other buddha-fields. The verb *upa-* + *√ pad* in this passage indicates “to be born”, and we see its future form *upapatsyate* in the SSukh. As with the emphasis placed on continuous concentration on Amitābha in PSS and SSukh, the LPG passage above similarly includes the expression “night and day”, representing the continuity of practice. This latter feature is missing from LPN.¹⁷⁹

In another passage of LPG, *buddhamanasikāra* clearly refers to visualising Buddha, rather than the oral practice of practitioner in SSukh, who “will hear the name [of the blessed Amitāyus, the Tathāgata], and, having heard it, will direct the mind towards it” (*nāmadheyam śroṣyati śrutvā manasikariṣyati*)¹⁸⁰. The passage of LPG is as follows:

(94r8) ... *tatra katamad bodhisatvasya mahāsa(94r9)tvasya buddhakāyasprhāparikarma?*

¹⁷⁹ *sa tathāgatān arhataḥ samyaksambuddhān ākāṅkṣati, darśanāya yatra lokadhātuṣu tiṣṭhanti dhīyamte yāpayanti, ākāṅkṣaṃ tatropapadyate, sa imair manasikāraiḥ viharati yad uta buddhamanasikāraiḥ*. (PSP, Kimura 1990 [IV]:158)

But in the parallel in LPKj (T 223, 342c15-17), we see the expression “night and day” (Ch: *zhou-ye* 晝夜), which is in line with LPG.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. the passage (Fujita 2011:89 and Gómez 2002:19) quoted above.

*yad buddhavigrahaṃ dr̥ṣṭvā na kadācid buddhamanasikāreṇa virahito bhavati • yāvat sarvākārajñatām anuprāpto <bhava>ti idaṃ subhūte bodhisattvasya mahāsatvasya buddhakā(94r10)yaspr̥hāparikarmaḥ.*¹⁸¹ (my edition based on Karashima 2016: 91)

In this case, what is the bodhisattva mahāsatva's aspirational worship towards the Buddha body? After he has seen the individual form of the Buddha, he is never separated from directing the mind towards the Buddha (*buddhamanasikāra*), until he has attained the knowledge of all forms. This, Subhūti, is the bodhisattva mahāsatva's aspirational worship towards the Buddha body.

Notably, this *buddhamanasikāra* is given as the first of ten stages of practice. Therefore it is placed at the very beginning of a bodhisattva's career, whereafter it should be continuously practiced. The expression – “After he has seen the individual form of the Buddha” (*buddhavigrahaṃ dr̥ṣṭvā*) – can be linked with our observations of other texts that *buddhamanasikāra* or *buddhānusmṛti* occurs after perceiving the image of the Buddha (cf. § 3.4 & § 7.1.4). In LP, this *buddhamanasikāra* is continuously practiced, until, as we will see in § 4.2.2, the body of the Buddha is actually seen following the bodhisattva's rebirth in other buddha-fields. This attainment is associated with the eighth stage of an advanced bodhisattva, and thus occurs some seven stages after the practice of *buddhamanasikāra* was first initiated.

4.2.2 Arriving in other buddha-fields and the bodhisattva path

Besides continuously practicing *buddhamanasikāra* in order to effect a rebirth in another buddha-field, according to LP there is another method to achieve the same end:

(34r6)... *ayaṃ (34r7) bodhisatvo mahāsatvo 'bhijñābhiḥ paripūrṇābhiḥ pūrvasyān diśi gaṃgānadīvālukopamāṃ lokadhātūn gatvā tathāgatān arhantaḥ samyaksambuddhān paryupāste satkaroti (34r8) gurukaroti mānayati pūjayati </> evaṃ dakṣiṇasyām paścimāyām uttarasyām adhistād upariṣṭād yāvat samantād daśasu dikṣv ekaikasyān diśi gaṃgānadīvālu(34r9)kopamāṃ lokadhātūn gatvā tathāgatān arhantaḥ samyaksambuddhān*

¹⁸¹ Very close to the parallel found in LPN:

tatra katamad bodhisattvasya mahāsatvasya buddhakāyaspr̥hāparikarma? yad buddhavigrahaṃ dr̥ṣṭvā na jātu buddha manasikāreṇa virahito bhavati, yāvat sarvākārajñatānuprāpto bhavati, idaṃ subhūte bodhisattvasya mahāsatvasya buddhakāyaspr̥hāparikarma. (PSP I-2:92)

This reading is identical with LPKj (T 223, p.257c22-24), but in LPM the sentence is shorter:

What is the aspirational worship towards the Buddha body? The Buddha says: upon seeing the image of the Buddha, one always directs his thought towards the Buddha. (何等爲意願佛身相? 佛言: 若見佛形像意常在佛。 T 221, p.28a10-12)

paryupāsti // satkaroti • gurukaroti mānāyati pūjayati </>¹⁸² (my edition based on Karashima 2016: 34)

This Bodhisattva, in full possession of his super-knowledges, goes, in each of the ten directions, to world-systems numberless as the sands of the Ganges, and there he honors, respects, reveres and worships the Tathagatas. (Conze 1975b:78)

Thus, a bodhisattva can also pass to other buddha-fields by means of super-knowledge (*abhijñā*). This follows the old model of the AP and *Akṣobhayavyūha*,¹⁸³ in which, to recall, the bodhisattva passes from buddha-field to buddha-field, just like the Cakravartin passes from palace to palace (§ 4.1.1). The goal of this action is to see and to honor the present Buddhas in other buddha-fields. Correspondingly, in LP, the super-knowledge (*abhijñā*), as well as the vision of the buddha-field and Buddha, occur in the context of bodhisattva practising at the eighth stage.

(93v7) ... *pu(93v8)nar aparaṃ subhūte bodhisattvena mahāsattvenāṣṭamyām bhūmau vartamāne[na] catvāro dharmāḥ paripūra[y](i)tavyā<h> . [ka]tame catvāraḥ? yad uta sarvasattvacittānupraveśaḥ abhijñāvīkrīḍanātā (93v9) buddhakṣetradarśanātā teṣāṃ ca kṣetrāṇāṃ yathādr̥ṣṭāṇāṃ pariniṣpādanātā • buddhaparyupāsa(natā) buddhakāya(ya)thā = = bhūtapratyavekṣanātā. ime subhūte catvāro dharmāḥ paripūrayi(93v10)tavyāḥ //*¹⁸⁴
(my edition based on Karashima 2016: 90)

Furthermore, Subhūti, four *dharmas* should be fulfilled by the bodhisattva, great being, who is abiding at the eighth stage. What are the four? Namely, 1. entrance into the minds of all beings which is the state of mastering the super-knowledges, 2. the state of seeing buddha-fields which is the state of perfecting those buddha-fields in accordance with what

¹⁸² The passage in PSP is no different, apart from its usage of abbreviation:

ayaṃ bodhisattvo 'bhijñāparipūrṇaḥ pūrvasyām diśi yāvad upariṣṭād diśi gaṅgānadīvālukopamān lokadhātūn gatvā tathāgatān arhataḥ samyaksaṃbuddhān satkaroti gurukaroti mānāyati pūjayati. (PSP, Kimura 2007 [I-1]:96-97)

¹⁸³ Cf. the quotations of T 224 (458a17-23) and T 313 (754c01-07) seen in § 4.1.1: (1) The prediction of Bhāgini.

¹⁸⁴ There is no significant difference in the parallel in LPN (PSP, Kimura 2009a [I-2]: 90) or the earliest Ch. translation (T 221, 27c13-17).

one has seen,¹⁸⁵ 3. the state of honouring the Buddhas, and 4. the state of contemplating the Buddha-body as it really is. These, Subhūti, are the four *dharma*s that should be fulfilled (modified from Conze 1975b:165).

Although it is not clearly stated here whether the bodhisattva arrives in other buddha-fields, the super-knowledge (*abhijñā*) and practice of honoring the Buddha (*buddhaparyupāsana*) can be also found in the previous LPG passage that states the bodhisattva “goes to world-systems numberless as the sands of the Ganges”. Notably, *paryupās-* has the sense of “to approach respectfully” (MW, p.608, col 3) or “sit close”, which shows that the bodhisattva gets close to the Buddhas (after his arriving in other buddha-fields). The early Ch. translations also agree with the reading that “in the eighth stage, the bodhisattva ... goes to see, respect and offer to the Buddhas”.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, “the contemplation of the Buddha body as it really is” (*buddhakāya-yathābhūta-pratyavekṣaṇa*) in the eighth stage is interpreted as “the contemplation of *dharmakāya* (as it really is)” (LPG) or “perceiving *dharmatā*” (LPM), in a passage belonging to the same chapter of LP (Cf. § 5.2, Case 2).

Schopen has analyzed two passages of the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* (abbr. Samādh) that concern going to or being reborn in Sukhāvātī. He argues that the text is “not concerned with a bodhisattva who is in the initial stages of his career, but with one fairly far advanced on the ideal path of development towards Buddhahood” (Schopen 1977:190). In the first passage,¹⁸⁷ the characterisations of one who has “obtained the mastery of the supernatural faculties (or super-knowledge)” (*paṃcābhijñāpāramiṃ ca prāptā*), who “has the range of *dhāraṇis*” (*dhāraṇigocarā*), and who “has abandoned all faults and purified all impurities” (*sarvadoṣaprahīṇās ca sarvakleśasamucchināh*) each serve to indicate the stage at which this bodhisattva abides. The first is initially connected with the third bhūmi in the scheme found in the Dbh, but “their full development is not obtained until the eighth...the abandonment of all faults and the complete cutting off of all impurities is also associated with the eighth bhūmi, while obtaining the *dhāraṇis* belongs most fully to the ninth...”

¹⁸⁵ Here, my understanding is slightly different from the translation suggested by Conze – “the vision of buddha-fields, and the creation, in accordance with what one has seen, of those buddha-fields” – and agrees with the early Ch. translations — LPM: “arriving in other buddha-fields to see the specialities, he will (then) make his own buddha-field perfect.” (到諸佛國觀其奇特，當自莊嚴其佛國土。T0221, p.27c15-16) and LPKj: “(after) seeing the buddha-fields, he makes his own buddha-field perfect according to the buddha-fields that he has seen.” (見諸佛國，如所見佛國，自莊嚴其國。T0223, p.257b22-23). In this regard, *pariṇiṣpādanatā* can be understood as “the making perfect” (BHSD, p.326).

¹⁸⁶ 復次須菩提，菩薩當復於八住地 ... 往見禮敬供養諸佛。(T0221, p.27c13-16)

¹⁸⁷ Samādh Dutt GMSii, pt. 2, 450.11; Ms. no.46, fol.121b5 = Pek vol.32, no. 795, 9-4-5; Eng. translation cf. Schopen 1977:189-190.

Furthermore, the most significant aspects of the second passage¹⁸⁸ are the references made to “realizing the *pratisaṃvid* (special knowledge)” and “obtaining *anutpāda-dharmakṣānti*”. The Dbh associates the former with the ninth bhūmi and the latter with the eighth (Schopen 1977:193).

In bringing the present passage from the Samādh into conjunction with the scheme of things worked out in the Dbh ... we want only to give some indication of where the bodhisattva of the present passage would fall on at least one traditional arrangement of the path, to place him approximately from the point-of-view of the tradition itself ... the author of this passage conceived of Sukhāvatī as a place to which a bodhisattva went to attain or fully mature these particular characteristics, as an ideal setting for a bodhisattva at an advanced level to continue his spiritual development. (Schopen 1977:190-191)

Additionally, the first passage also mentions that after staying in Sukhāvatī, the bodhisattvas “go to a *koṭi* of fields, being honorers of the feet of Buddhas”. Considering the similar elements we have found in LPG, going to other buddha-fields where the present Buddhas live and teach (including the buddha-field of Amitābha, Sukhāvatī) whilst abiding at the advanced stage of the bodhisattva path appears to be a widely held belief in Mahāyāna literature.

4.2.3 Directly seeing buddha of other buddha-fields

The occurrence of *abhijñā* in the passages we have mentioned above does not necessarily indicate that the bodhisattva goes to other buddha-fields to see the Buddha. In another passage related to seeing the Buddha, we see a method that is completely different from those listed above. In this case, the bodhisattva sees the Buddhas without arriving in other buddha-fields. The *buddhānusmṛti* in this context is connected with the divine eye (*divya-cakṣuṣ*).

*anāsraveṣu ca pañcasv abhijñāsu sthitvā divyena cakṣuṣā pūrvasyāṃ diśi buddhān bhagavanto draṣṣyati. tāṃś ca buddhān bhagavato dṛṣṭvā buddhānusmṛtiṃ pratilapsyate. tasya sā buddhānusmṛtir nocchetsyate yāvad anuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisambhotsyate. evaṃ yāvat samantād daśasu dikṣu ...*¹⁸⁹ (LPG, Conze 1974:16-17)

And when he has stood in the five superknowledges which are without outflows, then he sees with his heavenly eye, in all the ten directions, the Buddhas and Lords, and as a result he acquires the recollection of the Buddhas. And that Buddha-recollection of his will not

¹⁸⁸ Samādh Dutt GMSii, pt. 2, 350.7; Ms. no.46, fol.95a1 = Pek vol.31, no. 795, 311-5-6; Eng. translation cf. Schopen 1977:192.

¹⁸⁹ It is akin to the LPN parallel (Kimura 2006 [VI-VIII]:21) and does not differ significantly from LPKj (T 223, 388b2-4).

be cut off again before he knows full enlightenment. (Conze 1975b:559)

In the context of this passage, the fivefold super-knowledge (*pañcasv abhijñāsu*) – including the divine eye (*divya-cakṣus*), divine ear (*divya-śrota*), knowledge of other minds (*cittaparyāyajñāna*), recollection of previous habitations (*pūrvanivāsānasmṛti*) and the knowledge of the decay of affliction (*āsravakṣayajñāna*)¹⁹⁰ – indicates that the bodhisattva is already at an advanced level. Furthermore, the phrase “will acquire the recollection of the Buddha” (*buddhānasmṛti pratilapsyate*) obviously refers to staying in one’s own world and directly perceiving the buddhas in other buddha-fields. This mode of seeing is quite different from that advocated in AP and the rebirth-oriented practice that we found in the passages related to Sukhāvatī.

Finally another type of directly seeing the Buddha can be identified in the following passage found in the first chapter of LP:

(LPG 5r8) ... *atha bhagavāms tasminn eva siṃhāsane niṣaṇṇaḥ punar eva prabhāṃ prāmuṃcat* yayā prabhayā punar e-(LPG 5r9)-vāyaṃ trisāhasramahā<sā>hasro lokadhātur avabhāsito 'bhūt* yenāvabhāseṇa ya iha trisāhasramahāsāhasre lokadhātau satvās te sarve pūrvasyān diśi gaṃgānadī-(LPG 5r10)-vālukopameṣu lokadhātuṣu tathā<gatā>n arhataḥ samyaksaṃbuddhān saśrāvakaśaṃghān paśyanti sma · tatra ca pūrvasyān diśi ye gaṃgānadīvālukopameṣu loka-(LPG 5r11)-dhātuṣu sa[t]vās te 'pīmaṃ trisāhasramahāsāhasraṃ lokadhātuṃ bhagavantaṃ ca śākyamuniṃ tathāgataṃ sabhikṣusaṃghaparivāraṃ adrākṣu<r> yathā ca pūrvasyān diśy evaṃ dakṣi-(LPG 5v1)-nasyāṃ paścimāyāṃ uttarasy[ā]m adhistād upariṣṭād yāvat samantād daśasu dikṣu ye gaṃgānadīvālukopameṣu lokadhātu[ś]u satvās te 'pīma[m] (trisāha)sramahāsāhasraṃ (LPG 5v2) lokadhātuṃ bhagavantaṃ ca śākyamuniṃ tathāgataṃ sabhikṣusaṃghaparivāraṃ adrākṣuḥ //¹⁹¹ (Zacchetti 2005:372)*

Thereupon the Lord, seated on this very Lion Throne, smiled once again. Through the illumination from that smile this great trichiliocosm, and the innumerable world systems in the ten directions, were lit up. And all the beings in this great trichiliocosm saw the Buddhas, the Lords, and their assemblies of disciples in countless world systems in the East. And conversely, all the beings in countless world systems in the East saw this Saha world system, and Sakyamuni, the Tathāgata, together with his community of monks. (Conze 1975b:41-42)

¹⁹⁰ The fifth in other lists could also be the supernatural power (*rddhi*).

¹⁹¹ This reading is identical to the parallels in LPM (T 221, 2a04-08) and LPKj (T 223, 218a18-22).

The titles of the two earliest Ch. translations of LP, LPM and LPDh, are all associated with “light”: LPM is called “The Scripture of Radiating Light” (放光經), whereas LPDh has the name “The Scripture in Praise of the Light” (光贊經). This corresponds to the contents of the first Chapter of LP, where we see grandiose descriptions of the Buddha’s miraculous, radiating light before he preaches the Prajñāpāramitā, in contrast to the cautious apologetic argumentation regarding “the Prajñāpāramitā not contradicting *dharmatā*” at the beginning of AP (see § 1.3). With the help of this light, beings in uncountable buddha-fields can see the Buddha who is willing to teach the Prajñāpāramitā. However, it is hard to say whether this idea reflects a specific practice located in the path; rather it would be better to take the light as a metaphor for Prajñāpāramitā itself. As McMahan describes the role of light in Buddhist visionary literature:

Light is obviously the prerequisite for vision; ... it is a symbol in many traditions for religious truth, knowledge, and revelation. Light in the Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions serves as a particularly interesting metaphor and symbol, because it bridges the scholastic aspects of Buddhism with its visionary elements ... perfect wisdom is said to be both a light and a source of light; bodhisattvas are “lights and leaders of the world”, the six perfections are a bodhisattva’s light, torch, and illumination; the bodhisattva’s compassionate work is an abundant light that purifies the eyes of all beings, freeing them from saṃsāra and a light to the blind... (McMahan 2002:72)

The light also plays a significant role in the LSukh, where the name of Amitābha is interpreted as *amita* (unmeasured) + *bha* (light). References to or descriptions of light can be found in many places in the text. The most famous is perhaps an enumeration of different epithets of Amitābha associated with light.¹⁹² In this context, we also see a scene, similar to LP, where the light of Amitābha can reach countless other world-systems, and from which the beings in these world-systems will benefit.¹⁹³

¹⁹² Ananda, this is why this Tathagata is called Amitābha (that is, Measureless Light). This is why he is called Measureless Radiance, Measureless Splendor, Interminable Radiance, Unimpeded Radiance, Unobstructed Radiance, Ever Blazing Radiance, Radiance of Heavenly Gems, Colored Radiance of Unobstructed Light Rays ... (Gómez 2002:81)

For more details on the twelve light Buddhas in the Ch. translation of LSukh, cf. Shibata 1967.

¹⁹³ Cf. the section Amita Buddha’s Radiant Light (Gómez 2002:80-82).

4.2.4 The classification of seeing the Buddha in other sources

Notably, the different means of seeing the Buddha in LP mentioned above can be also found in PSS. Closely after one passage describing the bodhisattva's practice of visualisation in *pratyutpanna-samādhi*,¹⁹⁴ we find the following passage:

These bodhisattvas mahasattvas do not see through [the obstructions] with the divine eye, nor hear through them with the divine ear, nor travel to that buddha-field by means of the supernormal power of motion (神足, *ṛddhipāda*), nor do they die here to be reborn in that buddha-field there, and only then see; rather, while sitting here they see the Buddha Amitābha, hear the sutras which he preaches, and receive them all. Rising from meditation they are able to preach them to others in full.¹⁹⁵ (Harrison 1998:18)

In this PSS passage, four approaches to seeing the Buddha can be identified, and first three approaches rejected above are comparable with those given in LP:

- 1) perceiving the Buddha though divine eye and divine ear (cf. § 4.2.3)
- 2) arriving the buddha-field by means of the supernormal power of motion (cf. § 4.2.2)
- 3) rebirth in the buddha-field after death (cf. § 4.2.1)
- 4) *pratyutpanna-samādhi*

It is hard to prove that this passage has any direct relationship to LP; however, by virtue of their very occurrence, we may presume that these four means were widely current among different schools of Praxis at the beginning of the Common Era.

Interestingly, in the correspondence between Kumārajīva and the Chinese monk Hui-yuan, we also see another threefold category, which also reflects the different meditation methods of recollecting the Buddha (see § 6).

Kumārajīva answers: there are three types of *samādhi* of seeing the Buddha (見佛三昧). First, the bodhisattvas attain the divine eye and divine ear, or they fly to the buddha-fields in ten directions, seeing and asking the Buddhas, to break the net of doubts. Second, without super-knowledge (*abhijñāna*), the bodhisattvas continuously practice recollecting

¹⁹⁴ It is the same, Bhadrabala, for the minds of the bodhisattvas: when they perform this calling to mind (*pratyutpanna-samādhi*), the famous great mountains and the Mount Sumerus in all the Buddha-realms, and all the places of darkness between them, are laid open to them, so that their vision is not obscured, and their minds are not obstructed. (Harrison 1998:18)

¹⁹⁵ 是菩薩摩訶薩，不持天眼徹視，不持天耳徹聽，不持神足到其佛刹，不於是間終，生彼間佛刹乃見；便於是間坐，見阿彌陀佛，聞所說經悉受得。從三昧中悉能具足。(T 418, p. 905a23-27)

the present Buddhas such as Amitābha, concentrating his mind, then seeing the Buddhas and asking questions. Third, (the bodhisattvas) apart from desire (*virāga*) or not apart from desire learn *buddhānusmṛti* through seeing the Buddha statue, or seeing the body of birth, or seeing the Buddhas of the past, present and future. These three types of meditation are all under the name of *samādhi* of recollecting Buddha, but actually they are different. The best is attaining *abhijñāna* and seeing the Buddhas in ten directions, the others are inferior. They are named the *samādhi* of recollecting the Buddha in general.¹⁹⁶ (T 1856, p. 134b22-29)

The passage is closely followed by an explanation of the *pratyutpanna-samādhi*, which associates this *samādhi* with the second category:

Furthermore, if one continuously contemplates the characteristic of world-disgust (*nirvidā*), then coursing in friendliness (*maitrī*) towards the beings is difficult for him. Thus, for the sake of these bodhisattvas not apart from desire, *pratyutpanna-samādhi* is praised repeatedly. Although this meditation is not apart from desire, one can also concentrate his mind then see the Buddhas. This is the basis for seeking for the path of the Buddha.¹⁹⁷ (T 1856, p.134b29-c04)

The three categories of *samādhi* of recollecting Buddha mentioned by Kumārajīva can be summarized as follows:

- a) Acquiring the divine-eye and divine-ear or flying to the buddha-fields of the ten directions through the *abhijñāna* (= § 4.2.2 & § 4.2.3).
- b) Concentrating on the present Buddha (= *pratyutpanna-samādhi*).
- c) *Buddhānusmṛti* (recollecting the Buddha) (= § 6)

This threefold category is in line with the textual records related to recollecting the Buddha up to the 5th century C.E., although its enactment for the purpose of rebirth in *Sukhāvatī* is not mentioned. Categories 1) and 2) in PSS are combined as a), and the third category to

¹⁹⁶ 什答：見佛三昧有三種。一者，菩薩或得天眼天耳，或飛到十方佛所，見佛難問，斷諸疑網。二者，雖無神通，常修念阿彌陀等現在諸佛，心住一處，即得見佛，請問所疑。三者，學習念佛，或以離欲，或未離欲，或見佛像，或見生身，或見過去未來現在諸佛。是三種定，皆名念佛三昧，其實不同。[上?]者得神通見十方佛，餘者最下。統名念佛三昧。

¹⁹⁷ 復次，若人常觀世間厭離相者，於衆生中行慈爲難。是以爲未離欲諸菩薩故。種種稱讚般舟三昧。而是定力雖未離，亦能攝心一處能見諸佛，則是求佛道之根本也。

which Kumārajīva refers to as *buddhānusmṛti*, relates to a similar presentation in certain meditation manuals, as will be discussed in § 6.

In Kumārajīva's interpretation, seeing the Buddha with *abhijñāna* is regarded as the best approach for seeing the Buddha. As is stated in § 4.2.2, seeing the Buddha with *abhijñāna* is also associated with the advanced bodhisattva stage in LP. According to Kumārajīva therefore, for one who is familiar with early Prajñāpāramitā literature the ultimate goal of these different practices of seeing the Buddha is very likely to have been an experience of a real and present Buddha, and to hear their speech in other buddha-fields, which are supposed to accelerate practitioners on their journey to enlightenment. In this regard, the soteriological function of seeing the Buddha in LP does not differ significantly from the relevant records that we have seen in AP; namely, the purpose in flying to other buddha-fields for the purpose of seeing the Buddha and hearing the preaching of the Buddha (§ 4.1.1, 1).

Summary:

We have discussed the different types of ideal buddha-field in the Prajñāpāramitā tradition: the Abhirati of Akṣobhya is regarded as the ideal buddha-field in AP; whilst in LP, the buddha-field is a place of sensual enjoyment, and there we can also find the presence of the bodhisattva vow as in LSukh. Therefore, in accordance with the observations made by Nattier (2000, 2003) that the ideal buddha-field in early Mahāyāna literature shifted its exemplar from Abhirati to Sukhāvatī, we also find that the cult of Akṣobhya was dominant in the earliest strata of the Prajñāpāramitā tradition and that the cult of Amitābha was integrated only later.

The reasons for this adjustment in focus must remain largely conjecture: in some ways the cult of Amitābha obviously has more advantages; such as, an emphasis on enjoyment and the promise of a more ready acquisition of enlightenment. However, the integration of the cult of Amitābha into the Prajñāpāramitā tradition had far more discernible implications and brought it with some rather significant changes. Most prominent thereof is the notion that seeing the Buddha, now associated with the terms like *buddhamanasikṛ-* or *buddhānusmṛ-*, could serve as a means to attain a rebirth in the ideal buddha-field Sukhāvatī in the Pure Land tradition. Evidently this practice came to be in vogue and subsequently was introduced into such Prajñāpāramitā texts as LP, where it also stands as an important means to be reborn in the ideal buddha-field. At the time of this text's composition, other different approaches of seeing the Buddha also flourished; such as, directly perceiving or flying to present buddha-fields.

Nevertheless, we will see in the following chapters that the old idea about “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha” persisted and hence co-existed with novel notion regarding a vision of the Buddha. Indeed this idea continued to occupy the first position in formulations and understandings of seeing the Buddha in LP. Together with visions, seeing the Buddha through the *dharma* generally gave rise to a new understanding of the body of the Buddha, namely, the *dharmakāya* (it will be discussed in § 5).

5. From *dharmatā* to *dharmakāya*

5.1 Overview of previous studies on the *dharm*-body in Prajñāpāramitā literature

In his examination of passages concerning *dharmakāya* in Skt. and Ch. versions of AP, Harrison (1992a) argues that all the cases of *dharmakāya* in this early Prajñāpāramitā literature in fact do not refer to the ontological “body of dharma”. The compound *dharmakāya*, in three cases, is a *bahuvrīhi* form, whose usage as an adjective can be traced back to the *Aggañña-suttanta* of the *Dīgha-Nikāya*. In plural form this compound does not mean the “Buddhas are the *dharmakāyas*”, rather “they are those who are embodied in the *dharm*” or the “Buddha has the *dharm* as his body”, which is further connected by Harrison with “seeing *dharm* is seeing the Buddha” (Harrison 1992a:50), the formula that we have discussed in § 1.

In his investigation of the Ch. Āgamas, Harrison also discussed instances from the Skt. AP, in which *dharmakāya* appears as a noun (Harrison 1992a:52-55). As is pointed out by Radich, it would be a methodological problem to presume that the editions of the Ch. Āgamas are earlier than Mahāyāna formulations regarding the Buddha body (Radich 2007:821). Nevertheless, it should be noted that among the five passages, listed by Harrison (1992a:47), that include *dharmakāya* from the later versions of AP, we can find only one single case which has a counterpart in the APL. There, however, it is translated as *fo-jing-shen* 佛經身 (the corpus of Buddhist sūtras) (Harrison 1992a:57).

This contrasts with Radich’s opinion on *dharmakāya* in early Mahāyāna texts. In his doctoral dissertation discussing Buddha embodiments (2007:822) he posits the following arguments:

- (1) There are indeed significant elements and precursors of a nascent “classic” Mahāyāna metaphysical concept of the *dharmakāya* in the Lokakṣema corpus, and even in his Aṣṭa, though not yet by the name of *dharmakāya*.
- (2) The elements of this understanding are already clearly spoken of under the name of *dharmakāya* by the time of Mokṣala’s version of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, translated in 291 C.E.

Not only does the metaphysical “body of *dharm*” not occur in the APL, the earliest translation of AP, but below I will also point out that, in the supposed instances of *dharmakāya* in LP (case 1 and 2 in § 5.2) mentioned by Radich, *dharmakāya* is actually absent in the early version, LPM, and that yet another case regarded by Radich as an occurrence of *dharmakāya* in the LPM is the result of a misunderstanding that probably happened in the transmission of text (see § 5.3). Thus it seems rather premature to make any firm judgments regarding a metaphysical understanding of the *dharmakāya* in LP and it is demanded that we first clarify the process of the historical development of the notion.

Through a comparison of the early Ch. translations and the Gilgit Skt. version of the LP, this chapter attempts to contribute to the problematic of discerning how *dharmakāya* first arose in the Prajñāpāramitā tradition and then later came to be understood as the omnipresent body of the Buddha. The sources that I adopt to support my argument are not limited to Prajñāpāramitā literature, but include others contemporaneous to the time of the LP's composition.

5.2 *Dharmakāya* paralleling *dharmatā* in different versions of Larger Prajñāpāramitā

Two passages from the translation of LP by Mokṣala (*wu-cha-luo* 無叉羅 in the year 291 C.E.) together with its parallels in other early Ch. versions and the Skt. recension can provide us a general idea of the development of *dharmakāya*. Here I list the different Ch. versions according to the time of translation:

Case 1.

LPM (T 221, 08.0145a29-b02)

Do not see the Tathāgata through the *rūpakāya*. The Tathāgata is *dharmatā* (法性). *Dharmatā* is neither coming nor going. In the same way, the Tathāgatas are neither coming nor going.¹⁹⁸

LPKj (T 223, p.421c14-c18)

If someone were to distinguish that the Tathāgatas are coming or going, one should notice that they are all fools. Why? Good man, the Buddhas cannot be seen through *rūpakāya*. The *dharmakāya* of Tathāgatas is neither coming nor going. It is also the case of the coming and going of the Tathāgatas.¹⁹⁹

LPX(I) (T 220, p.1068a15-23)

In the same way, if someone argues that the Tathāgata-Arhat-Samyaksambuddha is coming and going, one should know this person is a fool, without insight. Why? Good man, all the Tathāgata-Arhat-Samyaksambuddhas cannot be seen through the *rūpakāya*. The Tathāgata is the *dharmakāya*. Good man, the *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata is the *tathatā* and *dharmadhātu* of all *dharmas*. One cannot say the *tathatā* and *dharmadhātu* are

¹⁹⁸ 莫以色身而觀如來。如來者法性，法性者亦不來亦不去，諸如來亦如是無來無去。

¹⁹⁹ 若有人分別諸佛有來有去，當知是人皆是愚夫。何以故？善男子，諸佛不可以色身見，諸佛法身無來無去，諸佛來處去處亦如是。

coming and going.²⁰⁰ In this way, the *dharmakāya* is neither coming nor going.²⁰¹

This passage is found at the beginning of chapter “Dharmodgata” (*dharmodgataparivarta*) in LP, continuing the story about how the bodhisattva Sadāprarudita searches for Prajñāpāramitā. In the context of seeing the Tathāgata, we find **dharmatā* (*fa xing* 法性) rather than the expected *dharmakāya* in the LPM. Nevertheless, later Ch. translations of LP do replace *dharmatā* with *dharmakāya*, as is the case in the Skt. text of the Sadāprarudita story in APN (its expected parallel in LPG and LPN unfortunately does not exist).

APN (Vaidya 1960a:253)

*ye ca Tathāgatasyāgamanam ca gamanam ca kalpayanti, sarve te bālajātīyā
dusprajñajātīyā iti vaktavyāḥ, tadyathāpi nāma sa eva puruṣo yo 'nudake udakasamjñām
utpādayati / tatkasya hetoḥ? na hi tathāgato rūpakāyato draṣṭavyaḥ / dharmakāyās
tathāgatāḥ / na ca kulaputra dharmatā āgacchati vā gacchati vā /*

If one distinguishes the coming and going of the Tathāgata, all of them should be called “fools or dummy living beings”, just like the person who produces the concept of water based on something that is not water. Why? The Tathāgatas should not be seen through *rūpakāya*. The Tathāgatas are *dharmakāya*. Good man, the *dharmatā* is neither coming nor going.

The APKj is quite close to this Skt. passage.²⁰² It is a quotation from a longer passage, discussed by Makransky (Makransky 1997:32), which, according to the context, emphasises the equation between the Tathāgata with *tathatā* / *dharmatā* (see § 1.4.1). However, in its earliest version, the APL, this passage is completely absent. Thus, in both the earliest Ch. translations of AP and LP, the term *dharmakāya* does not appear.

²⁰⁰ This sentence is obviously interpolated, because *tathatā* and *dharmadhātu* are synonyms of *dharmatā* (§ 1).

²⁰¹ 若謂如來應正等覺有來有去亦復如是，當知是人愚癡無智。何以故？善男子，一切如來應正等覺，不可以色身見。夫如來者，即是法身。善男子！如來法身即是諸法真如法界，真如法界既不可說有來有去，如來法身亦復如是，無來無去。

²⁰² 善男子，若有人以如來身色音聲而生貪著，如是人等分別諸佛有去來相，當知是等愚癡無智，如無水中而生水想。何以故？諸佛如來不應以色身見，諸佛如來皆是法身故。(T 227, p. 584b07-11)

Case 2.²⁰³

LPM (T 221, p.029a27-28)

What does it mean for a bodhisattva to truly perceive the body of the Buddha”? Through perceiving *dharmatā*, he truly sees (the body of the Buddha).²⁰⁴

LPDh (T 222:198b22-23)

What does it mean for a bodhisattva to carefully (*shen di* 審諦) examine the body of the Buddhas? He truly sees all the Buddhas as *dharmakāya*.²⁰⁵

LPKj (T 223, p.259b08)

What does it mean for a bodhisattva to perceive the body of the Buddha according to the truth? He sees the *dharmakāya* according to the truth.²⁰⁶

LPG (96v11-12)

(96v11) ... *tatra kata*(96v12)*mā bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya buddhakāyayathābhūtapratyavekṣaṇatā?*

yā dharmakāya<*ya*>*thābhūtapratyavekṣaṇatā*//²⁰⁷ (my edition based on the facsimile in Karashima 2016: 93)

In that case, what is the nature of a bodhisattva’s examination of the body of the Buddha according to the truth? It has the nature of an examination of the *dharmakāya* according to the truth.

The broader context in which Case 2 is situated concerns the conduct or achievements of a bodhisattva on the ten stages, wherein the “bodhisattva examining the body of the Buddha according to the truth” belongs to the eighth stage. Consistent with Case 1, the term **dharmatā* in the Mokṣala translation is replaced by *dharmakāya* in later versions. Thus, from the historical perspective, *dharmatā* and *dharmakāya* appear to be intimately related.

²⁰³ The Skt. passage of this case has been quoted and briefly discussed in § 4.2.2.

²⁰⁴ 云何菩薩眞見佛身？逮法性故是爲眞見。

²⁰⁵ 何謂菩薩而常審諦觀諸佛身？以眞正見諸佛則爲法身故。

²⁰⁶ 云何菩薩如實觀佛身？如實觀法身故。

²⁰⁷ The parallel in LPN does not differ dramatically:

tatra katamā bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya buddhakāyayathābhūtapratyavekṣaṇatā? yā dharmakāyayathābhūtapratyavekṣaṇatā, iyaṃ bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya buddhakāyayathābhūtapratyavekṣaṇatā (Kimura 2007 [I-2]:100)

5.3 One passage including *fa-shen* in Mokṣala's translation

One passage concerning *fa-shen* (法身 **dharmakāya*) in LPM is considered by Radich (2007: 787) as evidence of an early metaphysical usage of *dharmakāya*, on the basis that the unique expression “the **dharmatā* is the *fa-shen* (**dharmakāya*?)” (法性者則是法身) occurs.

Prajñāpāramitā is neither giving *asaṃskṛtadharmā*, nor abandoning *saṃskṛtadharmā*. Why? No matter if Tathāgatas come forth or not, the *dharmatā* persists. The *dharmatā* is the *fa-shen*, it stands independently from losing and destroying.²⁰⁸ (T 221, p.067c19-21)

However, the sentence in which this expression is included is obviously the *dharmatā* formula that we have already discussed in § 1. Since this formula closely follows canonical texts, it is impossible to read it in the manner that Radich suggests. Looking further into the Skt. parallel one reads:

prajñāpāramitā ... na saṃskṛtadhātor dāyikā vā cchorikā vā. tat kasya hetor? utpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā tathāgatānām sthitaivaiṣā dharmāṇām dharmatā dharmadhātu dharmasthitā dharmaniyāmatā. (PSP, Kimura 1986 [II-III]:184)

The Prajñāpāramitā ... is neither a giver nor a taker of the conditioned sphere. Why? No matter if the Tathāgatas come forth or not, it is only the *dharmatā* of the *dharmas* that remains: [it is] *dharmadhātu*, *dharmasthitā* and *dharmaniyāmatā*.²⁰⁹

In comparison with this passage, the corresponding phrase “the **dharmatā* is the *fa-shen*”, appears to be a mistaken translation of what are in fact two paratactic terms: “*dharmatā dharmadhātuḥ*”. This may be attributed to the usage of *fa-shen* (法身) in early Ch. Buddhist literature as a translation of *dharmadhātu*, in which *dhātu* has the sense of “element in the body” (BHSD, p.282, entry of *dhātu*), such as in one colophon of the Prajñāpāramitā literature written by Dao'an 道安 (312-385 C.E.).²¹⁰ Thus the expression in LPM – “no matter if the Tathāgatas come forth or not, it is only the *dharmatā* that remains. The sentence

²⁰⁸ 般若波羅蜜，亦不持無爲法有所與，亦不棄有爲法。何以故？有佛無佛法性住如故，法性者則是法身，亦不以忘住亦不以損住。

²⁰⁹ This passage is in the missing part between folio 149 - 150 of Gilgit manuscripts. So here I use the Nepalese Skt version of LP.

²¹⁰ 等道有三義焉：法身也，知(如)也，真際也。(出三藏記集 T 2145, p.48a25)

“the **dharmatā* is the *fa-shen* ...” should be reconstructed as: “**utpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā dharmāṇāṃ sthitāivaiṣā dharmatā dharmadhātuḥ*...” In the later Ch. translations of this passage,²¹¹ the two terms *dharmatā* and *dharmadhātu* are found again in a paratactic construction, rather than in an assertive sentence. Thus, the term *fa-shen* here cannot be reconstructed as *dharmakāya*.

As we have discussed above, the *dharmakāya* never appears in the LPM, and *dharmatā* appears to be an alternative for it. This is by no means a coincidence. As we shall presently demonstrate, this usage of the term *dharmakāya* developed historically from *dharmatā*. And this development may have initially occurred in the context of passages that deal with seeing the Buddha.

5.4 Dharma or *dharmatā* as the origin of *dharmakāya*

As revealed by previous scholars,²¹² there is only a single passage in Pāli canonical texts that includes the term *dharmakāya*. It arises in DN 27, the *Aggañña-suttanta*, in the context where the Brahmins state they are proud of their own purity and elected status because they are “true children of Brahmā, born from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā” (Walshe 1995:407) (*Brahmuno puttā orasā mukhato jātā Brahma-jā Brahma-nimmitā Brahma-dāyādā*, DN III.81). As a rebuttal, the Buddha says the following:

Vāseṭṭha, all of you, though of different birth, name, clan and family, who have gone forth from the household life into homelessness, if you are asked who you are, should reply: “We are ascetics, followers of the Sakyan.” He whose faith in the Tathāgata is settled, rooted, established, solid, unshakeable by any ascetic or Brahmin, any deva or māra or Brahmā or anyone in the world, can truly say: “I am a true son of [the] Blessed Lord, born of his mouth, born of Dhamma, created by Dhamma, an heir of Dhamma.” Why is that? Because, Vāseṭṭha, this designates the Tathāgata: “The Body of Dhamma” (*dharmakāyo*), that is, “The Body of Brahmā”, or “Become Dhamma” (*dharmabhūto*), that is “Become Brahmā”.²¹³ (Walshe 1995:409)

²¹¹ LPKj: 是般若波羅蜜，亦不與無爲法，不捨有爲法。何以故？若有諸佛若無諸佛。是諸法相常住不異，法相、法住、法位常住不謬不失故。(T 223, p.311b10-13)

LPX: 不與無爲法。不捨有爲法。何以故。善現。如來出世若不出世。如是諸法常無變易。法性法界法定法住無謬不失故。(T 220, p.201b19-22)

²¹² In this regard, see Harrison 1992a, Guangxing 2005:71 and Radich 2007:334-336 etc.

²¹³ *Yassa kho pan' assa Vāseṭṭhā Tathāgate saddhā niviṭṭhā mūla-jātā patiṭṭhitā dalhā asaṃhārikā samañena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā Mārena vā Brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmiṃ, tass' etaṃ kallaṃ vacanāya: “Bhagavato 'mhi putto oraso mukhato jāto dhamma-jo dhamma-nimmito dhamma-dāyādo” ti. Taṃ kissa hetu? Tathāgatassa h' etaṃ Vāseṭṭhā, adhivacanaṃ — “Dhamma-kāyo iti pi Brahma-kāyo iti pi, Dhamma-bhūto iti pi Brahma-bhūto iti pīti.” (DN III. 84)*

Harrison (1992a:50) also mentions this passage and points out that *dharmakāya*, *brahmakāya*, *dharmabhūta* and *brahmbhūta* are adjectives and listed here as designations for the Buddha: the Buddha has the *dharmakāya* as his body (*dharmakāya*) and the Buddha is the *dharmakāya* itself (*dharmabhūta*). He further connects this with the well-known passage in the Pāli Canon, SN III. 120, where Gautama says to Vakkali: “Whoever sees the *dharmakāya*, Vakkali, sees me; whoever sees me sees the *dharmakāya*”.

Radich (2007:354-362) argues that this sentence is an interpolation based on his investigation of a wider range of texts, including the “The Brahmin, Dharma and Sacrifice Sutta” (Iti 100), “The Robe” (SN 16.11), the *Anupada-suttanta* (MN111), and some Ch. parallels, in which the last sentence of the above quoted passage from DN 27 is absent. Thus he concludes that “there is no real **dharmakāya* in the Pāli canon” (Radich 2007:372). Radich's observation is more or less in line with what can be observed in the Sarvāstivāda tradition; in so far as it is hard to find *dharmakāya* or its Ch. counterpart *fa-shen* with the sense of the embodiment of dharma in any text belonging to the canonical Abhidharma works of the Sarvāstivāda school; namely, the *Samgītiparyāya*, *Dharmaskandha*, *Prajñaptipādaśāstra*, *Dhātukāya*, *Vijñānakāya* and *Prakaraṇa*.²¹⁴ Considering its rarity in canonical texts, the term *dharmakāya* in the sense of the embodiment of *dharma* was likely not influential before the turn of the Common Era.

Although this single case of the *dharmakāya* in the Pāli Canon is not a reliable attestation of the sense “embodiment of *dharma*”, it is worth mentioning that *dharmakāya* here is connected by Harrison (1992a) with the formula “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha” and thus, according to our discussion in § 1, it also refers to the term *dharmatā* / *dharmatā*.

This assumption is also in line with Makransky's discussion on one long passage from the Sadāprarudita story that includes *dharmakāya*. Although he does not take the Ch. parallels into consideration, according to the context of the passage he describes the relationship between *dharmatā* and *dharmakāya* as follows: “*Dharmakāya* as the ultimate defining principle of a Buddha, therefore, now means ‘embodiment of *dharmatā*’ in knowledge: *dharmakāya* = *dharmatā*[*tā*]*kāya* = *dharmatā* as body i.e., *dharmatā* itself as one's true embodiment.” (Makransky 1997:34)

However, he has not noticed the fact that the early occurrences of *dharmakāya* in the Prajñāpāramitā tradition are always associated with seeing the Buddha. There should, therefore, be an observable historical development from “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha”, through *dharmatā* as the very existence of the Buddha (§ 1), to seeing the Buddha through his *dharmakāya*.

²¹⁴ For a detailed analysis of these works, cf. Frauwallner 1995:13.

5.4.1 From *dharma* / *dharmatā* to *dharmakāya* in the context of seeing Buddha

The interchangeable usage of *dharmatā* and *dharmakāya* in the context of seeing the Buddha could be one explanation for how this usage of *dharmakāya* first arose. Notably, in the LPM recension of Case 1, the *rūpakāya* (form-body), indicating the physical body, appears together with **dharmatā* in the context of seeing the Buddha; rather than within the pair-model of the Buddha body that became popular in the later period. It shows us that in the early version of LP, the **dharmatā* was recognized as the very existence of the Buddha (not necessarily as embodiment of the Buddha) in contrast to his *rūpakāya*. This usage can be connected to the equation of *dharma*/ *dharmatā* with the very existence of the Buddha as discussed in § 1.

Interestingly in the *Kāśyapaparivarta* (abbr. KP), instead of *dharmatā* being contrasted with *rūpakāya*, *dharma* stands in its place. One paragraph concerning the three jewels from KP, which belongs to the list of earliest Mahāyāna scriptures, reads as follows:

... *dharmato* (')*pi tathāgataṃ na samanupaśyati kaḥ punar vāda rūpakāyena / virāgato* (')*pi dharmaṃ nābhiniśate kaḥ punar vāda rutavāḱpathodāharaṇena / asamskrtaṃ api cāryasaṃghaṃ na vikalpayati / kaḥ punar vādo gaṇasaṃnipātataḥ* (62v1-3, Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, Karashima & Kudo 2002:43)

One does not even see the Tathāgata through the Dharma, not to mention through the *rūpakāya*. One does not even adhere to the Dharma by turning away (*virāga*), not to mention through sound, speech or explanation. One does not even presume that the noble Saṃgha is unconditioned (*asamskrta*), not to mention merely a congregation.

The pair *dharma* vs. *rūpakāya* in the Skt. recension²¹⁵ is consistent with the early Ch. versions;²¹⁶ however, it is replaced by *dharmakāya* vs *rūpakāya* in the later Ch. version:

One does not see the Tathāgata through the real *dharmakāya*, not to mention the form. One does not see Dharma through emptiness and turning away (*virāga*), not to mention through an attachment to sound and word. One does not see the Saṃgha through unconditioned

²¹⁵ The Skt. text is written in Brāhmī, and is dated to 7-8th Century C.E. (Introduction vii in Vorob'eva-Desyatovskaja, Karashima & Kudo 2002). This is roughly contemporaneous with the translation of the *Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra* by Bodhiruci (菩提流志).

²¹⁶ 於佛法亦不著，何況常著色？（佛說遺日摩尼寶經 T 350, p.192c29-a03）
如法者不見如來，況有色身？（佛說摩訶衍寶嚴經 T 351, p.198c23-25）

dharmā, not to mention the congregation.²¹⁷ (T 310, p.636b23-25)

Thus, in the context of the three jewels, these passages stipulate that one “sees” (*samanupaśyati*) *dharmā* or *rūpakāya*, and the object of seeing, the *dharmā*, which represents the very existence of the Buddha, was later replaced by *dharmakāya* during the transmission of the text.

Notably, the relationship between *dharmā/dharmatā* and *dharmakāya* in the context of seeing the Buddha can also be found in an important verse in VP. The different versions of this verse provide us with insight into the historical development of the text. First, the earliest versions, viz. VPKh and VPKj, only include two stanzas:

VPKh (Harrison 2015:861)

(17v1) ... *ye māṃ rūpeṇa adrākṣī ye māṃ (gho)ṣeṇ(a) anvayuh*
mithyāprahāṇaprasṛtā na me dra(kṣyan)ti te n(arā)ḥ

VPKj (T 235, p.752a17-18)

If one looks at me through *rūpa*, searches after me though sound,
he goes on the evil path and he is not able to see the Tathāgata.²¹⁸

However, later witnesses have two additional stanzas that include the term *dharmakāya*:

VPG (Schopen 1989:105 = Skt. VPM = Ch: VPB²¹⁹ = VPP = VPDh = VPX = VPY)

(10v6) ...*ye māṃ rūpeṇa adrākṣur ye māṃ ghoṣeṇa anvayuh*/
mithyā-(11r1)-prahāṇaprasṛtā na māṃ drakṣyanti te janāḥ/

draṣṭavyo dharmato buddho dharmakāyas Tathāgatah/
dharmatā cāpy avijñeyā na sā śakyam vijānitum //

Whoever saw me through my physical form,
Whoever followed me through the sound of my voice,
Engaged in the wrong endeavors,
Those people will not see me.

²¹⁷ 以正法身尚不見佛，何況形色？以空遠離尚不見法，何況貪著音聲言說？以無爲法尚不見僧，何況當見有和合衆？（大寶積經 T 310, p.636b23-25）

²¹⁸ 若以色見我，以音聲求我，是人行邪道，不能見如來。

²¹⁹ Cf. T 236, p.761b04 - 07.

A Buddha is visible through the dharma,
A Realized One has the *dharma* for a body,
But the nature of *dharma* being unknowable by sensory consciousness,
It cannot be known by sensory consciousness. (Harrison 2006:156)

In the Skt. VPG and VPN, and the late Ch. translations, the second verse contains our key word *dharmakāya*. From the context, we may deduce that it is here identified with *dharma* or *dharmatā*; whilst in the relatively earlier translation, VPKj, the verse concerning *dharmakāya* is completely absent. On this basis, I contend that the occurrence of *dharma* / *dharmatā*, juxtaposed with *rūpakāya* in the context of seeing the Buddha, plays a significant role in the shift from *dharma/dharmatā* to *dharmakāya*. As shall presently be elucidated, it was the semantic multifariousness of the term *kāya* that most likely facilitated this shift.

5.4.2 The multiple meanings of *kāya* and the occurrence of *dharmakāya*

Radich (2010:127-128) traces the term *rūpakāya* back to the *Sāmaññaphala-suttanta*. In this *suttanta*, the King of Magadha, Ajātasattu, asks about the results of being a *samaṇa* (*sāmaññaphala*) that are available in this life. The Buddha replies that a *samaṇa* in this life will be highly respected. Then the King inquired after a more excellent result of being a *samaṇa* and in turn was given a series of good results along with detailed interpretations; including, holding moral discipline, restraint of the sense faculties, mindfulness and clear comprehension, contentment, abandonment of the hindrances, and the four trances (*jhāna*), etc. After the fourth trance, it states, one can acquire insight (*vipassana*) and thereafter create a mind-made body (*manomayakāya*). The following passage reads:

The body (*kāya*) of mine has form (*rūpin*), it is built up of the four elements (*cātummahābhūtika*), it springs from father and mother (*mātāpettikasambhava*), it is continually renewed by so much boiled rice and juicy foods, its very nature is impermanence, it is subject to erosion, abrasion, dissolution, and disintegration; and therein is this consciousness of mine, too, bound up, on that does it depend. (Rhys Davids 1899 [I]:86-87)²²⁰

The terms *kāya* and *rūpī* in this passage are not in one compound as *rūpa-kāya*. However, a parallel to this passage which details the process of acquiring insight and creating a mind-made body is found in the Abhidharma of the Dharmaguptaka school, **Śāriputra-abhidharma* (舍利弗阿毘曇 T 1548, p.712a29-b12), and in the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya *Si*

²²⁰ *ayaṃ kho me kāyo rūpī cātummahābhūtika mātāpettikasambhavo odanakummāsūpacayo aniccucchādanaparimaddanabhedavidhamsanadhammo. Idaṃ ca pana me viññāṇaṃ ettha sitaṃ ettha paṭibaddha'nti.* (DN I. 76)

Fen Lü (四分律 T 1428, p.964c25-0965a18). In these parallels, the translation “**rūpakāya* comprised of the four great elements” (*si da se-shen* 四大色身) appears in the position corresponding to *kāyo rūpī*. Although it is rare for relevant Indian sources to be preserved, the usage of *catumahābhūtika rūpakāya*²²¹ can indeed be found in the *Visuddhimagga*, which also supports the assumption that the term *rūpakāya* originates from the *Sāmaññaphala-suttanta*.

The term *kāya* indicates not only “body” or “embodiment”, but also “collection” or “corpus”. There is one interesting passage in the context of a discussion in the **Śāriputra-abhidharma* on the “mindfulness of the body”, belonging to a fourfold classification of mindfulness, that represents not only the Dharmaguptaka understanding of *kāya*, but also reflects the early Abhidharma perspective²²²:

“*Kāya*” is the form-body (*rūpakāya*) consisting of four great elements (*mahābhūta*), which is given by a mother and father, nourished by a diet, comforted by cloth, moistened by oil, and destroyed or changed by impermanence. This is called “*kāya*”. Furthermore, *nāmakāya* and *rūpakāya* are called “*kāya*”. Furthermore, the collection of the earth element, the collection of the water, fire, and wind elements, are called “*kāya*”. Furthermore, the group of elephant, horse, chariot and infantry are called “*kāya*”. Furthermore, the collection of six consciousness (P. *viññāṇakāya*, S. *viññāṇakāya*), six contacts (P. *phassakāya*, S. *sparśakāya*), six receptions (P. S. *vedanākāya*), six perceptions (P. *saññākāya*, S. *saṃjñākāya*), six thoughts (P. *sañcetanākāya*, S. *saṃcetanākāya*), six desires (P. *taṇhākāya*, S. *trṣṇākāya*),²²³ six considerations (S. *vitarka*) and six examinations (P. *vicāra*) are called “*kāya*”. (T 1548, p.613a14-20)

This passage sheds light on the usage of *kāya* in early Abhidharma texts. Only the first usage of *kāya* indubitably refers to body, and, as with the aforementioned, it is also associated with “the form-body (*rūpakāya*) comprised of the four great elements”. The last three applications designate a “collection” or “corpus”.

The second type also mentions the term *rūpakāya*,²²⁴ but here it has another origin: the pair *nāma-rūpa* is widely used in Buddhist canons and it can be even traced back to the Vedas and Upaniṣads (cf. Falk 2006, Chapter 1). The two terms *nāmakāya* and *rūpakāya* can be found

²²¹ Imassa kāyassāti: etassa catumahābhūtikassa rūpakāyassa. hitiyāti: pabandhatṭhitatthaṃ. (SL 024)

²²² After a general survey of the **Śāriputra-abhidharma*, Frauwallner concludes that this Abhidharma is “mainly based on old transmitted material ... it contains little in the way of innovation or doctrinal evolution” (cf. Frauwallner 1995:116).

²²³ These six groups of concepts derive from the *Saṅgītisuttanta* in DN.

²²⁴ These groups of terminologies come from the *Saṅgītisuttanta*.

in one passage in the Pāli *Mahānidānasuttanta* of the Dīgha Nikaya (DN 15, II. 62) or its Skt. counterpart, the *Mahānidānasūtra* (大緣方便經) in the Dīrgha Āgama (長阿含 T 1, p. 61b03-08). Additionally, this passage is widely quoted in Abhidharma texts in order to explain *pratītyasamutpāda*,²²⁵ but the two terms in these contexts relate to the beginning of a foetus's formation, and the *nāmakāya* and *rūpakāya* here indicate the collections of mind and form respectively.

However, the two *rūpakāya*, namely, *rūpakāya* (vs. *nāmakāya*) and *rūpakāya* (vs. *dharmā / dharmatā*) may have been confused with one another in later developments. One good example for this is to be found in the Sadāprarudita story of AP. In this text, these two types of *rūpakāya* appear in the context of seeing the Buddha through *dharmatā*, as has been quoted by Makransky and further discussed in § 1.4.1 and in § 5.2 Case 1 in the present study. Here the relevant passages translated from the Skt. AP (the numbers of the passages are as given by Makransky) are quoted as follows:

4. ...Because the Tathāgata is not to be perceived from his physical body (*rūpakāya*). The Tathāgatas are *dharmakāya*, and the real nature of *dharmas* (*dharmatā*) does not come or go. Precisely so, there is no coming or going of the Tathāgatas...

5. The Bhagavan has said that all *dharmas* are like a dream. And those who do not know all *dharmas* to be like a dream as explained by the Tathāgatas, they adhere to the Tathāgatas through [their] nominal body (*nāmakāya*) or physical body (*rūpakāya*), and imagine there is a coming or going of the Tathāgatas... (Makransky 1997:33)

As stated in § 5.2 Case 1, the parallel of this passage in the LPM represents the earliest version. Thus we see that **dharmatā* is juxtaposed with *rūpakāya*, rather than the later form of *dharmakāya* with *rūpakāya* in Skt. texts. Apart from this, there is not much difference

²²⁵ For instance, it occurs in one passage of the Dharmaskandha, one of the six basic Sarvastivāda Abhidharma works. The Skt. fragment (8v4-7), and its corresponding Ch. translation (法蘊足論 T 1537, p.509b16-25) of this passage, have been identified, and were subsequently carried forward by later Sarvastivāda Abhidharma. The title of the sūtra, *Mahānidānasūtra*, is not mentioned, but in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* is referred to simply through the common phrase: 'as it is said in the sūtra' (如契經說 cf. 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論 T 1545, p.517a23-b01).

between the Skt. passage and LPM.²²⁶ The pair-model *rūpakāya* and *nāmakāya* in this passage refers to the body of the *Tathāgata*, rather than designating a certain stage of the fetus, as seen in canonical texts. Thus, the two meanings of *rūpakāya* “collection of form” and “body of form” are very likely already mixed in these texts.

At the very least we can say that the early occurrence of *dharmakāya* appears to be a word play, making use of the multiple meanings inherent in the ultimate component *kāya*: it has the meanings of “corpus of *dharma*” and “the body of *dharma*” concurrently. However, when the meaning of “the body of *dharma*” was generally accepted by Buddhist communities, and especially among Mahāyāna followers, it precipitated the invention of a new body of the Buddha.

5.5 The further development of *dharmakāya* as the omnipresent body of the Buddha

Radich (2007:973) identifies “the earliest clear mention of *dharmakāya* so-called in the Ch. record” in the translation of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* by Zhi Qian (支謙), dating to around the same period as LPM. In these passages, the *dharmakāya* refers to the “embodiment of *dharma*”, rather than the “corpus of teaching”; for instance, we see the sentence “the *Tathāgatas* have the body of *dharma*, not the body of lust.” (如來法身，非思欲身 T 474, p. 523c05). The Skt. counterpart is the same: *dharmakāyās tathāgatā nāmiśakāyāḥ*.²²⁷

In addition, Radich has also pointed out that the *Ratnāvalī*, attributed to Nāgārjuna, is probably “the earliest mention of the opposition between *dharmakāya* and *rūpakāya*” among the sources he investigated. He provides the following translation of the two verses in question:

When the causes of even the Form Body (*rūpakāya*)
Of a Buddha are immeasurable
As the world, how then could the causes
Of the Body of Truth (*dharmakāya*) be measured?

²²⁶ The parallel in LPM and its Eng. translation are as follows:

所以者何？莫以色身而觀如來，如來者法性。法性者亦不來亦不去，諸如來亦如是無來無去... (T 221, p.145a29-b02)

如來、無所著、等正覺說言：諸法皆亦如夢有。於夢幻法有實相者，不知如來但入如來名色身耳。便作如來來往之相...(T 221, p.145b08-09)

Why? Do not see *Tathāgata* through *rūpakāya*, the *Tathāgata* is *dharmatā*. The *dharmatā* does not come and go and in this way the *Tathāgatas* do not come and go...

The *Tathāgata*-arhat-samyaksambuddha says all the *dharmas* are like a dream. The one who regards the dream-like *dharma* as real does not know the *Tathāgata* but clings to the *nāma-rūpa* body of the *Tathāgata*. Thus he generates the concept of the coming and going of the *Tathāgata*.

²²⁷ Cf. Takahashi 2006:34.1.

The Form Body (*rūpakāya*) of a Buddha
Arises from collected merit,
The Body of Truth (*dharmakāya*) in brief, O King,
Arises from collected wisdom. (translation by Radich 2007:998)

The authorship of the *Ratnāvalī* has been discussed by Walser (2002), who found that the records attributing this work to Nāgārjuna can be traced “back to at least as far back as the sixth century.”²²⁸ He further links this text, together with the *Suḥṛllekha*, to Nāgārjuna’s letters to his patron (*dānapati*), the king of the *Sātavāhana* dynasty, which ended sometime in the first two quarters of the third century (Walser 2002:223-262), and thus dates the composition of the *Ratnāvalī* to the second or third century C.E.²²⁹

In sum, the early mention of the opposition between *dharmakāya* and *rūpakāya*/*janmakāya* can be roughly traced as far back as ca. 2nd-3rd Century C.E., on the basis of the following evidence:

- a) In the Sarvāstivāda tradition, we cannot find any support for the appearance of this pair-model before the Vibhāṣā compendia.
- b) The *Ratnāvalī* can be attributed to Nāgārjuna around the second or third Century C.E., as Joseph Walser argues.
- c) The *Aśokāvadāna*, where the *rūpakāya* and the *dharmakāya* also occur, according to John Strong, is probably first written in ca. second-third Century C.E. (cf. § 6.2.2)

Thus, if the opposition *dharma* / *dharmatā* vs. the physical body contributed to the formation of the pair-model of the Buddha body, *dharmakāya* vs. *rūpakāya*, a date in the 2nd-3rd Century C.E. should be regarded as the very latest possible date for the transformation from the notion *dharma/dharmatā* to *dharmakāya*.

As discussed above, the interchangeable usage of *dharmakāya* and *dharmatā* in LP (Case 1 and 2) is not a mere conflation, but also a reflection of a concrete historical development from the term *dharmatā* to *dharmakāya*. The development of this relationship also served as a forerunner to the notion of a cosmic, omnipresent body, which the *dharmakāya* ultimately came to signify in later Mahāyāna literature. Returning to consider the manner in which

²²⁸ In the Indian context, the text is ascribed to Nāgārjuna by Bhavya, Candrakīrti, and Śāntarakṣita (cf. Lindtner 1990, Walser 2002).

²²⁹ He writes:

Therefore, the best determination we can make of the composition of the *Ratnāvalī* has to be between 175-204 A.D. or between 210-227 A.D, somewhere in the Lower Krishna Valley, with the earlier dates being more likely than the latter. (Walser 2002:261-262.)

dhammakāya was used in early canonical sources as an imitation of Brahmanical parlance; we may therefore, on the basis of the term's apparent association with Brahmanical thought (§ 5.4), regard the principle of the omnipresent *dharmakāya* in Mahāyāna texts as something of a homecoming for Brahmanical thought.

Although we have not seen a clear description of the metaphysical *dharmakāya* in LP, this shift can nevertheless be attributed to other Mahāyāna texts of ca. 2nd-3rd Century C.E.

5.5.1 The omnipresent *dharmakāya* in early Chinese translations

Here I would like to first refer to one of the earliest Ch. Buddhist scriptures, the *Zhu-fo Yao-ji Jing* (諸佛要集經要**Buddhasaṃgīti-sūtra*),²³⁰ translated by Dharmarakṣa (竺法護). In one lengthy passage of this text, the manifested *rūpakāya* and the transcendent *dharmakāya* occur in the context of seeing the Buddha:

The three thousand great-thousand worlds are full of Tathāgatas, just like the forests of sugar cane, bamboo, reed, paddy or hemp. If the Tathāgatas meet together in this Buddha-field, the bodhisattvas, the *devas*, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* (天、龍、鬼神、犍沓怛、阿須倫、迦留羅、眞陀羅、摩休勒), and the humans and non-humans (人與非人) do not see (all of them), but only see my single Tathāgata body. They also do not hear the teaching by all the Tathāgatas, but only the teaching by me. Mañjuśrī, look! What is established by the Tathāgata-Arhat-Samyaksambudha through the supernatural powers (*rddhipāda* 神足變化) is incredible. His body is subtle. The Tathāgatas fill the three thousand great-thousand worlds all around. The bodhisattvas see only one Tathāgata through the eye of enlightenment, not to mention the others, like the *devas*, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras*, *mahoragas* humans and non-humans etc., who desire to see (all the Tathāgatas) but are not able to see ... The Tathāgatas are the *dharmakāya*, not the *rūpakāya*. The body of the Buddha is free from intoxicants (*anāśrava*). All the intoxicants were cut down, including the body itself. It is seen without characteristics (*alīṅga* 無類), unborn (*ajāta*), non-arisen (*anutpāda*),

²³⁰ One manuscript fragment of this text has been found in Toyuq, dating to year 6 of the Yuankang 元康 era (296 C.E.) of the Western Jin dynasty. It is said to be “the earliest existing Ch. Buddhist manuscript found in the world” (Tsui 2013:65). The fragment of the *Buddhasaṃgīti sūtra* manuscript is available online: <http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/toyobunko/I-1-E-18/V-2/page/0017.html.ja>

As reported by Tsui (2013:63): “The manuscript was first recorded in the *Archive of Archeological Findings from the Western Region* (*Seiki kōko fufu* 西域考古圖譜) by Otani Kozui (大谷光瑞 1876-1948), a Japanese explorer, who conducted archaeological explorations of ancient Buddhist sites in Xinjiang, Gansu, and Tibet thrice between 1902 and 1914. It was a copy written by Zhu Fashou 竺法首, who was one of the *bishou* scribes in Dharmarakṣa's 竺法護 translation team”.

unseen (*adarśana*), unheard (*aśruta*), without mind (*avikalpa/ acetana*), impermanent (*asthāna/ apratiṣṭha*), just like empty space... the Tathāgata-Arhat-Samyaksambudha only has a name, without a corresponding (entity). Mañjuśrī sees the assembly of Tathāgatas, who has the supernatural power and a body like empty space (*gagana*). They in turn manifest the thirty-two characteristics of a great person and eighty minor marks. Mañjuśrī! The bodies of the Tathāgatas that you have seen are all established through the supernatural power of the Buddhas.²³¹ (T 810, p.765b12-c20)

The omnipresent body described in this text is, of course, not the only example of its kind. As stated by Guangxing, around the same period a series of scriptures with a metaphysical understanding of the Buddha's body were also translated into Chinese (Guangxing 2004:81). It is noteworthy that the characters of *dharmakāya* in the *Zhu-fo Yao-ji Jing* are quite similar to those used throughout the *Samādhirājasūtra*.

5.5.2 The omnipresent *dharmakāya* in the *Samādhirājasūtra*

The *Samādhirājasūtra* (abbr. *Samādh*) is closely related to the Prajñāpāramitā tradition and the early Mādhyamika School. As Régamey (1938:23) observes:

The *Samādh* is one of the most authoritative texts not of the Yogācāras but of the Mādhyamikas. There we find the characteristic features of the so called “Doctrine of Prajñāpāramitā” which formed, according to the Tibetan historiographers, the second “Swinging of the Wheel of the Doctrine” and which was characterized by the teaching about the absence of a real essence of all the *dharmas*.... Also the theory of the Bodies of the Buddha is in the *Samādh* akin to the conceptions of the Prajñāpāramitāsūtras.

According to Skilton (1999), this text has at least three versions: “1) that of the Ch. translation of Narendrayāśas 那連耶舍 (and another incomplete translation by Shi-Xian-Gong 釋先公) and Central Asian fragments; 2) that of the Gilgit manuscripts; and 3) that of the long version quoted by Candrakīrti and recorded in the Nepalese manuscripts.” The first

²³¹ 三千大千世界充備諸佛，猶如甘蔗竹蘆稻麻叢林。諸如來集其數若斯。於此刹土，諸菩薩衆、天龍、鬼神、犍沓耆、阿須倫、迦留羅、眞陀羅、摩休勒、人與非人，無一見者，唯見於吾一如來身；亦復不聞諸佛說法，但見吾身頌宣道化。文殊且觀：如來至眞之所建立，神足變化不可稱限。其身微妙，諸佛充滿三千大千世界靡不周遍。諸菩薩衆則以道眼，見一如來，豈況餘人？欲得見乎未之有也。諸天龍神、犍沓耆等及人非人... 諸如來等則爲法身，無有色像。佛身無漏，諸漏已盡，亦無有身。觀之無類，無生無起，無見無聞，無意無處。亦如虛空... 如來至眞，假有名矣，則無所應。文殊觀此諸如來衆，神足變化，身如虛空，而反隨時示現色身三十二相八十種好。文殊師利，向者所見諸如來身，悉是諸佛威神建立之所感動。

is the oldest and can be fixed, at the earliest, to the 5th century.²³² Skilton notes that this version is also quoted in the *Sūtrasamuccaya*, attributed to Nāgārjuna, which evades any true dating but was evidently in circulation between the 2nd and 9th centuries C.E. (Skilton 1999:648). Here I will take the early Ch. translation with its Skt. parallel into consideration. Consider the following verses:

vimuktaṃ mama vijñānaṃ sarvabhāvehi sarvaśaḥ /
svabhāvo jñātu cittasya bhūyo jñānaṃ pravartate // 22.19 //
kṣetrakoṭīśahasrāṇi gacchanti mama nirmitāḥ /
kurvanti cārthaṃ sattvānāṃ yatra kāyo na labhyate // 22.20 //
alakṣaṇo nirnimitto yathaiva gaganam tathā /
kāyo nirabhilāpyo me durvijñeyo nidarśitaḥ // 22.21 //
dharmakāyo mahāvīro dharmeṇa kāya nirjito /
*na jātu rūpakāyeṇa śakyaṃ prajñāpitum jino // 22.22 //*²³³ (Vaidya 1961b:145 = Régamey 1938:55)

31) Fully delivered from all *bhāvas* is my consciousness, - realized is the essence of the mind, and greater becomes my knowledge.

32) Thousands of millions of the spheres are magically created by me, and they serve the beings. Even there my body cannot be grasped.

33) Markless, signless, as is the sky - thus is defined my body which is ineffable and hard to understand.

34) The Great Hero is identical with the Absolute Body (*dharmakāya*). Born of *dharma* is his body; the Victorious One cannot be conceived in the aspect of the Material body (*rūpakāya*). (Régamey 1938:93)

The tone of the last verse is quite similar to the interpolated verse in VP that we have previously discussed (§ 5.4.1). Comparing the verses in the Samādh with the passage of the *Zhu-fo Yao-ji Jing*, we can also see some common features in the description of the Buddha's body:

²³² As pointed out by Skilton, it is doubtful that the colophon of T 641 attributes one lost translation to the 2nd century translator An-Shi-Gao, given that An-Shi-Gao's translations are exclusively non-Mahāyāna. An incomplete text by Shi-Xian-Gong (T 640) was presumably translated in 420-479 C.E. (cf. Skilton 1999:637)

²³³ The Ch. text does not differ much:

我心得解脫 一切種物中 能體知其性 而起於智慧 於千億佛刹 我於中現化 爲衆生說法 是故不可見 無相無狀貌 猶如於虛空 我身不可說 語言道斷故 法身大雄猛 其身從法生 曾無有色身 說之以爲佛 (T 639_15.0576c22-29)

- a) The body of the Buddhas, the *dharmakāya* (rather than *rūpakāya*), is like empty space (*gagana*) and cannot be seen or perceived.
- b) One cannot perceive the *Tathāgata* through his *rūpakāya*.
- c) Three thousand great-thousand worlds are full of the bodies of the Buddhas, but actually they are only manifestations of the *dharmakāya*.

Obviously, the *dharmakāya* in the Samādhi and the *Zhu-fo Yao-ji Jing* is different from “the corpus of *dharma*” or indeed the *dharmakāya* presented as a series of the Buddha’s achievements as the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma maintains (see § 6). The *dharmakāya* here is the omnipresent *Tathāgata*: the origin and the unity of all the Buddhas, the cosmic body.

5.6 *dharmadhātu* and *dharmakāya*

5.6.1 **dharmadhātuja-kāya* in the *Da Zhi-du Lun*

In DZDL, the earliest extant exegesis for LP and only preserved in Chinese, there is a repeated usage of the unique expression *fa-xing sheng-shen* (法性生身). Lamotte reconstructs the term in Sanskrit as **dharmadhātuja-kāya*, although it does not arise in any Skt. source. In this text it designates the omnipresent body and is sometimes interchangeable with **dharmadhātu-kāya* (法性身) and *dharmakāya*. It refers to both the Buddha and the bodhisattva in the advanced stages of their practice:

For the bodhisattvas who practice in the Prajñāpāramitā without obstruction (*anāvaraṇa*) will become the Buddhas when they attain liberation without obstruction (*anāvaraṇa-vimokṣa*); or they will become the **dharmadhātuja-kāya* bodhisattvas, like the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī etc. ... Just as wishes can be fulfilled through the *cintāmaṇi*, the beings who see the **dharmadhātuja-kāya* Buddha and the **dharmadhātuja-kāya* bodhisattva will obtain what they wish.²³⁴ (T 1509, p.309b07-12)

The **dharmadhātuja-kāya* is one of the two bodies of the Buddha. This is demonstrated by a gloss in the DZDL of a passage in LP. The passage in question reads: “At the time when I sit under the *bodhi* tree, the Cāturmahārājika gods up to the Akaniṣṭha gods lay down a bed of celestial robes (*divyavastrasaṃstara*) there” (LPG: *kim iti me bodhivṛkṣamūle niṣīdataś cāturmahārājakāyikā devā yāvad aghaniṣṭhā devā duṣyasamṣtaram kuryur iti prajñāpāramitāyāṃ śikṣitavyam*. Zacchetti 2005:385). The DZDL contrasts this passage with an episode in the biography of Śākyamuni Buddha, in which it states that the Buddha simply put grass under the bodhi tree.

²³⁴ 菩薩行無礙般若波羅蜜，若得無礙解脫成佛；若作法性生身菩薩，如文殊師利等...譬如如意珠所欲皆得，法性生身佛及法性生身菩薩，人有見者皆得所願亦復如是。

Moreover, the Buddhas of the birth-body (*janmakāya) collect grass under the tree, while the Buddhas of the *dharmadhātujakāya use heavenly robes as a seat, or things still better than these robes.²³⁵ (T 1509, p.310b24-25)

The birth-body (*janmakāya 生身) refers to the physical body (§ 6.2.1) and it constitutes one somatic aspect of the pair-model together with the *dharmakāya*. Sometimes in DZDL, this pair is also called *mātāpitṛkasambhava-kāya (父母生身) and *dharmadhātukāya (法性身). One example in this regard reads as follows:

Furthermore, the Buddha has two kinds of bodies (kāya), the *dharmadhātukāya and the body born from father and mother (P. mātāpitṛkasambhava, Skt. mātāpitṛkasambhava). The *dharmadhātukāya, filling the space of the ten quarters, is immense (*apramāṇa*) and infinite (*ananta*). Its appearance is beautiful (*abhirūpa*) and adorned with the major and minor marks (*lakṣaṇānuvyañjanālamkṛta*). It has immense rays (*apramāṇaraśmi*) and an immense voice (*apramāṇasvara*). The audience of the teaching also fills the space.²³⁶ (T 1509, p.121c26-29, cf. Lamotte 1944[I]:513)

The synonyms birth-body (*janmakāya) and form-body (*rūpakāya*), both referring to the physical body, can be traced back to *Sāmaññaphala-suttanta* (see § 5.4.2), where the expression “born from a father and mother” (*mātāpitṛkasambhava*) occurs as well. Thus, *mātāpitṛkasambhava-kāya in the passage quoted above has the same meaning as *janmakāya*.

In this passage, the *dharmadhātukāya*, filling the space of the ten quarters, possesses the quality of the omnipresent body. Additionally this passage includes interesting information regarding the *dharmadhātukāya*, describing it, for instance, as having a wonderful form, a feature which is normally attributed to the *sambhogakāya* (the body of enjoyment), one of the three bodies of the Buddha in the developed Buddha bodies theory. Thus, the Buddha body theory reflected in DZDL appears to be a transitional form between the pair-model in Prajñāpāramitā literature and the three bodies theory, which can be dated to after the fourth century C.E. in such Mahāyāna treatises as the *Mahāyānasūtralāṅkāra* or *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*.

²³⁵ 復次生身佛把草樹下，法性生身佛以天衣爲座，或勝天衣。

²³⁶ 復次佛有二種身：一者法性身，二者父母生身。是法性身滿十方虛空，無量無邊，色像端正，相好莊嚴，無量光明，無量音聲。聽法衆亦滿虛空。

In another DZDL passage the physical body is considered as the manifestation of the **dharmadhātujakāya*, created for the purpose of helping all the beings according to their qualities.

... I have already mentioned the two kinds of Buddhas: a) the Buddha with the *dharmadhātujakāya*, and b) the Buddha manifested according to the qualities of beings. From the aspect of the Buddha with the **dharmadhātujakāya*, we say that one can attain liberation by simply hearing the name of the Buddha. From the aspect of the Buddha manifested according to the qualities of beings, we say that in accordance with their karmic cause and conditions, some beings fall into hell, although they dwell with the Buddha. There is nothing that the **dharmadhātujakāya* Buddha cannot help with, and no wish that he cannot fulfill. (T 1509, 313a29-b04, cf. Lamotte 1980 [V]:2354)²³⁷

This passage attempts to resolve the apparent inconsistency between the view that says some beings still fall into the hell during the existence of the Buddha in the world, and the claim that buddhas are able to help all the beings. The above division of the two bodies provides a solution to this issue.

In DZDL, there is also a discussion regarding the two bodies of bodhisattvas:

There are two kinds of bodhisattva: a) the bodhisattva with *janmakāya*, and b) the bodhisattva with *dharmakāya*. The difference between them is whether the afflictions are cut down or not. The *dharmakāya* bodhisattvas cut down the afflictions, thus they attain the six *abhijñā*. In contrast, the *janmakāya* bodhisattvas do not cut down the afflictions, (but) some of them do not have desire and thus attain the first five *abhijñā*.²³⁸ (T 1509, p. 342a22-25)

The text goes on to say that the bodhisattva who has the six *abhijñā* can pass to different buddha-fields, make an offering to the Buddhas of the ten quarters, and aid beings in the worlds of the ten quarters etc. (T 1509, p.342a25-28). This model is also closely connected with the different stages of the bodhisattva career; for it is only the *dharmakāya* bodhisattva that can arrive in other buddha-fields with *abhijñā* to see the present Buddhas.

²³⁷ 上已說有二種佛：一者法性生身佛，二者隨衆生優劣現化佛。爲法性生身佛故，說乃至聞名得度。爲隨衆生現身佛故，說雖共佛住，隨業因緣有墮地獄者。法性生身佛者，無事不濟，無願不滿。

²³⁸ 菩薩有二種：一者生身菩薩，二者法身菩薩。一者斷結使，二者不斷結使。法身菩薩斷結使得六神通，生身菩薩不斷結使，或離欲得五神通。

Some further DZDL passages also discuss the position of the **dharmadhātuja-kāya* bodhisattva in the bodhisattva career. One such passage concerns the seventh of the ten bodhisattva stages:

Some bodhisattvas, who have obtained the patient acceptance towards non-arising *dharmas* (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*) and the **dharmadhātuja-kāya*, dwell in the seventh stage (*bhūmi*) ... (T 1509, p.273b17-18, cf. Lamotte 1976 [IV]:1908)²³⁹

Here the **dharmadhātuja-kāya* occurs together with *anutpattikadharmakṣānti* (無生法忍), and it suggests that in this context they belong to the same stage of the bodhisattva path. In another passage we also see that the **dharmadhātuja-kāya* is associated with the non-regressing (*avaivartika*) bodhisattva. According to Lamotte, the bodhisattva attains non-regression on the eighth stage (*bhūmi*), when (or after) he has obtained *anutpattikadharmakṣānti* on the seventh.²⁴⁰

Moreover, there are also the pure buddha-fields (*pariśuddhabuddhakṣetra*) that only hold the non-regressing bodhisattvas (*avaivartika*), who have the *dharmadhātuja-kāya*. They do not have any passions (*kleśa*) and only traces (*vāsanā*) remain.²⁴¹ (T 1509, p.312c05-06, cf. Lamotte 1980 [V]:2344)

A list of terminologies concerning the bodhisattva path is found in LP, and some of these terms were obviously borrowed from those that relate to the path of liberation in the Abhidharma tradition. In DZDL, these terminologies fall into the category of the practice of *janmakāya* bodhisattva, whose point of completion constitutes entrance into the state of the *bodhisattva-niyama*. Thereafter the **dharmadhātuja-kāya* bodhisattva practices according to the principle that all the *dharmas* are empty (T 1509, p.707a02-14). The **dharmadhātuja-*

²³⁹ 或有菩薩得無生法忍法性生身，在七住地住五神通，變身如佛教化衆生。

²⁴⁰ Apple (2011:181) summarizes the studies of Lamotte on this point:

Lamotte notes that bodhisattvas are truly considered *avaivartika* when they obtain *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*, the receptivity toward understanding that *dharmas* are unproduced. This is generally considered a quality of the eighth *bhūmi*, the *Acalā*, also called *avivartyabhūmi* or *avaivartikabhūmi*.

²⁴¹ 復有清淨佛國，純阿鞞跋致法性生身菩薩。無諸煩惱，唯有餘習。

kāya is attained after the physical body has been abandoned and upon entering the *bodhisattva-niyāma*²⁴²:

... when the bodhisattva enters into the *bodhisattva-niyāma* and dwells in the non-regressing (*avaivartika*) stage, his last physical body has vanished and he obtains the **dharmadhātuja-kāya*. Although he cuts down all the afflictions, due to the cause of the traces (*vāsanā*) of the afflictions he attains the **dharmadhātuja-kāya*, which is not born in the three worlds (*trailokya*).²⁴³ (T 1509, p.264b04-07)

Abandoning the physical body is also regarded as an important means to attain the **dharmadhātuja-kāya*. In other words, the *janmakāya* bodhisattva and the **dharmadhātuja-kāya* bodhisattva belong to different stages of the bodhisattva path, to which the diverse kinds of practice belong. This stands in contrast to the case of the two bodies of the Buddha, where the *janmakāya* is simply held to be a manifestation of **dharmadhātuja-kāya* of the Buddha.

5.6.2 **dharmadhātuja-kāya* and its relationship with the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*

The term **dharmadhātuja-kāya* in the DZDL is quite unique and it likely represents one of the earliest attempts in Prajñāpāramitā literature to formulate a system of terminology that deals with the notion of an omnipresent body of the Buddha. However, the potential origins of this term are not altogether clear. One DZDL passage that sheds light on this issue quotes a Mahāyāna text under the title *Acintyavimokṣasūtra*:

Furthermore, the Buddha has two kinds of bodies: i) the **dharmadhātuja-kāya*; ii) the body (manifested) in accordance with the world (*lokānuvartakakāya*). With respect to the **dharmadhātuja-kāya* ... as stated in the *Bu-ke si-yi jie-tuo Jing* (*Acintyavimokṣa-sūtra*), when the Buddha was ready to be born, he was the head of 84000 bodhisattvas who have

²⁴² The relationship between the term *niyāma* and other concepts, such as *anupattikadharmakṣānti*, *bhūmi*, *avaivartika* etc. in the context of the course of bodhisattva career is also studied by Lamotte. It is summarized by Apple (2011:120) as follows: “According to Lamotte, the bodhisattva *niyāma* is characterized by definitive attainment of the conviction that *dharma*s do not arise (*anupattikadharmakṣānti*), a conviction mentioned in the VP ... Lamotte notes that a number of texts place this final conviction in the eighth bhūmi, the Acalā (cf. Dbh, Msa, MVBh, Bbh). A bodhisattva who achieves this *kṣānti* is granted a great prediction (*mahāvyaākaraṇa*) (cf. Lal, Dbh, Saddhp, Msa, MVBh). At this point a bodhisattva gains assurance (*niyāma*) of future buddhahood (cf. MVBh ... Bbh...). ... at this point, a bodhisattva is without regression (*avaivartika*) and gains irreversible conviction (Saddhp).”

²⁴³ ...菩薩入法位，住阿鞞跋致地。末後肉身盡，得法性生身。雖斷諸煩惱，有煩惱習因緣故，受法性生身非三界生也。

‘one more birth before attaining the Buddhahood’.²⁴⁴ (T 1509, p.303b21-26, cf. Lamotte 1980 [V]:2238)

This passage leads us to another important Mahāyāna text, the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* (abbr. Gv), which tells of the young Sudhana (Good Wealth), the son of a merchant, who quests for the way to enlightenment. The narrative begins with an encounter between Sudhana and the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, who encourages him to search for “good friends” in order to learn how to carry out the conduct of a bodhisattva. After travelling far and wide across India, visiting a total of fifty-two practitioners, Sudhana has his final visionary experience and encounters the supreme bodhisattva Samantabhadra (Osto 2009).

The DZDL always refers to the Gv under the title *Bu-ke si-yi Jing* (= *Acintyasūtra*, see DZDL, p. 94b, 317a, 419a) or *Bu-ke si-yi jie-tuo Jing* (= *Acintyavimokṣasūtra*, see DZDL, p. 303b, 308b, 576c, 754b, 756b) (cf. Lamotte 1980 [V]:2238, n.4). However, the quotation above cannot be found in the extant versions of Gv. There are indeed similar passages to be located in both texts; for instance, the following outlines an episode in which the disciples of the Buddha are neither able to see the assembly of the great bodhisattvas nor to hear the *Acintyavimokṣasūtra* preached by Buddha:

Moreover, when the Buddha preached the *Bu-ke si-yi jie-tuo Jing* (*Acintyavimokṣasūtra*) to the great bodhisattvas Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, who were to the left and right sides of the Buddha, they could not hear it for the reason that they had not planted the causes and conditions necessary for hearing the teaching of Mahāyāna practice. Just as the meditator who has entered into the absorptions (*samāpatti*) of the spheres of totality (*kṛtsnāyatana*) can change all the things into water or into fire, but other people cannot see this.²⁴⁵ (T 1509, p.308b11-15, cf. Lamotte 1980 [V]:2304-2305)

²⁴⁴ 復次，佛有二種身：一者法性生身，二者隨世間身。... 法性生身者... 如不可思議解脫經說，佛欲生時，八萬四千一生補處菩薩在前導，菩薩從後而出。

²⁴⁵ 復次，佛為諸大菩薩說不可思議解脫經，舍利弗目連在佛左右而不得聞，以不種是聞大乘行法因緣故。譬如坐禪人入一切處定中，能使一切皆水皆火而餘人不見。

Akin quotations are repeated several times in DZDL. (T 1509, p.576c24-28²⁴⁶ and T 1509, p. 754b16-17²⁴⁷) Lamotte pointed out that this episode corresponds to a passage of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (*Acintyavimokṣa*)²⁴⁸ in which the Buddha, dwelling at the Jetavana in Śrāvastī and surrounded by an assembly of bodhisattvas and great *śrāvakas*, entered into the *simhaviṣṇubhita-samādhi* and accomplished a whole series of wonders (*vikurvita*). Yet the *śrāvakas* who were seated close to the Blessed One perceived neither the wonders of the Buddha nor the assembly of bodhisattvas.

na ca te mahāśrāvakāḥ śāriputra-maudgalyāyana-mahākāśyapa-revata-subhūti-aniruddha-nandika-kapphiṇa-kātyāyana-pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra-pramukhā jetavane tathāgatavikurvitaṃ adrākṣuḥ / na ca tān buddhavyūhān ... buddhakṣetrapariśuddhiṃ adrākṣuḥ / nāpi tam acintyaṃ bodhisattvaṇīyaṃ ... bodhisattvacaryāmaṇḍalavikurvitaṃ adrākṣuḥ /²⁴⁹ (Gv, Vaidya 1960b:12-13)

The great disciples, Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, Revata, Subhūti, Aniruddha, Nandika, Kapphiṇa, Kātyāyana, Pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra in the Jeta grove, did not see the wonders of the Tathāgata, the adornments of the Buddha, ... the purified buddha-field, nor did they see the inconceivable sphere of the bodhisattva, nor the wonder of the *bodhisattvacaryāmaṇḍala*. (Cleary 1993:1146)

²⁴⁶ 復有以菩薩根故，能見能聞能知諸佛神通力，非諸聲聞辟支佛所及。如不可思議解脫經中說。舍利弗目連須菩提等，雖在佛左右，以無菩薩根故，不見是大菩薩會及所有神通力，亦不聞佛說不可思議解脫。

Moreover, due to the roots of the bodhisattva, they (the bodhisattvas) can hear and understand the super-knowledge of the Buddhas. As stated in the *Acintyavimokṣasūtra*, even though Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Subhūti etc., stay beside the Buddha, due to lack of the root of the bodhisattva, they cannot see the assembly of the Great bodhisattvas and all the super-knowledges, and they cannot hear the *Acintyavimokṣasūtra* spoken by the Buddha.

²⁴⁷ 又如佛說不可思議解脫經，五百阿羅漢雖在佛邊而不聞，或時得聞而不能用。

Furthermore, as in the *Acintyavimokṣasūtra* spoken by the Buddha, the five hundred Arhats stay beside the Buddha but they cannot hear; or sometimes they can hear but they cannot practice.

²⁴⁸ *te [śrāvakās] tatraiva Jetavane saṃnipatitāḥ saṃniṣaṇṇā Bhagavataḥ purato vāmadakṣiṇapṛṣṭhato Bhagavato 'bhimukhaṃ saṃniṣaṇṇā na tāni Jetavane buddhavikurvitaṇy adrākṣuḥ... || tat kasya hetor | abhijātabodhisattvacakṣuṣpathavijñeyaṃ hi taṃ na śrāvakacakṣuṣpathavijñeyaṃ | tena te mahāśrāvakās tatraiva Jetavane sthitās tathāgatavikurvitaṇi buddhādhiṣṭhānāni buddhakṣetraparīśuddhiṃ bodhisattvasaṃnipātaṃ na paśyanti ||* (Gv, Suzuki & Idzumi 1953:19)

The Ch. versions see T 278, k. 44, p. 679c; T 279, k. 60, p. 322b–323a; T 293, k. 2: 666a.

²⁴⁹ The reading of the Skt. passage is quite similar to the Ch. recension (T 278, p.679b28-c06).

A later passage states that “the inconceivable sphere (*viṣaya*) of the Buddha cannot be collected (*asaṃhārya*) by all the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*” (*acintyo buddhaviṣayo 'saṃhāryaḥ sarvaśrāvakapratyekabuddhaiḥ*. see Vaidya 1960b:17). The term *viṣaya* corresponds to *dhātu* in the compound *dharma-dhātu* (sphere of *dharma*), the most important concept in the Gv. In light of Gv being quoted in DZDL in the context of **dharmadhātuja-kāya* (which we have seen before), the **dharmadhātuja-kāya* may indicate the beings who exist in the inconceivable sphere or the sphere of truth, the *dharmadhātu*. If our assumption holds, the Gv episode repeatedly quoted by DZDL probably relates to the distinction between the physical body of disciples, and the **dharmadhātuja* body of the Buddha and bodhisattvas; in other words, the disciples with a physical body cannot perceive either the wonder of the Buddha or the existence of bodhisattvas who have a **dharmadhātuja* body.

We have seen that one Gv passage (T 1509, p.342a25-28) refers to passing into different buddha-fields and making offerings to present Buddhas, an activity attributed by DZDL to the advanced bodhisattva (see § 5.6.1). In the earliest Ch. version of this passage, the term **dharmadhātuja-kāya* occurs:

Then, Ananya bodhisattva (無異行菩薩) answered Sudhana: “I ... attained the means of teaching, of showing all round, and speeding forth (普現速行 *samantamukhanirjavano*). ... in the buddha-fields where I pass by, all the Buddhas are present, and I make an offering for the *manomayakāya* of the Buddhas along with the countless offerings from bodhisattvas. Why? It is because I obtained the means of doctrine (*dharmaparyāya*), the *samādhi* which is truly in accordance with the non-attached and pure **dharmadhātuja-kāya*. Due to this achievement, I am able to make an offering to the non-attached *dharma*-body of the Buddha...According to the beings’ good roots accumulated in previous lives, I manifest my form-body (*rūpakāya*) to preach *dharma*...The great bodhisattvas face all the ten quarters without rest, they have no limit and cannot be broken by anything. The pure *dharma*-body fills the *dharmadhātu*.”²⁵⁰ (T 294, p.861a29-b16)

The term **dharmadhātuja-kāya* does not exist in the parallels to this passage that are found in the later versions of the Gv (Skt: Vaidya 1960b:165-166. Ch: T 278, p.718c21-0719a10 and T 293, p.735c13-0736a10). However, the conducts of the Ananya bodhisattva described in all

²⁵⁰ 爾時無異行菩薩答善財言：我...得此普現速行法門...所經諸國，佛皆現在。以一切菩薩無盡供具，供養諸佛摩訶摩身。所以者何？以我得此無著清淨法性生身如實相印三昧法門。以是功德，能供養如來無著法身。...隨諸衆生宿世善根，爲現色身，而爲說法。...諸大菩薩，普於十方，無所不至。境界無量，無能壞者。清淨法身，充滿法界。

these parallels²⁵¹ has the following similarities, which are close to the **dharmadhātuja-kāya* bodhisattva described in the DZDL (cf. § 5.6.1):

- i) Passing to different buddha-fields for the purpose of making an offering for the present Buddhas.
- ii) Manifesting the physical body for helping beings
- iii) The *dharmā*-body filling the *dharmadhātu* (phenomena world).

To sum up, the textual evidence supports the fact that DZDL and Gv share some prominent features with regard to the interpretation of the omnipresent body of the Buddha. It is therefore very likely that the Gv had a direct influence on DZDL, since it is also quoted as part of the commentary on the term **dharmadhātuja-kāya*.

5.6.3 *Dharmadhātu* as a word play in the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*

Associating the *dharmadhātu* with the Buddha's body, as stated in the examples above, is used to indicate the omnipresent existence of the Buddha. In this section, I will further investigate the cosmological model of Gv, which is famous for detailing the characteristics of *dharmadhātu* — in the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, Gv is attributed the title: “The chapter of entering into *dharmadhātu*” (*Ru Fa-jia Pin* 入法界品). Since *dharmadhātu* is crucial to our understanding the *dharmā*-body, I would like to go deeper into a word play centered on this term in Gv.

In § 1, we have discussed the semantic change of *dharmatā* and its synonyms: in the canonical text they refer to *pratītyasamutpāda*, which represents the teaching of the Buddha

²⁵¹ 善男子！我已成就菩薩普門速行法門 ... 所經諸國佛皆現在，以一切菩薩諸供養具而供養之...分別諸根，隨其所應而爲說法 ... 其諸大菩薩，普於十方無所不至，境界無量無能壞者。清淨法身，充滿法界。(T 278, p.718c21-0719a10)

善男子！我得菩薩解脫，名普門不動速疾行...普以最勝心至其佛所，以妙供具而爲供養。及施一切諸衆生海...一切衆生，悉知其心，悉知其根。隨其解欲，現身說法。...如諸菩薩摩訶薩，隨順遍行，普於十方無所不至，智慧境界等無差別。善布其身，悉遍法界。(T 293, p. 735c13-0736a10)

... *tasya me kulaputra samantaśrīsaṃbhavasya tathāgatasya pādamūlādeṣa samantamukhanirjavano nāma bodhisattvavimokṣaḥ pratilabdhaḥ* / ...*asarvāṇi ca tāni buddhakṣetrāṇi avirahitāni tathāgatāḥ* / *avatarāmi sarvāṃś ca tān buddhān bhagavataḥ* / *anuttarayā manomayyā anabhisamskāradharmadhātumudrāmudritayā tathāgatānujñātayā sarvabodhisattvapraharṣasamjananyā tathāgatam pūjāyāmi* / ... *sarveṣāṃ ca teṣāṃindriyacakram parijñāya yathāśayādhimuktito rūpakāyam samdarśayāmi* / .../(Gv 166) ... *kiṃ mayā śakyam sarvatrānugātānāṃ bodhisattvānāṃ samatādigabhimukhānāṃ asaṃbhinnajñānaviṣayāṇāṃ sarvadharmadhātusuvibhaktaśarīrānām* ... (Gv, Vaidya 1960b:165-166)

and also the very existence of the Buddha; in AP, accompanying the reinterpretation of *pratītyasamutpāda* as emptiness, these terms then become the central topic of the Prajñāpāramitā thought. The equation of these notions with the Buddha can be found in many places in AP, however, *dharmadhātu* does not occur in such a context.

This situation changes in Prajñāpāramitā texts that were composed later; such as, the large commentary of LP, DZDL, and in the condensed Prajñāpāramitā literature, MP (which will be discussed in § 5.6.4). In these sources, the *dharmadhātu* is awarded an increasing significance by virtue of its equation to the Buddha. This can be also attributed to, on the one hand, the occurrence of the omnipresent *dharmakāya*, as well as to the new interpretation for the term *dharmadhātu* itself.

The term *dhātu* embodies multiple meanings. As is pointed out in § 1, the early meaning of *dhātu* denotes the element that constitutes our phenomenal world, i.e., “Element, Urstoff”, and it is also used in grammatical language as a verbal root, “der Urstoff der Wörter, Verbalwurzel” (PW III, p.155). In this regard, the term *dhātu* can be regarded as the cause of the formation of the phenomenal world; thus, early Yogacāra treatises employ *dhātu* in the compound *dharmadhātu* as a synonym of *hetu* (cause) (§ 1.6.2). In the context of the synonyms of *dharmatā* in AP and LP (§ 1), I follow the translation “fundament” by Lamotte (fondement pour l’existence des choses, *dharmasthitaye dhātuḥ*²⁵²), which could denote both “cause” and “basis” simultaneously.

In one canonical text, the *Śāriputrasīmhanādasūtra* (cf. Lamotte 1980 [V]:2192 n.2), the Buddha compliments Śāriputra with the phrase “*dharmadhātu* is well penetrated”²⁵³ (*dharmadhātuḥ supratividdhaḥ* 善通達法性). This passage is discussed thrice in DZDL. As Lamotte (1980 [V]:2192 n.2) points out:

Lorsque les Sūtra canoniques disent que le Dharmadhātu a été bien pénétré (*supratividdha*) par le Buddha ou par Śāriputra (cf. DN II. 8, l. 13–14; II. 53, l. 13–14; MN I. 396, l. 10; SN II. 56, l. 4), ils ont en vue la Dharmatā hīnayāniste, à savoir le Pratītyasamutpāda (cf. SN II. 25, l. 17 et suiv.).

However, in the Mahāyāna context, because *pratītyasamutpāda* was reinterpreted as emptiness, the sense of the terms *dharmatā* and its synonyms were commonly modified to designate an ultimate truth or reality (see § 1).

The term *dhātu* can also mean “condition” or “state”; such as in the compound of *lokadhātu* and *nibbānadhātu* (PTSD p.333, see the entry of *dhātu*). Later it changes to indicate “realm” or “sphere”, a meaning that was probably influenced by the connotation of a

²⁵² Cf. Lamotte 1980 [V]:2183.

²⁵³ Cf. T 1509, p.298a20-29, Lamotte 1980 [V]:2193-2194.

“fundament”. When the *dharmadhātu* indicates the sphere of *dharma*, it can serve as a wonderful word play, whilst at the same time a cosmological model, because the term *dharma* refers to both “phenomena” and “truth”²⁵⁴.

As we have discussed in § 1.2, Gethin (2004) also summarizes six meanings of *dharma/dhamma* in canonical texts as (1) teaching, (2) good conduct or behavior, (3) truth, (4) nature, (5) natural law and (6) a mental or physical state or thing. With regard to the term *dharma* in the compound *dharmadhātu*, the meaning “phenomena” corresponds to the sixth in Gethin’s summary, and the meaning “truth” to the second.

Thus, the “sphere of truth” relates to the ultimate truth, while the “sphere of phenomena” indicates the whole cosmos, or the phenomenal world. Notably, in Gv, the two meanings, sphere of phenomena and the sphere of truth, can be distinguished through the verbs or nouns combined with them.

(1) *Dharmadhātu* as the sphere of phenomena

The sphere of phenomena can be understood as the phenomenal world experienced in daily life. In the Gv, *dharmadhātu* sometimes occurs together with a list of the spheres similar to the sphere of phenomena, such as the sphere of beings or all worlds etc:

ākāśadhātusamatayā tryadhvasamatayā dharmadhātusamatayā sattvadhātusamatayā sarvalokadhātusamatayā sarvakarmavaṃśasamatayā ... / ²⁵⁵ (Gv, Vaidya 1960b:25)

Through the equality of the sphere of space, that of the sphere of three times, that of the sphere of phenomena, that of the sphere of beings, that of the sphere of all worlds, that of the sphere of the entire lineage of karma ...

This passage can be regarded as a good example for the usage of *dharma* in the sense of phenomena. A more significant example in this regard is the expression “illuminating/spreading throughout the sphere of phenomena” ((*sarva*)*dharmadhātu* + √ *sphur*). This particular expression occurs frequently in Gv; for instance:

acintyabodhisattvadharmāvabhāsapratilābhena prītivegasambhavamahāvīkurvitavyūhān niścāritvā sarvadharmadhātu spharanti sma / yaduta cittakṣaṇe cittakṣaṇe vipularaśmijālameghāḥ sarvajagatsaṃtoṣaṇā niścāritvā daśa diśaḥ spharanti sma /

²⁵⁴ Both of the meanings are found under the entry of *dhamma* in PTSD, p.333.

²⁵⁵ The early Ch. recension, T 278, reads similarly, but has a different sequence of words:

法界等，虛空界等，三世等，一切衆生界等，一切劫等，一切業性等。(T 278, p.683b11-12)

Through the equality of the sphere of phenomena, that of the sphere of space, that of the sphere of three times, that of all kalpas, that of the sphere of the entire lineage of karma ...

sarvaratnam aṇi ghaṇṭā megha

niścāritvā

*sarvatryadhvatathāgataguṇavarṇanirdeśameghanirnādānanuravanto daśa diśaḥ
spharanti sma* ²⁵⁶ (Gv, Vaidya 1960b:31-32)

Through obtaining the splendor of the inconceivable bodhisattva dharma and after issuing the great miracle splendor made of pleasure stream, he illuminated all the spheres of phenomena. Or else, after issuing the great cloud of the net of rays, which comfort all the people, he illuminated all the ten quarters.

The verbal forms stemming from √ *spḥur* often occur together with *dharmadhātu*. We have seen the compound “the body widely spreading in all the *dharmadhātu*” (*sarva-dharmadhātu-suvibhakta-śarīra*), which is similar to the omnipresent body mentioned in the last quotation in § 5.6.2. Additionally it can also serve as an example for the usage of *dharmadhātu* as the sphere of phenomena. If we further consider the fact that, according to BHSD, *spḥurati* has both the meanings of a) fills with light, and b) widely spreads (BHSD, p. 613, col 2), the wide distribution or spreading of the omnipresent body in the sphere of phenomena could be expressed metaphorically through the motif of light pervading space.

(2) *Dharmadhātu* as the sphere of truth

Moreover, the notion of the sphere of truth is indicative of a particular ontological principle regarding phenomena. In Gv, in the same episode quoted by DZDL that deals with the inability of the great disciples to perceive the miracle of the Buddha and the assembly of bodhisattvas (see § 5.6.2), the expression “successive entrance to the sphere of truth is awakened” (*dharmadhātuparamparāpraveśo ’nubuddhaḥ*) occurs in the following passage:

*tathā hi teṣāṃ sarvajñatāvīpakṣāvidyādūṣyāvabaddhajñānacakṣuṣāṃ tad
asaṅgabodhisattvajñānacakṣur na pariśuddham, na ca tair*

²⁵⁶ The Ch. version reads similarly:

以樂法力故，不可思議力故，於念念中，各放無量光明雲，普照法界，覺悟衆生。(T 278, p. 685c10-12)

Through the power of the pleasure *dharmā*, and through the inconceivable power, he issues immeasurable clouds, illuminating all the spheres of phenomena, and enlightening the beings.

dharmadhātuparaṃparāpraveśo 'nubuddhaḥ, yena tad acintyatathāgatasamādhivṛṣabhitāvikurvitaprātihāryaṃ paśyeyuḥ // ²⁵⁷(Vaidya 1960b:16)

For those whose eyes of knowledge are opposed (*vipakṣa*) to omniscience, are ignorant, bad and attached, the eye of knowledge of the non-attached bodhisattva is not purified, and they have not become awakened to the successive entrances to the *dharmadhātu*, by means of which they would see the bull like quality (*vṛṣabhitā*), the wonder (*vikurvita*), and miracle (*prātihārya*) of the inconceivable *samādhis* of the Tathāgatas.

In this passage, the expression “the successive entrances to the *dharmadhātu*” (*dharmadhātuparaṃparāpraveśaḥ*) is associated with “being awakened” (*anubuddhaḥ*). Thus the *dharmadhātu* here clearly indicates the sphere of truth, and the expression literally means “entrance to the truth”, rather than “entrance to the phenomenal world” — as stated below, we also see a similar expression “*dharmadhātu* is fully awakened” *dharmadhātur abhisambuddhaḥ* in MP (see § 5.6.4).

Therefore, the passage quoted above states that the disciples are unable to see the miracles etc., because they are not aware of the sphere of truth. This confirms our assumption that, for disciples, the sphere of truth (*dharmadhātu*) is an imperceivable and inconceivable sphere. In this way, we have an interesting contradiction caused by a word play: the disciples live in the sphere of phenomena (*dharmadhātu*) yet cannot perceive the sphere of truth (*dharmadhātu*).

In the Ch. version of the Avataṃsaka, the term *dharmadhātu* is translated as *fa-jie*, and from the Ch. translation it is hard to identify the subtle differences of these two meanings. However, the significant commentators of the Hua-yan (= Avataṃsaka) school (華嚴宗) were probably also aware of the double meaning of *dharmadhātu* and the word play behind it. For instance, the corresponding expressions quoted above are actually used in the treatise of the founder of Hua-yan school, Fazang (法藏), reportedly skilled in the Sanskrit language:

... 普照法界者，顯業用成益。證理法界故，照事法界故。(T 1733, p.398a17-18, *Hua-yan Jing tan-xuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記)

²⁵⁷ In comparison with the Skt. recension, the Ch. recension is more brief:

不覩如來自在神變菩薩大衆。所以者何？不得菩薩清淨眼故，不能次第覺法界故。(T 278, p. 680b15-17)

They do not see the miracle of the Tathāgata and the assembly of bodhisattvas. Why? Because they do not attain the purified eyes of a bodhisattva and they have not awakened to the successive entrances to the *dharmadhātu*.

... illuminating (√ *sphur*) all the *dharmadhātu* shows the benefits of objective functions, because what is realized (**anubuddha*) is the *dharmadhātu* of truth, and what is illuminated (**sphurita*) is the *dharmadhātu* of phenomena.

This passage reflects the double usage of *dharmadhātu* – the *dharmadhātu* of truth (理法界) and the *dharmadhātu* of phenomena (事法界). In this passage, Fazang also employs verbs (√ *sphur* and √ *budh*) that we have seen in the GV.

Through this word play, the composer of Gv wanted to create an interesting cosmological model: the *dharmadhātu* is both equivalent to and different from the phenomenal world. As is well known, the infinite world-realms (*lokadhātu*) of various sizes are each divided into realms of desire, form, and formlessness. They present the cosmological structure of Buddhism. When the *dharmadhātu* is identical to the sphere of phenomena, it inevitably gives rise to a contrast with its other sense, the sphere of truth, which entails that all things – all worlds, realms, and beings – are simply illusory manifestations. This contrast represents a contribution particular to the philosophy of the Gv and *Avatamsakasūtra*: “the conception of the perfect interpenetration of everything in the universe, in which everything is as if reflected in everything else, without any mutual obstruction. The phenomenal and transcendental universes are identical, with separateness of phenomena on the surface but perfect harmony and unity within ...” (Potter 1999:96-97)

Applying this principle to notions regarding the *dharmabody*, the latter usage of *dharmadhātu* indicates that whilst the *dharmabody* is the body of enlightenment, it is also fully diffused in the sphere of phenomena; in other words, it is identical therewith. As remarked by Potter (1999:263): “A special influence came from the *Tathāgatotpattisambhavanirdeśasūtra* of the *Avatamsakasūtra*, as shown in the composition of v. I, 27 of the *Ratnagotravibhāga*. This *sūtra*, treating the meaning of the enlightenment of the Buddha, established the concept of *dharmakāya*, i.e., the Buddha identified with *dharmadhātu*”.

5.6.4 The equation of *dharmadhātu* with the Buddha in the *Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā*

In LP, the expression “to realize the *dharmadhātu*” (*dharmadhātum abhisambudh-*) is similar to “realizing the supreme *dharmadhātu*” (*dharmadhātuparam ... anubuddhaḥ*) in Gv, but it is formulated in typical *Prajñāpāramitā* language:

(LPG 26r4) ... *punar aparaṃ śāradvatīputra bodhisatvasya mahāsatvasya prajñā[pā]*
 (LPG 26r5) *ramitāyāṃ carato naivam bhavati • kaccid ahaṃ dharmadhātum*
abhisambuddhyeya na vābhisambuddhyeya tat kasya heto{h}r na hi dharmadhātum
abhisambuddho nābhi(LPG 26r6){*bhi*}*sambudhyate • nābhisambhotsyate • //* (Zacchetti 2005:398 = LPN, Kimura 2007 [I-1]:77)

Furthermore, Śāradvatīputra, coursing in the perfection of wisdom it does not occur to the bodhisattva: “I wonder if I shall fully realise the *dharmadhātu*, or not realise it at all?” And why? It is simply not so: realizing the *dharmadhātu* is neither realised nor not realized.

The text continues with an elucidation of the expression “to penetrate the *dharmadhātu*” (*dharmadhātuṃ prati-√vyadh-*) (see § 5.6.3), wherein the precise form that explanation has also been changed to fit the model of Prajñāpāramitā language: “I would neither penetrate the *dharmadhātu*, nor not penetrate the *dharmadhātu*” (*dharmadhātuṃ pratividhyeya vā na vā pratividhyeya*).

Similarly in one passage of MP, we also find the unique expression “the *dharmadhātu* is not realized” (*na dharmadhātur abhisambuddhaḥ*). The seemingly the contradictory argument in this passage can only be explained through our previous discussion on the Gv:

śāradvatīputra āha - na mañjuśrīr bhagavatā dharmadhātur abhisambuddhaḥ? mañjuśrīrāha - na bhadanta śāradvatīputra bhagavatā dharmadhātur abhisambuddhaḥ | tat kasmād dhetoḥ? tathā hi bhadanta śāradvatīputra dharmadhātur eva bhagavān ²⁵⁸
(MP, Vaidya 1962:347)

Śāradvatīputra asked: Mañjuśrī, is *dharmadhātu* not realized by the Blessed One?

Mañjuśrī: No, venerable Śāradvatīputra, the *dharmadhātu* is not realized by the Blessed One. For what reason? Because, venerable Śāradvatīputra, the *dharmadhātu* is the Blessed One.

The *dharmadhātu* here can indicate, on the one hand, the sphere of truth, which refers to enlightenment (*bodhi*); on the other hand, *dharmadhātu* can mean the sphere of phenomena, viz. all the *dharmas*. Since the Buddha, whose body spreads widely in the world (see § 5.6.3), is an omnipresent existence, he can thus be equated with the sphere of phenomena or all the *dharma*. In this way, the double meaning of *dharmadhātu* creates the paradox “*dharmadhātu* is both the *bodhi* and the Buddha at the same time.”

Notably, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī is neither a key figure in AP, LP, nor in most of the condensed Prajñāpāramitā corpus, and he only occurs frequently in MP. However, he is the most significant bodhisattva in Gv, who plays a significant role in leading Sudhana to enlightenment. Therefore, the usage of *dharmadhātu* in Gv may have also influenced the MP, particularly the equation of *dharmadhātu* with the Buddha in this text.

²⁵⁸ The Ch. parallel (T 232, p.728b09-11) reads the same.

In MP, this argument further generates a different manner of perceiving the Buddha, which manifests in a specific meditation entitled the *eka-vyūha-samādhi*. The definition of the *eka-vyūha-samādhi* is found in the following passage:

*ekavyūhāṃ samādhim avatartukāmena kulaputreṇa kuladuhitrā vā viviktāni śayanāsanāni kartavyāni; asaṃsargārāmena ca bhavitavyaṃ, sarvaṇimittā-manasikāreṇa paryāṅkaṃ 'baddhvā niṣīditavyaṃ, tatra <ca?> Tathāgato manasikartavyaḥ, sarvadharmāś ca manasikartavyā anupalambhayogenāyam ca Tathāgataṃ manasiku*ryat, tasya nāmadheyaṃ grhītavyaṃ. tac ca nāmadheyaṃ śrutvopalabhya yasyāṃ diśi sa Tathāgatas, tāṃ diśaṃ āmukhīkṛtya niṣīditavyaṃ. tam eva Tathāgataṃ manasikurvātāṃ, tena manasikṛtenālītānāgatapratyutpannā buddhā bhagavanto manasikṛtā bhavisyanti.* (Tucci 1923:134)

Good men and good women who want to enter into the *ekavyūhā-samādhi*, should construct a secluded dwelling; they should practice without the pleasure of sensual attachment; their minds focused on all objects, they should sit having assumed the *paryāṅka* posture. Thereupon, they should focus on the Tathāgata, on all *dharma*s and, practicing without (false) perception, they should focus on the Tathāgata and grasp his name (?). After hearing his name, one should sit facing the direction of the Tathāgata. And thus, focusing his mind on that Tathāgata, he will focus on the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones of the past, future and present.

Closely after the sentence “should grasp his name” (*tasya nāmadheyaṃ grhītavyaṃ*), we find the expression “and after hearing the name” (*tac ca nāmadheyaṃ śrutvā*), which seems to suggest that the understanding of *nāmadheyaṃ* + √ *grh* appears to be “hearing the name”.

What is unique in MP is that perceiving one Buddha is equated to perceiving all the Buddhas. This is further elucidated in a passage that closely follows the one previously quoted (cf. Tucci 1923: 134), serving as an interpretation for the fact that reciting the name of one Buddha is equal to recollecting all the Buddhas.

tat kasmād hetor? ekam idaṃ tathāgatatvaṃ, yathā, Mañjuśrīr, ekasya Tahtāgatasyāprameyā buddhaguṇā, aprameyaṃ pratibhānaṃ. evaṃ eva, Mañjuśrīr, ekavyūhaṃ samādhim adhigamya ekasyānutpādasyāprameyā dharmaparyāyaviṣayāḥ

*pratikāṅkṣitavyā, ye 'sya pravatsyante, ye ca Tathāgatair arhadbhiḥ samyaksaṃbuddhair bhāṣitāḥ*²⁵⁹ (Tucci 1923:134-135).

Why? There is only one nature of a Tathāgata, Mañjuśrī, the Buddha-qualities of a single Tathāgata and his readiness in speech are immeasurable. In this way, Mañjuśrī, having attained the *ekavyūha-samādhi*, from a single arising immeasurable spheres of the *dharmaparyāya* should be expected and from that they [the spheres] will be proclaimed, and spoken by the Tathāgatas, the Noble Ones, the Perfectly Awakened Ones.

In this passage the *eka-vyūha-samādhi* produces the sphere of doctrine (*dharmaparyāyaviṣaya*). The Ch. translation translates this latter term as *fajie* (法界), the *dharmadhātu*, which here recalls the association of that term with the developed Buddha body theory in the Gv. In MP, for instance, this is articulated quite prominently in the expression “the *dharmadhātu* is the Blessed One” (*dharmadhātur eva bhagavān*²⁶⁰ = 世尊即是法界²⁶¹). As we have discussed above, *dharmadhātu* can refer to both the sphere of phenomena representing the phenomenal world, and the sphere of law representing the truth. In this way, the non-duality of truth and phenomena is articulated in a unique fashion: the sphere of law overlaps with our sphere of phenomena, but due to the lack of merits and insight, we cannot perceive the sphere of law, just like the great disciples cannot perceive the miracle of the Buddha and the assembly of bodhisattvas.

²⁵⁹ The reading in the Ch. recension is different, and includes additional information regarding the identification of one Buddha with countless Buddhas.

何以故? 念一佛功德無量無邊, 亦與無量諸佛功德無二。不思議佛法等無分別, 皆乘一如成最正覺, 悉具無量功德無量辯才。如是入一行三昧者盡知恒沙諸佛法界無差別相。(T 232, p. 731b5-b09).

Why? The merit of recollecting one Buddha is immeasurable, and is not different from that of an uncountable Buddha. Unimaginable Buddha *dharmas* have no distinction: all of them equate to *tathatā* and lead to the ultimate enlightenment; all of them possess immeasurable merit and wisdom. In this way, entering into the *eka-vyūha-samādhi*, one understands the non-distinction of the sphere of dharma of all the Buddhas.

²⁶⁰ Cf. the passage (Vaidya 1962:347) quoted in § 5.6.4.

²⁶¹ Cf. T 232, p.728b11.

This non-duality causes a special Avatamsaka “all in one, one in all” philosophy, which can be associated with the famous metaphor of Indra’s net.²⁶² Since the phenomenal world is identical with the truth, the individual in the phenomenal world should also possess the features of omniscience. In this way, in the MP passage quoted above, perceiving the *dharmadhātu* is realized through an interesting paradox: the starting point of this process, focusing on one Buddha, will lead to seeing all Buddhas (能於一佛念念相續，即是念中，能見過去、未來、現在諸佛²⁶³). There is in fact a similar discussion concerning “one Buddha is all Buddhas” in Gv:

ye te ekakalpasarvakalpa-sarvakalpaikakalpānupraveśavihāravihārīṇaḥ / ye te ekakṣetrasarvakṣetraikakṣetrāsambhedavihāravihārīṇaḥ / ye te ekadharmasarvadharma-sarvadharmaikadharmāvirodhavihāravihārīṇaḥ / ye te ekasattvasarvasattvaikasattvānānātvavihāravihārīṇaḥ / ye te ekabuddhasarvabuddha-sarvabuddhaikabuddhādvayavihāravihārīṇaḥ /²⁶⁴(Vaidya 1960b: 370.15-19).

They dwell in an entrance-dwelling where one *kalpa* is all and all *kalpas* are one; they dwell in an unbroken-dwelling where one field is all and all fields are one; they dwell in the harmony-dwelling where one dharma is all, all *dharma*s are one; they dwell in the infinite-dwelling where one being is all and all beings are one; they dwell in the non-duality dwelling where one Buddha is all, all Buddhas are one...

Thus, the paradoxical cosmology model from the Gv, “one is all and all is one”, is adopted into the practice of the recollection of the Buddha in the MP, and perfectly connects the focusing on one Buddha (representing the individual) with the perception of all the Buddhas (representing the whole).

Summary

As stated by Harrison in regards to AP, the term *dharmakāya* does not indicate the embodiment of *dharma*. If we compare the Skt. and earliest Ch. witnesses of this text, the

²⁶² As is stated by Poceski (2004:347): “A popular metaphor that exemplifies Hua-yan (Avatamsaka)’s notion of mutual interpenetration of all phenomena is that of Indra’s net. The image of Indra’s net of jewels originally comes from the Huayan (*Avatamsaka*), which describes how in the heaven of the god Indra there is a vast net that extends infinitely in all directions. Each knot of the net holds a gleaming jewel, and because the net is limitless in size it contains an infinite number of jewels. As the multifaceted surface of each jewel reflects all other jewels in the net, each of the reflected jewels also contains the reflections of all other jewels; thus there is an unending process of infinite reflections.”

²⁶³ Cf. T 232, p.731b03-05.

²⁶⁴ It reads the same to the Ch. parallel (T 232, p.728b11).

only occurrence of *dharmakāya* as a noun refers to “the corpus of *dharma*”. Similarly, in the earliest Ch. translation of LP by Mokṣala, we find *dharmatā* instead of *dharmakāya*. This is by no means a coincidence, for, in the early canonical texts *dharmakāya* was developed from *dharma/dharmatā* to represent the very existence of the Buddha.

Presumably, this development was stimulated by the formation of the “proto-pair-model”, *rūpakāya* vs. *dharma*, as found, for instance, in the *Kāśyapaparivarta*. Here, the *rūpakāya*, likely basing itself on one passage of the *Sāmaññaphala-suttanta*, is put in opposition to *dharma* in the context of seeing the Buddha. The multiple meanings of *kāya* as body or collection, makes the beginning of the shift from *dharma* or *dharmatā* to *dharmakāya* possible. Adding *kāya* after *dharma* also paves the way for the occurrence of the *dharmakāya* theory in Mahāyāna texts from 2nd or 3rd Century C.E. onwards. On the one hand, the *dharmakāya* was transformed to the metaphysical and un-perceivable ‘embodiment of dharma’ seen in such Mahāyāna texts as *Samādhi*; on the other hand, the discrepancy between the Buddha’s *dharmakāya* and *rūpakāya* became more pronounced, whereby the *dharmakāya* designated the omnipresent and metaphysical body and the *rūpakāya* was only regarded as its manifestation in uncountable Buddha-fields.

In the Prajñāpāramitā tradition specifically, the omnipresent Buddha body, **dharmadhātuja-kāya* of the DZDL, refers to the bodies of both the Buddha and bodhisattva, and is regarded as belonging to a special sphere (*viśaya*), the sphere of *dharma* (*dharmadhātu*), where these Buddhas and bodhisattvas dwell. However, this sphere is neither separated from the phenomenal world, nor is it identical with it. This cosmological model is apparently influenced by Gv, since Gv is also quoted in the context of **dharmadhātuja-kāya* in DZDL. In Gv, this cosmological model is realised by the word play used in the text: *dharmadhātu* refers to both the sphere of phenomena and the sphere (or fundament) of truth. Therefore, in the Gv our phenomenal world is both worldly and pure, and the omnipresent body spreads throughout it and this view, it seems, further influenced the equation of the Buddha to *dharmadhātu* in MP.

6. The pair-model of the Buddha's embodiments associated with *buddhānusmṛti*

6.1 The interpolation of pair-model of Buddha bodies into the Larger Prajñāpāramitā

We have already observed how *dharmakāya* ultimately replaced *dharmatā* in Prajñāpāramitā literature. Now we can turn to a similar case concerning *buddhānusmṛti* (the recollection of the Buddha). Our first example occurs in one chapter of the LPN, dedicated to comparing relics (*śarīra*) with the Prajñāpāramitā,²⁶⁵ within which the *dharma*-body (*dharmakāya*) and form-body (*rūpakāya*) are connected to *buddhānusmṛti*:

punar aparaṃ bhagavan ye daśasu dikṣu tathāgatā arhantaḥ samyaksambuddhā asaṃkhyeyeṣv aprameyeṣu lokadhātuṣu tiṣṭhanti dhriyante yāpayanti dharmam ca deśayanti. tāṃś ca dharmakāyena ca rūpakāyena ca draṣṭukāmena iyaṃ eva prajñāpāramitā śrotavyodgrahītavyā dhārayitavyā vācayitavyā paryavāptavyā parebhyas ca vistareṇa saṃprakāśayitavyā yoniśas ca manasikartavyā. sacet kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā tān daśasu dikṣu tathāgatān arhataḥ samyaksambuddhān icched draṣṭum, tena kulaputrena vā kuladuhitrā vā prajñāpāramitāyāṃ caratā buddhānusmṛtir bhāvayitavyā dharmatayā. (Kimura 1986 [II-III]:96)

Furthermore, Blessed One, the Tathāgatas, Arhats, Perfectly Awakened Ones in the ten directions abide, exist, spend time and teach the Dharma in un-calculable immeasurable world-spheres. Wishing to see them by means of the *dharma*-body and form-body, the Prajñāpāramitā should be heard, held, borne (in mind), recited, studied, fully explained to others and thoroughly contemplated. If a son or daughter of a good family wants to see the Tathāgatas, Arhats, Perfectly Awakened Ones in the ten directions, they, when coursing in the Prajñāpāramitā, should practice the recollection of the Buddha by means of *dharmatā*.

There is only a little variance in the LPKj, which can be dated as early as the very beginning of 5th Century C.E. Likewise, the corresponding passage in the LPX (T 220, p.164b18-25) repeats this passage almost word for word. The translation of the parallel in LPKj is given as follows:

Furthermore, Blessed One! The one who wishes to see the *dharma*-body and the form-body of present Buddhas in the uncountable worlds of ten directions, should hear and bear the Prajñāpāramitā, recite it, correctly remember it and preach it to others. In this way, a son or daughter of a good family will see the *dharma*-body and the form-body of present Buddhas in uncountable worlds of ten directions. The son or daughter of a good family

²⁶⁵ This passage corresponds to the part missing between folios 149-150 of the Gilgit manuscripts; thus here we can only use the LPN.

who courses in Prajñāpāramitā should practice the recollection of the Buddha by means of *dharmatā*.²⁶⁶ (T 223, p.292b09-15)

This passage clearly shows that both the form-body and the *dharm*-body serve as the main objects of *buddhānusmṛti*. However, what draws our attention in particular is that, similar to the cases in § 5, both the pair-model of bodies, the form-body (*rūpakāya*, *se-shen* 色身) and the *dharm*-body (*dharmakāya*, *fa-shen* 法身), as well as the concept of *buddhānusmṛti*, are in fact absent in the parallel in LPM:

Blessed One! If one wishes to see the uncountable present Buddhas in ten directions, he should follow the Prajñāpāramitā, recite it, bear it, and have others practising it and offering donations. In this way, the son or daughter of a good family will see the uncountable present Buddhas in ten directions. As a result of their offerings to the Prajñāpāramitā, they attain the *dharmas*. Blessed One! A son or daughter of a good family who wants to see all the Tathāgatas, Arhats, Perfectly Awakened Ones should receive and bear the Prajñāpāramitā.²⁶⁷ (T 221, p.53a15-21)

The pair-model's association with *buddhānusmṛti* in later versions may represent a significant shift in thought. As described in § 1, discussions of seeing the Buddha through *dharmatā* make use of the early Buddhist idea “seeing *dharm*(*tā*) is seeing the Buddha” found in the SN. When used in this context, the verb “sees” (*paśyati*) functions as a rhetorical device, and although *dharm* / *dharmatā* appears together with *rūpakāya* in several early texts (such as the *Kāśyapaparivarta* and LPM), the purport in fact remains. However, compounding *kāya* with *dharm* to form the notion of *dharm*-*kāya* paved the way for the development of the pair-model of the Buddha bodies (§ 5).

The LPKj passage quoted above is the earliest extant evidence in the Prajñāpāramitā tradition, in which the two bodies are regarded as the proper objects of *buddhānusmṛti*. In the rest of this chapter, I would like to investigate the relationship between the two bodies of the Buddha and *buddhānusmṛti* in some sources, relatively earlier or roughly contemporary to LPKj. These include the *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma*, the Central Asian meditation manual,

²⁶⁶ 復次，世尊！有人欲見十方無量阿僧祇諸世界中現在佛法身、色身，是人應聞受持般若波羅蜜，讀誦、正憶念、為他人演說。如是善男子、善女人，當見十方無量阿僧祇世界中諸佛法身、色身。是善男子、善女人行般若波羅蜜，亦應以法相修念佛三昧。

²⁶⁷ 世尊！若欲見十方現在無央數諸佛者，當奉行般若波羅蜜，諷誦受持，教人習行供養。是已，善男子、善女人便得見十方現在無央數諸佛。以善男子、善女人供養般若波羅蜜故便得諸佛法。世尊！欲得見諸佛如來，無所著，等正覺者，是善男子、善女人當受持般若波羅蜜。

attributed by scholars to the Sarvāstivāda school, and a Mahāyāna text, the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* (Samādh). These sources evince how the two bodies came to be accepted as part of the meditation practice known under the name *buddhānusmṛti* in both the Abhidharma School and among Mahāyāna followers. This development may also have contributed to the interpolation of the two bodies into the context of *buddhānusmṛti* in LP, as demonstrated above.

6.2 The two Buddha bodies and *buddhānusmṛti* in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma

The name of the two bodies of the Buddha is not limited to the form-body and *dharm*-body. Radich has conducted an investigation into the earliest Sarvāstivāda treatise concerning the two bodies the **Mahāvibhāṣa* and found that the text uses the Ch. term *sheng shen* (生身 the birth-body), rather than *se-shen* (色身 the form-body), to translate *rūpakāya* / *rūpaśarīra*. (cf. Radich 2007, Chapter 4.5; Radich 2010). Thus, we face a problem in reconstructing the Skt. form of *sheng shen*, the body of birth. In his study of Buddha body in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Makransky (1997:24) has found that *rūpakāya* is the term employed to denote the physical body and is to be contrasted with *dharmakāya*. Although some scholars also note the use of the terms “body of birth” or “body born of father and mother” in Sarvāstivāda texts,²⁶⁸ most present them as if they are simply interchangeable with *rūpakāya* (Radich 2010, n. 40). Furthermore, La Vallée Poussin (1906:948) mentions *rūpakāya* or *bhūtikāya* as the physical body in contrast to *dharmakāya* in the *Divyāvadāna* and *Jātakas*.

6.2.1 Terms for the two Buddha bodies in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma

In this regard, Radich (2010:128, 146) suggests that the reconstruction of the “body of birth” could be **sāmbhavikakāya*, on the basis of the Pāli passage which we have quoted in § 5.4.2. It includes both the body (*kāya*) which has form (*rūpin*) and is “built up of the four elements” (*cātummahābhūtika*), as well as the body “born of father and mother” (*mātāpettikasambhava*) in the *Sāmaññaphala-suttanta* from DN:

Ayaṃ kho me kāyo rūpī cātum-mahā-bhūtika mātā-pettika-sambhavo odana-kummās-upacayo anicc’-ucchādana-parimaddana-bhedana-viddhaṇsana-dhammo, idaṇ ca pana me viññāṇaṃ ettha sitaṃ ettha paṭibaddhaṃ ti. (DN I. 76-77)

This my body is material, made up from the four great elements, born of mother and father, fed on rice and gruel, impermanent, liable to be injured and abraded, broken and destroyed, and this is my consciousness which is bound to it and dependent on it. (Walshe 1995:104)

²⁶⁸ Takeuchi 1983:160; Demiéville 1929:177. etc.

However, this passage does not directly support the reconstruction of “body of birth” as **sāmbhavikākāya*. In fact, there are also two exceptions, which suggest another possible reconstruction; these are mentioned only briefly by Radich (2007):

(1) La Vallée Poussin has proposed to reconstruct *sheng-shen* as **janmakāya* in one of his articles (La Vallée Poussin 1928-29:768).²⁶⁹

(2) The *Niraupamyastava* attributed to Nāgārjuna includes one verse referring to the two bodies:²⁷⁰

sarvatrānugataś cāsi na ca yāto 'si kutra cit/

*janmadharmaśarīrābhyām acintyas tvam mahāmune // 56.12 //*²⁷¹

The dual instrumental (*janmadharmaśarīrābhyām*) in case (2) demands that the compound is a *dvandva* comprised of two nouns, i.e., the *janma*- and *dharma-śarīra*. Thus this passage is evidence for the twofold model of the Buddha body. Yet Radich (2007:673, n.1473) maintains that these terms in the *Niraupamyastava* are highly unusual: nowhere else do we find a body referred to as *janma*-, whether as *janmakāya* or *janmaśarīra*. Nevertheless, some passages found elsewhere offer strong support for the reconstruction of **janmakāya*, as first suggested by La Vallée Poussin, or its synonym **janmaśarīra*, as the original form of *sheng-shen*. Foremost, both the Skt. term *janmakāya* and its Ch. form *sheng shen* arise in the following passage of *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (abbr. Msa):

yadā buddharahite kāle svayaṃ dhyānam utpādya janmakāyaṃ tyaktvā nirmāṇakāyaṃ grhṇāti (Lévi 1907:70:9-10)

At a time when the Buddha is absent, having produced *dhyāna* oneself, and having abandoned the *janmakāya*, one obtains the body of manifestation (*nirmāṇakāya*).²⁷²

²⁶⁹ Cf. Radich 2007:852 n.1846.

²⁷⁰ Ed. in Tola & Dragonetti 1985:13, Tucci 1932:316.

²⁷¹ Thou are followed everywhere, but Thou art born nowhere; oh great ascetic. Thou art beyond our thought, as regards attributes of birth and corporeity. (Tucci 1932:317)
Cf. Radich 2007:673, n.1473.

²⁷² The Ch. parallel reads the same. (佛空時生，自能修禪捨於生身而受化身。T 1604, p. 616a04-05)

This text is attributed to the Yogācāra masters,²⁷³ who were historically closely associated with the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma School. It is therefore reasonable to assume a Sarvāstivāda background for the term *janmaśarīra* used in this passage. Thus perhaps not unexpectedly we do indeed find another passage that mentions *janmaśarīra* within the orthodox Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma text, the *Abhidharmadīpa*,²⁷⁴ composed by Dīpakāra (ca. 450~550 C.E.):

yat punar janmaśarīraṃ bhagavatāṃ samyaksambuddhānāṃ bodher āśrayabhūtaṃ dvātriṃśatā mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇaiḥ khacitam aśītyānuvyañjanair virājitaṃ, yat khalu dṛṣṭvā svavikalpasamutthita-pratighadūṣita-buddhīnāṃ api mārapakṣyāṇāṃ tīrthyāṇāṃ ca manah prasīdati | (*Abhidharmadīpa*, Jaini 1959:187-188)

Furthermore, having seen the birth-body of the Blessed Ones, the Perfectly Awakened Ones, the physical basis of awakening studded with the thirty-two characteristics of the great being, and resplendent with the eighty minor marks, thereupon the mind of the heretics, who have an opinion raised from vain imaginings and corrupted by obstructions, and who adhere to evil, becomes tranquil (i.e. has faith).

Notably, the term *janmaśarīra* appears in the context of seeing the Buddha. In fact, as we will discuss below, these two bodies have a close relationship with seeing the Buddha, and especially with the practice of *buddhānusmṛti*.

In another passage from the same text, *janmaśarīra* is explicitly mentioned together with *dharmaśarīra* as a pair, and here we also learn to what exactly the two bodies refer: the *janmaśarīra* is associated with the thirty-two characteristics of a great being (*mahāpuruṣa*), and the *dharmaśarīra* refers to the eighteen special *dharma*s (*āveṇikadharmas*):

anye tu bruvate- buddhā dviśarīrādhiṣṭhānāḥ | janmaśarīrādhiṣṭhānāḥ, dvātriṃśanmahāpuruṣalakṣaṇāḥ | dharmaśarīrādhiṣṭhānāḥ cāṣṭādaśāveṇikabuddhaguṇāḥ | sāmāntakaprṣṭhasaṃgrhītāḥ | (Jaini 1959:209)

But others say: the Buddhas have two bases, comprising two bodies. The foundations of the birth-body comprise the thirty-two characteristics of the great being. And the foundations of the dharma-body comprise the eighteen special Buddha qualities.

²⁷³ According to hagiographies, it belongs to the treatises that Maitreya taught to Asaṅga (*Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, *Madhyāntavibhāga*, *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*, *Ratnagotravibhāga*, and *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*) and the *Yogācārabhūmi*. For a modern study on the issue of authorship, cf. Seyfort-Ruegg 1969.

²⁷⁴ *Abhidharmadīpa*, “Lamp of Abhidharma”, follows Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* in its structure, but it stands in the same position as the *Vibhāṣā* compendia.

The features associated with the two bodies can be already found in two separate passages of **Mahāvibhāṣa*, belonging to the group of *Vibhāṣā* compendia.²⁷⁵

- (1)...the *dharmakāyas* are equal. That is to say, as one Buddha accomplishes (成就, */*sidh*) the limitless merits of the eighteen special qualities (*āveṇikadharmā*, 十八不共法), viz. the ten powers (*bala*), the four confidences (四無畏, *caturvaisāradya*), great compassion, and the three foundations of mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*), so do the other Buddhas, and thus we say [they are all] equal.²⁷⁶ (T 1545, p.85a26-28)
- (2) The Venerable One (Upagupta) said ‘...I have already seen the *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata, but what I have not seen is the body of birth (*janma-kāya). Could you now manifest it for me?’...After Māra thanked the Venerable One, he entered into the forest, and manifested himself as the Tathāgata: thirty-two characteristics and eighty minor marks, and his powerful radiance is brighter than thousand suns.²⁷⁷ (T 1545, p.698a08-a15)

²⁷⁵ In the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma tradition, presumed starting from *Vibhāṣā* compendia, the pair-model of the Buddha bodies “suddenly” occurs in the texts. Before we turn to this pair in *Vibhāṣā* compendia, we shall first lay out the materials of the *Vibhāṣā* compendia. The available Ch. translations of *Vibhāṣā* compendia including following texts:

- (1) **Vibhāṣāśāstra* (轉婆沙論, T 1547) attributed to Sitapāṇi, translated by *Saṃghabhūti 僧伽跋澄, dating from 383 C.E.;
- (2) **Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra* (阿毘曇毘婆沙論, T 1546) translated by Buddhavarman 浮陀跋摩, dating from 437 C.E.;
- (3) **Mahāvibhāṣā* (阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論 T 1545) translated by Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664 C.E.).

Skt. fragments of the *Vibhāṣā* compendia have been identified within the Pelliot collection (Enomoto 1996). The Skt. text “corresponds closely to the translations of the **Mahāvibhāṣā* and **Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra*”, but ‘both Ch. translations include additional material’, and thus were probably a ‘later version of the text’ (Willemsen, Dessein & Cox 1998:233-234). The **Vibhāṣāśāstra* may be earlier than both, “since it refers to the *Prakaraṇapāda* as the work of Vasumitra; this appellation may suggest that final compilation of the *Prakaraṇapāda* had not yet taken place or that it had not yet been given that title when the **Vibhāṣāśāstra* was composed” (Willemsen, Dessein & Cox 1998:236). However, it remains difficult to determine an exact dating for *Vibhāṣā* compendia.

²⁷⁶ Cf. Radich 2010:135. The original Ch. text reads:

法身等，謂如一佛成就十力、四無所畏、大悲、三念住、十八不共法等無邊功德，餘佛亦爾，故名平等。

²⁷⁷ 尊者告曰...如來法身吾今已見，所未見者，謂佛生身。仁今頗能爲我現不？...魔王歡喜謝尊者已，便入林中，即自化身作如來像。三十二相八十種好，威光赫奕過千日輪。

In the Sarvāstivāda context, the pair-model of *janma-kāya*(-śarīra) vs. *dharma-kāya*(-śarīra), is thus distinct from the model of the Mahāyāna context, where we find *rūpa-kāya*(-śarīra) vs. *dharma-kāya*(-śarīra).

6.2.2 *Buddhānusmṛti* and the two bodies of the Buddha

The *Mahāvibhāṣa* passage (2), where the pair-model occurs, is probably quoted from the *Aśokāvadāna*. The corresponding passage in *Aśokāvadāna* is as follows:

Upagupta: I have already seen the *dharma-body*, but I have not seen the *physical body* of the Lord of the Triple World, who resembles a mountain of gold. Thus, in return for this “very greatest favor,” [I want you] to make manifest here the physical form of the Buddha. Truly, nothing would be more pleasing to me than this, for I am eager [to see] the body of the *Daśabala*...²⁷⁸

Māra: When you, all at once, look upon me, wearing the costume of a Buddha, do not prostrate yourself out of respect for the qualities of the Omniscient One. If you show even a little reverence toward me, you mind render from *the recollection of the Buddha*, I will be consumed by fire, O mighty one. Do I have the power to endure the prostration of one whose passions are gone? I am like the sprouts of the eranda tree that cannot bear the weight of an elephant’s trunk.²⁷⁹ (Strong 1983:192)

When we compare the **Mahāvibhāṣa* and *Aśokāvadāna*, the *rūpakāya* and *janmakāya* appear interchangeable.²⁸⁰ Moreover, when Upagupta states – “I have already seen the *dharma-body*” – the *dharma-kāya* to which he refers is still ambiguous. It is hard to imagine how this *dharma-kāya* could be read in light of the above Abhidharma passages, which attribute this body to the achievements of the Buddha, such as *āveṇīkadharma*. More likely, is that it refers

²⁷⁸ *dharmakāyo mayā tasya dr̥ṣṭastrailokyanāthasya /*
kāñcanādrinibhastasya na dr̥ṣṭo rūpakāyo me //
tadanupamamanugrahaṃ prati tvamiha vidarśaya buddhavigrahaṃ /
priyamadhikamato hi nāsti me daśabalarūpakutūhalo hyahaṃ // (Mukhopadhyaya 1963:23)

²⁷⁹ *sahasā tvamihodvikṣya buddhanepathyadhāriṇaṃ /*
na praṇāmastvayā kāryaḥ sarvajñaguṇagauravāt //
buddhānusmṛtipeśalena manasā pūjāṃ yadi tva mayi
svalpāmapyupadarśayiṣyasi vibho dagdho bhaviṣyāmyahaṃ /
kā śaktirmama vītarāgavihitāṃ soḍhuṃ praṇāmakriyāṃ
hastanyāsamivodvahanti na gajasyairāṇḍavṛkṣāṅkurāḥ // (Mukhopadhyaya 1963:23-24)

²⁸⁰ That is to say, the term *sheng-shen* 生身 (**janmakāya*) in **Mahāvibhāṣa* (如來法身吾今已見，所未見者，謂佛生身。T 1545, 698a09-10) corresponds to *rūpakāya* in *Aśokāvadāna* (*dharmakāyo mayā tasya dr̥ṣṭastrailokyanāthasya / kāñcanādrinibhastasya na dr̥ṣṭo rūpakāyo me*. Vaidya 1959:225).

to the teaching of the Buddha. Evidence for this is seen in one passage from the same chapter, which describes how, before subduing Māra through magic, Upagupta entered into meditation and perceived the way that the Buddha had preached the *dharmā*:

The elder Upagupta then entered into meditation and examined the matter of how the assembly of the Tathāgata had customarily been seated. He perceived that that assembly sat down in the shape of a half-moon. Next, he contemplated the way the Tathāgata had preached the Dharma, and he perceived that the Buddha made an exposition of the Truth after giving a step-by-step discourse. Therefore, he too preached a step-by-step discourse, and then began to expose the Truth.²⁸¹ (Strong 1983:185-186)

This is the sole passage in the chapter concerning Māra's subjugation by Upagupta that deals with a perception of the Buddha, apart from the episode where Māra manifests the *rūpakāya* of the Buddha. The passage only relates details of the audience of the Buddha's teaching and the teaching itself and because Upagupta says to Māra, "I have not seen the physical body of the Lord of the Triple World", it is possible that in the meditation, he is only able to perceive the way Buddha teaches rather than the concrete figure of the Buddha. Therefore, my interpretation would be that *dharmakāya* in this text very likely indicates the corpus of "teaching" or *dharmā*, rather than "the embodiment of *dharmā*" of the Buddha (the word play as stated in § 5.4.2).

One remarkable passage from the Ch. translation of this episode, which is absent in the Skt. version, takes up the narrative after Māra's promise to Upagupta that he would manifest the Buddha's figure:

Māra then entered into the forest and transformed into the form of the Buddha, as if drawing a colorful figure of the Buddha on new and white materials. One would never tire of seeing it.²⁸² (T 2042, p.119c20-21)

In this passage, the manifestation of the Buddha figure by Māra is compared with drawing on white material. To recall a passage previously quoted from the *Vimuttimaggā* – "if a man wishes to meditate on the Buddha, he should worship Buddha images and such other objects" (see Harrison 1993:219) – we may suggest that the Aśokāvadāna thus provides further textual evidence for the close connection between the Buddha image and the development of *buddhānusmṛti*.

Previous scholars have described the *dharmakāya* in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma as

²⁸¹ The Ch. counterpart (T 2042, p.118c10-15) reads similarly.

²⁸² 魔即入林化作佛身，如以綵色畫新白作佛身相，看無厭足。

either: (a) the eighteen *āveṇikadharmas* (Guangxing 2005); or (b) the *āsaikṣadharmas*, with emphasis on *kṣayaājñāna*, *anutpādayājñāna* and the five *anāsravadharmas* (La Vallée Poussin 1928-29 and Makransky 1997).²⁸³ Radich (2010:142) further argues that “the definitions of *dharmakāya* in terms of *āsaikṣadharmas* and *anāsravadharmas* turn out to be reducible to the same concept, expressed in different terms” and further “both this definition of *dharmakāya* as *āsaikṣaskandha-cum-anāsravaskandhas* and the definition in terms of *āveṇikadharmas* can be shown to hinge on a more fundamental underlying notion of the Buddha as embodied in his gnosis (*bodhi*, *jñāna* etc.)”. Thus, he considers that the term *dharmakāya* here indicates the embodiment of dharma, rather than the corpus of teaching.

However, the case of the quotation from the *Aśokāvadāna* shows us how complicated this issue really is. Another passage²⁸⁴ from the earliest translation of the Vibhāṣā compendia, the **Vibhāṣāsāstra*, also clearly testifies to that the *dharmakāya* refers to the teachings, and this usage presumably preserves the earlier understanding of *dharmakāya*. Some descriptions of the *dharmakāya* in the **Vibhāṣāsāstra* are also used in the sense of metaphors; for instance, in one passage,²⁸⁵ the *dharmakāya* is said to be nurtured with the four trances.

Most significantly, in the context of the *Aśokāvadāna* passage, the two bodies are associated with *buddhānusmṛti*, which obviously refers to seeing the Buddha, rather than recollecting the ten epithets of the Buddha, as is widely seen in the Pāli canon. It is of course not the only case in this regard.

²⁸³ Cf. Radich 2010:152.

²⁸⁴ 彼佛契經，說八萬法身。問曰：“法身者有何齊限數？”“有一說者，一數經名法身，謂彼一身，是謂一身齊限數。如是至一切八萬。更有說者，謂契經說，意止此是一法身齊限數。如是契經說，意斷神足根力覺種道種，是謂一法身齊限數。如是至一切八萬。”(T 1547, p.459a16-a21)

According to Sūtra, eighty-thousand *dharmakāyas* are mentioned. Question: How should one count the *dharmakāya*? [Answer:] There is one explanation in the Sūtra called the *kāya* of dharma. When it says one *kāya*, it is the number of one *kāya* (Sūtra) up to 80 thousand. Furthermore, it is said, according to the Sūtra, mindfulness is one *dharmakāya*, in this way, the (exertion for) getting rid of existing (*pradhāna*), bases of supernatural power (*rddhipāda*), root, power, enlightenment, and the path can be also counted as one *dharmakāya* respectively, then up to 80 thousand.

Closely after this passage, we also see the discourse of five pure aggregates (*anāsravaskandhas*) of *dharmakāya*, which is the counterpart of five aggregates of *janmakāya* (cf. T 1547, p.459a27-b05).

²⁸⁵ 問曰：“何以故世尊說四禪爲食？”答曰：“長養法身故。如餘食長養衆生，如是禪長養法身。是謂世尊契經說四禪爲食。”(T 1547, p.486c27-0487a01) Question: why does the tathāgata say that the four trances are foods. Answer: because they feed the *dharmakāya*, just as other foods feed beings, the four trances feed the *dharmakāya*. So it is said by the tathāgata the four trances are foods in Sūtra.

6.3 The two bodies in the *buddhānusmṛti* passages of meditation manuals

In the Central Asian meditation manual, named by modern scholars as “Das Yogalehrbuch”, the pair-model, *janma-dharma-śarīra*, occurs in the section that deals with *buddhānusmṛti*. A Ger. translation of the relevant passage is given by Dieter Schlingloff, but the two bodies appear only in one place, and what they refer to is not quite clear.

(YL 165R1) + + + (b)[u](d)dh(ā)śrayeṣu dharmāśarīraṃ dṛśyate /
tajjanmadharma[śa]rīraniḥṣṭābhīḥ prabhābhir lokam spharitvā t(i)ṣṭhanti /

(Dann) erscheint in den Gestalten der Buddhas der Leib der Lehre. Mit den Strahlen, die aus ihrem natürlichen und aus ihrem Leib der Lehre hervorkommen, durchdringen [die Buddhas] die Welt. (Schlingloff 1964:178)

Actually, this pair-model is part of the basic structure of the section on *buddhānusmṛti*. Considering our previous discussion, together with some passages from the Ch. meditation manuals, we can gain a better understanding of the *buddhānusmṛti* section in Das Yogalehrbuch.

It is assumed by many scholars that Das Yogalehrbuch is part of the Sarvāstivāda tradition (Schlingloff 1964, Inokuchi 1966, Schmithausen 1970 and Enomoto 1984). According to Yamabe (2006:326), the mystical visions in the Yogalehrbuch are quite similar to the meditation/visualisation texts translated into Chinese after the early fifth century, which are classified into two categories: the meditation manuals (*chan-jing* 禪經)²⁸⁶ following the framework of “Hīnayānist” meditative practice; and the visualisation sūtras (*guan-jing* 觀

²⁸⁶ *Chan script of Dharmatrāta* (Da-mo-duo-luo Chan Jing 達摩多羅禪經 T 618)

Concentration of Sitting Meditation (Zuo-chan-san-mei Jing 坐禪三昧經 T 614)

Explanations of Meditation (Chan-fa Yao-jie 禪法要解 T 616)

Concise Essentials (Si-wei Lue-yao-fa 思惟略要法 T 617)

Five Gates of Chan Essentials (Wu-men-chan Jing Yao-yong-fa 五門禪經要用法 T 619)

Chan Essentials (Chan Mi-yao-fa Jing 禪秘要法經 T 613)

Methods for Curing (Zhi-chan-bing Mi-yao-fa 治禪病秘要法 T 620)

經)²⁸⁷ that follow the format of Mahāyāna sūtras.

The passages on *buddhānusmṛti* following the reference to the two bodies are mentioned in four of the seven Ch. meditation manuals:

Concentration of Sitting Meditation (T 614): 0276a06-277b09, 0281a22-b25

Concise Essentials (T 617): 0299a03-c02

Five Gates of Chan Essentials (T 619): 0327a08- c01

Chan Essentials (T 613): 0264b12-c07, 0265b28-c07, 0254a24-b06

Another source can also be introduced into our comparison: one long passage from the earlier 1st or 2nd century C.E. treatise, the **Vimuttimaggā* (解脫道論 The Treatise on Path to Liberation, T 1648, p.426b26- 428a27), which is traditionally attributed to the Arahat Upatīṣya/Upatissa and was translated into Chinese by Saṃghapāla, Saṃghavarman or Saṃghabhara (僧伽婆羅) in the early sixth century. This passage is similar in its contents to the passages concerning *buddhānusmṛti* in the meditation manuals. Apart from the ten epithets of the Buddha that appear at the beginning, the contents of *buddhānusmṛti* in this text fall into four categories, rather than the categories of two bodies:

- 1) “The merit of previous lives” (本生功德) - recollecting the Jataka stories.
- 2) “The merit of saving his own” (自拔身功德) - recollecting the episodes of the Buddha’s last life before his enlightenment.
- 3) “The merit of attaining supreme dharma” (得勝法功德) - recollecting the ten powers of tathāgata, the fourteen insights of the Buddha, and eighteen Buddha dharma etc.
- 4) “The merit of benefiting the world” (世間饒益功德) - recollecting the episodes after his enlightenment

6.3.1 The pair-model as two steps of the practice of *buddhānusmṛti* in Das Yogalehrbuch

The structure of *buddhānusmṛti* is not clearly specified in Das Yogalehrbuch; nevertheless, by

²⁸⁷ *Ocean-samādhi Contemplation* (*Guan-fo San-mei Hai Jing* 觀佛三昧海經, T 643)

Maitreya Contemplation (*Guan Mi-le-pu-sa-shang-sheng-dou-shuai-tian Jing* 觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經, T 452)

Samantabhadra Contemplation (*Guan Pu-xian-pu-sa-xing-fa Jing* 觀普賢菩薩行法經, T 277)

Ākāśagarbha Contemplation (*Guan Xukongzang-pu-sa Jing* 觀虛空藏菩薩經, T 409)

Bhaiṣajyarāja and Bhaiṣajyasamudgata Contemplation (*Guan Yao-wang Yao-shang Er-pu-sa Jing* 觀藥王藥上二菩薩經, T 1161)

Immeasurable Life Contemplation (*Guan Wu-liang-shou-fo Jing* 觀無量壽佛經, T 365).

comparing it with the Ch. meditation manuals, we can roughly identify five steps: 1) recollecting the ten epithets of the Buddha, 2) changing the number and color of the Buddha figure, 3) visualising the physical body of the Buddha, 4) visualising the *dharma*-body of the Buddha and 5) visualising the *Abhiṣeka* ritual.

1) Ten Epithets

The “ten epithets” of the Buddha (Yogalehrbuch 164V1) are given at the beginning of the passage. The one who practices *buddhānusmṛti* is clearly the *aryaśrāvaka* (*aryaśrāvakaḥ tathāgatam ākārataḥ samanussarati*). This is in line with the *Mahānāma-suttanta* (AN 6.10), in whci it is stated that the *ariyasāvaka* recollects the ten *anussati* (*samaye ariyasāvako tathāgatam anussarati*).²⁸⁸ According to one Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma text, the *Dharmaskandha*, and some Pāli commentaries, this term should be interpreted as a *tatpuruṣa* (the disciple of the Noble One, i.e. the disciple of the Buddha), rather than as a *karmadhāraya* (the noble disciple, i.e. the saint). The reconstruction of the Central Asian fragments reads as follows:

iti hi sa bhagavāṃs tathāgato '[r]h(aṃ) sa(myak)sambuddho vidyacaraṇasampannaḥ sugato lokavid anu)[tt](a)raḥ puruṣa(damyasārathiḥ śāstā devamanuṣyāṇāṃ b)[u]ddho bhagavān / (Yogalehrbuch 164V1)²⁸⁹

The formula of the “ten epithets” (*adhivacana*) has been already discussed by Harrison (1992b:216). It is widely known and used consistently throughout the Pāli sources,²⁹⁰ whilst in the Skt. literature, the term *tathāgata* is added before *arhat*, forcing one to read *anuttaraḥ puruṣadamyasārathiḥ* as one epithet, so as to keep the number at ten (1992b:216-217). In the Ch. meditation manuals, the sequence of the epithets is the same as in the Skt. version (cf. §

²⁸⁸ Cf. AN III. 285.

²⁸⁹ As for other Skt. parallels, cf. *Arthavinīścaya-sūtra* (Vaidya 1961d:324): *ityapi sa bhagavāṃs* (1) *tathāgato* (2) *'rhan* (3) *samyaksambuddho* (4) *vidyācaraṇasampannaḥ* (5) *sugato* (6) *lokavida* (7) *anuttaraḥ puruṣadamyasārathiḥ śāstā* (8) *devamanuṣyāṇāṃ* (9) *buddho* (10) *bhagavāniti*

謂聖弟子念如來事：（1）如來（2）應（供）（3）等正覺（4）明行足（5）善逝（6）世間解（7）無上士調御丈夫（8）天人師（9）佛（10）世尊。（大名經 T 99, 237c21-23）

In this passage of SA931, *gong* (供) is missing, but in other Ch. parallels the term *ying gong* 應供 often occurs.

²⁹⁰ *iti pi so bhagavā* (1) *arahaṃ* (2) *sammāsambuddho* (3) *vijjācaraṇasampanno* (4) *sugato* (5) *lokavidū* (6) *anuttaro* (7) *purisadammasārathi satthā* (8) *devamanussāṇaṃ* (9) *buddho* (10) *bhagavā'ti*.

He is the Exalted One, arahant, fully enlightened, perfected in knowledge and way of life, one well-gone, a knower of the worlds, none higher, a tamer of tamable men, a teacher, the awake among devas and men, the Exalted One! (Woodward 1932:205)

2) Perceiving and Changing the Figure

Then, the meditator recollects the Buddha figure and transforms its colors at will (Yogalehrbuch 164V2-V5). Similarly in the *Concentration of Sitting Meditation*, after recollecting the “ten epithets” of the Buddha, one replicates and reduces the Buddha figures, and also changes their color (能見一佛作十方佛，能見十方佛作一佛。能令一色作金銀水精毘琉璃色，隨人意樂悉令見之) and here even the colors are identical with the Central Asian meditation manual: gold, silver, cat’s-eye gem, crystal... (*suva(r)ṇarū[p]y(a)vaiḍūrya[spha]ḍikam...[ta]dvarṇai buddhaśra[y](ai)*).

3) Visualising the Physical Body of the Buddha

Various manuscripts discuss the importance of visualising scenes from the Buddha's life, although these vary from text to text. In the Skt. fragments (Yogalehrbuch 164V5-R4), some crucial scenes of the Buddha's life are briefly mentioned: making the Bodhisattva vow (*bodhipraṇidhāna*), the four perfections (*dānaśīlavīryapra[jñā]*), his descent from Tuṣita heaven, birth and departure from his mother's womb, ascetic practices.....converting Bimbisāra, Upatissa (Śāriputra), Kolita (Maudgalyāyana) and his father, the great miracle, and so on. In comparison, the passage concerning *buddhānusmṛti* in the *Concise Essentials* and the *Five Gates of Chan Essentials* only three important scenes are mentioned in the passage that discusses visualising the physical body, viz. sitting under the bodhi tree, preaching the dharma for five *bhikṣu*, and preaching *prajñā* for the masses on Gr̥dhrakūṭa Mountain, are mentioned (T 619, 327b03-06). The events of birth, ascetic practice, subduing *māra*, and preaching are attributed to the contents of visualising the physical body in *Concentration of Sitting Meditation* (T 614, 276c25-277a02). Furthermore, in the *Vimuttimaggā*, in addition to Gautama's story (the merit of saving his own), some Jātaka tales (the merit of previous lives) are also mentioned (T 1648, 427a29-b19).

Although the thirty-two characteristics of the great person and eighty minor marks associated with the *janmaśarīra/janmakāya* in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts cannot be found in Yogalehrbuch (probably also due to the fragmentary condition of the manuscript), they are connected with the physical body in the former passage of the *Concentration of Sitting Meditation* (T 614, p.276a26-c25) concerning events in the Buddha's biography.

The earliest textual evidence for recollecting important scenes from the Buddha's life can be traced back to a passage in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* of *Dirgha Āgama*. This text

²⁹¹ For instance, in Kumārajīva's meditation manual *Concentration of Sitting Meditation*

(1)多陀阿伽度 (2)阿耨呵 (3)三藐三佛陀 (4)鞞伽遮羅那 三般那 (5)宿伽陀 (6)路伽憊 (7)阿耨多羅富樓沙曇藐 舍多 (8)提婆魔舍喃 (9)佛 (10)婆伽婆。(T 614, 277a08-a20)

mentions four places related to the birth, enlightenment, the first sermon, and the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha (§ 7.1.1). These four holy places worthy of recollection were illustrated in some early Buddhist sites, but without depicting the figure of the Buddha.²⁹² In the same way, the reliefs illustrating the scenes of the Buddha's life with the figures of the Buddha, which are widespread in Gandhāra, accompanied by a rise in literature on the Buddha's life during Kuṣāṇa period, can likely also be used as objects of *buddhānusmṛti* (not necessarily in the sense of meditation). Thus, this trend may well have influenced the shift in focus towards visualising the physical body of the Buddha in the meditation under the name of *buddhānusmṛti*.

4) Visualising the Dharma Body of the Buddha

With respect to the *dharma*-body, four primary groups of concepts are concerned: the ten powers (165V4-V5), the four confidences (165V5), the three distinctive bases of mindfulness (165V6), and great compassion (165V6-R1). The distinctive bases of mindfulness (*āveṇika smṛtyupasthāna*) cannot be found in the relevant part of the Ch. meditation manuals, such as the *Concise Essentials* and *Five Gates of Chan Essentials*; in these sources, it is replaced by the eighteen special qualities (*āveṇikadharmā*). This was mainly caused by the variant lists of the eighteen special qualities, and the classification by Das Yogalehrbuch is obviously in line with the **Mahāvibhāṣa* (T 1545, p.85a26-28) and *Abhidharmadīpa* (Jaini 1959:209) passages we quoted before.

In addition to this, one remarkable feature of visualising *dharmakāya* in Das Yogalehrbuch is that the four groups of concepts are all characterized by a series of visions, although the reason and the guiding principle thereof are by no means clear. One specific term *adhipatirūpa* ("governing embodiment" = *adhi* + *pratirūpa*) refers to the embodiment of these abstract concepts, whose contents thus include the ten powers, represented by a vision of the five white elephants (*pañca śveta gajā*) and five Buddhas; the four confidences, represented by the four treasure cycles (*catvāri ratnamaṇḍalāni*); the three distinctive bases of mindfulness, represented by three people holding weapons and oil jars; and finally great compassion is represented by women with the color of empty space (*ākāśavarṇā śtrī*).

In the Ch. translations, we do not find these conceptual embodiments related to *dharmakāya*; rather, *dharmakāya* is associated with a metaphor found in three separate passages,²⁹³ wherein a jar or golden jar containing the Mani Jewel is used to describe the *dharmakāya* inside the physical body.

5) Visualising the *Abhiṣeka* ritual

²⁹² In Sanchi, for instance, the four important scenes are illustrated, but only the symbols, rather than the figure of the Buddha, can be found in these scenes (Miyaji 2006:65).

²⁹³ cf. T 619, p.327b09-14; T 613, p.264b20-c03; T 613, p.265b28-c07.

Interestingly, at the end of the *buddhānusmṛti* section, we see a description of *abhiṣeka*²⁹⁴ (consecration). Because we do not have the full text, we can only identify the following sentence:

Zur Zeit der Besprengung (durchdringt ein Strom) Dieser zerschmilzt und erfüllt dann durch die Öffnung des Hauptes [seine] Gestalt. Mit den [Strömen], die aus dieser hervorkommen, stellt sich ein Edelsteinstrom zur Schau (und aus) der Stirn allmählich, bis er mit dem gleichzeitig aus dem Nabel hervorkommenden Strom vermischt [seinen] Standort erfüllt. Es erscheint [sein] Standort aus Edelsteinen. Die Buddhas von Edelsteintempeln (Am Ende) wird das zu Erkennende im Nabel zum Verschwinden gebracht. So [erfolgt] das Erwachen.²⁹⁵ (Schlingloff 1964: 178-179)

There are many passages in Chinese meditation manuals that refer to *abhiṣeka*, and the closest description of the procedure is found in the method of visualising *abhiṣeka* in *Chan Essentials*:

Moreover, the method of visualising *abhiṣeka* should be taught in this way: the one, who practices the visualisation of *abhiṣeka*, first sees his own body as a *vaiḍūrya*-light, surpassing the three realms. Then he sees a real Buddha uses the bottle to pour the bathing water into the head [of a bodhisattva], and the whole body [of the bodhisattva] is filled with water. After the whole body, even each joint, is filled, the water flows out of the navel toward the place in front [of the bodhisattva]. The Buddha Continuously pours the water.

²⁹⁴ As is stated under the entry of *abhiṣeka* in the Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism, The Skt. term *abhiṣeka* is “originally used to refer to the anointment of an Indian king or the investiture of a crown prince, which by extension came to be applied to the anointment of a bodhisattva as a buddha. Just as a wheel-turning monarch (*cakravartin*) invests the crown prince by sprinkling the crown of his head with fragrant water from all the four seas, so too do the buddhas anoint the crown of a bodhisattva when he makes his vow to achieve buddha-hood...”

“*Abhiṣeka* is used especially in tantric literature ... to refer to an initiation ceremony that empowers disciples to ‘enter the *maṇḍala*’, where they are then allowed to learn the esoteric formulae (*mantra*) and gestures (*mudra*) and receive the instructions associated with a specific tantric deity.” (Buswell & Lopez 2014)

²⁹⁵ (165R2) ... *abhiṣekakāle* [te] + + + + + + + + + + + [t]i sa ca pravilīnaḥ tadā[śr](āyām) (165R3) *murdhnaś c[ch]idreṇa pūrayati tata eva ca niḥsṛtai ratnapravāhaḥ darśanam datvā lalā(ṭ)[ā]* + + + + + + + + + + + (kra)meṇa yāvat sahanābhi[ni](h)-(165R4)-[s](rt)[e](na prav)āhena miśrībhūtaḥ [s](th)itīm āpūrayati ratnamayī ca sthitir dṛśyate bud(dhā) + + + + + + + + + + (ḥ ratnak) [ū]ṭ[ā]śār[ai] + + + + + + + + + + + (165R5) + + + + + + + + + + + (ante nā)bhyām nirudhyate jñeyam iti vyutthānam // ... (Schlingloff 1964:178-179)

After the *abhiṣeka*, the Blessed One disappears. The water flowing out of the navel looks like the *vaiḍūrya*, and its color is like the purple *vaiḍūrya*-light. The light illustrates the three thousands great thousand worlds.²⁹⁶ (T 613, p.260b15-21)

After seeing the *abhiṣeka* of the Buddha, the text suddenly changes to the *abhiṣeka* of the practitioner himself:

When the water flow is finished, you should teach the practitioner to concentrate on the mind: “wish the Buddha, the Blessed One, to do *abhiṣeka* for me”. Then he sees his body largely expanded as the air pervades, surpassing the three realms. Then he sees the water entering into the top of his head. Then his body expands in water, and is filled with water. Then one sees his own navel as the lotus, and the water springs out, surrounding his body like a pool.²⁹⁷ (T 613, p.260b21-25)

The basic idea behind *abhiṣeka* is that, after this ritual, one will become the real Buddha. Thus, it appears to me that visualising the *abhiṣeka* (consecration) on one’s own body may also imply the identification of the body of the practitioner with the body of the Buddha.

6.3.2 Perceiving the Buddha image before meditation

The practice of seeing the *dharma*-body in the Central Asia meditation manual; namely, symbolising the abstract terms for the purpose of visualisation, reflects a dramatic change in the Buddha body theory. In many early records concerning the “pair-model”, seeing the Buddha through the physical body is criticized (**Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra* T 1546, 134a29-b08, *Kāśyapaparivarta* p.43. 62v1-3), and this is also in line with the absence of any figures of the Buddha in the early art historical evidence. However, the rise of seeing the physical body was probably stimulated by the popularity of Buddha statues and images.

As stated in *Śrāvakaśāstra*, at the beginning of the practice of impurity (*aśubha*), one perceives *nimitta* by means of sitting beside the cemetery or having the relevant image in hand (Schmithausen 1982:63). It is then reasonable to presume that the starting point of practicing *buddhānussmṛti* could be also perceiving a Buddha figure, using a concrete Buddha image, such as a statue or painting. In fact, this is recorded at the beginning of some passages

²⁹⁶ 復當更教觀灌頂法。觀灌頂者自見己身，如琉璃光超出三界。見有眞佛，以澡瓶水，從頂而灌，彌滿身中。身彌滿已，支節亦滿，從臍中流，出在於前地。佛常灌水。爾時世尊灌頂已，即滅不現。臍中水出，猶如琉璃，其色如紺琉璃光，光氣遍滿三千大千世界。

²⁹⁷ 水出盡已，復當更教繫念：“願佛世尊更爲我灌頂。”爾時自然見身如氣龐大甚廣，超出三界。見水從頂入，見身龐大，與水正等。滿於水中。復自見臍猶如蓮華，涌泉流出，彌滿其身，繞身如池。

from the Ch. meditation manuals that we mentioned above.

There are three kinds of people: the one who practices at the beginning, the one who has already practiced and the one who has practiced for a long time. With regard to the beginner, one should lead him to the Buddha statue, or teaches him to visualise the perfect marks of the Buddha statue until he can identify the marks clearly. After perceiving it with the fixedness of thought, he turns to the quiet place, visualising the Buddha statue in mind.²⁹⁸ (T 614, p.276a08-12)

With respect to *buddhānusmṛti*, if the Buddha does not exist in the world, then how can one recollect him? Nothing is more convincing than seeing with the eyes. One should visualise the excellent statue, which is indistinguishable from seeing the real Buddha. From the Uṣṇīṣa and the white ūṛṇā curl (that emits light) between his eyebrows down to the feet, and then returning to Uṣṇīṣa, one visualises them one by one. Then, retire to a quiet place, closing one's eyes and contemplating...²⁹⁹ (T 619, p.327a12-15)

The relevant record can be also found in other sources related to *buddhānusmṛti*, such as the case of *Aśokāvadāna* mentioned above and the *Vimuttimaggā*. The latter states for example: “If man wishes to meditate on the Buddha, he should worship Buddha images and such other objects”³⁰⁰ (Harrison 1992b:219, according to T 1648, p.426c06-08). Therefore, seeing the physical body of the Buddha is not criticized in the meditation context, but is regarded as a basic step towards contemplating the *dharma*-body.

6.4 Two bodies of the Buddha and *buddhānusmṛti* in the *Samādhirāja-sūtra*

We have already seen that the two bodies of the Buddha become important visualisation objects in the *buddhānusmṛti* section of the Central Asia meditation manual that is closely associated with the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma School. Notably, in the Mahāyāna text, *Samādhirāja-sūtra* (Samādh), which is closely connected with the Prajñāpāramitā tradition (see § 5.5.2), the two bodies are also found in verses 7-10 of Chapter 24, and belong to the context of seeing the Buddha:

²⁹⁸ 念佛三昧有三種人：或初習行、或已習行、或久習行。若初習行人，將至佛像所，或教令自往諦觀佛像相好，相相明了。一心取持還至靜處，心眼觀佛像。

²⁹⁹ 若念佛者，佛不在世，云何憶念？人之自信無過於眼，當觀好像如見真佛無異。先從肉髻眉間白毫，下至於足，復至肉髻，相相諦觀。還於靜處，閉目思惟。

³⁰⁰ 如說修多羅涅槃底里句：若人欲念佛，其可恭敬如佛像處。

paśyitvā kāyu buddhasya vakṣyante dṛṣṭu nāyakaḥ /
na cāhaṃ rūpakāyena paśyitum śakya kenacit // Samādh 24.7 //
jñātaḥ svabhāvo rūpasya yādṛśaṃ rūpalakṣaṇam /
rūpasvabhāvam ājñāya kāyo mama nideśitaḥ // Samādh 24.8 //
evam pañcāna skandhānāṃ jñānaṃ me dharmalakṣaṇam /
jñātvā svabhāvaṃ dharmānāṃ dharmakāye pratiṣṭhitaḥ // Samādh 24.9 //
deśemi dharma sattvānāṃ dharmakāye 'py aniḥsṛtaḥ /
na ca dharmata buddhānāṃ śakyaṃ vācāya bhāṣitum // Samādh 24.10 // (Vaidya 1961b:151)

Having seen the body of the Buddha, they will say that the guide (= Buddha) is seen,
 But I cannot be seen by means of any [such] form-body (*rūpakāya*).
 One who knows that the inherent-nature of form (*rūpa*) is merely a characteristic of form,
 In recognizing the inherent-nature of form my body is revealed.
 Thus I have knowledge of the five aggregates as the *dharma*-characteristic (*dharmalakṣaṇa*),
 Knowing the inherent-nature of the *dharma*s, I was firmly established in the *dharmakāya*.
 I teach the *dharma* to beings, but I have not left the *dharmakāya*,
 The essence of the *dharma* of the Buddhas cannot be uttered in word.

The Ch. version of these verses (T 639, p.581c18-25) does not differ significantly from its Skt. counterpart. This passage declares that the Buddha is “firmly established in the *dharmakāya*” (*dharmakāye pratiṣṭhita*), and that he cannot be seen through the *rūpakāya*. Only the person who understands the characteristic or self-nature of *dharma* can see the *dharmakāya* of the Buddha.

Then, in the fourth chapter of Samādh “Recollection of the Buddha” (*buddhānusmṛtiparivarta*), which has been translated by Gómez & Silk (1989:75-78), the two bodies of the Buddha also occur in one long passage (verses 9 - 22),³⁰¹ which itself should be treated as a process of meditation. There are some noticeable features in this long passage: the bodhisattva recollects the Buddhas in all aspects (v. 9) and sees thousands of millions of Buddhas (v. 10). Then he concentrates on the distinctive body features of the Buddha, such as his golden body (v. 13). After that, the practitioner abides in the signless realm and realizes that all the *dharma*s are empty (v. 14). At that point he is firmly established in the *dharmakāya* of the Buddha and does not perceive the Buddha through the *rūpakāya* (v. 15). He practices repeatedly and constantly (v. 16 & v. 17), no matter whether he is walking, standing, or sitting, and even makes a vow to attain awakening as Buddha (v. 18). He then praises the Buddha (v. 19 & v. 20), and he can see the Buddha

³⁰¹ For the Skt. passages, see Vaidya 1961b:20-22.

both during both the day and night (v. 20). Even when he is ill, diseased, or when he feels the pangs of death, *buddhānusmṛti* never fades... (v. 21 & v. 22).

Some features of this model of *buddhānusmṛti* practice seem to be comparable with the PSS. First, the expression “recollects the Tathāgatas in all their aspects” (Samādh Chapter 4. v. 9 & v. 10) refers to the most distinctive feature of *pratyutpanna-samādhi*:

The Buddha said to the bodhisattva Bhadrapāla: “Any bodhisattvas whose thoughts are at present concentrated and directed towards the Buddhas of the ten quarters, will, if they possess mental concentration, achieve all the exalted practices of a bodhisattva ...”³⁰² (Harrison 1998:15)

In this passage, mental concentration on the Buddha without disturbance is emphasized. In this regard, the PSS text also mentions continuously practising for up to seven days and nights:

In the same way, Bhadrapala, bodhisattvas, whether they be ascetics or wearers of white [laymen or laywomen], having learned of the Buddha-field of Amitābha in the western quarter, should call to mind the Buddha in that quarter. They should not break the precepts, and call him to mind single-mindedly, either for one day and one night, or for seven days and seven nights. After seven days they will see the Buddha Amitābha. If they do not see him in the waking state, then they will see him in a dream.³⁰³ (Harrison 1998:17-18)

The quality of continuous practice for this time period is also found in the Samādh: one practices repeatedly and constantly and then “sees the World Protector both during the day and during the night” (Samādh Chapter 4. v. 20). A similar expression –“dwells in the attention to them (the Tathagatas) night and day” (*ebhir manasikāre rātriṇ-divaṃ viharati*) – can be also found in LP (cf. § 4.2.1).

The two bodies of the Buddha appear in the in Samādh in the chapter on *buddhānusmṛti*. Here, the text mentions the special feature of the golden body of the Buddha, associated with the *rūpakāya*, and the practitioner (bodhisattva) makes this body the object (*ālambanī*) of his thought (Samādh Chapter 4. v. 13). The two bodies are not explicitly mentioned in PSS, but the practitioner in PSS should recollect the Buddha’s body with its special features:

³⁰² Translated from T 418, p.904b24-25. In the Tibetan version, this passage corresponds to the answer to the question: “what then is the *samādhi* called Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present?”. This shows its function as the definition of this *samādhi*; but the content of the *samādhi* is dramatically extended to 154 items.

³⁰³ Translated from T 418: 905a14-17.

The Buddha's body is endowed with all the thirty-two marks, he radiates light, he is fine and upstanding beyond compare, in the midst of the assembly of monks he preaches the sutras, and the sutras he preaches are of indestructible form.³⁰⁴ (Harrison 1998:19)

The text of Samādh proceeds to explain that the *rūpakāya* of the Buddha, the physical body with special features, is not perceived by the practitioner when he understands the emptiness of all *dharma* and when he is established in the *dharmakāya* (Samādh Chapter 4. v. 13 & v. 14). In comparison, in PSS, the vision in the *pratyutpanna-samādhi* is emptiness, which is explained through the notion of *citta-mātra*.³⁰⁵

One thinks to oneself: “The Three Realms — the Realm of Desire, the Realm of Form, and the Realm of the Formless— these Three Realms are simply made by thought ... There is nothing in these *dharma*s which can be enjoyed; they are all made by thinking. If thinking is nothing but empty, then anything which is thought is also utterly nonexistent.” So it is, Bhadrāpala, such is the vision of the bodhisattvas who are established in the meditation. (Harrison 1998:21-22, translated from T 418, p.905c29-p.906a7)

Due to the idealist understanding present in the passage, not only the Tathāgata but also all *dharma*s are understood as emptiness,. This is clearly repeated in a verse at the end of the chapter,³⁰⁶ which, as pointed out by Harrison, is also quoted in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*:

*asāraṁ ime dharmā manyanāyāḥ samutthitāḥ /
sāpy atra manyanā śūnyā yayā śūnyeti manyate //* (Vaidya 1963:107)

These *dharma*s are insubstantial, they all arise from (mis)conception.

Whatever is conceived with regard to emptiness, that conception is here empty. (Harrison 1990:44, n. 31)

Thus, both PSS and Samādh state that the one who understands the emptiness of all *dharma*s is successful in seeing the Buddha in the ten directions or in the *pratyutpanna-samādhi*. Perceiving the special features of the Buddha body seems to be regarded only as a temporary

³⁰⁴ ... 佛身有三十二相悉具足，光明徹照，端正無比，在比丘僧中說經。(T 418, p.905b13-16)

³⁰⁵ Harrison (1990:42, n.23) reconstructs the Tibetan sentence *kham s gsum pa 'di dag ni sems tsam mo* (Harrison 1978:36.21-22) “Whatever belongs to this Triple World is nothing but thought” as *citta-mātram idam yad idaṁ traidhātukam* on the basis of the Dbh (cf. Rahder 1926:49), and refers to studies on “the significance of this statement in the historical development of Mahāyāna idealism” (Schmithausen 1973:172-176 and Hall 1986:15-16, n.23).

³⁰⁶ 是法無堅固，常立在於念，以解見空者，一切無想念。(T 418, 906a10-11)

measure, ultimately to be superseded by perceiving the emptiness of all *dharmas*.

As stated in § 3, we can find some examples where the Sadāprarudita story in AP imitates the contents of PSS, demonstrating the popularity of the *pratyutpanna-samādhi* among Prajñāpāramitā followers. We also noted that Samādh shares many features with Prajñāpāramitā literature. As a matter of fact, it is regarded as the “Doctrine of Prajñāpāramitā” and is a major authority for the Madhyamaka school (Régamey 1938:23, cf. § 5.5.2); therefore, the *buddhānusmṛti* chapter in Samādh might also shed light on the continuous development of the *pratyutpanna-samādhi* in the early Madhyamaka School that strictly follows the teaching of Prajñāpāramitā.

Summary

In sum, the pair-model of the Buddha bodies was interpolated into the context of *buddhānusmṛti* in LP, and it might be associated with the tradition of treating *buddhānusmṛti* as a meditational practice, which became popular prior to 5th Century C.E..

As stated above, the body of birth (*janma-kāya/-śarīra*) and the body of dharma (*dharmakāya/-śarīra*) in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma became two important objects of *buddhānusmṛti*, as reflected in the Central Asia meditation manual. Thus, the relevant Abhidharma understanding of the two bodies was adopted in actual meditation practice. The distinctive bases of mindfulness (*āveṇika smṛtyupasthāna*), for instance, that are interpreted as the *dharmakāya*-body of the Buddha in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma (namely, ten powers, four confidences, three distinctive bases of mindfulness, and great compassion), are symbolized as concrete objects in order to meet the needs of those practising visualisation.

The *buddhānusmṛti* practice reflected in Samādh is probably closer to that found in LP, and it shares many similar features with the PSS. If we further compare the *buddhānusmṛti* section in Samādh with that in the Skt. meditation manuals, the two bodies of the Buddha are both regarded as important objects of *buddhānusmṛti*, but what the *dharmakāya*-body means largely differs. In Samādh, the *dharmakāya*-body is connected with the emptiness of all *dharmas*, and this is in line with our previous observation: from a historical perspective, *dharmakāya* developed from *dharmadharma* (§ 5); and the *dharmadharma* referred to emptiness in early Prajñāpāramitā literature (§ 1). In contrast, the *dharmakāya*-body in the Central Asian meditation manual adopts the understanding already present in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma tradition. Furthermore, the visualisation of the physical body of the Buddha is accepted in both texts (*janmakāya* in Skt. meditation manual and *rūpakāya* in Samādh) and it seems to be subordinate to perceiving the *dharmakāya*-body.

7. *Buddhānusmṛti* in the Larger Prajñāpāramitā

We have already discussed the development of seeing the Buddha in the Prajñāpāramitā tradition, observing a shift from its metaphoric usage to its indicating a specific mode of visualisation. In LP, seeing the Buddha is sometimes associated with the term *buddhamanasikāra*, but more predominantly with the term *buddhānusmṛti* (*nian-fo* 念佛, recollection of the Buddha), which alone can have multiple meanings. The latter member of the compound, *anusmṛ-*, encompasses several senses and Izumi (1939) defines six on the basis of the *Dhātupatha*: 1) holding, keeping in mind; 2) remembering (in contrast with the continuity in the first meaning); 3) desiring; 4) investigating; 5) as it is declared that ... (used in the context of listing things); and 6) recitation (Izumi 1939:100-103). From these, he then determines the following three usages of *buddhānusmṛ-* in Buddhist literature:

- (a) An emphasis on calling the Buddha to mind (mainly based on the first two meanings listed above).
- (b) The function of the mind together with calling out the name of the Buddha.
- (c) An emphasis on calling out the name(s) of the Buddha.

In this section, I will analyse the usage of *buddhānusmṛti* in canonical texts. Then I will show its development, as witnessed by a detailed description in one paragraph of LP.

7.1 *Buddhānusmṛti* and relevant terms in canonical texts

7.1.1 Recalling the scenes of the Buddha's life in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*

The early meaning of *anusmṛ-* may be closer to calling to mind. Its combination with the Buddha, as a calling of the Buddha to mind, can be found in one passage in *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* of *Dīrgha Āgama* that deals with recollecting the important scenes of the Buddha's life. It refers to the four places on the earth related to his birth, enlightenment, first sermon and *parinirvāṇa*.

(41.5) *catvāra ime bhi(k)ṣ(avaḥ) pr(thivīp)r(adeśāḥ) śrāddhasya kulaputrasya kuladuhitur vā yāvajjīvam anusmaranīyā bhavanti |* (41.6) *(katame catvā)raḥ | iha bhagavāñ jātāḥ | iha bha(gavān) anuttarāṃ samyak sambodhim abhisambuddhaḥ | iha bhagavatā triparivartaṃ dvādaśākāraṃ dhārmyaṃ dharmacakraṃ pravartitam | iha bhagavān anupadhiśeṣe nirvā(ṇadhātau) parinirvṛtaḥ |*³⁰⁷ (Waldschmidt 1950-1951:388)

³⁰⁷ The Skt. recension is close to the Ch. recension (長阿含・遊行經 T 1, p.26a03-09). In this passage we also see *nian* 念 corresponding to *anusmṛ-*, and the four places are identical with the Skt. recension.

There are, monks, four places on the earth that should be remembered (*anusmaraṇīya*) throughout the life of a faithful son or daughter of a good family. What are the four? Here the Lord was born. Here the Lord achieved the ultimate enlightenment. Here the Lord turned thrice the righteous wheel of dharma in twelve ways. Here the Lord entered into the *nirvāṇadhātu* free of attachments.

These four sites to be remembered (*anusmaraṇīya*) are illustrated in pictorial form at some of the early Buddhist sites from the 2nd century B.C.E, although the figure of the Buddha is not expressly shown and instead is represented through symbol.³⁰⁸ In Gandhāra also, reliefs illustrating the scenes of the Buddha's life, now with an anthropomorphic Buddha figure, were widespread from the ca. 1st century C.E and thereafter during Kuṣāṇa period, accompanying a boom in the composition of the Buddha's biographical literature. These representations can also be used as the objects of *buddhānusmṛti* (not necessarily in the sense of meditation) and may have given rise to the practice of visualising the Buddha in the meditation practice under the name of *buddhānusmṛti*.

7.1.2 The ten epithets of the Buddha in the *Mahānāmasuttanta*

In canonical works, a formula detailing ten epithets of the Buddha is also related to *buddhānusmṛti* (Harrison 1992b, see also § 6.3.1):

Table 7.1. The ten epithets of the Buddha

Pāli	Sanskrit	Chinese
(1) araham	(1) tathāgato	(1) 如來
(2) sammāsambuddho	(2) 'rhan	(2) 應(供)
(3) vijjācaraṇasampanno	(3) samyaksaṃbuddho	(3) 等正覺
(4) sugato	(4) vidyācaraṇasampannaḥ	(4) 明行足
(5) lokavidū	(5) sugato	(5) 善逝
(6) anuttaro	(6) lokavida	(6) 世間解
(7) purisadammasārathi	(7) anuttaraḥ	(7) 無上士調御丈夫
(8) satthā devamanussānam	puruṣadamyasārathiḥ	(8) 天人師
(9) buddho	(8) śāstā devamanuṣyāṇām	(9) 佛
(10) bhagavā'ti.	(9) buddho	(10) 世尊
	(10) bhagavāniti	(大名經 T 99, p.237c21-23)
(<i>Mahānāmasuttanta</i> , AN 6.10, PTS: III. 285)	(<i>Arthaviniścaya-sūtra</i> , Vaidya 1961d:324)	

In the canonical texts and others such as the LP, *buddhānusmṛti* always occurs in a six-fold series of recollections: recollection of (1) the Buddha (*buddhānusmṛti* 念佛), (2) the Dharma

³⁰⁸ In Sanchi, for instance, the four important scenes are illustrated, but only the symbols, rather than the figure of the Buddha, can be found in these scenes (Miyaji 2006:65).

(*dharmānusmṛti* 念法), (3) the Saṅgha (*saṃghānusmṛti* 念僧), (4) morality (*śīlānusmṛti* 念戒), (5) liberality (*tyāgānusmṛti* 念捨), and (6) deities (*devatānusmṛti* 念天).³⁰⁹ Each recollection that comprises the six-fold list has its own individual formula (see below).

In the *Mahānāmasuttanta* (Pāli: AN 6.10 = Ch: SA 931) the Buddha tells Mahānāma - one of the first five disciples of the Buddha and a member of Śākya lineage – that a disciple of the honorable one (*ariyasāvaka*) should recollect six things. In the course of each recollection, one quotation of a formula occurs. Because of their widespread appearance and the form of quotation, we cannot rule out the possibility that the ten epithets of the Buddha are recited aloud.

7.1.3 Concepts relevant to *buddhānusmṛti*

Closely related to the ten epithets formula are some other groups of terminologies worthy of mention. In the recently published article by Schlosser & Strauch (2016), Strauch notes an issue concerning the term G. *abheja-prasāda* (Skt. *abhedyā-prasāda*). He demonstrates that the G. *abheja* derives from the Old Indian *abhedyā* “unbreakable” and notes that in several Skt. texts the term *abhedyā-prasāda*, meaning “unbreakable faith”, occurs (2016:80-85). However, the same term is always written as *avecca-pasāda* in P., or, in its Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit variant, *avetya-prasāda*, denoting “faith based on understanding” or, following Pāli commentarial literature, “immovable faith”³¹⁰ as well as “perfect confidence”.³¹¹ Strauch argues that the latter usage of *avetya-prasāda* could be considered as the original, but the sound change from Middle Indic *avecca* to Gāndhārī *abheja* is difficult to explain (2016:87-88). Apparently the composers of the Vibhāṣā compendia also encountered issues and were aware of the multiple senses the terminology encompasses. Consequently they listed five possible meanings: 1) purities (淨), 2) unbreakable purities (不壞淨 **abhedyā-prasāda*), 3) uninterrupted purities (不斷淨 **abhedyā-prasāda*), 4) immovable-purity (不動

³⁰⁹ In other Buddhist literature, it is also extended up to a tenfold series, adding the following four recollections to the list: (7) respiration (*ānāpānānusmṛti* 念出入息), (8) death (*marāṇānusmṛti* 念死), (9) the parts of the body (*kāyagatānusmṛti* 念身) and (10) peace (*upaśamānusmṛti* 念滅) (Harrison 1992b:216).

³¹⁰ In the Pāli dictionaries, such as *A Critical Pāli Dictionary*, the first half of the compound *avecca* is sometimes regarded as deriving from *ava* + *ā* + *√i* (to understand, to know) (or *ava* + ger. *√i* (*-itya), and this is supported by the commentary of Buddhaghosa, which explains *avecca* as *paññāya ajjhogahetvā, paṭivijjhivā, ñātvā, jānitvā*. Modern Pāli researchers therefore translate the compound as “confidence/trust/faith based on understanding”. However, in some commentaries, this compound is associated with *acala* (immovable) or *acyuta* (firm, solid), and Buddhaghosa himself also combines the two meanings, immovable and understanding, and argues that ‘solid faith’ derives from the correct understanding of the Buddha (cf. Schlosser & Strauch 2016:78-80).

³¹¹ Schlosser & Strauch 2016:84.

淨 *avetya-prasāda), and 5) purities of view (見淨 / 慧淨 *avetya-prasāda).³¹²

Strauch further investigates a passage from the *Saṅgītisuttanta* (DN 33 III. 227), in which the three jewels, together with (ārya-)śīla, are arranged into a fourfold list of *śrota-āpattyaṅga* (attributes of the entrance into the stream). In this passage, only the three jewels are associated with the *aveccapasāda*, whereas in the *Dharmaskandha* of the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma,³¹³ there is a passage based on one quotation from a sūtra (corresponding to the 836th sūtra of Ch. *Samyuktāgama* (T 2, p.214b7-19 and Pāli SN 55.17),³¹⁴ in which *avetyaprasāda* refers to all four concepts: the three jewels together with *śīla*:

What are the four *avetyaprasādas (*si zheng-jing* 四證淨)? They are: *buddha-avetyaprasāda*, *dharma-avetyaprasāda*, *saṅgha-avetyaprasāda*, and the virtue favored by the nobles. Why? The four great elements, namely, the element of earth, water, fire, and air, are capable of change; those noble disciples who have achieved the four *avetyaprasādas* definitely will not change.³¹⁵ (Schlosser & Strauch 2016:88-89, translation by Lin Qian)

Consequently, Strauch suggests that among Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma circles the group of

³¹² Based on T 1545, p.534c14-29, translation and discussion by Lin Qian (林乾) and Stauch. (Schlosser & Strauch 2016:85-86)

³¹³ As it is pointed out by Erich Frauwallner, the *Dharmaskandha*, one of the six basic Abhidharma texts of the Sarvāstivādin, “proves to be a very early work from the time before Aśoka’s missions and can therefore also be regarded as the Sarvāstivādin’s earliest Abhidharma work after the *Samgītiparyāya*” (Frauwallner 1995:20). He compares the structure of the *Dharmaskandha*, which includes a list of concepts, named by him as *mātrkā*, that concern the path to liberation, with the structure of the *Vibhaṅga* in the Pāli Abhidharma, and concludes that they have both a shared general form that can be traced back to an early period, in addition to a similar exegetical method: “a sūtra text containing the relevant doctrinal concepts is first presented and then subsequently explained” (Frauwallner 1995:19). However, in individual details of form, the two works bear considerable differences because of “a long period of separated development before the text assumed its ultimate form” (Frauwallner 1995:20).

³¹⁴ Although in the Pāli Abhidhamma counterpart to the *Dharmaskandha*, the *Vibhaṅga*, the whole chapter regarding the “four unshakable faiths” is absent, Frauwallner points out that this may be attributed either to the fact that the group of doctrinal concepts to which it belongs were not regarded as a *mātrkā* in the *Vibhaṅga* any longer, or to the expense of the content in the Pāli Abhidhamma. Because we can also find “unshakable faith” in the *Saṅgītisuttanta*, the original form of this chapter can likely be traced back to the period of early Buddhism, before Aśoka’s missions (Frauwallner 1995:19-20).

³¹⁵ ... 何等爲四? 謂佛證淨、法證淨、僧證淨、聖所愛戒。所以者何? 諸有地界水火風界, 是四大種, 容可改易。若有成就此四證淨, 諸聖弟子, 必無改易。(T 1537, p.460a21-24)

four *śrota-āpattyaṅga* influenced the fourfold list of *avetyaprasādas*, resulting in the interpolation of *śīla* as the fourth *avetyaprasāda* (Schlosser & Strauch 2016:88-90).

The remainder of this section considers the same materials as Schlosser & Strauch (2016) but in distinction it shall focus on a feature that has not drawn significant attention; namely, the connection between *avetyaprasāda*, *śrota-āpattyaṅga* and *anusmṛti*. First, let us examine the passage of the *Saṅgītisuttanta* (DN 33 III. 227) concerning *śrota-āpattyaṅga*, where, interestingly enough, the formulas of the four *anusmṛti* from the *Mahānāma-suttanta* occur:

Four factors of his state who has attained the stream (*śrota-āpattyaṅga*). Herein, brethren, the Ariyan disciple has an unshakeable faith (*avecca-ppasādena*) (1) in the Buddha:--'So he too, the Exalted One, is Arahant, supremely enlightened, full of wisdom and goodness, Blessed One, world-knower, peerless driver and tamer of men, teacher of devas and men, Buddha, Exalted One!' (2) in the Norm:--Well proclaimed by the Exalted One is the Norm, effective in this life and without delay, bidding us come and see, leading us onward, to be known by the wise as a personal experience. (3) in the Order:-- Well practised is the Order of the Exalted One's disciples, in uprightness, method and propriety, namely, the four pairs of persons, the eight classes of individuals. This is the Order of the Exalted One's disciples, to whom offerings and ministering should be made, and gifts and reverent greeting as unto the supreme field of merit throughout the world. (4) Endowed is it with virtues lovely to the Ariyans, unbroken and flawless, consistently practised, unblemished, making men free, commended by the wise, unperturbed and conducing to rapt concentration.³¹⁶ (Rhys Davids 1921 [III]:218-219)

The formulas found in the context of *śrota-āpattyaṅga* and *avecca-ppasāda* (unshakeable faith) are quite similar to those encountered in the context of *anusmṛti* in the *Mahānāmasuttanta* (AN 6.10). Although in the *Dharmaskandha*, the formulas only appear in

³¹⁶ *Cattāri sotāpānassa aṅgāni. Idh' āvuso ariyasāvako Buddhhe avecca-ppasādena samannāgato hoti — 'Iti pi so Bhagavā araham Sammā-Sambuddho vijjā-caranasampanno sugato loka-vidū anuttaro purisa-damma-sārathi satthā devā-manussānam Buddhō Bhagavā ti.'* Dhamme avecca-ppasādena samannāgato hoti — *'Svākkhātō Bhagavatā Dhammo sanditthiko akāliko ehi-passiko opanayiko paccattam veditabbo viññūhīti.'* Saṃghe aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti — *'Supatipanno Bhagavato sāvaka-Saṃgho uju-patipanno Bhagavato sāvaka-saṃgho, ñāya-patipanno Bhagavato sāvaka-saṃgho, sāmīci-patipanno Bhagavato sāvaka-saṃgho yadidam cattāri purisa-yugāni, attha purisa-puggalā, eso Bhagavato sāvaka-saṃgho āhuneyyo pāhuneyyo dakkhineyyo añjali-karaṇīyo anuttaram puñña-kkhettaṃ lokassatī.'* Ariya-kantehi sīlehi samannāgato hoti akhandehi acchidehi asabalehi akammāsehi bhujissehi viññuppatthehi aparāmatthehi samādhī-samvattanikehi (Saṅgītisuttanta DN 33 III. 227).

the explanation for the three jewels,³¹⁷ the formula for *śīla* also occurs in the *Dutiyamittāmaccasuttanta* (SN 55.17), which is quoted in the passage of the *Dharmaskandha* that deals with the four *avetyaprasāda*. Thus, in canonical texts such as *Saṅgītisuttantanta* and *Dutiyamittāmaccasuttanta* the formulas of the four-fold recollections are all cited in passages relevant to *śrota-āpattyaṅga* or *avetyaprasāda*.

Since the six-fold *anusmṛti* also occurs in the *Saṅgītisuttanta*, *avetyaprasāda* and *anusmṛti* clearly refer to two different groups of concepts. So what is the relationship between these concepts? If we examine the explanation of *avetyaprasāda* in the *Dharmaskandha*, we find an interesting explanation. Taking *avetyaprasāda* towards the Buddha as an example:

With respect to a “disciple of the honorable”, “honorable” (**ārya*) means the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha. Because of taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha, one is called “a disciple of the honorable”. “Recollecting the Buddha by [his] characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*)” means: through this definition, by this way and for this reason, direct the mind to the Buddha, focusing one’s mind in recollection, without forgetting and losing, without missing and omitting, without losing *dharmatā* and clear memory. In this way, it is called “Recollecting the Buddha through this characteristic”.³¹⁸ (T 1537, p.460b08-12)

In this passage, the first three *avetyaprasāda* can be also understood as an unforgettable or stable recollection of the three jewels.³¹⁹ Here the explanation for *ārya-śrāvaka* is particularly noteworthy, for it takes the compound *ārya-śrāvaka* as a *tatpuruṣa* “the disciple of the honorable (three jewels)”, rather than as a *karmadhāraya* “the honorable/holy disciple”, indicating the disciples who attain the four results. This interpretation therefore connects the passage concerning the first three *avetyaprasāda* with taking refuge in the three jewels, which is specifically attributed to the practice of Buddhists at large, including laypersons (*upāsaka* and *upāsikā*). At the same time it should be remembered that *śīla*, the basic moral

³¹⁷ Taking *avetyaprasāda* towards the Buddha for example:

云何佛證淨。如世尊言。此聖弟子。以如是相。隨念諸佛。謂此世尊。是如來阿羅漢正等覺明行圓滿善逝世間解無上丈夫調御士天人師佛薄伽梵。(T 1537, p.460a29-b03)

³¹⁸ Translated from the following passage:

言聖弟子者，聖謂佛法僧，歸依佛法僧故，名聖弟子。以如是相隨念佛者，謂以此相此門此理，於諸佛所起念隨念。專念憶念，不忘不失，不遺不漏，不失法性，心明記性。是故，名為以如是相隨念諸佛。

³¹⁹ As for the fourth item related to *śīla*, there is only one shorter passage (T 1537, p.464c10-15), which is in line with the reading of the formula related to *śīla* that we have seen in *Saṅgītisuttantanta*: *ariyakantesu sīlesu samādapetabbā, nivesetabbā, paṭiṭṭhāpetabbā akhaṇḍesu ... pe ... samādhisaṃvattanikesu* (quotation from *Dutiyamittāmaccasuttanta*).

precept for Buddhists, also includes the five or eight precepts referring to the layperson.³²⁰

We can assume that the early layers of the development of the recollections had much to do with taking refuge in the three jewels. However, in the *Sanḅītisuttantanta* and its parallels, the three jewels together with *śīla* fall into the category of *srotāpattyaṅga*, referring to a “holy disciple” as an alternative for *ārya-śrāvaka*, which therefore belongs to a higher level of practice. As stated by Tokuoka Ryoe (徳岡亮英), the trifold refuge, unbreakable faith, and the *śrota-āpattyaṅga* in canonical records are identical in nature and result: fearlessness, calmness free of suffering, not falling into the evil rebirths, and rebirth in heaven.³²¹ The occurrence of the recollections in passages related to *śrota-āpattyaṅga* or *avetyaprasāda* should, in all likelihood, be attributed to a continuity in practice: laypersons or monks alike take refuge in the three jewels and follow certain precepts, whilst in succeeding practice the recollections of the three jewels and precepts should be repeated until they become unforgettable. In this way, an “unbreakable faith” is established and a practitioner is settled in the position of having *śrota-āpattyaṅga*. Generally the formulas are fixed as a fourfold recollection, but they are also extended to sixfold and tenfold schemas.³²²

7.1.4 Interpretations of the three jewels in canonical texts and early treatises

The conflation of the recollections, the *śrota-āpattyaṅga* (attributes of the entrance into the stream), *avetyaprasāda* (unbreakable/unshakable faith), and the trifold refuge at the level of practice, is also reflected in the varieties of two parallel canonical texts: the “Chapter of the three jewels” (*san-bao pin* 三寶品) in the **Ekottarikāgama* (T 125 *zengyi ahan Jing* 增壹阿含經) speaks of the trifold refuge, whilst its counterpart in the Pāli canon, the *Aggappasādasuttanta* (AN 4.34), classifies the three jewels along with the noble eightfold path under the four faiths (Pāli: *pasāda*, Skt: *prasāda*). Following on from our analysis above, this is not overly unexpected, since taking refuge and cultivating the faiths are both expressed by way of equivalent formulas and hence may be indicative of the same practice. Furthermore, the contents of both texts also shed light on our understanding of the interpretations of the three jewels in other Buddhist treatises to be discussed below. Here I

³²⁰ As stated in the *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*:

The five precepts address the moral obligations of all Buddhist laypersons and are sometimes taken along with the three REFUGES in a formal ceremony. They are thus viewed, much like monastic precepts, as a set of vows that call for abstention...Observance of these eight rules conventionally takes place only for limited periods, often on six days each month, arranged around the full and new moon days that coincide with the monthly confessional ceremonies (Skt., *poṣadha*; Pāli, *uposatha*) in the monastic community (cf. *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*:673).

³²¹ Tokuoka 1989:70-71; and Tokuoka 1984:118-120.

³²² This development of the concept is also discussed in Tokuoka 1984:120, although the formulas we have shown above are not mentioned.

only list the interpretations for taking refuge in the three jewels, as found in the “Chapter of the three jewels” in the **Ekottarikāgama*:

What is taking refuge in the qualities of the Buddha? Of beings, whether bipeds, quadrupeds, or those with many feet, with form or void of form, with consciousness or void of consciousness, or in the heaven of neither perception nor non-perception, the Tathāgata is the most honorable, the best, and unsurpassed.³²³ (T 125, 602a01-04)

What is taking refuge in the Dharma? The Dharmas: with or without flaws, conditioned or unconditioned, the destruction of craving (*trṣṇākṣaya*), apart from desire (*virāga*), ending (*nirodha*), and *nirvāṇa*, the most honorable, the best, and unsurpassed.³²⁴ (T 125, 602a11-13)

³²³ 彼云何名為歸佛之德？諸有眾生，二足、四足、眾多足者，有色、無色，有想、無想，至尼維先天上，如來於中，最尊、最上，無能及者。It corresponds to the Pāli passage:

Yāvatā, bhikkhave sattā apadā vā dipadā vā catuppadā vā bahuppadā vā rūpino vā arūpino vā saññino vā asaññino vā nevasaññināsaññino vā tathāgato tesam aggam akkhāyati araham sammāsambuddho. (AN II.34)

Monks, as compared with creatures, whether footless, bipeds, quadrupeds, or those with many feet, with form or void of form, with sense or void of sense or indeterminate in sense, a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Fully Enlightened One is reckoned best of them (Woodward 1932:38-39).

³²⁴ 云何名為自歸法者？所謂諸法：有漏、無漏，有為、無為，無欲、無染，滅盡、涅槃；然涅槃法於諸法中，最尊、最上，無能及者。

Corresponding Pāli passage:

Yāvatā, bhikkhave, dhammā saṅkhatā vā asaṅkhatā vā, virāgo tesam aggamakkhāyati, yadidaṃ madanimmadano pipāsavinayo ālayasamugghāto vaṭṭupacchedo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānaṃ. (AN II.34)

Monks, as compared with things compounded or not compounded, freedom from passion is reckoned best of them, to wit: the subduing of pride in self, the restraint of thirst, the removal of clinging, the cutting off of the base of rebirth, the destruction of craving, freedom from passion, ending, Nibbana. (Woodward 1932:38-39)

What is taking refuge in the honorable Saṅga? The honorable Saṅga: among the orders and companies, among the beings with form, the order of the Tathāgata's disciples is the most honorable, the best, and unsurpassed.³²⁵ (T 125, p.602a20-22)

A similar interpretation of taking the trifold refuge can also be found in some early Buddhist treatises. The *Nettipakarana*,³²⁶ for instance, dated by the PTS editor Hardy to “about or shortly after the beginning of our era” (Hardy 1902:XXVII), includes an interpretation for the three jewels. In one chapter of the *Nettipakarana*, concerning, in this case, the five-fold recollections (the recollection of deities of the six-fold model is not included) (Hardy 1902:54-55), the formulas from *Mahānāmasuttanta* are quoted. There we also find the interpretations for the three jewels, partly comparable with the interpretations seen in the “Chapter of three jewels” quoted above, shortly after each formula of the first three recollections.³²⁷ However, in the interpretation for Buddha, we find the description of the achievements of the Buddha, which are not described in the canonical text, but emphasized in the later Abhidharma texts: *balanipphattigato vesārajjappatto adhigatapaṭisambhido...* (Hardy 1902:54); translated as “he who has come to produce the Powers, reached the kinds of Intrepidity, arrived at the Discriminations ...” (Ñāṇamoli 1962:81). Similarly a passage in the

³²⁵ 云何名為自歸聖眾？所謂聖眾者，大眾大聚。有形之類眾生之中，如來眾僧於此眾中，最尊、最上，無能及者。

Pāli: Yāvatā, bhikkhave, saṅghā vā gaṇā vā, tathāgatasāvakasaṅgho tesam aggamakkhāyati, yadidaṃ cattāri purisayugāni aṭṭha purisapuggalā esa bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho āhuneyyo pāhuneyyo dakkhiṇeyyo añjalikaraṇīyo anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ lokassa. (AN II.34)

Monks, as compared with orders and companies, the Order of a Tathāgata's disciples is reckoned best, to wit: the four pairs of men, the eight types of men, that is, the Exalted One's Order of disciples. Worthy of honor are they, worthy of reverence, worthy of offerings, worthy of salutations with clasped hands, a field of merit unsurpassed for the world. (Woodward 1932:39)

³²⁶ As is pointed out by Stefan Baums, in the *Nettipakarana* and a similar Pāli treatise, the *Peṭakopadesa*, “there are several strong indications that the Gāndhārī method of categorial reduction implements exegetical principles and specific tools later set out in the family of manuals preserved for us” (Baums 2014:34-35).

³²⁷ The interpretations of Dharma and Saṅgha are similar to those in canonical texts such as *Aggappasādasuttanta* or *Mahānāmasuttanta*:

(2) Dharma: *yadidaṃ madanimmadano pipāsavinayo ālayasāmagghāto vaṭṭupacchedo suññato atidullabho tanhakkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānaṃ...* (Hardy 1902:55) “That is to say, the disillusionment of vanity, the outbidding of thirst, the elimination of reliance, the termination of round, the void, the very hard to get, the exhaustion of carving, fading, cessation, extinction ...” (Ñāṇamoli 1962:82)

(3) Saṅgha: *sīlasampanno samādhisampanno paññāsampanno vimuttisampanno vimuttiñāṇadassanasampanno ...* (Hardy 1902:55) “perfect in virtue, perfect in concentration, perfect in deliverance, perfect in knowing and seeing of deliverance...” (Ñāṇamoli 1962:83)

Vimuttimaggā, a Buddhist commentary related to *Nettipakaraṇa*,³²⁸ the interpretations for the three jewels are found at the beginning of each paragraph concerning the three recollections.³²⁹ The consistencies between the canonical texts and early treatises, such as the *Nettipakaraṇa* and *Vimuttimaggā*, are obvious. In these texts the interpretation of Dharma (*tr̥ṣṇākṣaya*, *virāga*, *nirodha*, *nirvāṇa*) is identical,³³⁰ and the interpretation of Saṅga is also similar: defined as the “honorable congregation” (聖眾) in the *Ekottarikāgama* and as the “congregation of the honorable men” (聖人和合) in the *Vimuttimaggā*. However, clarifying the meaning of the Buddha by way of his achievements is different from elucidation in canonical works. This matter shall be taken up fully in the next section.

Shortly after the exposition of the three jewels, the *Vimuttimaggā* then quotes and elucidates word for word the formulas of the recollections in a passage concerning *avetyaprasāda*. Although a similar style of commentary can already be seen in the *Dharmaskandha*, and some details are indeed quite comparable, many of the detailed explanations of the formulas vary. In other words, we are unable to substantiate a direct relationship between the relevant contents of the *Dharmaskandha* and *Vimuttimaggā*. In

³²⁸ As Kogen Mizuno (水野弘元) points out, two sentences in the *Vimuttimaggā* are quoted from the “*Peṭaka*”, and parallels of these sentences can be found in the *Peṭakopadesa*, which is closely related to the *Nettipakaraṇa* both in its structure and contents. Mizuno supposes that the *Peṭaka* was probably composed first, before the *Peṭakopadesa* (Mizuno 2003:197-198). In the *Da Zhidu Lun*, the *Peṭakopadesa* is written *pi-le* (蜚勒) (cf. Zacchetti 2002). However, the *Peṭakopadesa* and *Nettipakaraṇa* are rarely quoted in other extant Buddhist scriptures.

³²⁹ (1) “Buddha”: becoming the Lord (*bhagavat*) alone and without a teacher, enlightening the right truth correctly without learning dharma, knowing everything, and obtaining powers and confidences. This is called “Buddha”. (T 1648, p.426b27-28. 佛者，世尊自然無師，於未聞法正覺正諦，能知一切得力自在。此謂爲佛。)

(2) “Dharma”: *nirvāṇa* and the practice leading to *nirvāṇa*. What is *nirvāṇa*? It is the secession of all predispositions (*saṃskāra*), abandoning of all afflictions (*kleśa*), the destruction of craving (**tr̥ṣṇākṣaya* 滅愛), freedom of affection (**virāga* 無染), and cessation (**nirodha* 寂滅). This is called *nirvāṇa*. What are the practices leading to *nirvāṇa*? The four mindfulnesses, the four right exertions, the four bases of power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of enlightenment and the noble eightfold path are called practices leading to *nirvāṇa*. (T 1648, p.428a29-b04)

(3) “Saṅgha”: congregation of the honorable men is called *saṃgha*. (T 1648, p.428b29. 僧者，聖人和合。此謂爲僧。)

³³⁰ The passage on the interpretation of Dharma from the *Pasādasuttanta* in AN II. 34 (= T 125, p. 602a11–13) is reproduced in many other sūtras, such as AN (II.35) and the *Itivuttaka* (88). The Skt. formula occurs in the *Divyāvadāna* (154-155), *Avadānaśataka* (I: 50, 330); AKBh (93.4–5): *yo kecid dharmā saṃskṛtā vāsaṃskṛtā vā virāgas teṣām agra ākhyāyate*. Furthermore, we also find the same passages in the *Mahāvastu* (II: 285.20–21; III: 200.11–12), which are very close to the Pāli. (cf. Lamotte 1976 [IV]:2075).

comparison, there is also a Gāndhāri commentarial passage on the *Samgītisutra* that explains the formula of the recollection of the Buddha verbatim.³³¹

In the relevant paragraph in the *Vimuttimaggā*, however, one distinctive feature that other earlier treatises do not possess is a connection between the practice of recollecting the Buddha and the image of the Buddha, which is indispensable for the practice of visualisation:³³² “if a man wishes to recollect the Buddha, he should worship Buddha images and other such objects” (若人欲念佛，其可恭敬如佛像處 T 1648, p.426c07-08). Despite the fact that the content of recollecting the Buddha in the *Vimuttimaggā* still follows canonical texts, here, and for the first time, the practice is directly associated with paying respect to the Buddha image.

7.2 The interpretation of calling the Buddha to mind in the Larger Prajñāpāramitā

In the preceding sections we demonstrated how the formulas of the recollections, as well as the interpretation of the act of taking refuge or cultivating faith (*prasāda*), continuously served as inspirations for later understandings of the three jewels: the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha. Returning now to *buddhānusmṛti* in the early Prajñāpāramitā literature, the three jewels arise again in a paragraph of LP that details this specific recollection within the six-fold model.³³³ The paragraph is a representative presentation of *buddhānusmṛti*, with the purport of calling the Buddha to mind, and it stands as the most detailed description of *buddhānusmṛti* in early Prajñāpāramitā literature. Further comparisons with different sources have also enabled us to better answer the question of how this *buddhānusmṛti* paragraph in LP was compiled. The passage in question deals with five groups of concepts that stand as the objects of *buddhānusmṛti*.

(1) The five aggregates:

This group of terms is commonly found in Buddhist texts in discussions of the “self”. “Self” is made of the five aggregates (*skandha*): the physical body (*rūpa*), physical sensation (*vedanā*), sensory perception (*saṃjñā*), habitual tendencies (*saṃskāra*), and consciousness (*viññāna*).

³³¹ *ariha d[i] vimutiḍa saṃmasaṃbudho di ṇaṇiḍa puruṣadaṃmasaraṣi di dhaṃmeṇa* «vi» *uḥhav[i]ḍa [sa]raṣiṇa praḍiṭhaved[i] budho bhakā(*va)* (32V15, cf. Baums 2009:52).

Worthy one: the state of liberation. Completely enlightened: the state of a knower. Driver of men who need to be tamed: the state of having raised oneself by the dharma; the Lord Buddha establishes as a driver. (Baums 2009:52, n.19)

³³² In the case of *aśubhā*, the practice starts with perceiving (*udgrah-*) the characteristics (*nimitta*), which means the practitioner sits near the grave, or takes the images in their hand. (Schmithausen 1982:63)

³³³ Skt: LPG: Conze 1974:5(7)-6(10), and PSP: Kimura 2006 [VI-VIII]: 6-8.

Ch.: LPM: T 221, p.120c24-121b13 = LPKj: T 223, p.385b15-386a20. LPDh: —.

(2) The special somatic features of the Buddha:

To this group belong the “thirty-two characteristics of a great man” (*dvāṭṛṃśata mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa*), which were perhaps the earliest special somatic features of the Buddha to be defined (Radich 2007:295-333). Appended to these qualities are a golden color (LPG: *suvarṇavarṇa*) or golden body (PSP: *suvarṇakāya*) and an immeasurable light (LPG: —, PSP: *vyāmamātrā prabhā*). No similar combination occurs in the main body of AP, but it is found in later textual strata, such as in the story of Sadāprarudita Bodhisattva.³³⁴

(3) The five pure aggregates:

The five pure aggregates (*anāsravaskandha*) include the morality-aggregate (*śīlaskandha*), concentration-aggregate (*samādhiskandha*), wisdom-aggregate (*prajñāskandha*), liberation-aggregate (*vimuktiskandha*), and “insight into special knowledge” aggregate (*vimuktijñānadarśanaskandha*). Radich (2007:527-544) has observed that this group arises in some archaeological findings: the Gāndhārī Senavarma inscription, as well as in two further inscriptions, the “Kopśakasa Reliquary”, and the “Inscription de l’an 98 d’Azès”, where a common formula speaks of the relics as “quickened” or “suffused” (*paribhāvita*) with these terms (2007:529, n. 1144).

This formula can be traced back to canonical texts, where the five pure aggregates are already called “dharma-aggregates”, and they are “transparently intended as a positive counterpart to the negative analysis of the ordinary given person subject to suffering given in the better-known *pañcaskandha* formula” (Radich 2007:531). In the Vibhāṣā compendia, the term **aśaikṣadharmā* (dharma of “the one being no longer a pupil” = Arhat), referring to taking refuge in the Buddha, is also explained with reference to the five pure aggregates.³³⁵ Furthermore, the five pure aggregates are regarded as the counterpart of (1) the five aggregates in the Vibhāṣā compendia (cf. T 1546, p.289a14-17). In the later Sarvāstivāda tradition, the five pure aggregates fall into the category of the *dharma*-body and in the Pāli tradition this feature appears first in Buddhaghosa’s work (cf. Radich 2007:913).

(4) The achievements of the Buddha:

The formula used to describe the achievements of the Buddha comprises the ten Buddha powers (*daśa-tathāgatabala*), the four confidences (*catur-vaiśāradya*), four special knowledges (*catur-pratisaṃvidya*), great friendliness (*mahāmaitrī*), great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*) and the eighteen special Buddha-dharmas (*aṣṭādaśa-āveṇika-buddhadharma*). In the Senavarma inscription, for instance, we can also see the expression: “endowed with the

³³⁴ The relevant passage has been quoted in § 3, Episode 3 (2).

³³⁵ Quoted below (T 1546, p.296a13 = T 1546, p.289a14-17).

powers of(?) the ten powered one, attained the four confidences” (cf. Salomon 1986:271). A similar reading is seen in the *Nettipakaraṇa* passage that we have discussed above: “he who has come to produce the Powers, reached the kinds of Intrepidity, arrived at the Discriminations ...” (Ñānamoli 1962:81). And a passage in the *Visuddhimagga* reads: “knowing everything and obtaining powers and confidences”³³⁶. In the Sarvāstivāda traditions from the Vibhāṣā compendia onwards, they are regarded as synonyms for the *dharma*-body.

(5) *Pratītyasamutpāda*

As discussed in § 1, the doctrine of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) was regarded as constituting the very existence of the Buddha, seen for instance in the Skt. version of the *Śālistambasūtra*: “He who sees *pratītyasamutpāda* sees the dharma, [and] he who sees the *dharma* sees the Buddha.”³³⁷ The *pratītyasamutpāda* can also be connected with Buddha relics, with the support of a wide range of archaeological evidence (cf. Boucher 1991). As stated in § 5, the term *dharmatā*, referring to *pratītyasamutpāda* in canonical texts, was transformed to *dharmakāya* in later texts.

Therefore, the above five objects of *buddhānusmṛti* in LP, viz., the groups of concepts related to the Buddha, are collected from diverse origins, although in their arrangement they may be closely associated with the Abhidharma tradition.³³⁸

In the foregoing, we drew attention to the increasing emphasis the Buddhist tradition placed on paying respect to the image of the Buddha and the important influence this had in the interpretation of the Buddha and the practice of *buddhānusmṛti* after the Common Era (§ 7.1.4). Thus, in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma tradition, starting from the Vibhāṣā

³³⁶ 能知一切得力自在 (T 1648, p.426b28).

³³⁷ Schoening (1995:230) tr. from Skt. text. The Ch. parallel in the *Liao Ben Shengsi Jing* (了本生死經 T 708, 815b06-07), attributed to Zhi Qian (支謙), reads the same, and in the *Fo Shuo Daogan Jing* (佛說稻芊經), dating to the Eastern Jin (東晉 317-420 C.E.), we see that the *pratītyasamutpāda* is remarkably equated to *dharmakāya* (“Seeing *pratītyasamutpāda* is seeing the *dharmakāya* which completely attains anuttarā-samyak-sambodhi.” 見十二因緣，即是見無上道具足法身。 T 709.817a16-17). This reading also supports our suggestion that the *dharmakāya* was developed from the notion of *dharma* in the context of seeing the Buddha.

³³⁸ In the comparisons above, we frequently mentioned certain Sarvāstivāda texts, especially the Vibhāṣā compendia, but we should be cautious about making any firm judgements in attributing the five objects to the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma, due to the lack of Abhidharma sources from other schools. More likely is that the composer of LP used some materials of *buddhānusmṛti* that had circulated in the Buddhist communities of Northwestern India ca. 2-3 Centuries C.E.

compendia,³³⁹ the somatic pair-model, the Buddha's physical body vs. *dharma*, was introduced into the context of *buddhānusmṛti* or taking refuge in the Buddha. For instance, in the **Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra* there is an important definition of taking refuge in the Buddha.³⁴⁰

Someone says taking refuge in the Buddha is taking refuge in the body of the *tathāgata* born from the parents, along with its parts such as the head, feet etc. In order to prevent such an opinion, if one takes refuge in the Buddha, one should take refuge in the *bodhi* or *aśaikṣadharmā* of the Buddha.³⁴¹ (T 1546_28.0134b01-03)

This definition seems to have also been accepted in the later Sarvāstivāda tradition, given that we can find a similar description in the AKBh: “He who takes Refuge in the Buddha takes refuge in the *dharmas* of an Arhat (*aśaikṣa-dharmas*) which form a Buddha” (Pruden 1988:601).³⁴² After this passage, in a case similar to the Vibhāṣā compendia, taking refuge in the “form body” (= physical body, *rūpakāya*) of the Buddha is also criticized. (Pruden 1988:601)

³³⁹ This is not a singular instance. Cox notes: “theories and entire discussion, including even the supporting scriptural citations and reasoned arguments, that are presented in later Buddhist texts, can often be traced to Vibhāṣā compendia” (Willemen & Dessein & Cox 1998:230).

³⁴⁰ For a delineation of the doctrinal systems contained in the Vibhāṣā compendia (cf. § 6.2.1).

³⁴¹ 衆生或謂，歸佛者謂歸趣如來父母所生之身、頭、足等分。爲止如是意故，若歸趣佛者，當歸趣佛菩提、無學法者。

³⁴² *yo buddhaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchati, aśaikṣān asau buddhakarakān dharmāñ charaṇaṃ gacchati.* (AKBh, Pradan 1967:216.15) This Skt. passage and two Ch. versions of this portion tr. by Paramārtha (若人歸依佛，必歸依能成佛無學諸法。T 1559, 233b17-18) and by Xuanzang (歸依佛者，謂但歸依能成佛無學法 T 1558, 76b24) read the same.

In the Vibhāṣā compendia, the term **āsaikṣadharmā* is explained as the five pure aggregates,³⁴³ and this is in line with the LP paragraph discussed above, where the five pure aggregates occur as one of the objects of *buddhānusmṛti*.³⁴⁴ Although the pair of Buddha bodies, *janmaśarīra* (physical body) and *dharmāśarīra*, occur in all the versions of the Vibhāṣā compendia, we could not simply transpose the above understanding directly into the **Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra* passage quoted above and conclude that here also the **āsaikṣadharmā* or the five pure aggregates is the embodiment of *dharmā*.³⁴⁵ As discussed in § 5, we can discern a textual development from regarding the *dharmā* as the very existence of the Buddha, to the embodiment of the *dharmā* as the Buddha body, the *dharmāśarīra*. In a similar process, the *āsaikṣadharmā* also came to signify the *dharmā* that is equated with Buddha.

Comparing the five-object structure with the LP paragraph concerning *buddhānusmṛti*, the first two objects in LP would correspond to the physical body, and the last three to the *dharmā* (rather than *dharmakāya*, but it can be probably understood as the “proto-dharma-body”). However, in contrast to the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma, which maintained the physical body (i.e. the representation of the Buddha) is regarded as inferior to the *dharmā*, in the LP, both the physical body and the *dharmā* are rejected. In this regard, a formula repeatedly refers to the five object groupings of *buddhānusmṛti* by way of negation (*na ... manasikartavyo*), and each group of the five objects is followed by a typical Prajñāpāramitā expression: “because non-mindfulness and non-mental concentration [are] *buddhānusmṛti*” (*asmṛty amanasikāro hi buddhānusmṛtiḥ*).

A similar attitude towards the three jewels and *śīla* can be found in another LP passage that concerns taking refuge (*niśraya*, the verbal form of *śaraṇa*):

³⁴³ What is *āsaikṣadharmā* (無學法)? Answer: the five aggregates of *āsaikṣa* (無學五陰) (T 1546, p. 296a13). In addition, we also see one passage dealing with the relationship between these pure five aggregates and the common five aggregates:

世尊經說五陰：戒陰、定陰、慧陰、解脫陰、解脫知見陰。問曰：如是則有十陰。何故說五陰耶？答曰：此後五陰，即在前五陰中。戒陰在色陰中，餘四陰在行陰中。是故說五。

The sūtra of the Lord speaks of the five aggregates: morality (*śīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*prajñā*), liberation (*vimukti*), and insight into special knowledge (*vimuktijñānadarśana*). Question: in this case there are ten aggregates, why is it only five aggregates that are commonly spoken of? Answer: the additional five aggregates are inside the first five aggregates. The aggregate of *śīla* is in the aggregate of *rūpa*, the other four are in the aggregate of *samskāra*; thus only five are spoken of (T 1546, p.289a14-17).

³⁴⁴ In contrast, they are found in the formula regarding the the Saṅgha in the *Mahānāmasūtra*, and in the explanation of the Saṅgha in the *Nettipakarana* (PTS, p.55, translation cf. Ñāṇamoli 1962: 83).

³⁴⁵ This is similar to the case discussed in § 6.2.1, which demonstrated that the list of the Buddha’s qualities was regarded as the *dharmakāya* (T 1545, p.85a26-28).

katame viṃśatiḥ? yad uta ātmagrāho 'sya na bhavati sattvagrāho ... buddhaniśrayadr̥ṣṭyabhiniveśo dharmaniśrayadr̥ṣṭyabhiniveśaḥ saṃghaniśrayadr̥ṣṭyabhiniveśaḥ śīlaniśrayadr̥ṣṭyabhiniveśaḥ śūnyā dharmā iti vivādaḥ śūnyatāvirodhaś cāsyā na bhavati, ime subhūte viṃśatidharmā bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya saptamyām bhūmau vartamānasya na bhavanti. (PSP, Kimura 2007 [I-1]: 90)

What are the twenty? Namely, for him there is no (1) grasping of self, (2) grasping of beings...(14) view or examination of a refuge in the Buddhas, (15) Dharma, (16) Saṃgha, or (17) morality, [there are no] (18) empty *dharmas* and thus for him there is no (19) opposition or (20) non-opposition to emptiness. There are, Subhūti, no twenty *dharmas* for the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* abiding at the seventh stage.

This LP passage is discussed by Schlosser & Strauch (2016:97), who also point out that the Bajaur Mahāyāna Gāndhārī manuscript displays a similar attitude towards the fourfold unbreakable faith (*abhedyaprasāda*): the Buddha, Dharma, Saṃgha and Śīla.³⁴⁶ In this context, any perception of an unbreakable faith should be avoided. By way of example, consider the passage below, which deals with the attitude towards an unbreakable faith in the Buddha in the G. Mahāyāna Sūtra:

utamañhaṇaḥido vi tasagado ◇ *na samaṇupaśati* ◇ *paramañhaṇaḥida vi* ◇ *tasagada na sa-*
(**manupaśati* ·) (Bajaur Collection 2, 1A3-4) ...
yado ya Śāriputra ◇ *mamo śavaga · edehi ca* ◇ *añehi ca karaṇehi* ◇ *na samaṇupaśati ·*
*tado budho abhejaprasa(*deṇa samuṇaga)[d]a bho[di]* ◇ (Bajaur Collection 2, 1A7-8 + 1CD.18)

He also does not perceive the Tathāgata as being in the highest place (*uttamasthāna-sthita*). He also does not perceive the Tathāgata as being in the supreme place (*paramasthāna-sthita*). ...

And because, Śāriputra, my disciple does not perceive [the Tathāgata(?)] for these and other reasons, he is endowed with unbreakable confidence in the Buddha. (Schlosser & Strauch 2016:95)

Here, the *utamañhaṇaḥido* (Skt. *uttamasthāna-sthita*) and *paramañhaṇaḥida* (Skt. *paramasthāna-sthita*) recall the interpretation of the Buddha in the canonical text quoted above: “Monks, as compared with creatures, whether footless, bipeds, quadrupeds, or those

³⁴⁶ For a transcription and translation of the relevant Gāndhārī passage, cf. Schlosser & Strauch 2016: 95-96.

with many feet, with form or void of form, with sense or void of sense or indeterminate in sense, a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Fully Enlightened One is reckoned best of them.” (*Yāvata, bhikkhave, sattā ... tathāgato tesaṃ aggamakkhāyati araham sammāsambuddho*) in Pāli, and “...the most honorable, the best and the incompetent one” (...最尊、最上、無能及者) in Ch. (quoted in § 7.1.3).

Remarkably in these sources, one encounters similar attitudes towards the three jewels and *śīla* occurring in the contexts of *anusmṛti*, taking refuge, and *abhedyaprasāda* respectively, which, we must remember, are practices closely associated with one another (cf. § 7.1.3). Moreover, another similar attitude is found in the passage pertaining to seeing the three jewels in the *Kāśyapaparivarta* (cf. § 5.4.1); for instance: “one does not see the Tathāgata through the *dharma*, not to mention through the *rūpakāya*.” (... *dharmato* (‘) *pi tathāgataṃ na samanupaśyati kaḥ punar vāda rūpakāyena* / 62v1-2 Kp p.43.) This view can be connected with the pair-model of the *dharmakāya* and *rūpakāya* discussed in § 6, and placed together with the LP paragraph detailing *buddhānusmṛti*, it can be regarded as the proto-pair-model of the Buddha bodies, namely, *dharma* vs. *rūpakāya*.

In contrast to the Vibhāṣā compendia, both the correct and the wrong definitions are negated in the *Kāśyapaparivarta* and LP, which display a certain “Mahāyāna style”, in that both sides of the understanding, both affirmation and negation, are themselves negated on the premise of non-perception. This in turn suggests that the texts dealing with *buddhānusmṛti*, such as the LP and others, were modified from the Abhidharma exposition of *buddhānusmṛti* or taking refuge in Buddha and so forth. Hence, the usage of *buddhānusmṛti* in the sense of calling the Buddha to mind in early Prajñāpāramitā texts has a certain connection with earlier terminologies and practices, but especially with those employed in the Abhidharma tradition. Thus, *buddhānusmṛti* is something of a mixed activity, encompassing both the practice of visualising the figure and recollecting the merit of the Buddha, which in conglomeration constitute the meditation practice discussed in § 6.

Summary

This chapter considered the usage of *buddhānusmṛti* in LP. The system of *buddhānusmṛti* detailed therein draws on several diverse source groups. The practice is situated within a quite typical presentation of the six recollections, but it also includes the five types of objects of *buddhānusmṛti*, which are also scattered throughout the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma. Whilst in this latter corpus, the five objects may be classified under the pair-model (cf. § 5) – the first two objects (the five *skandhas* and the thirty-two *lakṣaṇas*) corresponding to the physical body and the last three (the five pure *skandhas*, the Buddha’s achievements and *pratītyasamutpāda*) connected with the *dharma*-body – this model does not appear in the early translation of the LP and was interpolated into later versions in the context of seeing the Buddha.

However, in the earliest version of LP there is some evidence of a proto-pair-model: *rūpakāya* vs. *dharmā/dharmatā*, as used in the Sadāprarudita story (§ 5.4.2). It is quite likely the fivefold object scheme also falls into the category of this proto-pair-model.

Additionally, the LP emphasizes the non-perception of any concept and in this regard shares the same model as the Gāndhāri Bajaur Mahāyāna text and the *Kāśyapaparivarta*. Here, the five objects are simultaneously affirmed as objects of recollection whilst also being negated.

8. The *vajra*-like body

8.1 Larger Prajñāpāramitā passage on destroying the *vajra*-like body

We have examined the LP passages concerning the two bodies of the Buddha in § 5 and § 6. Now we may turn to an interesting LP passage concerning the Buddha body: in the chapter comparing the respective amount of merit gained the worship of relics and the Prajñāpāramitā text, one unique passage reinterprets the origins of the relics (*śarīra*) and the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha, and associates the body of the Buddha with the *vajra* (adamant), terming it a *vajra*-like body (*ātmabhāva vajropama*):

śakra āha: yathā 'haṃ Bhagavan Bhagavato bhāṣitasyārtham ājāneyā 'yaṃ kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā tathāgata-śarīrāṇi svayaṃ satkuryād gurukuryād mānayet pūjayed arcayed apacāyeta, so 'pi sarśapa-phala-mātrakaṃ tathāgata-śarīraṃ parasmai dādyād ayam eva tato bahutaraṃ puṇyaṃ prasavet. evaṃ arthavaśaṃ saṃpaśyamānena tathāgatena vajropamaṃ samādhiṃ samāpadya ātmabhāvaṃ vajrōpamaṃ bhittvā tathāgata-śarīrāṇy adhiṣṭhitāni mahākaruṇāṃ saṃjanaya sattvakāye tathāgatadhātu-vainayikānāṃ sattvānāṃ. (PSP, Kimura 1986 [II-III]:101)

Śakra said: If I, Blessed One, have understood the meaning of what the Blessed One has said, then suppose that a son or a daughter of a good family were themselves to honor, praise, respect, worship, adorn and pay reverence to the relics of the Tathāgata, or if they were to give relics of the Tathāgata that are even the size of a mustard-seed to others, this would certainly produce more merit. Thus due to knowing this reason, the Tathāgata, having attained the *vajra*-like *samādhi*, and having destroyed the *vajra*-like body he established the relics of the Tathāgata. Generating great compassion for the sake of those beings, in the mass (*kāya*) of beings that are guided (*vaināyika*) by the relic of the Tathāgata.

The LPKj (T 223, p. 293b03-08) does not differ significantly from this Skt. version; however, in the earlier Ch. translation LPM, the *vajra*-like body is absent:

Śakra said to the Buddha: Blessed One! As I have understood the meaning of the *dharma* spoken by the Buddha. A son or a daughter of a good family makes offering to the relics. If they also disperse the relics in the size of mustard-seed to others, there is much merit. Blessed One! As I investigate its meaning again, the Tathāgata, abiding in the **vajra-samādhi* (金剛三昧), destroys his own body to make powdered relics like mustard-seeds.

(If someone pays respect to) them, he will receive endless luck and end his suffering.³⁴⁷ (T 221, p.53c22-27)

In all versions of this passage, the Buddha destroys his own body in order to make a powders from his relics is concerned. This obviously diverges from the tragic scene of the *parinirvāṇa* that is commonly depicted in the early Buddhist texts, such as the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (cf. § 8.4). In Indian sources, a similar description (also lacking the *vajra*-like body) can be identified in Mātṛceṭa's work, *Śatapañcāśataka*. Here the text describes the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha by saying:

yas tvaṃ samādhi-vajreṇa tilaśo 'sthīni cūrṇayan/ atiduṣkarakāritvam ante 'pi na vimuktavān // 144 //

Powdering your bones into tiny particles with the diamond of *samādhi*, you did not even at the end give up your habit of performing arduous works. (Bailey 1951:143)³⁴⁸

Similar to the case of the LPM, in the *Śatapañcāśataka* also the Buddha uses his willpower (*samādhi-vajra*, which can be interpreted as a Karmadhāraya compound, i.e., *samādhi* like *vajra*) to generate the particles of relics. Radich (2013) points out that this *Śatapañcāśataka* passage is “the earliest association between *vajra* and relics ... in the textual record” (2013:250).³⁴⁹ Subsequently, he investigates a large range of sources that explicitly describe the relics as being like adamant and the Buddha having a body that is “like adamant” (如金剛, 若金剛, 猶金剛 etc.), which, he states, occur “in the layer of our record immediately after the Pāli canon” (2013:251).

The earliest extant record describing the body being like *vajra*, however, is not a manuscript, but rather the “Senavarma Inscription” (first half of the first century C.E.). This inscription has drawn Radich's attention and he follows Oskar von Hinüber's translation in

³⁴⁷ 釋提桓因白佛言：“世尊！如我從佛所聞法中事，善男子善女人供養舍利，若復分持如芥子者與他人，其福甚多。世尊！如我重察其義，如來住於金剛三昧自壞其身，下末舍利如芥子者，而供養之，受無極福斷諸苦之際。”

³⁴⁸ Cited in Skilling 2005: 293. cf. Radich 2013:250.

³⁴⁹ Radich (2013) also points out some similar descriptions in the Ch. sources, such as DZDL etc..

speaking of a “final body” (**antimaśarīra*) as a “mass of vajra” (**vajrasaṃghaṇa*).³⁵⁰ Yet the meaning remains largely uncertain, to which he remarks:

A connection between relics and adamant is widespread in the textual record by the close of the period that concerns us here (an explosion of new ideas about immortality in the Ch. record around 400 C.E.). On the evidence of the Senavarma Inscription, it is possible that this connection predates the other ideas we will study; but this evidence is tenuous, given that the Senavarma Inscription is only one piece of evidence, and is very difficult to interpret. (Radich 2013:250)

Hence, it is worthwhile reconsidering the translation of this earliest extant record of the *vajra*-like body of the Buddha in the Senavarma Inscription (§ 8.2). We shall demonstrate that the specific somatic form here is less related to the relics and more to the context of the Buddha’s ultimate enlightenment (§ 8.3). The *vajra*-like body also occurs in the context of the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa* in LP. The motif of destroying the *vajra*-like body can be traced back to a canonical text, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*. Consequently, examining this sūtra will be very helpful for our effort in understanding the association of this motif with the cult of relics (§ 8.4). Finally, with the help of the LPG, I will try to address the issue of two different forms of the *vajra*-like *samādhi* in LP, based on the analysis of the previous topics (§ 8.5).

8.2 Reconsidering the earliest record that refers to a “*vajra*-like body”

The relevant passage from the Senavarma Inscription reads as follows (I provide the latest transliteration from the Kharoṣṭhī by Stefan Baums (2012) as well as the Skt. reconstruction and translation by von Hinüber (2003):

ye tada tadiśate atmabhavate vayirasaghaṇade aṃdimaśarirate visayuyeṇa pacimaeṇa śarireṇa ṇiṣayeta aṇutaravosi apisavudha apisavujīta te dhama tatha driṭha yasa ke aṇe paśeati aṇoma aṇasia te dhama (Baums 2012:228 = von Hinüber 2003:23, 5d-6b)

**yas tadā tādrśata ātmabhāvato vajrasaṃghaṇato ’ntimaśarīrato viṣaṃyu(k)tena paścimaśarīrena niśrayitvā anuttarabodhim abhisambuddho ’bhisambudhyitvā taṃ dharmam tathā drṣṭvā, yathā ko ’nyo paśyet anūnam anadhikaṃ taṃ dharmam ...* (von Hinüber 2003:24)

³⁵⁰ On this important inscription, cf. Fussman 1982; Salomon 1986; von Hinüber 2003.

Also reviews of von Hinüber 2003 by Fussman 2003–2004, Falk 2003 and Norman 2005.

John Strong (2004:183) has pointed out the possible connection between the adamantine nature of relics and “the adamantine nature of buddhahood” (cf. Radich 2013: 249, and Radich 2007 section 4.1.2.5).

Welcher damals durch den (?) von dem derartigen Körper, der Diamantmasse, dem letzten Körper getrennten allerletzten Körper *nīśrayitvā* die höchste Erleuchtung erlangt hat, nachdem er die Erleuchtung erlangt hat, die Lehre so geschaut hatte, daß ein anderer (?) die Lehre in vollem Umfange sehen könnte... (von Hinüber 2003:24)³⁵¹

This section of the inscription presented von Hinüber (2003:24) with the most difficulties. However, if we focus on the translation of the term *vajrasaṃghaṇa* (Skt. **vajrasaṃghaṇa*), „die Diamantmasse“, some additional light may indeed be shed on our understanding of the passage as a whole. The word *saṃghaṇa* derives from the root √ *han* together with the prefix *saṃ-*, which means not only “collection or assemblage, heap, multitude...” (cf. MW p. 1129, vocabulary entry of *saṃgha*), that is a “mass”, but also “compact” (cf. BHSD p. 549, vocabulary entry of *saṃghāta*) or “solid”.³⁵²

The compound *vajrasaṃghaṇa* appears rarely in Skt. texts, but the relevant form, *vajrasaṃghāta* (as compact or solid as *vajra*), appears in many places. For instance in the *Mahābhārata*, Bhīma, the son of Kuntī, is described as “a boy solid as *vajra*” (*vajrasaṃghātaḥ kumārah*). This arises in the context of a narrative, in which Kuntī, frightened by a tiger, suddenly stood up, unconscious of the child that lay asleep on her lap.

tataḥ sa vajrasaṃghātaḥ kumāro ’bhyapataḥ girau
patatā tena śatadhā śilā gātrair vicūrṇitā (*Mahābhārata* 01,114.13)

The boy, solid as the adamant, fell down upon the mountain, and in his fall shattered it with his body to a hundred pieces. (van Buitenen 1973:255)

Precisely how the idea of a body being as solid as adamant came to be associated with the body of the Buddha remains an open question. One solution perhaps resides in the frequent application of the term *saṃghāta* in a compound with the name of a god, Nārāyaṇa, the son of the first man in Hinduism. In the context of Buddhist literature Edgerton defines the purport of “Nārāyaṇa” (BHSD p.293, col 2) as follows:

³⁵¹ Eng. translation reads:

He who at that time supporting himself with his last body — which is separate from his final body, the corporeality that is of that kind, the thunderbolt agglomeration — attained the highest enlightenment and, having attained enlightenment, saw these factors (of existence) in such a way that any body else can see them without subtraction or addition ... (Baums 2012:230-231)

³⁵² In Ger., the usage of „die Diamantmasse“ is comparable with the usage of „die Gesteinsmasse“, which not only has the meaning of “mass”, but also refers to “solid” (This understanding is arrived at thanks to Prof. Dr. Martin Lehnert).

Nārāyaṇa, also Mahā-n°, q.v.; presumably the name of the Hindu god, but used in BHS as a proverbially powerful personage ... in MPS 31.21 Buddha has the power of many hundreds of Nārāyaṇas.³⁵³

Here, the comparison of the Buddha with Nārāyaṇa is intended to express the former's strength. Other texts utilise the analogy to develop ideas regarding the unique *vajra*-like solidity of the Buddha's body; and in other instances, such as Saddhp, *Nārāyaṇa-saṃhananakāya* is associated with a bodhisattva (Kern 1884:428.9–10), whose usage is akin to another early Mahāyāna text, Gv, which contains the similar expression *abhedyā-nārāyaṇa-vajra-saṃhanana-kāya*³⁵⁴.

One early dated text that describes the body of the Buddha being as solid as *vajra* (*vajrasaṃhatana*) is found in the Skt. *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra* and its earliest Ch. translation, made by Zhi Qian³⁵⁵ (dating to as early as 183 C.E.):

vajrasaṃhatano hi bhadantānanda tathāgatakāyaḥ sarvākuśalavāsanāprahīṇaḥ sarvamahaujaskakuśaladharmasamanvāgataḥ / (Takahashi 2006:33.10-12)

Venerable Ānanda! The body of the Tathāgata is solid as *vajra*. All the evil and impurity vanished, and it is endowed with all the might and good *dharma*.

The earliest appearance of the compound, *vajra*- together with *-ātmabhāva*,³⁵⁶ is found in a Mahāyāna text, the *Sukhāvātīvyūha-sūtra*, and its Ch. translation, the *Fo-shuo Wu-liang-shou Jing* (T 360 佛說無量壽經), which was translated by Kang Seng-kai (康僧鎧) and can be dated to 250 C.E. (*terminus ante quem*):

³⁵³ This case of MPS will be further discussed in § 8.4.

³⁵⁴ Cf. Vaidya 1960b:252.

³⁵⁵ The passage in the Ch. translation by Zhi Qian (T 474, p.523b27-28) is akin to the Skt. version.

³⁵⁶ The expression in Lal “*vajradṛḍha abhedya nārāyaṇo ātmabhāvo*” (Lefmann 1902: 202.17) could be construed as *nārāyaṇa*- in comp. with *-ātmabhāva*, “having a body like Nārāyaṇa”. The term referring to “body”, *ātmabhāva*, also appears in our quotation from LP (*ātmabhāvaṃ vajropamaṃ*) at the beginning of this chapter, and in the passage of Senavarna (*ātmabhāvo vajrasaṃghanato*). In other words, the body of the Buddha is compared with the body of Nārāyaṇa, which is as solid as *vajra* (*vajradṛḍha*) and not destroyable (*abhedyā*).

sacen me bhagavan bodhiprāptasya tadbuddhakṣetre ye bodhisattvāḥ pratyājātā bhaveyuḥ te sarve na nārāyaṇavajrasaṃhata nātmabhāvasthā apratilabdā bhaveyuḥ mā tāvad aham anuttarāṃ samyaksambodhim abhisambudhyeyam [26]³⁵⁷ (Fujita 2011:20.7-10)

May I not gain possession of perfect awakening if, once I have attained buddhahood, the bodhisattvas in my land do not obtain the adamant body of Narayana. (Gómez 2002:169)

Furthermore, sometimes the solid body is also seen in long lists concerning the special bodily features of the Buddha; such as, its occurrence in the well known eighty minor marks of a Buddha in LPKj: “the fifth, the body is solid as Nārāyaṇa” (五者，身堅實如那羅延³⁵⁸).

Cumulatively, this evidence is in favour of understanding the term *vajrasaṃghaṇa* in the Senavarma Inscription as “solid as *vajra*”, rather than “mass of *vajra*” as previous scholars have proposed. Its combination with *ātmabhāva* therefore should be rendered as “solidity like the *vajra*”. The reconstructed Skt. text and the tentative translation of the problematic Senavarma passage might be given as follows:

**yas tadā tādrśata ātmabhāvato vajrasaṃghanato 'ntimaśarīrato viśaṃyujyena paścimaśarīrena nisadya tam anuttarabodhim abhisambuddho 'bhisambudhyitvā tam dharmam tathā dṛṣṭvā, yathā ko 'nyo paśyeta anūnam anadhikam tam dharmam...*

At that time, sitting down with his last body (*paścimaśarīra*), which is different from the body as solid as *vajra* (*ātmabhāva vajrasaṃghana*), the ultimate body (*antimaśarīra*), he (Buddha) achieved the ultimate enlightenment. After he achieved the ultimate enlightenment, and after he saw the *dharma*, someone else would see the *dharma* without adding and subtracting (*anūnam anadhikam*) in the same way...

The formula *tam dharmam tathā dṛṣṭvā, yathā ko 'nyo paśyeta anūnam anadhikam tam dharmam* in this passage is similar to one sentence in Saddhp:

³⁵⁷ It is akin to the Ch. parallel as follows:

設我得佛，國中菩薩不得金剛那羅延身者，不取正覺。(T 360, p.268b23-24)

If I were to attain the Buddhahood, I would not attain enlightenment until the bodhisattvas in the buddha-field acquire the body as solid as *vajra*, like Nārāyaṇa.

³⁵⁸ Cf. T 223, p.395c29-396a01.

dharmam ca deśa(yamāno 'nūnam ana)dhikam dharmam deśayati / samena dharmapremnā, na kasyacid antaśo dharmapremṇāpy adhikataram anugrahaṃ karoti / imaṃ dharmaparyāyaṃ saṃprakāśayamānaḥ [/]³⁵⁹ (SaddhpG-B, Watanabe 1975:257.12-15)

When he preaches the law, he preaches no less and no more (*anūnam anadhikam*) than the law, without partial predilection for (any part of) the law, and he does not show greater favour to one than to another, even from love of the law. (Kern 1884:271-272)

This formula in Saddhp refers to preaching *dharmā* to other beings. Thus, we can assume that the Senavarma passage might also refer to the realization of *dharmā* (he saw the *dharmā*) and its subsequent exposition to others (who would also see the *dharmā* exactly as he saw it). This event happened after the enlightenment of the Buddha.

However, there are still some ambiguities in the first half of this passage. One difficulty is that the two kinds of “last body”, *paścimaśarīra* and *antimaśarīra*, appear together, and it is hard to explain how the *paścimaśarīra* can be separated (**visamyujyena*) from the *vajra* body (if *paścimaśarīra* is associated with relics, it is also hard to imagine how the Buddha can achieve the ultimate enlightenment by means of his relics). Our solution here is to explain the term *visamyujya* as indicating “different from”, since *yujya* can be also understood as “homogeneous, similar, equal in rank or power” (MW, p.854). In that case, the *antimaśarīra* that is as solid as *vajra* might refer to the ultimate body of the Buddha, distinguished from *paścimaśarīra* that represents the last body as a bodhisattva. But we still lack sufficient evidence to prove this interpretation.³⁶⁰ As von Hinüber (2003:25) points out, in Theravāda Buddhism, the *antimasarīra* indicates the body in the last life of the cycle of rebirth. He further supposes that *paścimaśarīra* may refer here to the last body during the time of the destruction of *dharmā*, just as it is seen in the commentary of Dīghanikāya, where the three Nirvāṇas also occur: *kilesaparinibbāna* under the bodhi tree, *khandhaparinibbāna* in Kusinārā and *dhātuparinibbāna* at the end of the *dharmā*. However, in this regard, we can also suggest another interpretation: the *paścimaśarīra* here may relate to the last body as a

³⁵⁹ It reads akin to the Nepalese Saddhp:

dharmam ca deśayamāno 'nūnam anadhikam dharmam deśayati samena dharmapremnā na ca kasyacid antaśo dharmapremṇāpy adhikataram anugrahaṃ karotīmaṃ dharmaparyāyaṃ saṃprakāśayamānaḥ || (SaddhpN, Kern & Nanjio 1908-1912:286.3-4)

³⁶⁰ In this regard, I found a passage in one late Ch. translation attributed to Jñānagupta (闍那崛多, 523-600 C.E.), *Shan-si Tong-zi Jing* (善思童子經), in which we see that Buddha-hood is achieved after abandoning ones last body: “After offering to the Tathāgatas, Arhats, Perfectly Awakened Ones, abandoning the last body, he became the Buddha, and his name is Pure Moon Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Awakened One” (供養彼諸多陀阿伽度阿羅訶三藐三佛陀已，捨最後身而得作佛，名為淨月多陀阿伽度阿羅訶三藐三佛陀。T 479, 613a19-22).

bodhisattva before the enlightenment of the Buddha, and after the enlightenment, an ultimate body was acquired which was as solid as *vajra*.

Another issue of the inscription's passage resides in the verb **niśrayitvā* (relying on), which scholars have reconstructed from G. *niṣayeta* (Baums 2012:231 and Hinüber 2003:24-25). Normally one would expect this verb to be connected with a noun in the accusative case, but here it is construed with an instrumental. The issue of course could rely in its reconstruction and this could well be resolved in reconstructing G. *niṣaye ta* > Skt. *nisadya* + *taṃ*; thereby the passage refers to the Bodhisattva sitting down under the bodhi tree.³⁶¹ Although this reading is more suitable in terms of its meaning, a hindrance remains in the sound change (G. *-ye* > Skt. *-dya*) of the latter reconstruction, which is problematic in light of other standard sound changes witnessed in Gāndhārī. Indeed one would expect G. *niṣaja* (P. *nisajja*) > Skt. *nisadya*. However, we have already discussed another apparent exception to this norm in § 2.2, where we observed that G. *niyada* is oft used as part of a word play referring simultaneously to both Skt. *niryāta* (from the root √ *i* 'go') and Skt. *nirjāta* (from the root √ *jan* 'be born'). Thus the sounds *-ja* and *-ya* were sometimes conflated in G.

If these suggestions are accepted, the new meaning we can now derive therefrom would much better fit the context of inscription, which we can now read as a cursory rendering of an event in the life of the Buddha: after sitting down on the *vajra* seat (*vajrāsana*) under the *bodhi* tree, the Buddha acquired ultimate enlightenment and then taught the *dharma* to others. Some post Common Era Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma sources support this contention in stating that the *vajra* body or *vajra*-like body is regarded as one of the special qualities achieved by Buddha and is associated with ultimate enlightenment (cf. § 8.3).

8.3 The *vajra*-like body and the enlightenment of the Buddha

Our interpretation of this Senavarma passage is related to one other important issue: what is the relationship between the Bodhisattva or Buddha's attainment of the *vajra*-like body and his enlightenment? One answer to this question may be located in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (abbr. AKBh):

³⁶¹ Similar expressions can be found in many Skt. sources:

imāni te catvāri pātrāṇi yāni tvayā bodhimaṇḍe niṣadya anuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisambuddhena pratigrahītavyānīti / (APN, Vaidya 1960a:205)

yatra sa bhagavān dharmacakranirghoṣagaganameghapradīrājas tathāgato niṣadya anuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisambuddhaḥ (GV, Vaidya 1960b:273)

yatra sa bhagavāṃ niṣadyānuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisambuddhaḥ | (SDhPG-A, Watanabe 1975:76.2-3 = SDhPN, Kern & Nanjio 1908-1912:159.9-10)

Tasya [Jambudvīpasya] ca madhye kāñcanamayyāṃ pṛthivyāṃ vajrāsanam abhinirvṛttam yasmin niṣadya sarve bodhisattvā vajropamaṃ samādhim utpādayanti. na hi tam anya āśrayaḥ pradeśo vā soḍhuṃ samarthah.³⁶² (Pradan 1967:161)

In its [= Jambudvīpa's] center, resting on the sphere of gold, is the “diamond throne” where the Bodhisattva sits to attain *vajropama-samādhī* and so to become an Arhat and a Buddha: no other place, and no other person can support the *vajropama-samādhī* of the Bodhisattva. (Pruden 1988:455)

The *vajra*-like *samādhī* (the historical development of this term will be also discussed in § 8.5) is the last mental concentration to be enacted before enlightenment, and the *vajra* seat in this passage is supposed to support the body of the bodhisattva who enters into the *samādhī*. Remarkably, a similar description also occurs in the two versions of the early Vibhāṣā compendia.³⁶³ The description is found closely after the passage comparing the power of Nārāyaṇa with the incredible power of the bodhisattva, in other words, “the bodhisattva has the power of Nārāyaṇa”.³⁶⁴ Then we see the following discussion (in the earlier version):

Question: For what reason does the bodhisattva accumulate such power (力) [i.e., of Nārāyaṇa]? Answer: For the purpose of showing that everything [of the bodhisattva] is excellent ... If the ultimate enlightenment is settled on the top of the Sumeru mountain, the mountain will be destroyed, because the powers and the confidences of the Buddha are quite considerable. Therefore, when the Tathāgata attained enlightenment, once he began to walk and slowly stepped on the earth, the earth was shaking. Moreover, because of the ultimate enlightenment of the Buddha the vajra seat occurs automatically on the Jambudvīpa of the triple thousand great thousand worlds. The bodhisattva sits on it and thereafter attains the ultimate enlightenment. In this way, we can say the bodhisattva

³⁶² The Ch. translation reads the same:

(南瞻部洲...) 唯此洲中有金剛座，上窮地際下據金輪。一切菩薩將登正覺，皆坐此座上起金剛喻定，以無餘依及餘處所有堅固力能持此故。(T 1558_29.0058a01-04)

³⁶³ For more information on the Vibhāṣā compendia, cf. § 6.2.1.

³⁶⁴ Cf. T 1546, p.119b13: 菩薩有那羅延力.

accumulates a solid body (堅牢之身) for the purpose of attaining the ultimate enlightenment.³⁶⁵ (T 1546, p.119b15-b28)

In this passage, the “power” (**bala*) found in the question and the “solid body” (**saṃghāta ātmabhāva*) found in the answer seem to be interchangeable. This reminds us of our discussion above, where we noted that sometimes the Buddha is depicted as possessing the power of the mass of Nārāyaṇa (*Nārāyaṇa-saṃghāta-bala*) and at other times as having a body as solid as Nārāyaṇa (*Nārāyaṇa-saṃghāta-ātmabhāva*). Furthermore, albeit we only see the sentence “the *vajra* seat occurs automatically in the Jambudvīpa ...” in this passage, its parallel, which is found in Xuanzang’s version of the passage quoted above,³⁶⁶ is quite close to AKBh.

Thus, this passage offers us a significant piece of information; namely, that the three terms related to *vajra* are conjointly employed at the moment of the Buddha’s attaining ultimate enlightenment under the bodhi tree. The *vajra*-like *saṃādhi* refers to the mind as solid as *vajra* with the quality of destroying all afflictions; the *vajra*-like body is powerful and comparable with Nārāyaṇa; and the *vajra* seat is the only possible form of support for such a body, protecting the earth from the damage the body could engender.

The LP seems to be aware of the explanation given for the *vajra* seat in the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma.

(LPG 15v7) ... *punar aparaṃ śāradvatīputra bodhisattvena mahāsattvena prajñāpāramitāyāṃ caratāivam vyupaparīkṣitavyam* kim iti me 'nuttarāṃ* (LPG 15v8) *samyaksambodhim abhisambuddhasya gacchato niṣaṇṇasya śayānasya sa prthivīpradeśo*

³⁶⁵ 問曰：以何等故，菩薩修集如是力耶？答曰：欲現一切皆勝事故 ... 若當阿耨多羅三藐三菩提住須彌山頂者，須彌山便當摧破，以力無畏甚尊重故。是以如來初成道時，舉足欲行，安徐蹈地，地故震動。復有說者，以阿耨多羅三藐三菩提故，於三千大千世界中閻浮提，閻浮提中有金剛座，自然而出。菩薩坐上，成等正覺。如是亦為阿耨多羅三藐三菩提故，積集堅牢之身。

³⁶⁶ It is akin to the parallel in the later translation:

Question: For what reason does the bodhisattva accumulate such body-powers (身力)? Answer: In order to show that everything (of his) is excellent ... If the ultimate enlightenment is settled on the top of the Sumeru mountain, the mountain will be destroyed as if dust, because the powers and the confidences of the Buddha are quite considerable. Therefore, the Jambudvīpa in this three-thousand great thousand worlds has the *vajra* seat, of which the top reaches the ground of the earth, and the bottom is based on the golden cycle. The bodhisattva sits on it and attains ultimate enlightenment. Apart from this, no solid place can be relied on. Thus when the bodhisattva first became Buddha, once he began to walk and slowly stepped on the earth, the earth shook six times. Only when he raised the *adhimokṣa* (勝解), was he able to walk. (T 1545, p.155c25-156a07)

vajramayaḥ samtiṣṭheta · tena prajñāpāramitāyāṃ śikṣita(LPG 15v9)vyam* //³⁶⁷
(Zacchetti 2005:385)

... so that, when he has fully known the utmost, right, and perfect enlightenment – whether he walks, stands, sits, or lies down – that spot of earth may become Adamantine. (Conze 1975b:54)

In the commentary of LP preserved in Chinese, DZDL, the interpretation of this passage is also quite similar to that in the AKBh and Vibhāṣā compendia quoted above.³⁶⁸

As shown before, in the Mahāyāna context, for instance in the LSukh passage, acquiring the *vajra*-like body is regarded as a significant goal of the bodhisattva career. In the *Yogacārabhūmi*, a similar term, *vajrasāraśarīra*, is regarded as the result or fruit (*phala*) of the good deeds appearing together with the ultimate enlightenment:

*tatra sarvadānasya sarvaśīlasya vistareṇa yāvat sarvasamānarthatāyā āsevitāyāḥ
suviśodhitāyāḥ sakalasampūrṇāyā anuttarā samyaksambodhir vajrasāraśarīratā
saddharmacirasthitikā ca phalam abhinirvartate* ³⁶⁹ (Bbh, Dutt 1966:158)

There is the case that the highest perfect awakening, the nature of a body as solid as a *vajra*, and a long-enduring good-Dharma result from the fruit of complete generosity, complete moral conduct etc., (*vistareṇa yāvat*), of the complete equalities, of the services, of the good purifications, of the full accomplishments.

Its connection with ultimate enlightenment is therefore so far clear; however, the *vajra*-like body in the LP passage actually occurs in the context of the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha. We shall now turn to elucidating the historical background of this specific context.

³⁶⁷ The parallel in the LPM is the same:

使我成阿耨多羅三耶三菩，所遊行處所住處坐處悉爲金剛，當學般若波羅蜜。(T 221, p. 004a27-28)

³⁶⁸ The passage in DZDL reads as follows:

有人言，土在金輪上，金輪在金剛上。從金剛際出，如蓮花臺直上，持菩薩坐處，令不陷沒。以是故，此道場坐處名爲金剛。(T 1509, p.310c27-311a01)

Someone says: the earth is resting on the sphere of gold, the sphere of gold is resting on the *vajra*. Directly from the sphere of *vajra* stretches [a pillar] to support the throne of the Bodhisattva, protecting the throne from sinking. In this way, the throne is named as *vajra*.

³⁶⁹ Corresponding to the Ch. parallel:

此中所有一切施、一切戒、廣說乃至一切同事、若多修習，若善清淨，若具圓滿，能感無上正等菩提金剛堅固身、正法久住果。(T 1579, p.532c22-24)

8.4 The *vajra*-like body and the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha

In LP the *vajra*-like body occurs in the context of the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha, which reminds us of the widespread canonical text, the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (MPS). Interestingly, in MPS, the body of the Buddha is not destroyed by his own willpower, but by means of the power of impermanence (*anitya*). This is stated in the last teaching of the Buddha. Here, we see the *vajra*-like body as it occurs in one Ch. version translated by Fa-xian:³⁷⁰

At that time, after speaking of this verse, the Tathāgata told the monks: “you should know that all the *saṃskāras* are impermanent. Although now I have the *vajra*-like body, it is unavoidable that it will be changed by impermanence. The switch from life to death is dreadful, you should dedicate yourself to practice, in order to leave this fire pit speedily. This is my last teaching. I shall enter into the *parinirvāṇa*, now is the time.”³⁷¹ (T 7, p. 204c25-29)

This passage refers to the last teaching of the Buddha. Waldschmidt (1967) compares the parallels concerning this last teaching of the Buddha in the Pāli, Skt. and the four Ch. versions of MPS. He supposes that before the *parinirvāṇa* the historical Buddha exposed his aging and decrepit body to the disciples in order to show them the impermanence of all worldly things and to encourage them to strive heartily in their practice. This episode is explicitly described in the Skt. version, but intentionally avoided in the Pāli and Ch. versions (Waldschmidt 1967:56-63). In his last teaching, the Buddha emphasized that his body would be destroyed by the power of impermanence:

(42.9) *atha bhagav(ān svakāyad uttarāsaṅgam ekān)te vivṛtya bhikṣūn āmantrayati /*
(42.10) *avalokayata bhikṣavas tathāgatasya kāyam / vyavalokayata bhikṣavas*
tathāgatasya kāyam / tat kasmād dhetoḥ / durlabhadarśanā y(e tathāgatā) arhantaḥ
samyaksambuddhās tadyathodumbare puṣpam / (42.11) aṅga bhikṣavas tūṣṇīm bhavata

³⁷⁰ Another passage in Ch. MPS (大般涅槃經 T 7) translated by Fa-xian 法顯 also relates to this destruction of the solid *vajra*-like body by impermanence. “The Tathāgata, the honorable one among the gods and humans, has a body as solid as a *vajra*. Even for him, the impermanence can not be avoided, not to mention the others.” (如來天人尊，金剛身堅固，猶不免無常，而況於餘人？ T 7, p.205b07-08)

³⁷¹ 爾時如來，說此偈已，告諸比丘：“汝等當知：一切諸行，皆悉無常。我今雖是金剛之體，亦復不免無常所遷。生死之中極為可畏。汝等宜應勤行精進，速求離此生死火坑。此則是我最後教也。我般涅槃，其時已至。”

vyayadharmāḥ sarvasaṃskārāḥ / (42.12) *iyam tatra tathāgatasya paścimā (vācā)*
(Waldschmidt 1950-1951:393-394)

“Betrachtet, ihr Mönche, den Leib des Tathāgata! Betrachtet genau, ihr Mönche, den Leib des Tathāgata! Und warum das? — Tathāgatas, Heilige, wahrhaft Erleuchtete sind selten zu Gesicht zu erlangen, (selten) wie eine Blüte am Uḍumbara(baum). Fürwahr, ihr Mönche, bleibt ruhig! Der Vergänglichkeit unterworfen sind alle Triebkräfte”. Das war dort der letzte Ausspruch des Tathāgata. (Waldschmidt 1967:82-83)

In the Skt. version of MPS, the power of impermanence is also mentioned in a detailed description of numerous other powers, which does not have a parallel in other versions. The powers include the power handed down from father and mother (*mātāpaitṛkabala*), the power of merit (*puṇyabala*), of insight (*prajñābala*), and of supernatural power (*ṛddhibala*); but the power of impermanence (*anityatābala*) is stronger than any of them (Waldschmidt 1967:59). Notably, the power of Nārāyaṇa appears in the passage under the category of the power handed down from father and mother. The text states that even when multiplied in potency a hundred fold, the power of Nārāyaṇa is still equal to only one power of the Tathāgata, which is yet still weaker than the power of impermanence (Waldschmidt 1967:72). As stated above, the comparison between Buddha and Nārāyaṇa relates not only to the *vajra*-like body of Nārāyaṇa, but also to the power of Nārāyaṇa (§ 8.2). Therefore, in this context, Nārāyaṇa's power, subordinate to impermanence, corresponds to the *vajra*-like body that is destroyed by impermanence. In addition, in the Ch. version of MPS translated by Buddhayaśas (佛陀耶舍) together with Zhu Fo-nian (竺佛念), which is, compared with the others, closer to the Skt. version of MPS, the Buddha exposed his right arm rather than the whole body. Then, in another verse found in the same text, we also see the *vajra*-like body destroyed by impermanence.³⁷²

Thus, a comparison of different versions of MPS seemingly supports our assumption that the *vajra*-like body of Nārāyaṇa and the powers of Nārāyaṇa are present in different versions of the last teaching of the Buddha before his *parinirvāṇa*. Moreover, in two versions thereof we see that the *vajra*-like body is destroyed by the power of impermanence. In contrast, in the LP, one Ch. Āgama passage (T 125, p.751a11-14), and one later section of the Ch. *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* (T 377, p.910c27-28), the body of the Buddha is said to be destroyed by the willpower of the Buddha.

³⁷² This body is like a bubble, who would be relaxed? The Buddha attains the *vajra*-body, which is destroyed by impermanence. (T 1, p.027b11-12 是身如泡沫，危脆誰當樂？佛得金剛身，猶為無常壞)

If the Buddha's act of destroying his body by the force of his will can be associated with the last teaching of the Buddha, which emphasizes the power of impermanence in MPS, then what is the underlying intention of reattributing the destructive from the power of impermanence to the power of will? It is noteworthy that most of the textual and the epigraphical evidence listed above is associated with the cult of relics. Thus, to claim that the body was destroyed by the Buddha's own willpower may endow the relics with the supernatural power or the power of sanctification. It is also interesting to note that, according to the Pāli commentary, the Buddhas do not necessarily destroy their body for the purpose of dispersing the relics. If the Buddha can live a long life, he may also leave a single (*ekaghana*) relic and will have only one Stūpa, because the purpose of dispersing the relics is simply to enable more people to see the body of the Buddha (Skilling 2005:11). In this case, telling the story that the Buddha destroyed his body with his own power is in response to the requirement of the cult of relics.

Therefore, in LP, destroying the *vajra*-like body is no longer the tragic episode recorded in the MPS, but is rather associated with *samādhi*; namely, the *samādhi-vajra* in the *Śatapañcāśataka*, or *vajropama-samādhi* in LPN, whose purpose of enactment is to disperse relics for the benefit of all beings. However, here we have another issue: the *vajra*-like *samādhi* (*vajropamasamādhi*) here is the *samādhi* that takes place before the *parinirvāṇa*, but we have come across another *vajra*-like *samādhi* in the context of the ultimate enlightenment. Obviously these two *vajra*-like *samādhis* have different origins, and they are connected with the *vajra*-like body in a contradictory way. We will next look at the two kinds of *vajropama-samādhi* as they are found in LP.

8.5 The two kinds of *vajra*-like *samādhi* in the Larger Prajñāpāramitā

Shogo Watanabe (渡辺章悟) has investigated the historical development of *vajropama-samādhi*. In the early versions of AP, reflected by the two earliest Ch. translations, the term *vajropama-samādhi* does not appear, whereas in the Skt. version it is only briefly mentioned in a general list of all *samādhis*, and is therefore very likely to be a later interpolation (Watanabe 2005:198-199). In contrast, the *vajropama-samādhi* occurs many times in all versions of LP. Watanabe summarizes four kinds of usage of *vajropama-samādhi* in LP:

- a) Appearing two times in the list of 108 *samādhi*.
- b) Appearing once in the passage of destroying the Vajra-like body.
- c) Appearing twice together with *vidyutopama-samādhi*.
- d) Appearing four times in the context of the bodhisattva path, being the *samādhi* practised immediately before enlightenment.

The fourth usage connects this *samādhi* with enlightenment. As stated by Watanabe (2005), in the bodhisattva path reflected in LP, the bodhisattva holds the *bodhi-citta* continuously and then enters into the *vajropama-samādhi*. Suddenly he produces “the insight connected with one moment (of thought)” (*eka-[citta-]kṣaṇa-samāyukta-prajñā*), and then acquires insight into all signs (*sarvākārajñatā*), and possesses the ten powers of a Tathāgata, the four confidences, the four liberations without obstacle, the eighteen distinctive characteristics of a Buddha, as well as great friendship and great mercy etc. (Dutt 1934: 82, 6-11). In comparison, such Abhidharma texts as the *Abhidharmakośa* state that the “no-interval path” (*ānantarya-mārga*) directly before the final liberation is called *vajropama-samādhi*. In this moment all the afflictions are cut down, the insight of disappearance (*kṣayajñāna*) arises, and in the next moment one enters into the final “path of liberation”. Therefore, *vajropama-samādhi* momentarily coincides with insight into decay (*kṣayajñāna*) or the decay of all influx (*sarvāsrava-kṣaya*) (Muroji 2000:112).

There is evidently a structural similarity between these two traditions: the path of liberation and the bodhisattva path. From the historical perspective, this similarity is mainly due to the fact that in LP a series of terminologies were borrowed from the former to constitute the latter, which as a result, shares in some of its components. Thus, the proper fixed way (*samyak-niyāma*) of the Arhat is changed to the fixed way of Bodhisattva (*bodhisattvaniyāma*); the no-interval path (*ānantarya-mārga*) in the path of liberation corresponds to *ānantarya-samādhi* (= *vajropamasamādhi*) of the Bodhisattva; and the insight of decay (*kṣayajñāna*) or decay of all influx (*sarvāsrava-kṣaya*) generated from the *vajropama-samādhi* is comparable with the insight connected with one moment (*eka-kṣaṇa-samāyukta-prajñā*). In this way, the path of the Bodhisattva is conjoined to the path of the Arhat. Here, therefore, the *vajropama-samādhi* is clearly associated with enlightenment, and it has nothing to do with the willpower that destroys the Buddha’s own body.

The third usage of *vajropama-samādhi* also entails the notion of destroying all the afflictions. Due to the fact it occurs together with the lightening-like *samādhi* (*vidyutopama-samādhi*),³⁷³ it was likely taken from the Abhidharma context. As stated by Watanabe, the *Anguttara Nikāya* (PTS, AN I-124, 20-26) mentions three types of people — people who have mind like a sore (*arukūpamacitto puggalo*), mind like lightning (*vijjūpamacitto*

³⁷³ In PSP we read: “staying in the *ānantarya-samādhi*, staying in the *vidyutopama-samādhi*, staying in the *vajropama-samādhi*, staying in the *samyak-sambodhi*” (Watanabe 1991: 17, 4-6). According to the Abhidharma, the *ānantarya-samadhi* in the first position should be equivalent to *vajropama-samādhi*, following the definition that “when the *vajropama-samādhi* arises, immediately (**ānantaryam*) one realizes the extinguishment of the confusion of view and the confusion of practice of the three spheres” (cf. 阿毘達磨毘婆沙論 T 26, p.992b22-24, and 大毘婆沙論 T 37, p.142c4). Thus, it could be an interpolation due to the the synonymous usage of terms. LPX(II) is in line with PSP in that *ānantarya-samadhi* occurs before the *vidyutopama-samādhi* and *vajropama-samādhi*, but this is not seen in other Ch. translations.

puggalo), and mind like *vajra* (*vajirupamacitto puggalo*). The last type refers to Buddhist saints, whose mind can destroy all afflictions, just as a *vajra* can destroy all other stones. Subsequently in the Theravāda Abhidhamma, and especially in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, the *vijjūpama-dhamma* (lightening-like, Skt: *vidyutopama-*) and *vajirūpama-dhamma* (*vajra*-like, Skt: *vajropama-*) are connected with the four Śramaṇa results (*phala*): *vijjūpama-dhamma* matching the first three results, and the *vajirūpama-dhamma* corresponding to the result of the Arhat. Furthermore, the earliest appearance of the expression *vajropama-samādhi* is found in the **Vibhāṣāśāstra*, and this *samādhi* can break and destroy all the afflictions (*kleśa*) (Watanabe 2005:196-198).

However, the second usage of *vajropama-samādhi* for destroying *vajropama-ātmabhāva*, averted to at the beginning of this chapter, is associated with the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha and appears to be quite different from the third and the fourth (Watanabe 2005:199-202).

The twice-repeated occurrence of *vajropama-samādhi* in the long list of *samādhi* also confirms that in LPN there are two kinds of *vajropama-samādhi*.³⁷⁴ However, this is not the case in LPG and LPKj. In the former, we find a parallel of LPN in regards to the second *vajropama-samādhi*:

(86r10) *tatra katamo vajropamo nāma samādhīḥ? yatra samādhau sthitvā sarvadharmāṇāṃ nirvidhaṃ karoti / yatsamādhim api na samanupaśya yad ucyate va(86r11)jropamo nāma samādhīḥ.* (my edition based on the facsimile in Karashima 2016: 83)

What is the *samādhi* called *vajropama*? Having stayed in [this] *samādhi*, he penetrates (*nirvidha* = *nirvedha*) all the *dharma*s, but without perceiving the *samādhi*. This is the *samādhi* called *vajropama*.

³⁷⁴ The two *vajropama-samādhis*, found in the long list of *samādhis* in LPN are as follows:

a) *tatra katamo vajropamo nāma samādhīḥ? yatra samādhau sthitvā sarvasamādhībhir na bhidyate, ayam ucyate vajropamo nāma samādhīḥ.* (PvsP1-2: 66)

What is the *samādhi* called *vajropama*? Having stayed in the *samādhi*, it is not broken by all the *samādhis*, this is the *samādhi* called *vajropama*.

b) *tatra katamo vajropamo nāma samādhīḥ? yatra samādhau sthitvā* (PvsP1-2: 70) *sarvadharmāṇ nirvidhyate samādhim api na samanupaśyati, tenocyate vajropamo nāma samādhīḥ.*

What is the *samādhi* called *vajropama*? Having stayed in the *samādhi*, one penetrates (*nirvyadh-*) all the *dharma*, but does not perceive the *samādhi*, this is the *samādhi* called *vajropama*.

The term *nirvidh-* or *nirvyadh-* refers to a thorough understanding of *dharma*.³⁷⁵ Thus, the *samādhi* is more related to enlightenment. The parallel in the LPKj is akin to LPG.³⁷⁶ Additionally in LPG, another *samādhi* related to *vajra*, distinct from *vajropama-samādhi* (as seen in LPN), is named only *vajra*:

(85r10) ... *tatra katamo vajro nāma samā(85r11)dhiḥ? yatra samādhēsthite sarvasamādhayo na bhidyante, ayam ucyate vajro nāma samādhīḥ*// (my edition based on Karashima 2016: 82)

What is the *samādhi* called *vajra*? If [this] *samādhi* is not standing, all the *samādhis* are not broken, this is the *samādhi* called *vajra*.

It literally means with this *samādhi* one can destroy all the *samādhis*. This is in contrast to the reading of the LPN and one Central Asian fragment.³⁷⁷ However, the reading in LPKj³⁷⁸ and

³⁷⁵ This term also occurs in the expression *dharmadhātuḥ supratividdhaḥ* (well-penetrated *dharmadhātu*), which literally means “well-understood fundament of *dharma*” (cf. § 5.6.3).

³⁷⁶ LPKj reads: “What is the *samādhi* called *vajropama*? Having stayed in this *samādhi*, he penetrates all the *dharma*s, but without perceiving penetration. This is the *samādhi* called *vajropama*.” (云何名如金剛三昧? 住是三昧, 能貫達諸法亦不見達。是名如金剛三昧。T 223, p.252a29-b01)

The interpretation for this *samādhi* in LPX (T 220, p.075c21-22) is similar, but the name of this *samādhi* becomes *vajramālā-samādhi* (金剛鬘三摩地). In LPM, both the name and the interpretation of this *samādhi* read differently: “Then, there is the *samādhi* called *vajra*. Having stayed in this *samādhi*, he determines (**vinīści-*) all the *samādhis*.”(復有金剛三昧, 住是三昧者決斷諸三昧。T 221, p.24a12-13)

³⁷⁷ *tatra katamo vajropamo nāma samādhir yatra samādhau sthitvā sarvasamādhīn na bhindaty ayam ucyate vajropamaḥ samādhi* (Bidyabinod 1927)

What is the *samādhi* called *vajropama*? Having stayed in the *samādhi*, all the *samādhi* are not broken, this is the *samādhi* called *vajropama*.

³⁷⁸ The reading in LPKj is similar to LPG: What is the *samādhi* called *vajra*? Having stayed in this *samādhi*, all the other *samādhis* are broken, this is the *samādhi* called *vajra*. (云何名金剛三昧? 住是三昧能破諸三昧, 是名金剛三昧。T 223, p.251b27-28). Then LPM has a shorter sentence but it also has the meaning of destruction: “Then, there is the *samādhi* called *vajra*. Having stayed in this *samādhi*, no other *samādhis* are able to stand against it.”(復有金剛三昧, 住是三昧者諸三昧無有敢當者。T 221, p.23b28-29). In comparison to LPKj, LPX has a similar interpretation, only with an extension. Notably, the name becomes *vajropama-samādhi*, which, at this point, is in line with LPN: “What is the *samādhi* called *vajropama*? Having stayed in this *samādhi*, all the other *samādhis* are broken, and this is the *samādhi* called *vajra*.” (云何名為金剛喻三摩地? 謂若住此三摩地時, 能摧諸定非彼所伏, 是故名為金剛喻三摩地。T 220, p.074c20-22)

the commentary of LP, DZDL, which is translated by Kumārajīva as well, agree with the LPG. In these two texts, we also see the name **vajra-samādhi* (金剛三昧), again distinct from the **vajra*-like *samādhi* (如金剛三昧). The distinction of their name and meaning is declared in DZDL as follows:

The teacher of Abhidharma (** Abhidharmavādin*) explains: the *vajra*-like *samādhi* (如金剛三昧) can break all the afflictions without remain; just as Indra destroys the army of the Asuras with a *vajra* in his hand. This is the last mind of the practitioner, after this mind one attains the three bodhis successively: the *bodhi* of the Śrāvaka, the *bodhi* of the Pratyeka-buddha and the ultimate enlightenment of the Buddha. The **vajra-samādhi* (金剛三昧) can destroy all the dharmas, then one enters into *nirvāṇa* without remainder (*nirupādhiśeṣa-nirvāṇa*), never attaining rebirth. Just as the real *vajra* can break the mountains, making it totally destroyed without remain.³⁷⁹ (T 1509, p.400b22-28)

This interpretation is in line with the reading in LPG and LPKj that *vajropama-samādhi* is related to enlightenment, while the *samādhi* called *vajra* is associated with the destruction without remian. The parallels of the latter one in the LPN and a Central Asian fragment impart that either all the other *samādhis* are destroyers, or the *vajra*-like *samādhi* cannot break any *samādhi*, which probably does not fit the simile of a *vajra* at all.

The two kinds of *vajropama-samādhi* in the list of 108 *samādhi* of the Nepalese version of LP have different origins, and they occur in the LPG as *vajropama-samādhi* and *samādhi* called *vajra* respectively. The *vajropama-samādhi* associated with enlightenment originates from the notion of a mind as solid as *vajra*, found in the *Anguttara Nikāya*, and it occurs as *samādhi* in the context of the path of liberation in the Abhidharma tradition, as a means to cut down the afflictions. In contrast, the *samādhi* called *vajra* associated with the *parinirvāṇa* is the destroyer of the *vajropama-ātmabhāva* / *-kāya*, and originates from a combination of the power of the Buddha and of Nārāyaṇa (see § 8.2 and § 8.4). Probably the LPG and the early Ch. versions of LP preserve the earlier notion of the destroyer, the *samādhi* called *vajra*, which is in line with Mātṛceta's work, the *Śatapañcāśataka*. The translator Kumārajīva seems to be aware of this distinction, given that the *samādhi* are translated as **vajropama-samādhi* (如金剛三昧) and **vajra-samādhi* (金剛三昧).

³⁷⁹ 論者言：如金剛三昧者，能破一切諸煩惱結使無有遺餘。譬如釋提桓因手執金剛，破阿修羅軍。即是學人末後心。從是心次第得三種菩提：聲聞菩提、辟支佛菩提、佛無上菩提。金剛三昧者，能破一切諸法，入無餘涅槃更不受有。譬如真金剛能破諸山令滅盡無餘。

Therefore, if the LPG and LPKj can be understood as more or less reflecting the early form of LP, the four usages of *vajropama-samādhi*, as stated by Watanabe, can now be revised. Usage a) actually includes two different *samādhis*: the destroyer of all dharmas, **vajra-samādhi*, which also corresponds to b) (although the parallel is absent in LPG due to the missing folios), and the *vajropama-samādhi* that is associated with enlightenment and parallels the usages c) and d).

Summary

In sum, the body like *vajra* (*ātmabhāva vajropama*) in LP, occurs in the context of a reinterpretation of the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha. It may share the same literary tradition as the *Śatapathaśāstra*, which states that the Buddha destroys his own body through his willpower, the *samādhi-vajra* (*samādhi* like *vajra*), in order to generate relics. This may be modified from the ancient motif in early Buddhism that, as stated in the last words of the Buddha in several versions of MPS, the body of the Buddha, even the *vajra* body (金剛身) [identical to] or more powerful than Nārāyaṇa, can be destroyed by the power of impermanence (*anityatābala*). This modification seems to agree with the sanctification of relics, given that the Senavarma Inscription, closely related to the cult of relics, also mentions the body being solid as *vajra* (*ātmabhāvata vajrasaṃghanata*).

According to the LPN the body like *vajra* is destroyed by the *vajropama-samādhi*; but there are two kinds of *vajropama-samādhi* found in the list of 108 *samādhis* in the same text. In contrast, the LPG and LPKj actually have different names and contents, viz., *vajropama(-nāma)-samādhi*, the *samādhi* raised before enlightenment, and *vajra(-nāma)-samādhi* that is raised before the *parinirvāṇa*. Therefore, if the LPG preserves the earlier form of these *samādhi*, the original notion of willpower in the LP passage, the *vajropama-samādhi*, is probably the *samādhi-vajra* (*samādhi* like *vajra*) as the *Śatapathaśāstra* suggests, or the *vajra(-nāma)-samādhi* (*samādhi* called *vajra*) found in the list of 108 *samādhi* in LPG. It should not be confused with the *vajropama-samādhi* that refers to enlightenment, and corresponds to the same term in the Abhidharma context.

Conclusion

My dissertation investigated the notion of “seeing the Buddha” and its relationship with Buddha embodiments, as described in early Prajñāpāramitā literature. This involved a study of various texts dated from the beginning of the Common Era up until the 7th Century, and outlined the historical developments of several important conceptions current to the Buddhist thought of this period. In the earliest phase of this development, “seeing” was used in a metaphorical manner. The older idea prevalent in early Buddhism that “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha” inspired the assimilation between the Buddha and the teaching or text of the Prajñāpāramitā. Later however, seeing the Buddha more often appeared in the sense of a real vision of the Buddha and became associated with the goal of salvation. This change also paved the way for the development of the Buddha bodies theory: the *dharmakāya* was developed from *dharma* or *dharmatā* and interpolated into the context of seeing/recollecting the Buddha, along with the *rūpakāya*. Eventually it became indicatory of the omnipresent body of the Buddha. This conclusion is a combination of the findings of the relatively independent studies, contained respectively in the eight chapters. It serves as a summary of the three main arguments of this study and synopsis the historical development of “seeing the Buddha” and the Buddha body theory.

(1) Seeing the Buddha in a metaphorical manner

After the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha, the reestablishment of his presence in the world became an increasing concern among Buddhist communities. One consequence of this was that the *dharma*, representing the teaching of Buddha, came to be considered as the very existence of the Buddha. As evidence for this development, we pointed to the claim that “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha”. In this context, *dharma* indicates *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent origination). At the same time, in the canonical SĀ, we also find that *dharmatā* occurs in the formula “whether the Tathāgata is born or not, the *dharmatā*, the fundament for the stability of *dharma*, persists” (*utpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā sthitā eveyaṃ dharmatā dharmasthitaye dhātuḥ*). The corresponding Pāli counterpart to the latter formula in the SN is only slightly different. In both Pāli and Skt. versions, this formula is found in contexts that discuss *pratītyasamutpāda*. So when the formula speaks of the *dharmatā* persisting, regardless of whether the Tathāgata is born or not, the likely intention is that *dharmatā*, in a fashion akin to *dharma*, was employed to designate *pratītyasamutpāda*: the truth taught by the Buddha which could simultaneously be regarded as the very existence of the Buddha.

However, when the formula concerning *dharmatā* is adopted in the AP, it, and its synonyms, are replaced by the terms *śūnya(tā)* (empty), *ānimitta* (signless) and *apraṇihita* (wishless) etc. This is because in the earliest phases of Prajñāpāramitā and Madhyamaka thought, *pratītyasamutpāda* is reinterpreted as *śūnyatā*. In this way, although the context has changed, seeing the Buddha through *dharma* / *dharmatā*, or identifying *dharmatā* as Buddha,

continue to exist in Prajñāpāramitā literature.

Taking into account a further development of the *dharmatā* formula in the LP, yet other factors surrounding the application of this notion begin to arise. Around the time that LP was compiled, the *dharmatā* formula triggered a controversy among the Abhidharma scholastic traditions: some regarded the synonyms of *dharmatā* as indicative of permanent existence and attributed them to the list of *asaṃskṛta-dharma*, a proposition that was starkly criticized by Sarvāstivāda circles. This categorization seems to have been accepted by LP, and thus the synonyms of *dharmatā*, *tathatā* and *dharmadhātu*, occur together with *bhūtaakoṭi* in the list of concepts indicating reality or ultimate truth in this, and indeed other Mahāyāna texts (§ 1).

Also inspired by the idea that “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha”, in the AP other efforts are made to associate the Buddha with the Prajñāpāramitā text. These gave rise to the cult of the text: from the perspective of the Prajñāpāramitā tradition, the Prajñāpāramitā text itself is undoubtedly the teaching of Buddha (*dharma*). According to the AP, the Prajñāpāramitā text, or the tenets thereof, should be treated like the Teacher (= Buddha) (*yathā śāstā*). Another interesting aspect that demonstrates the connection between the Prajñāpāramitā text and the Buddha is the argument that the text itself is the mother of Tathāgatas (*mātā ... tathāgatānām*), which is the starting point of a series of arguments for the power of Prajñāpāramitā.

This unique maternal expression can be linked with two compounds. The first, *prajñāpāramitā-nirjāta*, meaning born from the Prajñāpāramitā, occurs frequently in the AP and LP manuscripts from Nepal. The second occurs in parallels of the earlier versions of the LP, such as the manuscripts from Gilgit or Central Asia, where we find the hybrid Skt. form *prajñāpāramitā-niryāta*, which encompasses two meanings concurrently: one from the root √ *i* (to go) indicating “adept, perfectly skilled, in” (BHSD, p.303, col 2), and another from the root √ *jan* (to create, to produce) meaning “born” (BHSD, p.301, col 1). Both senses can be attributed to interpretations of the Gāndhārī form, presumably *prañāpāramida-ṇiyada*. Therefore, when one states that the Tathāgatas are “adept in *prajñāpāramitā*” or “entering into *prajñāpāramitā*”, it is uncontroversial, but when one understands it as meaning the Tathāgatas are “born from *prajñāpāramitā*”, an important argument is forwarded that the *prajñāpāramitā* is the mother of Tathāgatas. Based on this word play, the text argues that the Tathāgatas will protect *prajñāpāramitā*, just as sons protect their mother. A rhetorical technique is also applied here: the *prajñāpāramitā*, as the most significant practice of the bodhisattva path, is equated to the Prajñāpāramitā text itself. In this way, the Prajñāpāramitā text draws its power from the Tathāgatas. These arguments that associate the Prajñāpāramitā text with the Buddha further support the position that ritual actions, such as keeping, reciting, and reproducing the Prajñāpāramitā text, will not only create immeasurable merit, but also offer protection in daily life. Thus, those elements constituting the basis of the cult of Prajñāpāramitā are not merely rhetorical and they contributed significantly to the development of the cult of the Prajñāpāramitā text (§ 2).

(2) Visualising and recollecting the Buddha

In the Sadāprarudita story, which is attached to the end of AP and was probably compiled later than the bulk of AP, we saw that the description of the process of Sadāprarudita searching for Prajñāpāramitā closely resembles the visualisation practice of *pratyutpanna-samādhi*, as described in the sūtra bearing the same name, the PSS. At the end of this process, Sadāprarudita meets the Dharma-preacher, who is treated as the Buddha, both in the Sadāprarudita story and in the remaining parts of AP. The metaphorical intention was to communicate that the Prajñāpāramitā and its preacher are to be regarded as the Buddha, as something of a continuation of the metaphor that we discussed above in the context of the cult of the Prajñāpāramitā. However, what is novel to this story is that we begin to find the influence of the practice of visualising the Buddha on Prajñāpāramitā literature, which notably does not exist in the main body of AP (§ 3).

The popularity of this model of visualisation is due to the fact that visualisation is an important approach for reaching the important soteriological goal of being reborn in other buddha-fields. This is also in line with the records in the PSS, where the visualisation of the Buddha serves as the central means for attaining rebirth in the buddha-field of Amitābha. Correspondingly, in the Sadāprarudita story the description of the city Gandhavatī, where the Dharma-preacher dwells, is quite close to the description of the buddha-field in SSukh. Concerning the fact that the cult of Amitābha is a central topic in both PSS and SSukh, and the fact that both the city and the buddha-field resemble some descriptions found in the canonical texts, we can say that the city Gandhavatī represents something of a transitional stage between the description of the sacred place in canonical texts, such as the city Kusāvātī, and that of the buddha-field Sukhāvātī. Furthermore, instead of the mixture between visualisation and metaphor found in the Sadāprarudita story, visualisation alone came to form a significant part of the bodhisattva path in the LP, and was used to achieve the soteriological goal of being reborn in the ideal buddha-field, in a form quite akin to the LSukh. The Buddha visualisation here is formulated with two terms: *buddhānusmṛti* (recollection of the Buddha) and *buddhamanasikāra* (directing the mind towards the Buddha). Additionally in these two texts, the practice of the bodhisattva vow is advocated as a means to establish one's own enjoyment-filled buddha-field. This is contrast to what we can see in the main body of AP; namely, that the ideal buddha-field is Abhiratī, of abode of Akṣobhya Buddha. As is described in the *Akṣobhyavyūha*, it is impossible to arrive at this buddha-field except through diligent practice over immeasurable lives, rather than the simple mental concentration stated in the LSukh, and the enjoyment of beautiful buddha-field is considered more as a by-product than an end itself (§ 4).

Notably, in early Buddhism, the original application of the term *buddhānusmṛti* (recollection of the Buddha) had nothing to do with visualisation, but rather the recollection of the ten epithets of Buddha. These epithets also came to be used to interpret terms like *avetyaprasāda* (unshakable faith) and *śrota-āpattyāṅga* (attributes of the entrance into the

stream). This occurred because paying respect to the three jewels - Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha - is a basic religious practice: they are recollected continuously until one's faith becomes solid, and then until the specific stage called “entrance into the stream” is arrived at. Therefore, the original meaning of *buddhānusmṛti* is close to recollecting the merits of the Buddha. The popularity of visualising the Buddha was very likely triggered by the popular practice of making images. For instance, in the MPS of the DĀ and in its Pāli counterpart, recollecting (*anusmara*) the four holy places associated with the important events in Buddha's life is reflected in iconographical evidence, dating from before the Common Era, where physical representations of the Buddha are absent. In the PSS, however, a text composed around the Common Era, we first begin to encounter records of *buddhānusmṛti* pertaining to recollecting the Buddha image. Moreover, in the LP, *buddhānusmṛti* comes to refer to recollecting both the image and the qualities of the Buddha (§ 7). Notably, this *buddhānusmṛti* designates an attempt to actually perceive the Buddha, rather than seeing the Buddha in a metaphorical way.

3) Seeing the Buddha and the development of the Buddha embodiment

So far we have examined the shift from metaphorically “seeing the Buddha” to an actual perception of the Buddha in the early Prajñāpāramitā tradition. This relationship can be further explained through an analysis of the development of the Buddha bodies theory. As stated above, identifying the Buddha with *dharmatā* was inherited from the older idea in early Buddhism, “seeing *dharma* is seeing the Buddha”. However, the *Vakkali-suttanta* of the SN, whence this older idea derives, also declares the principle that form (*rūpa*) is impermanent, and thus inferior to the *dharma* in representing the Buddha. A similar position is also found in texts dated after the Common Era, such as the Vibhāṣā Compendia and the KP, in which the physical body (*rūpakāya*) occurs together with *dharma* as a pair indicating the existence of Buddha, but again the *rūpakāya* is regarded as inferior to *dharma*. We named this the “proto-pair-model” of Buddha embodiment, because there is no evidence to show that the *dharma* here is indicative of the body of the Buddha, i.e., the *dharmakāya*.

In later recensions of the LP, the term *dharmakāya* was interpolated into the context of “seeing the Buddha”, sometimes replacing *dharmatā* in early versions. The sudden occurrence of *dharmakāya* can be explained by a word play: the term *dharmakāya* indicates both the collection of *dharma* (teaching) and the body of *dharma* (truth). The latter usage evolved from a metaphorical “seeing” into an actual perception of Buddha, and its acceptance around 2nd-3rd Century C.E. led to the development of the pair-model *dharmakāya* vs. *rūpakāya*, as witnessed by a wide range of texts from other traditions. This shift gave rise to the new development of the Buddha bodies theory. We find some kind of omnipresent body, namely, **dharmadhātuja-kāya* (法性生身) in the commentary to the LP, the DZDL, that is only preserved in Chinese. This term refers to the bodies of both the Buddha and bodhisattva,

and is regarded as belonging to the sphere of *dharma* (*dharmadhātu*). This cosmological model is apparently influenced by the Gv, since this sūtra is quoted in the context of the **dharmadhātuja-kāya* in the DZDL.

In the Gv, the cosmological model related to the *dharmadhātu* is realized by a word play: *dharmadhātu* indicates both the sphere of phenomena and the sphere / fundament of truth. Therefore, the *dharmadhātu* could be the transcendent truth, beyond our phenomenal world, but at the same time identical with it. The omnipresent body of the Buddha spreads throughout the *dharmadhātu* and this view, it seems, further influenced the equation of the Buddha with the *dharmadhātu* in the MP, which states, for example, “the *dharmadhātu* is the Blessed One” (§ 5).

Notably, the pair-model of Buddha bodies was also given different appellations: In the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma tradition the terms *janmakāya/dharmakāya* or *janmaśarīra/dharmaśarīra* are particularly prominent, whereas in Mahāyāna sūtras and other texts, the terms *rūpakāya/dharmakāya* or *rūpaśarīra/dharmaśarīra* are more commonly encountered. In the Skt. meditation manuals and the Ch. manuals, or indeed certain Mahāyāna sūtras such as the *Samādhirājasūtra*, visualising or perceiving the two bodies of the Buddha even constitute the two basic steps of the meditation practice entitled *buddhānusmṛti*. The popularity of this meditation practice may also have influenced the interpolation of the two-body paradigm into the context of *buddhānusmṛti* in the LP (§ 6).

Finally, in the last chapter, I also discussed the *vajra*-like-body (*ātmabhāva vajropama*) of the Buddha. The LP states that the Buddha’s body at the time of *parinirvāṇa* is destroyed by the *vajropama samādhi*. This notion is shared with other texts, such as the *Śatapāñcāśataka* by Mātṛceta, which states that the Buddha destroys his own body through the *samādhi-vajra* (viz. the *vajra-like-samādhi*) to generate the relics. This may be a modification of an earlier motif found in several versions of the MPS, that the Buddha has a *vajra* body (金剛身), which can be destroyed by the power of impermanence (*anityatābala*). This modification seems to agree with the sanctification of relics, given that the Senavarma Inscription, closely related to the cult of relics, also mentions the body being as solid as a *vajra* (*ātmabhāva vajrasaṃghana*) (§ 8).

In sum, through investigating the different textual phases of the early Prajñāpāramitā literature, we demonstrated two processes of development. First a shift from a metaphorically “seeing the Buddha” to an actual perceiving of the Buddha as a soteriological method, and second that the *dharma* (or *dharmatā*), regarded as both the teaching of the Buddha and as a representation of his very existence, was replaced by *dharmakāya* indicating the omnipresent body of the Buddha(s). These two processes correlate with one another and were enabled by philosophical innovation, the usage of rhetorical techniques, and the development of meditational practice.

Glossary

<p><i>abhāva</i> (Skt.) non-existing <i>abhedyā-prasāda</i> (Skt.) unbreakable faith <i>abheja-prasāda</i> (G.) unbreakable faith <i>abhijñā</i> (Skt.) super-knowledge <i>adhipatirūpa</i> (Skt.) governing embodiment <i>abhiṣeka</i> (Skt.) consecration <i>anabhisamkāra</i> (Skt.) non-performance <i>anāgama</i> (Skt.) no coming <i>anānārtha</i> (Skt.) no difference <i>anaññathatā</i> (P.) unaltered suchness <i>ananyathā</i> (Skt.) unaltered suchness <i>anāsravaskandha</i> (Skt.) pure aggregate(s) <i>śīlaskandha</i> (Skt.) morality-aggregate <i>samādhiskandha</i> (Skt.) concentration-aggregate <i>prajñāskandha</i> (Skt.) wisdom-aggregate <i>vimuktiskandha</i> (Skt.) liberation aggregate <i>vimuktijñānadarśanaskandha</i> (Skt.) “insight into special knowledge” aggregate <i>anekārtha</i> (Skt.) no identity <i>anicca</i> (P.) impermanent <i>ānimitta</i> (Skt.) signless <i>anīya</i> (Skt.) impermanent <i>anirgama</i> (Skt.) no going <i>anīrodha</i> (Skt.) non-cessation <i>antimaśarīra</i> (Skt.) ultimate body <i>anuccheda</i> (Skt.) non-annihilation <i>anusmṛti</i> (Skt.) recollection <i>buddhānusmṛti</i> (Skt.) recollection of the Buddha <i>dharmānusmṛti</i> (Skt.) recollection of the Dharma <i>saṃghānusmṛti</i> (Skt.) recollection of the Saṅgha <i>śīlānusmṛti</i> (Skt.) recollection of morality <i>tyāgānusmṛti</i> (Skt.) recollection of liberality <i>devatānusmṛti</i> (Skt.) recollection of deities <i>anutpāda</i> (Skt.) non-origination <i>apraṇihita</i> (Skt.) wishless <i>aśaikṣadharmā</i> (Skt.) <i>dharma</i> of “the one being no longer a pupil” (= Arhat) <i>asaṃkleśa</i> (Skt.) non-defilement <i>asaṃskṛtadharmā</i> (Skt.) unconditioned <i>dharma</i> <i>aśāsvata</i> (Skt.) non-permanence</p>	<p><i>aṣṭādaśa-āveṇika-buddhadharma</i> (Skt.) eighteen special Buddha-dharmas <i>aśubha</i> (Skt.) impurity <i>atthakkhana</i> (P.) eight wrong circumstances <i>āveṇikadharmā</i> (Skt.) special qualities (of the Buddha) <i>avetya-prasāda</i> (Skt.) faith based on understanding / unshakable faith / perfect confidence <i>avinivartanīya-bodhisattva</i> (Skt.) irreversible bodhisattva <i>aviparītata</i> (Skt.) all encompassing <i>aviparyastata</i> (Skt.) all surrounding <i>avitathatā</i> (Skt. / P.) non-falseness <i>avyavadāna</i> (Skt.) non-purification <i>bao chuang</i> 寶幢 (Ch.) treasury banner <i>ben ji</i> 本際 (Ch.) original limit <i>ben wu</i> 本無 (Ch.) original non-existence <i>bhūta</i> (Skt.) the reality <i>bhūtaḥkoṭi</i> (Skt.) end of existence / true goal / reality-limit <i>bīja</i> (Skt.) seed <i>brahma-vihāra</i> (Skt.) supreme state (including <i>maitrī</i>, <i>karuṇā</i>, <i>muditā</i> and <i>upekṣā</i>) <i>buddhamanasikāra</i> (Skt.) directing the mind towards the Buddha <i>buddhaparyupāsana</i> (Skt.) honoring the Buddha <i>buddhavadāna</i> (Skt.) the word of the Buddha <i>caitya</i> (Skt.) shrine <i>cakravartin</i> (Skt.) wheel-turning monarch <i>catur-pratisaṃvidyā</i> (Skt.) four special knowledges <i>catur-vaiśāradya</i> (Skt.) four confidences <i>catuṣkoṭi</i> (Skt.) four alternative positions <i>daśa-tathāgatabala</i> (Skt.) ten Buddha powers <i>dharmatṭhitatā</i> (P.) stability of dharma <i>dharmaniyāmatā</i> (P.) certainty of dharma <i>dharmabhāṇaka</i> (Skt.) <i>dharma</i>-preacher <i>dharmadhātu</i> (Skt.) the fundament of <i>dharma</i> / the sphere of <i>dharma</i> <i>*dharmadhātu(ja)kāya</i> (法性生身) the body born in the sphere of <i>dharma</i></p>
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dharmakāya (Skt.) *dharma*-body
dharmānairātmya (Skt.) non-substantiality of all factors
dharmaparyāya (Skt.) means of doctrine
dharmāśarīra (Skt.) *dharma*-body
dharmasthitaye dhātuh (Skt.) fundament for the stability of *dharma*
dharmatā (Skt.) the essence of *dharma*
dhātu (Skt. / P.) fundament / cause / sphere
dhyāna (Skt.) trance
dvātriṃśata mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa (Skt.) thirty-two characteristics of a great man
fo-jing-shen 佛經身 (Ch.) the corpus of Buddhist *sūtras*
gotra (Skt.) lineage
hetu (Skt.) cause
idappaccayatā (Skt. / P.) the state of having this as a cause
janmakāya (Skt.) birth-body
janmaśarīra (Skt.) birth-body
jian shi-fang zhu-fo san-mei 見十方諸佛三昧 (Ch.) seeing the Buddhas of the ten directions
kāmadhātu (Skt.) sphere of desire
kukkucca (P.) remorse
madhyadeśa (Skt.) middle region
mahākaruṇā (Skt.) great compassion
mahāmaitrī (Skt.) great friendliness
mahāvīdyā (Skt.) secret lore / incantation
maitrī (Skt.) friendliness
manomayakāya (Skt. / P.) mind-made body
mātāpaitṛkabala (Skt.) power handed down from father and mother
mātāpettikasambhava (P.) born of father and mother
nembutsu 念佛 (Jp.) recollecting the Buddha
nian fo 念佛 (Ch.) recollecting the Buddha
nirjāta (Skt.) born
nirmāṇakāya (Skt.) body of manifestation
nirvidā (Skt.) world-disgust
pañca-abhijñā fivefold super-knowledge (*divya-cakṣus* (Skt.) divine eye
divya-śrota (Skt.) divine ear
cittaparyāyajñāna (Skt.) knowledge of other minds
pūrvanivāsānusmṛti (Skt.) recollection of previous habitations

āsravakṣayajñāna (Skt.) knowledge of the decay of affliction
pañcakāmaguṇa (Skt.) five qualities of desire
pañcaskandha (Skt.) five aggregates
rūpa (Skt.) physical body
vedanā (Skt.) physical sensation
saṃjñā (Skt.) sensory perception
saṃskāra (Skt.) habitual tendencies
viññāna (Skt.) consciousness
parinirvāṇa (Skt.) complete *nirvāṇa*
paścimaśarīra (Skt.) last body
prajñāpāramitā (Skt.) perfection of wisdom
prajñāpāramitā-nirjāta (Skt.) born from *Prajñāpāramitā*
prajñāpāramitā-niryāta (Skt.) adept in *prajñāpāramitā*
prasāda (Skt.) faith
prāsāda (Skt.) palace
prātihārya (Skt.) miracle
pratisaṃvid (Skt.) special knowledge
pratītyasamutpāda (Skt.) dependent origination
punya (Skt.) merit
pūtikāya (P.) foul body
ṛddhi (Skt.) supernatural power
rūpa (Skt. / P.) form
rūpadhātu (Skt.) sphere of pure form
rūpakāya (Skt.) form-body
rūpaśarīra (Skt.) form-body
ṣaḍāyatana (Skt.) six sense objects
rūpa (Skt.) vision
śabda (Skt.) hearing
gandha (Skt.) olfaction
rasa (Skt.) taste
spraṣṭavya (Skt.) touch
dharma (Skt.) concept
sāmaññaphala (P.) results of being a *śramaṇa*
sambhogakāya (Skt.) body of mutual enjoyment
saṃghaṇa (Skt.) mass / compact / solid
saptatṛṃśati-bodhipakṣya-dharma (Skt.) 37 wings to enlightenment
śarīra (Skt.) relics / body
śāstr (Skt.) teacher
satyatā (Skt.) the actuality
shinri gainen 真理概念 (Jp.) the concepts of the truth

smṛtyupasthāna (Skt.) foundations of
mindfulness
śravaka (Skt.) Disciple
śrota-āpattyaṅga (Skt.) attributes of the entrance
into the stream
śūnyatā (Skt.) emptiness
svabhāvaśūnyatā (Skt.) emptiness of own being
tāraṅkopama-kalpa (Skt.) starlike aeon
tathatā (Skt./ P.) suchness
tattvatā (Skt.) truth
tr̥ṣṇāksaya (Skt.) destruction of craving
upāsaka (Skt.) layman
upāsikā (Skt.) laywoman
upāyakaśālyā (Skt.) skill in means
vajra (Skt.) adamant
vajrāsana (Skt.) adamant seat
vajropama-kāya / *-ātmabhāva* (Skt.) *vajra*-like
body
vikurvita (Skt.) wonder
vippaṭisāra (P.) regret
virāga (Skt.) apart from desire
viśaya (Skt.) sphere
yāthātathā (Skt.) real state

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Auffassungen von Buddha-Sehen und Buddha-Körper in der frühen Prajñāpāramitā-Literatur

Diese Dissertation untersucht das „Buddha-Sehen“ und seine Beziehung zum Buddha-Körper in der frühen Prajñāpāramitā-Literatur. Sie behandelt verschiedene Texte, die auf die Zeit vom 1. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert n. Chr. datiert werden, und skizziert die historischen Entwicklungen einiger wichtiger Begriffe in dieser Zeitspanne. In der frühesten Phase dieser Entwicklungen wurde das „Sehen“ (Begriffe aus der Wurzel $\sqrt{\text{dṛś}}$) metaphorisch verwendet und folgte der älteren Idee, die im frühen Buddhismus bekannt war: „Das Dharma-Sehen ist das Buddha-Sehen“. Später aber bedeutete das Buddha-Sehen häufiger eine wirkliche Vision oder Wahrnehmung des Buddhas und wurde mit dem Ziel der Erlösung verbunden. Diese Veränderung hat auch den Weg für die Entwicklung der Buddha-Körper-Theorie geebnet: der Begriff „Dharma-Körper“ (*dharmakāya*) wurde in den Kontext des Buddha-Sehens neben dem Begriff „Form-Körper“ (*rūpakāya*) eingefügt. Diese Dissertation besteht aus acht relativ unabhängigen Themen, (Kapitel 1-8). Hier fasse ich die drei Hauptargumente daraus zusammen und versuche, eine Übersicht über die historische Entwicklung des "Buddha-Sehens" und der Buddha-Körper-Theorie zu geben.

(1) Den Buddha in einer metaphorischen Weise sehen

Nach dem *parinirvāṇa* des Buddhas wurde die Wiederherstellung seiner Gegenwart in der Welt eine große Besorgnis unter den buddhistischen Gemeinschaften. Eine Folge davon war, dass der „Dharma“ und die „Dharmatā“, die „das Wort des Buddhas“ (*buddhavacana*) repräsentieren, als die Existenz von Buddha betrachtet wurden. Als Beweis für diese Phänomene haben wir darauf hingewiesen, dass die *Samyukta-Āgama* die Sätze enthält: „Das Dharma-Sehen ist das Buddha-Sehen“ sowie „Ob die Buddhas geboren werden oder nicht, die Dharmatā, das Fundament für die Stabilität des Dharmas, bleibt“ (*utpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā sthitā eveyaṃ dharmatā dharmasthitaye dhātuḥ*). Im letzteren bedeutet die „Dharmatā“ das „bedingte Entstehen“ (*pratityasamutpāda*). Aber wenn dieser Satz in *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* nachgebildet wird, wechselt die Bedeutung „bedingtes Entstehen“ (*pratityasamutpāda*) zu „Leerheit“ (*śūnya[tā]*), „Merkmalloses“ (*ānimitta*) und

„Unbegehrtes“ (*apraṇihita*) usw., weil in der frühesten *Prajñāpāramitā*- und *Madhyamaka*-Literatur das „bedingte Entstehen“ als „Leerheit“ uminterpretiert wird (Kap. 1).

Es ist sehr wahrscheinlich, dass das nicht-metaphorische „Buddha-Sehen“, nämlich die Buddha-Visualisierung, nicht betont wurde, bevor die zwei Kapitel über die Geschichte von *Sadāprarudita* in *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* aufgenommen wurden. Beim „Buddha-Sehen“ im Hauptteil von *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* geht es meistens um die Beziehung zwischen dem Buddha und dem *Prajñāpāramitā*-Text, die durch einige rhetorische Techniken realisiert wird. Ein interessantes Beispiel ist die Argumentation, dass der *Prajñāpāramitā*-Text selbst die Buddhas hervorbringen kann (§ 2).

(2) Visualisierung und Erinnerung an den Buddha

In der Geschichte von *Sadāprarudita* in *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* finden wir die Beschreibung eines Prozesses, in dem *Sadāprarudita* nach *Prajñāpāramitā* sucht. Dieser Prozess ist ähnlich wie der Prozess der Buddha-Visualisierung, die als *pratyutpanna-samādhi* bezeichnet wird. Am Ende der Geschichte traf sich *Sadāprarudita* mit dem Dharma-Prediger, der als der Buddha verstanden wurde. Auffällig an dieser Geschichte ist aber, dass wir den Einfluss der Praxis der Buddha-Visualisierung auf die *Prajñāpāramitā*-Literatur finden, die insbesondere im Hauptteil der *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* nicht existiert (§ 3).

Vergleichsweise ist die Visualisierung in der Großen *Prajñāpāramitā*, die aus *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* erweitert wurde, eine wichtige Methode, um das soteriologische Ziel zu erreichen. Zum Beispiel kann man die Wiedergeburt im idealen Buddha-Land durch die Praxis *buddhānusmṛti* (Erinnerung an Buddha) oder *buddhamanasikāra* (den Geist auf den Buddha richten) erreichen, die in der Großen *Prajñāpāramitā* beide „Visualisierung“ bedeuten. Dennoch kann man durch Über-Erkenntnis (*abhijñā*) in andere Buddha-Länder gelangen oder in der eigenen Welt bleiben, um die gegenwärtigen Buddhas in anderen Buddha-Ländern direkt wahrzunehmen (§ 4).

Im frühen Buddhismus hatte der Begriff *buddhānusmṛti* jedoch nichts mit Visualisierung zu tun, sondern bedeutete die Erinnerung der Leistung des Buddhas. Die Popularität der Visualisierung des Buddhas entstand sehr wahrscheinlich wegen der Herstellung von Bildern des Buddhas. Im Vergleich dazu finden wir auch eine andere Praxis von *buddhānusmṛti*, der Nennung von Buddhas Namen, in der *Saptaśatikā-Prajñāpāramitā* (§ 7).

3) Das „Buddha-Sehen“ und die Entwicklung der Buddha-Körper-Theorie

Bisher haben wir eine Entwicklung vom metaphorischen „Buddha-Sehen“ zu der wirklichen Wahrnehmung des Buddhas in der frühen Prajñāpāramitā-Tradition beobachtet. Mit dieser Entwicklung können wir die Bildung der Buddha-Körper-Theorie besser verstehen. In *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* oder in der frühesten Version der Großen Prajñāpāramitā wird der Buddha mit den Begriffen „Dharmatā“ und „Dharma“ identifiziert, die sich auf „das Dharma-Sehen ist das Buddha-Sehen“ beziehen. Manchmal stehen in solchen Texten die Begriffe „Form-Körper“ (*rūpakāya*) und „Dharma“ als Paar, aber in den späteren Versionen der Großen Prajñāpāramitā wird der Begriff „Dharma-Körper“ (*dharmakāya*) anstelle von „Dharmatā“ in den Kontext des „Buddha-Sehens“ interpoliert. Das heißt, „Dharma-Körper“ kommt ursprünglich aus „Dharmatā“ (§ 5).

Die zwei Buddha-Körper - den physischen Körper (= Form-Körper) und den Dharma-Körper - findet man auch in einigen anderen Texten, z.B. im „Yogalehrbuch“ oder der *Samādhirāja-Sūtra*, in denen die Visualisierung bzw. Wahrnehmung der beiden Körper sogar die grundlegenden Schritte der „*buddhānusmṛti*“ genannten Meditations-Praxis bildet. Diese Meditations-Praxis kann auch die Interpolation der Begriffe von zwei Körpern im Kontext des „Buddha-Sehens“ in der Großen Prajñāpāramitā beeinflusst haben (§ 6).

Zusätzlich untersuchten wir auch ein interessantes Beispiel, in dem der Buddha-Körper als „der Körper so stark wie Diamant“ bezeichnet wird (§ 8).

Zusammengefasst, durch die Untersuchung der Texte, die die verschiedenen Phasen der Entwicklung der frühen Prajñāpāramitā-Literatur repräsentieren, haben wir die Entwicklung von einem metaphorischen „Buddha-Sehen“ zu einer tatsächlichen Wahrnehmung des Buddhas als eine soteriologische Methode innerhalb der Prajñāpāramitā-Tradition gezeigt. Gleichzeitig finden wir auch die Entstehung des Dharma-Körpers des Buddhas aus dem Begriff „Dharma“ oder „Dharmatā“, der sowohl als das Wort des Buddhas betrachtet, als auch als Repräsentation seiner Existenz verstanden wurde. Diese beiden Prozesse korrelieren miteinander und wurden durch die philosophischen Innovationen, die Entwicklung der neuen rhetorischen Techniken und der meditativen Praxis gefördert.

