Framing Intellectual and Lived Spaces in Early South Asia: Sources and Boundaries

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Framing Intellectual and Lived Spaces in Early South Asia

Beyond Boundaries

Religion, Region, Language and the State

Edited by
Michael Willis, Sam van Schaik
and Lewis Doney

Volume 2

Framing Intellectual and Lived Spaces in Early South Asia

Sources and Boundaries

Edited by
Lucas den Boer and Elizabeth A. Cecil

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Preface

The articles collected in this volume were presented at the 7th Annual Asian Studies Symposium, held in September 2016 at Leiden University. This conference brought together young scholars interested in developing new and integrative approaches to the study of primary historical sources from South Asia. The studies in this volume were presented at two different panels, which addressed material culture and philosophy, respectively. Papers were presented by Elizabeth A. Cecil, Sanne Dokter-Mersch, Divya Kumar-Dumas, Mirjam Westra, Laxshmi Greaves, Lewis Doney, Himal Trikha, Evgeniya Desnitskaya, Ana Bajželj, Gregory Forgues, Marie-Hélène Gorisse, Jonathan Duquette, and Lucas den Boer. We are pleased to also include Peter Bisschop's article within the Text, Image, and Material section.

The current volume was supported by the ERC Synergy project '*Asia Beyond Boundaries: Religion, Region, Language and the State*', with which both editors were affiliated. This interdisciplinary research project was hosted by the British Museum, the British Library, SOAS, and Leiden University from 2014 – 2020. The project aimed to improve our understanding of the Gupta Period (4th–7th century CE) and its legacy in South and Southeast Asia by working across disciplinary boundaries and regions. This interdisciplinary approach also characterises the contributions in this book. As a volume in the *Beyond Boundaries* series, this work contains a collection of studies that work across geographical, chronological, disciplinary, and historiographical boundaries. The contributions are linked by a shared emphasis on engagement with primary sources and methodological innovation that participates in broader trends currently animating the study of Asian history and religions.

In addition to thanking all of the authors and the anonymous reviewers who have helped to create this book, we would like to recognize the following people and organizations: Lewis Doney and Michael Willis as editors of the *Beyond Boundaries* series; Kristen De Joseph for valuable editorial assistance; the International Institute for Asian Studies, the J. Gonda Fund Foundation, and the Society of Friends of the Kern Institute for funding the conference that occasioned this volume.

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Contents

Lucas den Boer and Elizabeth A. Cecil

Introduction

The contributions to this book address a series of 'confrontations' – for example, debates between intellectual communities, the interplay of texts and images, and texts and objects – and explore the ways in which the legacy of these encounters, and the human responses to them, inspired cultural production in early South Asia. The book employs the idea of 'confrontation' as a lens through which to examine historical moments in which individuals and communities were confronted with new ideas, ideologies, and material expressions. Some of these encounters could be qualified as agonistic, as expressions of community identity and practice vied for normative status. Yet this active term also describes occasions of dynamic exchange and interaction between historical agents and the social and material contexts that defined the lived and intellectual spaces in which they operated. While the legacy of cultural production in the Gupta Period is often categorized as canonical, and thus suggests a fixity of form and idea, the studies included in this volume draw attention to the processes and contexts in which the 'classical' took shape and the subsequent reception and revision of its cultural forms.

1 Intellectual and Lived Spaces

The confrontations that this book presents originated in intellectual and lived spaces that were mutually influential. The different chapters explore how the lived spaces of writers and artists influenced their ideas and creations, and how texts, objects, and images reflect the identities of their makers. Instead of studying the primary sources as ends in themselves, the authors use these sources as the means to investigate the lived context of their creators. By looking at the materials from this perspective, the sources reveal how philosophical, religious, and artistic activities contributed to processes of identity formation and the negotiation of boundaries between communities. In addition to contributing new perspectives on the development of intellectual communities and the ideological parameters of philosophical traditions, this volume works to situate these cultural developments in their social and historical contexts.

We use the term "lived space" to refer to the sociocultural worlds in which the authors, thinkers, and artists, whose works are discussed in the following

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chapters, operated. Adopted from the work of Henri Lefebvre,[1] "lived space" is part of a conceptual triad that also includes "conceived" and "perceived" space. Whereas the latter two operate in largely ideational realms, lived space is the locus of culture and social activity and provides a productive frame for the papers included in the first section of the book. While the highly theoretical world of philosophy may appear to map most closely on the similarly abstract category of "conceived space", we have chosen the term 'intellectual space' instead. This term recognizes the notional spheres in which philosophical discourses work to locate themselves while, at the same time, it draws attention to the social embeddedness of the philosophers and schools that the authors examine. Even in the case of doctrinal differences and opposing philosophical traditions, the contributors show that individual thinkers occupied a shared 'intellectual space' in which they investigated a common set of questions concerning the formation and expression of authoritative knowledge and the manner in which that knowledge could be embodied by human (or more-than-human) agents. To begin to access these intellectual and lived spaces in the premodern world requires situating not only text, but other forms of religious media and cultural production in their shared contexts. Although addressed to discrete cases and places, each of the chapters that follow proceed from this shared perspective.

2 Sources and Boundaries

The individual contributions to the volume address a wide range of material and textual sources and cultural contexts – from Tibetan bells and Jaina teachers, to traditions of Sun worship and the poetics of argumentation. Given the variety represented, the question naturally arises regarding what ties these discussions productively together? The answer is the use of primary source materials to explore the shaping of cultural and intellectual communities. A close engagement with primary sources underpins each of the discussions in the book. Engaging with both textual and material evidence, in their work the contributors also trouble the persistent binary that often separates these bodies of historical evidence by showing how premodern cultural agents negotiated and synthesized their sources. Moreover, by tracing patterns of bi-directional influence it becomes evident that using one body of evidence to corroborate the claims of another (i.e. simply looking for a textual precedent for an image or vice-versa) is far

1 Henri Lefebvre. *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991.

too simple and minimizes the innovative and imaginative ways in which cultural producers made use of the materials at their disposal.

In addition to questioning persistent binaries in the classification of source materials, the contributions included in the first section work to complicate the very categories of 'text' and 'material' by tracing the historical development of particular practices through different modes of cultural production. The practice of Sun worship, for example, is shown to have been shaped by a rich legacy of purāṇic narrative in conversation with traditions of ritual rules and prescriptions (i.e. *śāstra*) popularized by competing religious communities. Material production, too, is a multi-faceted category. By including monumental sculptures for worship, ritual objects, temple adornments, and the frame for inscriptions, the category of 'material' is shown to be as complex and varied as that of 'text'.

The studies included in the second section trace the development of knowledge communities in ways that challenge the idea of fixed boundaries between intellectual traditions. These traditions, in fact, are shown to be the work of enterprising thinkers who borrowed, responded to, and refined the ideas of their interlocutors from across Brahmanical, Jain, and Buddhist lineages. In addition to recovering dialogue between communities often held to be distinct, established forms of argumentation, too, are not restricted to the category of *śāśtra* as 'knowledge system', but worked across literary genres and were influenced by poetic works, prose ritual manuals, and epic exemplars.

3 Overview of Contents

The articles in the first half of the volume address the intersections of textual, material, and visual forms of cultural production. These contributions focus on three primary modes of confrontation: the relation of inscribed texts to material media, the visual articulation of literary images and, finally, the literary interpretation and reception of material religious media. Discussions of the relation of text and material culture have tended to privilege literary semantics and imagine a unidirectional pattern of interaction, whereby textual forms inspired images and guided material production. These articles aim to re-describe these interactions through focused case studies that incorporate a variety of media, ranging from individual objects and monuments, to sanctified spaces and religious landscapes.

The second part of the volume focuses on confrontations both within and between intellectual communities. The articles in this section address the dynamics between peripheral and dominant movements in the history of Indian

philosophy. Texts belonging to peripheral movements, such as the Jaina tradition, often apply creative strategies to position themselves in relation to their intellectual rivals. This process of boundary formation is a driving force behind philosophical developments and ideological changes. Instead of solely focusing on the philosophical merit of specific positions, the contributions in the second part of the book explore the relation between philosophical texts and the ideological and social realms in which these works evolved.

4 Text, Image & Lived Spaces

The articles of the first half of the volume are in dialogue with current works that examine religious centers and built landscapes as sites of community building and which emphasize the strategic use of images and inscriptions to materialize social affiliations. These essays are also influenced by studies that emphasize the effective agency of architecture, objects, and images in shaping South Asian history. Recent examples include F.B. Flood, *Objects in Translation: Material Culture and Medieval 'Hindu-Muslim' Encounter* (2009) and R. Eaton and P. Wagoner, *Power, Memory, Architecture: Contested Sites on India's Deccan Plateau, 1300–1600* (2014). While working to situate and contextualize the creation of material religious media within the social and geographic contexts in which it was produced, the contributions are also attuned to the reception and legacy of particular objects and images. They consider how images may have been explained by later viewers, how objects were made meaningful, and the ways in which the memory of a historical moment could be received via material forms.

In "The Enigma of the Centauress and her Lover", Laxshmi Greaves explores an enigmatic, yet important, iconographic topos found in the art of the Kuṣāṇas, Kṣatrapas and Guptas; namely, a centauress (that is, a figure with the torso of a woman and the lower half of a horse) bearing on her back a human male in regal attire. The pair are sometimes joined by a devotee or a celestial being such as a *vidyādhara*. This type of image has been found at several sites including Sāñcī, Bādāmi, Rājghāṭ, Lakha-Dhora and Mathurā, with undoubtedly the most magnificent example hailing from the stepped pyramidal brick monument known as ACI, located at the heart of the ancient city of Ahichhatrā in Uttar Pradesh. Readings of this fantastic figure have tended to rely on the identification of a textual source to explain the unique image: ranging from it being simply an emblematic representation of a *kinnara-mithuna* dallying in the hills; to the celestial nymph Urvaśī, with her husband; or Manu Vaivasvata (Prajāpati) on the

back of the Earth Goddess who has temporarily assumed a half-mare/half-woman form. All of these interpretations are problematic in one way or another. By moving beyond a textual explanation for the identity and popularity of a visual form, Greaves considers how the image may have functioned within the structural contexts and broader visual programs of the monuments and landscapes in which it was encountered and viewed.

With her study, "Visual Story-Telling in Text and Image: The Nāga as Inhabitant of the Ocean and the Netherworld", Sanne Dokter-Mersch address the intersections of narrative and image. As in the study of Greaves, Dokter-Mersch also works to explain the features of an iconographic form. But in this case, the image itself it not obscure; rather, it depicts one of the most widely known moments from early Vaiṣṇava mythology. From the Kuṣāṇa period onwards, stone images of Viṣṇu in his boar manifestation (*varāha*) appear across India. Most elements in these material representations of the myth can be explained from an iconographic or textual point of view. One ubiquitous element of the images, however, cannot be explained by recourse to the textual sources that recount the manifestation of the boar *avatāra*: namely, the presence of one or two *nāgas*, or mythical serpents, coiling under Viṣṇu's foot. Reading text and image together, Dokter-Mersch argues that the artists' imaginings of the *nāgas* expresses a cosmological vision that, while also present in the literary narratives, takes on an innovative form in sculpture.

Both Greaves and Dokter-Mersch take as their respective foci the material and visual expression of narratives. For Greaves, the connection between text and image is not straightforward, and her analysis points to spaces of material production and uses of images without a clear literary parallel. For Dokter-Mersch, the early Indic literary and visual sources are rich sources for representations of the *varāha* myth. But popularity does not equate to uniformity. Even within the parameters of a well-known narrative, authors and artisans found space for innovative modes of expression.

This question about the possibility of innovation within established cultural parameters is addressed in an engaging way in the contribution of Peter Bisschop, "*Vyoman*: The Sky is the Limit. On the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*'s Reworking of the *Liṅgodbhava* Myth." While the *Liṅgodbhava* myth is well known and tells of the origins of Śiva's worship in material form, specifically the *liṅga* that serves as his emblem, Bisschop draws attention to a remarkable adaptation of this myth in the context of Sūrya worship recorded in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*. The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* authors revised the *Liṅgodbhava* myth told in chapter 3 of the *Śivadharmaśāstra* and turned it into a myth about the manifestation and worship of Sūrya's *vyoman,* a mysterious object presented as the supreme form of the Sun god. While the *Liṅgodbhava* narrative describes the origins of a

familiar object of devotion (i.e. the Śiva *liṅga*), the identity of the *vyoman* as an object of worship is more difficult to trace. Does the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*'s description of the Saura emblem represent a textual innovation, or does it describe an actual object? By reexamining these narratives alongside ritual objects typically known as *saurapīṭha*s in art-historical literature, Bisschop shows how the authors of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* used a familiar narrative to reinterpret a comparatively abstract ritual object as an iconic form of the Sun.

Part one concludes with Lewis Doney's work on "Temple Bells from the Tibetan Imperial Period: Buddhist Material Culture in Context." This contribution outlines how the tradition of bells and gongs in monasteries along the Silk Road, focusing on Khotan, met Chinese bell-casting technology. Then what the design of extant imperial Tibetan bells and their epigraphy tell us about their form and function, their links with songs and praise, and their relation with Buddhism and power in Tibet. Like the contribution of Bisschop, Doney also takes as his focus the evolution of the visual and ritual functions of an object. He, too, considers the integration of text alongside the development of iconic bell 'types'. But in this case, the materiality of text is expressed in a different way, since the bells themselves function as text bearing objects. And in ways that participate with the other three essays in this section, Doney offers some glimpses into how these bells were remembered in Tibetan Buddhist historiography and art of the post-imperial period. This consideration of 'reception history' is an aspect that parallels Bisschop's study of textual reworking. In both cases, a formal template is adapted and reworked to develop a new mode of expression within the framework of 'tradition'.

5 Philosophy & Intellectual Spaces

The articles in the second half of the volume address different sorts of philosophical confrontations. Even though the history of philosophy is often presented as a series of ideas that evolve independently from their wider socio-historical setting, scholars are becoming increasingly attuned to the ways in which philosophical developments have been influenced by the historical contexts of particular thinkers. Important recent studies in this respect are V. Eltschinger, *Buddhist Epistemology as Apologetics: Studies on the History, Self-understanding and Dogmatic Foundations of Late Indian Buddhist Philosophy* (2014) and J. Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won: From Alexander to the Guptas* (2016). The authors in this part of the book explore how specific philosophical standpoints

can be situated in a wider temporal and cultural framework. Their work demonstrates the methodological value of analyzing philosophical views as elements within a multi-dimensional historical setting. On the one hand, this facilitates a better understanding of the historical texts. On the other, it turns the philosophical texts into relevant sources for an investigation of their socio-historical contexts.

In the chapter "Nonagonistic Discourse in the Early History of Indian Philosophical Debates: From Brahmodyas to the Mahābhāṣya" Evgeniya Desnitskaya investigates the continuity between the ancestral ritualistic verbal contests (*brahmodya*) as attested in the Vedas, and later forms of debate and dialogical textual structures. For this purpose, she focuses on the instances of nonagonistic argumentation in the *brahmodya*s, the Upaniṣads, and the *Mahābhāṣya* with the aim of revealing shared patterns and identifying possible affinities between ritual debates, the philosophical strategies of the Upaniṣadic thinkers, and those of the ancient grammarians. Desnitskaya's study shows that discussions that predate the period of classical philosophical debate (*vāda*) do not fit the agonistic pattern that later became normative. In the first section of her article, she discusses the classical *brahmodya*s that are found in the Ṛgveda and the Brāhmaṇas. In the second section, the author analyses the development of the *brahmodya*s and the early philosophical debates in the Upaniṣads. The third part of her article deals with nonagonistic discussions in Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*. The article offers several novel interpretations of the primary sources and provides a stimulating account of the early development of philosophical debates.

The two chapters by Marie-Hélène Gorisse and Ana Bajželj deal with Jaina philosophy. This topic is particularly relevant for an exploration of philosophical confrontations since the Jains have a long history of negotiating their space as a minority tradition within the wider cultural environment. Their well-known theory of 'non-one-sidedness' (*anekāntavāda*) is an important element in their attempt to distinguish themselves by creating a model that accommodates the views of others. This perspectivist model provided the Jains with a tool with which to incorporate aspects of rival views within their own theories while, at the same time, claiming intellectual superiority over their opponents. This dynamic is clearly visible in Marie-Hélène Gorisse's study, "The Legitimation of an Authoritative Discourse in Jainism". This chapter analyses the strategies employed by Jaina thinkers to establish the authority of the Jaina scriptural corpus. The first sections of her study provide an overview of seminal accounts on verbal or scriptural authority (*āptatva*), which is based on key passages in texts such as the *Tattvārthasūtra* and the *Nyāyāvatāra*. Gorisse shows how this debate was strongly influenced by the view on verbal testimony (*āgama*) that was upheld by the Naiyāyikas. After providing a general overview of the development of this debate, Gorisse provides an in-depth analysis of the discussion on authority

in Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā*. This work establishes the superiority of the Jaina perspective by pointing out the inadequacy of the one-sided views of the rival movements. Gorisse's study shows that the development of Jaina philosophy has to be studied in tandem with the developments in their wider intellectual environment and that the Jains represent a unique voice in the Indian philosophical landscape.

The chapter "Clay Pots, Golden Rings, and Clean Upper Garments: Causality in Jaina Philosophy" by Ana Bajželj investigates the philosophical merit of the Jaina view on causality. In previous studies, the Jaina view has been described as a middle ground between two rival theories. On the one hand, there is the view that an effect is pre-existent in its cause (*satkāryavāda*), which can be found in the Sāṃkhya tradition. On the other, there is the idea that the effect radically differs from the cause (*asatkāryavāda*), as defended by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika tradition. Other scholars have labelled the Jaina view on causality as '*sadasatkāryavāda*', since it combines aspects of both positions. Even though such a position might seem attractive at first sight, some scholars have questioned whether the Jaina solution provides a persuasive philosophical alternative or whether the Jains simply refuse to choose sides. In her study, Bajželj addresses this question by analysing important primary sources on the Jaina theory of knowledge. To this end, she focuses on Amṛtacandra Sūri's *Tattvadīpikā*. The chapter contains a large number of translated passages from Amṛtacandra's work and provides a rigorous analysis of his ideas on causality. The author demonstrates that the Jaina theory was not an ad hoc solution but that it offers a genuine philosophical alternative to the views of the other movements.

Gregory Forgues' study, "Charting the Geographies of 'Ju Mi pham rNam rgyal rGya mtsho's Perspectivist Approach to the Two Truths", shows how an early medieval Buddhist debate continued in the writings of the 19th century Tibetan scholar Mi pham. In this chapter, Forgues focuses on Mi pham's presentation of the relation between the concealing truth (*kun rdzob, saṃvṛti*) and the ultimate truth (*don dam pa, paramārtha*). Previous scholarship has characterised Mi pham's views on this subject as ambiguous or even inconsistent. However, the author argues that Mi pham uses several models that relate to different stages of understanding and that his account as a whole provides a coherent theory. Based on a careful reading of the primary sources, Forgues analyses the different perspectives that can be distinguished in Mi pham's work. This analysis reveals that Mi pham teaches Madhyamaka through a series of ascending views. These views correspond to (i.) the views of beginners who distinguish between *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*, (ii.) Svātantrika Madhyamaka, and (iii.) Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka. The corresponding goals of these three perspectives are (i.) to introduce beginners to two truths, (ii.) explain the nominal

ultimate, and (iii.) point to the actual ultimate. As such, Forgues demonstrates that Mi pham's inclusivist account provides a hierarchical soteriology that skilfully combines several opposing views on the nature of the two truths.

The contributors to this volume address a wide range of historical confrontations that shaped intellectual and lived spaces in early South Asia. We hope that the topics and disciplinary approaches in this book offer a stimulating confrontation which will facilitate a fruitful dialogue across the different disciplinary boundaries in the field of South Asian studies.

Part I: **Text, Image & Lived Spaces**

Laxshmi Rose Greaves

1 The Enigma of the Centauress and Her Lover: Investigating a Fifth-century Terracotta Panel from Ahichhatrā

1 Introduction

> Among these lesser gods that keep their place on the fringes of the orthodox are to be found spirits of the Earth and of the Mountain; the Four Guardian Gods of the Quarters with *Vessavana-Kuvera* at their head; *Gandharvas*, heavenly musicians; *Nagas*, the snake-people who have their world beneath the waters of streams and tanks, but who sometimes are identified with the tree spirits; and *Garudas*, half men, half birds who by kind are deadly foes of the *Nagas*. These diminished godlings must be regarded as the last remnant of a whole host of forgotten powers, once mighty and to be placated, each in its own place. Strange beings of another sphere, they could not wholly be passed over either by Brahman or Buddhist.[1]

The race of *kinnaras* – divine composite-creatures usually with human heads and torsos, and the lower bodies of animals, often horses, or birds[2] – can be added to this eclectic group of celestial beings or 'godlings' described by Vincent A. Smith. This paper is concerned with early visual depictions of

1 Vincent Arthur Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 7.

2 Half-human and half-equine creatures are sometimes called *kimpuruṣa*. Panchamukhi writes: "Though the lexicons equate kinnara with kimpurusha, the Vāchaspatya draws a distinction between the two on the basis of literary evidence . . . the [19th century] Vāchaspatya adds: -kimpurusha has the hips of a horse and the face of a man, while kinnara has the horse face and human body." See Panchamukhi, Raghavendra Swamirayacharya, *Gandharvas & Kinnaras in Indian Iconography* (Dharwar: Kannada Research Institute, 1951), 25–26; The *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, on the other hand, describes two types of kinnara, the first with a human body and horse head and the second with a human head and horse body. See Panchamukhi, 27. The earliest known centaur images (kéntauros in Ancient Greek) date as far back as the Late Bronze Age. See, for example, terracotta figurines from Ras Shamra-Ugarit, Minet el Beidha and Ras ibn Hani in northern Syria (Ione Mylonas Shear, "Mycenaean Centaurs at Ugarit," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 122 (2002), 147–153). A striking terracotta sculpture from Lefkandi in Euboea, Greece, which dates to the tenth century BCE, is often considered the earliest centaur image but post-dates the aforementioned figurines. Though male centaurs predominate in Greek art and mythology, centauresses are also represented and become increasingly commonplace after the fifth century BCE (see D.E. Strong, "A Lady Centaur," *The British Museum Quarterly*, 30.1/2 (1965): 36–40 (38)). As with their Indian counterparts, Greek centaurs are associated with forests and mountains.

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equine *kinnarīs* (centauresses), and particularly those in the company of a male with human form.[3] Generally speaking, we find two major iconographic depictions involving centauresses in India (Figure 1).[4] The earlier, predominant type shows a centauress carrying a regal-looking male on her back. Between the third century BCE and the sixth century CE this image appears to have held a degree of popularity and we find it adorning Hindu and Buddhist monuments alike and on small portable terracotta discs. The second type, which emerged at the start of the eighth century, portrays a male figure in the act of subduing a small centauress. Both of these iconographic types appear to have fallen into obscurity after the early medieval period and the original identity of these flamboyant pairs have since been lost to collective memory. The aim of this

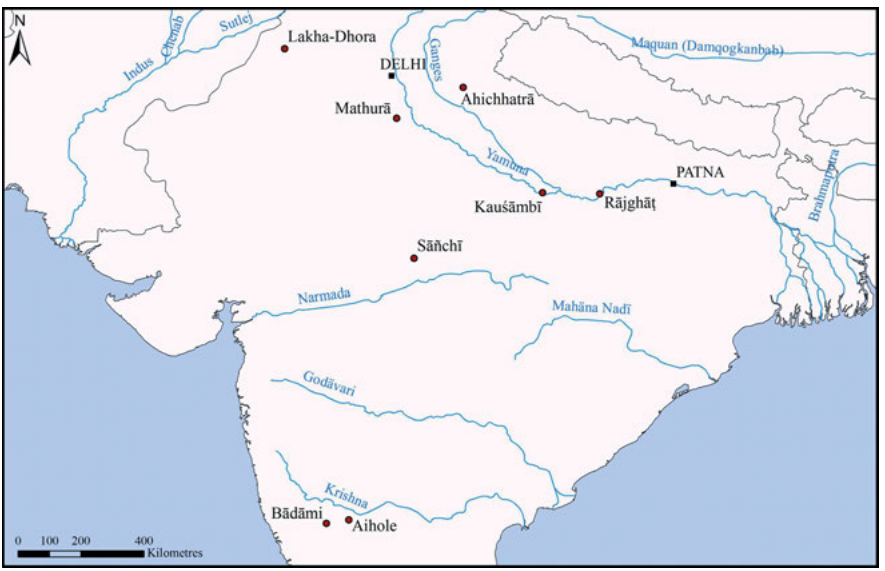

Figure 1: Map showing location of known centauress images in India.

3 This paper has developed from a subchapter of my doctoral thesis: Laxshmi Greaves, Brick Foundations: North Indian Brick Temple Architecture and Terracotta Art of the Fourth to Sixth Centuries CE (Cardiff University: PhD thesis, 2015), 455–466.

4 Centaurs and centauresses also featured in the art of Gandhara. Here they are depicted with the head, body and legs of a human and the rear and hind legs of a horse. See, for example, a small Kusāna period centauress from Dera Ismail Khan (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region of Pakistan) at the British Museum (Museum number: 1888, 1115.1); and a schist centauress from the same period in the Chandigarh Museum. The images from Gandhara will not be explored here as this paper is primarily concerned with cenaturess with male rider/ male oppressor scenes.

paper, then, is to attempt to determine what these images might have signified or represented, taking into account the possibility that their meaning may have evolved or even transformed over the eleven–hundred years in which they were being produced. It is plausible that the surviving centauress sculptures could illustrate a variety of myths or possibly even different episodes of the same myth.

The methodological approach taken in this paper involves analysing text and image in conjunction. That is to say, since the types of images in question ceased to be produced after the early medieval period, and their architectural and archaeological contexts are, for the most part, lost, unknown, or in a severely ruined state, parallels or clues to the identity of the centauress and her companion have been sought in religious texts. Consonant with the antiquity of centaur(ess) imagery, most of the texts which refer to this breed of mythical creature were composed at an early date, with some texts post-dating the most ancient of the images.

While it is essential that art historians in the field of South Asian studies actively engage with textual sources, and *vice versa*, this approach inevitably throws up a number of searching questions, pitfalls and challenges. In other words, we face confrontations when merging the two disciplines. By identifying an image, it becomes imbued with meaning, significance and context, and thus the stakes are high. To quote Donald Preziosi, ". . . the principal aim of all art historical study has been to make artworks more fully *legible* in and to the present."[5] It is not uncommon, then, for images to be wrongly affiliated with specific textual narratives in order to satisfy the need for a solution. Occasionally, obscure or divergent details present in an image are ignored. This tendency to bypass or hurry over inconvenient details or nuances undermines the evidence that points to a complex, hugely diverse and creative artistic culture in early India, teeming with singularity, non-conformity and place-specificity. This is especially the case for imagery produced before the mid-fifth century CE, because after this point in time Hindu temple iconography becomes increasingly formalised. Minor irregularities in early imagery include details such as attributes held by a deity which find no mention in the texts, while more significant 'deviations' take a radical departure from mainstream iconographic conventions. In addition, many unique deity images survive, some of which may have depicted local gods. A fifth century image recently found at Ahichhatrā, for example, portrays a three-headed, six-armed ithyphallic Śaiva deity, each of the heads sporting a third eye, a flaming head of hair, and a trifurcated tongue with an eye. This fearsome deity wields a trident and is possibly in the act of stamping on a demon (the image has suffered damage).

5 Donald Preziosi, "Art as History," in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Donald Preziosi (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 21–30 (14).

Since a deity of this description does not feature in the texts, we can only make an educated guess as to his identity. A possible interpretation is that he represents a composite form of Rudra and Agni.[6]

Occasionally, a confrontation between textual studies and art history manifests itself when the dates of comparative visual and textual material do not correspond. Thus, it has sometimes been argued that an image cannot be a representation of a well-known myth embodied in the texts, despite visual evidence to the contrary, because the earliest known textual account of the myth post-dates the image. A story, however, might be in circulation orally (perhaps in a variety of different tellings) for a considerable length of time before being absorbed into a Purāṇa, an epic, or into another branch of literature.[7]

This paper, then, begins with the premise that there are traditions, divinities, or myths that have not survived in writing, or indeed, may never have been written down in the first place, with the only relics surviving in a visual medium. Sometimes, to the frustration of the art historian, these visual relics

6 Greaves, "Brick Foundations," 2015, 432–435.

7 This subject has also been explored by Shonaleeka Kaul in her article on "Early Mathurā: Sacred Imagination and Diverse Traditions," *Indian Historical Review* 42.1 (2015): 1–16 (9); and by Upinder Singh, who writes:

> The History of Hinduism has generally been constructed on the basis of frameworks provided by religious texts, which are not always accurately reflective of popular practice. Apart from their elite authorship and the notorious problem of dating, Brahmanical texts reflect a phase when the practices they mention have been accorded brahmanical sanction, and hence conceal their much earlier origin. Further, traditions seeking to attain or having attained the position of cultural dominance try to marginalize other traditions that may have been very important at the time and in the process give us a distorted impression of prevailing religious practice.

See Upinder Singh, "Cults and Shrines in Early Historical Mathura (*c.* 200 BC–AD 200)," *World Archaeology* 36.3 (2004): 378–398 (378).

Likewise, Richard Mann writes:

> Recent scholarship illustrates significant gaps between the ideologies propounded in textual sources and the world of material evidence. [Gregory] Schopen has observed, for instance, that western scholars often had access to the archaeological record produced by the ASI but chose to ignore or undermine it when it appeared to question what textual sources claimed. He repeatedly highlights a bias in the study of Indian Buddhism where '[t]extuality overrides actuality'.

See Richard D. Mann, "Material Culture and the Study of Hinduism and Buddhism," *Religion Compass* 8.8 (2014): 264–273 (269). Mann references Gregory Schopen. "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism," in *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India*, edited by Gregory Schopen (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 1–22 (7).

refuse to relinquish their secrets. As will shortly become evident, the images that concern us in this paper, do not explicitly recall a known textual narrative. As a result, the discourse here will necessarily be of a somewhat tentative nature. This paper will nevertheless seek to demonstrate a more enquiring, thorough approach towards the type of complex, obscure imagery that is often paid little attention in literature on ancient or early South Asian art.

The paper will focus chiefly on the most spectacular surviving image depicting a centauress and a male with human form: a terracotta plaque hailing from the ancient city of Ahichhatrā in the Bareilly District of Uttar Pradesh. This plaque was one of several recovered from the upper terrace of the largest of Ahichhatrā's many temples; a stepped pyramidal brick monument known as ACI or Bhimgaja, situated at the very centre of the fortress city (Figure 2).[8]

Figure 2: The pyramidal brick temple structure known as ACI or Bhimgaja, located at the heart of the fortress city of Ahichhatrā in the Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh. Photograph courtesy of the Archaeological Survey of India.

8 ACI was excavated under the direction of K.N. Diksit and A. Ghosh between 1940 and 1944. The Ahichhatrā plaque might belong to the reign of the *mahārājādhirāja* Kumāragupta I (*c.* 415–447) based on the similarity in composition and style between the image of the centauress and rider in the terracotta panel to that of horse and rider which appears on some of

The Śiva temple which once crowned the monumental terraces of ACI is no longer extant, but owing to the vast scale of the square platforms the structure still dominates the surrounding landscape for quite some distance. The form of ACI recalls to some extent the great *stūpas* and sanctuaries built under the Kuṣāṇa kings, such as the breath-taking Kaneśko-oanindo-bagolaggo (Sanctuary of Victorious Kaniṣka), a monument built in terraces carved out of a hill in Surkh-Kotal in the Baglan province of Afghanistan (ancient Bactria). Such monuments might be considered as awe-inspiring, magnificent statements of dynastic power, markers of territorial ownership, and tangible manifestations of religious devotion.

ACI probably dates to the Gupta period, *circa* 450 CE, although the structure continued to be expanded, altered and renovated up until the eleventh century CE.[9] Upon approaching the monument, steps on either the east or west (the front entrance) would have been ascended, and the dark corridors of the platforms circumambulated. The walls of the penultimate terrace were adorned with large terracotta relief plaques, many of which depicted manifest forms of Śiva, or myths involving the god.[10] The subject matter of the surviving panels would appear to focus overwhelmingly on self-mastery and the overcoming of sin, with fierce forms of Śiva or Rudra being most prevalent.[11] After observing these powerful images, the devotees would then proceed to the surmounting temple (now lost), enshrining the monumental *liṅga*: the potent "sign" of the unmanifest Śiva.[12] Moreover, they would have been greeted with arresting views of the surrounding city through the doorways of the porches, or from the external *pradakṣiṇa-patha* (circumambulatory walkway), as though standing at the summit of a mountain. It should be noted here that there may have been restrictions over who had access to the temple, or even to different levels of the monument. There might have also been a protocol attached to who could ascend which flight of steps.

The characters depicted on the Ahichhatrā panel have previously been interpreted as representing a nameless *kinnara-mithuna* dallying in the hills; the

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the coins of the aforementioned ruler (personal communication with Ellen Raven, 2016). Most of the panels from ACI are now in the National Museum, New Delhi.

9 ACI is built over the ruins of an apsidal or circular Kuṣāṇa brick structure.

10 For the most part, the order and placement of the images was not reported by the excavators.

11 Subject matter includes, for example, the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice, a character who might represent the *gaṇa* Nīlalohita (a form of Rudra), Caṇḍeśvara and Bhairava.

12 The stone *liṅga* which still balances precariously on the uppermost platform of ACI measures 2.4 m in height and 1.1 m in width.

celestial nymph Urvaśī with her husband Purūravas – a subject popular in early Indian texts; and Manu Vaivasvata (Prajāpati) seated on the earth goddess who has temporarily assumed a mare form. Each of these readings is problematic in one way or another and will be explored in this paper.

2 The Panel

The Ahichhatrā panel survives in its entirety and depicts a *kinnarī* with a male figure of smaller proportions seated on her back (Figure 3). In the upper-right hand corner of the plaque hovers a *vidyādhara* (celestial being) carrying a garland. A tree with bowed branches against a background of hilly or mountainous terrain is depicted in the lower register.[13] The square face of the *kinnarī* is strikingly similar to that of the nude female in another panel from ACI. Elsewhere I have very tentatively identified the latter character as the *apsarā* (celestial nymph) Urvaśī, standing before Sage Nārāyaṇa, although there is a strong possibility that she instead represents the goddess Pārvatī in the presence of Śiva (Figure 4).[14]

Like the latter female, the centauress also wears large hooped-earrings and has a comparable though considerably more elaborate hairstyle in a trefoil arrangement. No doubt this gorgeous hair-arrangement ornamented with beads and a lotus flower is supposed to indicate her extraordinary beauty and elevated status. She holds her right hand up in the *tripatāka* gesture while she places her left hand with seeming affection over the left shoulder of the male rider.[15] Interestingly, her male companion also makes the *tripatāka mudrā* with his right hand, the same hand which he uses to tenderly caress her chin (Figure 5). The *tripatāka* gesture is a fascinating detail since it generally indicates speech or dialogue; the pair then,

13 The nineteenth–century encyclopaedic Sanskrit dictionary, the *Śabdakalpadruma*, locates the land of the *kimpuruṣas* in the mountainous regions between Mount Meru and the Himalayas. See Panchamukhi, *Gandharvas & Kinnaras*, 11.

14 This interpretation of the plaque is tentative and is explored in Laxshmi Rose Greaves. "Śiva Dakṣiṇāmūrti or Sage Nārāyaṇa? Reconsidering an Early Terracotta Panel from Ahichhatrā," in *South Asian Archaeology and Art 2014. Papers Presented at the Twenty-Second International Conference of the European Association for South Asian Archaeology and Art held at the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities/National Museums of World Culture, Stockholm, Sweden, 30th of June to 4th of July 2014*, edited by Eva Myrdal (New Delhi: Dev, 2020), 135–152.

15 V.S. Agrawala, *Terracotta Figurines of Ahichchhatrā (District Bareilly, U.P.), 2nd ed.* (Varanasi: Prithivi Prakashan, 1985, 1st ed. 1948), 66.

Figure 3: Terracotta plaque from Ahichhatrā ACI, measuring 64 x 64 x 9 cm. National Museum, New Delhi.

are engaged in conversation.[16] Both wear a ring on their little fingers. The breasts of the centauress are bare though her décolletage is adorned with two necklaces, one an *ekāvalī* (single strand of pearls), and a long scarf that flutters in the wind behind her. Between her breasts hangs a sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*). On the lower half of her body sits a saddle (*paryāṇapaṭṭa*) with a tassel dangling from its hem.

16 The *tripatāka mudrā* involves the raising of the middle and index fingers, while the thumb and other fingers are folded into the palm of the hand. This gesture is common in Buddhist art, including in the art of Gandhara, and interpretations of the meaning of this *mudrā* have been offered by numerous scholars such as John Marshall, H.P. Francfort, M.L Carter and most recently by Tadashi Tanabe. Tanabe concludes that this gesture, which had its *naissance* in Hellenistic Greek art, signifies the act of speaking, conversation, praising or other types of verbal communication, such as singing (as *kinnarīs* are famed for doing). See Tadashi Tanabe. "The Gesture of Raising Two Fingers Depicted on Gandharan Sculpture." In *Religion, Society, Trade and Kingship: Archaeology and Art in South Asia and along the Silk Road, 5500 BCE-5th Century CE*, edited by Laxshmi Rose Greaves and Adam Hardy (New Delhi: Dev, 2020), 209–222.

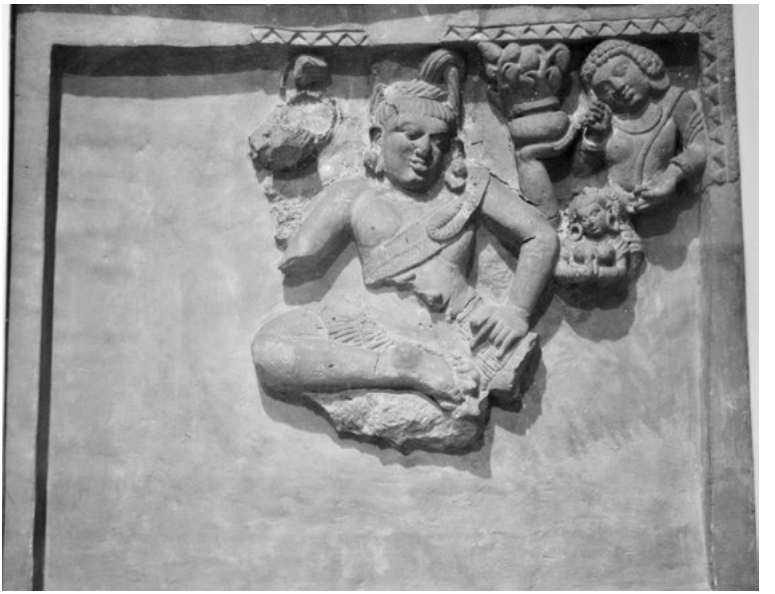

Figure 4: Terracotta plaque from Ahichhatrā ACI, measuring 65 x 73 x 9 cm. National Museum, New Delhi.

Figure 5: Detail of the centauress plaque from Ahichhatrā ACI. Note the *tripatāka mudrā* made by both characters.

Running under her tail is a band (*kakṣyābandha*) with a zigzag design and an ornate medallion at the centre (*cakraka*). The *kinnarī* has two hind legs but no front legs and her tail and hoofs have been finely executed.[17] The male is bedecked in finery including a crested-turban, earrings and, across his chest, a *channavīra* ornament with an embossed disc at the centre. He holds a bow in his left hand and is clothed in a striped *dhotī*. The foot and lower leg of the man have been naturalistically modelled with the foot having a delicate arch. The scarf of the *kinnarī* blows against his chest and flaps behind him in a delightful attempt to convey a sense of movement.

3 Further Centauress/Rider Images

Two further terracottas depicting so-called *kinnara-mithuna* were found at Ahichhatrā. The first is a simple disc produced from a single mould showing a *kinnara* pair. This was found at ACVII to the west of the ancient fortress (Figure 6).[18] The second fragmented plaque, which comes from ACIII located a few hundred metres southwest of ACI, has a flat base (possibly free-standing or part of an architectural element) and possesses relief depictions on both faces of a centauress with rider.[19] Only a leg of each rider has survived but Agrawala asserts that anklets were worn. Based on this detail, Agrawala identified the riders as female. Several male deities in plaques from ACI, however, wear anklets and such might be the situation here. Rare examples do exist, though, of male *kinnaras* carrying women. Indeed, an unusual relief on the Great Stūpa at Sāñcī depicts a pregnant female seated on the back of a centaur; while an intriguing fragmented Gupta period terracotta plaque from Nachar Khera in Haryana, portrays a centaur carrying a slumped figure with human form (Figure 7).[20]

17 As an aside, until *circa* 600 BCE, centaurs in Greek art were usually depicted with only hind legs like many of the South Asian examples (see Strong, "A Lady Centaur," 36).

18 Agrawala, *Terracotta Figurines*, 58.

19 Agrawala, *Terracotta Figurines*, Fig. A. Agrawala dates this plaque to 550–650 CE. It could, however, be earlier than his estimate, especially since he describes it as very similar to the Kusāna period plaque from the Jamalpur Mound in Mathurā (Fig. 8).

20 The Gupta period plaque from Nachar Khera is housed in the Gurukul Museum in Jhajjar. It depicts a multi-armed male figure (six arms are extant, it is not clear whether there were more) seated on a bench or possibly on a chariot. In one of his right hands he holds a sword. Beneath him is a centaur either galloping or in flight. The arms of the centaur are folded across his chest and his now fragmented head is thrown backwards. The head and neck of a goose is visible

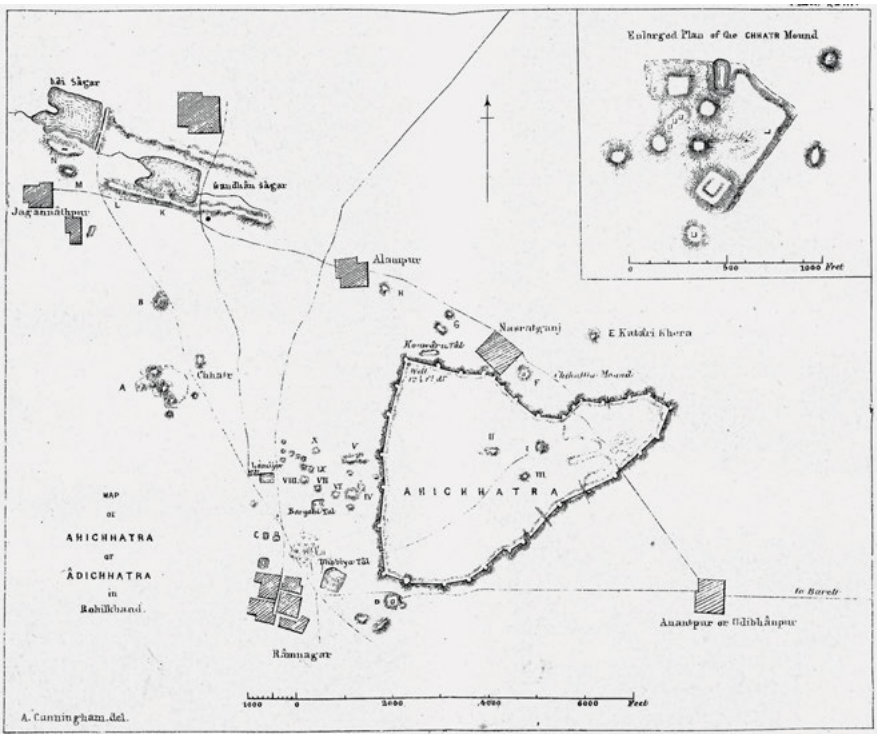

Figure 6: Alexander Cunningham's plan of Ahichhatrā published in Four Reports Made During the Years 1862–63–64–65 (Simla: Archaeological Survey of India, 1871), Plate XLIII.

behind the centaur. Notably, a goose is often depicted pulling Rāvaṇa's aerial chariot and thus it is plausible that the multi-armed figure pictured here is a representation of Rāvaṇa. Lastly, the remnants of a human figure can be seen seated on the back of the centaur. Though the figure is severely eroded, it might be suggested that the back of the figure is facing towards us, while the head is resting on the lap of the multi-armed male. The Gurukul Museum believes the six-armed figure to be a depiction of the demon Triśira, but this is rather speculative, and more research on this image is needed (see Virjanand Devakarni, *Prachin Bharat Main Rāmāyaṇ Ke Mandir* (Gurukul Jhajjar: Haryana Pranttiya Puratattva Sangrahalaya, 2007), plate 3). John and Mary Brockington suggested that the centaur could depict the *rākṣasa* Mārīca, an ally of Rāvaṇa, who took the form of a golden deer in the *Rāmāyaṇa* in order to lure Rāma away from Sītā (personal communication, 2018). As Mārīca is dying after being struck by one of Rāma's arrows, he begins to morph back into his original form (3.42.10–20). Given that the other panels from Nachar Khera depict scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* (including one with the golden deer), this is certainly possible. If this panel does indeed depict Rāvana with a part-zoomorphic Mārīca carrying Sītā on his back, then it would represent a version of the abduction episode not preserved in the texts.

Figure 7: Gupta period fragmented terracotta plaque from Nachar Khera, Haryana, in the collections of the Jhajjar Museum, Haryana.

Agrawala likens the ACI panel to a Kuṣāṇa period red-sandstone depiction from the Jamalpur Mound, Mathurā, housed in the Government Museum in Mathurā (Figure 8).[21] This temple bracket is carved on each face with a composition remarkably close – though less ornate – to that of the former plaque, indicating that the artists at Ahichhatrā were following an iconographic model already

21 Agrawala, *Terracotta Figurines*, 58. The current state of the Jamalpur Mound is described by Vinay Kumar Gupta in his survey of archaeological sites in and around Mathurā. He describes this site, located along the ancient highway nearly two miles from the city, as once being home to two monasteries of the Kuṣāṇa and Gupta periods – the former built by the Kusāna king Huviṣka – and the find spot of exquisite sculptures, including of the Saptamātṛkās and Lakṣmī. The site has now been levelled and only brickbats and potsherds remain. See Vinay Kumar Gupta, "Archaeological Landscape of Ancient Mathura in Relation to its Art Workshops," *Indian Historical Review* 42 (2015): 189–209 (195).

Figure 8: Kuṣāṇa period stone relief carving of a centauress with a male rider from Jamalpur Mound, Mathurā. Photograph courtesy of the American Institute of Indian Studies.

established by or during the Kuṣāṇa period. The heads of the relief figures on both sides are lost which suggests that they may have been deliberately defaced. On both faces a male figure is portrayed seated on the back of a *kinnarī* who has a nude torso. As in the Ahichhatrā relief, she wears a *kakṣyābandha* with a medallion at the centre, located horizontally across her lower body. She also wears a large band or necklace which she takes hold of with her right hand as though trying to detach it. This act does not necessarily have a negative connotation. Indeed, it is a relatively common gesture in Kuṣāṇa period art and may even have a suggestive meaning.

On one face of each of the three masterful pillars from Bhuteśvara, Mathurā, on display at the Indian Museum in Kolkata, is sculpted a voluptuous, smiling *yakṣiṇī* standing on a prostrate dwarf. The *yakṣiṇī* depicted on the central pillar wears a very large and no doubt weighty, multi-strand necklace which she takes hold of with her right hand. In her left hand she holds a swag of fabric which hangs sensuously from her girdle. There is no indication here that the *yakṣiṇī* is distressed; quite the contrary, she is cheerfully subduing a dwarf beneath her feet. The male figure in the Jamalpur bracket is holding an article in one hand. The handle looks somewhat like the hilt of a knife, but the upper part of the object is ovoid

in shape and therefore not typically blade-like. Indeed, it resembles a mirror held by a seated female figure carved on a Kusāna period ivory panel from Begram in Afghanistan. And compellingly, the centauress in Figure 10 holds a mirror.[22] The *kinnarī* is galloping across a mountainous terrain and, as with the Ahichhatrā depiction, her upper body is twisted awkwardly towards the male figure. Again, movement has been expressed through a shawl fluttering behind the man.[23]

Agrawala also informs us that, aside from at Mathurā and Ahichhatrā, images of *kinnara-mithuna* were found at Sāñcī, Bādāmi and at Rājghāṭ.[24] The small Śuṅga period terracotta hollow disc from Rājghāṭ, housed in the Bharat Kala Bhavan in Varanasi, and described by T.K. Biswas as a rattle, depicts a centauress turning her head to face the male seated on her back.[25] He holds leaves and fruits in his right hand perhaps indicative of fertility.[26] Another terracotta roundel believed to date to the Śuṅga period is housed in the Government Museum, Mathurā. It is in a fragmented state but depicts a centauress and male rider embracing. Again the *kinnarī* turns to face her companion. A worn roundel from Kauśāmbī dating to the Śuṅga or Kuṣāṇa period, on display at the National Museum in New Delhi, portrays a *kinnarī* with a male rider (Figure 9). The *kinnarī* twists her body to face her male lover. The pair seem to be holding hands, or at least touching each other affectionately. Behind the rider stands a male attendant or devotee. A Gupta period terracotta moulded-disc from Lakha-Dhora near Raṅgamahal in Rajasthan illustrates a loving *kinnarī* with male-rider scene on one face, while the reverse is ornamental. A male devotee with his hands held together in *añjalimudrā* joins the couple, suggesting that this is an auspicious scene.[27] It seems somewhat unlikely, though not impossible, that a nameless *kinnara-mithuna* would be the object of

22 See Elizabeth Rosen Stone. "Some Begram Ivories and the South Indian Narrative Tradition: New Evidence." Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology, 3.

23 A first century CE red sandstone tympanum (a vertical recessed triangular architectural element, usually placed above a door or window) from Mathurā depicts across two registers on each face, devotees wearing various styles of dress, deer, and winged *kinnarīs* processing towards Buddhist places of worship, including a *caitya*, a tree shrine and a pillar surmounted by the wheel of law. The *kinnarīs* are part human, part horse and part bird. One of the *kinnarīs* holds her palms together in *añjalimudrā*, while the other carries offerings. Here the *kinnarīs* represent auspicious creatures and are not accompanied by partners. The tympanum is on display at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and can be viewed on their digital database: http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/tympanum-from-a-buddhist-structure-16991.

24 Agrawala, *Terracotta Figurines*, 59.

25 T.K. Biswas, "Kinnara–Kinnarī," in *Chhavi-2: Rai Krishnadasa Felicitation Volume*, edited by Krishna Anand (Varanasi: Banaras Hindu University, 1981), 266–69 (268).

26 Parmeshwar Lal Gupta, *Gangetic Valley Terracotta Art* (Varanasi: Prithivi Prakashan, 1972), 96, Plate 212; and Biswas, "Kinnara–Kinnarī." Plate 565.

27 See Urmila Sant, *Terracotta Art of Rajasthan* (Delhi: Aryan Books International, 1997), 179.

Figure 9: A hollow terracotta disc from Kauśāmbī housed in the National Museum, New Delhi.

worship and adoration. Likewise, K.N. Sastri highlights the irregularity of the presence of the garland-bearing *vidyādhara* in the Ahichhatrā ACI plaque.[28] These examples suggest that the characters represented here are probably not merely emblematic.

To the best of my knowledge, the earliest surviving depiction of this type of image is that carved on a stone pillar – part of the railing surrounding the Great Stūpa at Sāñcī, dating to *circa* the Śuṅga period (Figure 10).[29] This carving in low-relief is situated within a roundel and shows a centauress with her body twisted to face the viewer rather than her male companion. She holds a garland in her right hand, and a round object with a handle – possibly a mirror – in her left hand. The handsomely dressed male rider rests his right hand on the left

28 Cited in K. M. Shrimali, *History of Pañcāla* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1983), 129.

29 This *stūpa* was commissioned by Emperor Aśoka (reigned *circa* 268–232 BCE) and later expanded.

Figure 10: A roundel carved onto a railing pillar at the Great Stūpa, Sāñcī.

shoulder of the *kinnarī*. His scarf flaps in the wind behind him conveying movement and reminding us that these characters are not intended to be thought of as static. Floral confetti surround the couple lending the image a joyous ambience. Attention might be drawn here to the garland which is also a feature of the Ahichhatrā ACI panel. In the Sāñcī image, however, the garland is held by the *kinnarī*, while in the latter image it is held by a subordinate celestial being.

Centauresses also found favour with the Early Cālukyas in northern Karnataka. One such image survives *in situ* at the Mālegitti Śivālaya Temple (*c*. 700 CE) on the outskirts of ancient Vātāpi (modern-day Bādāmi, Bagalkot district, Karnataka) (Figure 11).[30] Perpendicular to the lower left-hand side of the ornately carved

30 Differing views exist on the age of the Mālegitti Śivālaya Temple. Adam Hardy believes it to date to around 700 CE since, on the basis of style, it is not as old as the Upper Śivālaya Temple at Bādāmi (personal communication, 2017).

Figure 11: Centauress sculpture next to the entrance to the inner sanctum of the Mālegitti Śivālaya Temple at Bādāmi.

entrance leading through to the *garbhagṛha*, is a surprising relief of a large-scale crowned male figure with a small centauress standing upright on her hind legs. As with the centauress in the Ahichhatrā panel, she does not possess forelegs but has human arms. In her lowered right-hand the centauress clutches onto a

rope-like article that hangs over her bare left shoulder. Her left-arm is raised above her head. The crowned, two-armed male figure holds a large club with a conch-like hilt in his right hand. A description in the museum at Bādāmi alleges that the male figure is tugging at the hair of the crowned centauress with his right hand. Interestingly, in the same hand the male figure holds an item that could potentially represent a noose (*pāśa*). Both characters in the Bādāmi image have a serene and somewhat detached countenance but this does not necessarily carry much meaning since such expressions are quite commonplace in early Indian sculpture, even in scenes of violent conflict. Significantly, the male figure places his left foot on the arched rear of the centauress – a pose which is typically one of subjugation or even of vanquishment. This composition has markedly little in common with the centauress images already described and it is possible that a different myth or scene is being represented here. Though the inner sanctum of the temple enshrines a *liṅga,* Michael Meister and M.A. Dhaky assert that the temple was originally consecrated to Sūrya or Āditya since the sun god, flanked by the two goddesses of dawn, is depicted in pride of place at the centre of the door lintel above the entrance to the *garbhagṛha*. Moreover, Garuḍa or Daṇḍi, and Piṅgala act as door guardians.[31]

The final centauress image to be explored in this paper is one that adorns a pillar on the eastern side of the entrance to the honey-coloured-stone apsidal Durgā Temple (*c*. 700 CE) at Aihole, fifteen miles northeast of Bādāmi (Figure 12). An inscription on the gateway to the temple tells us that the monument was originally dedicated to Āditya (Sūrya). The damaged sculpture has much in common with the image from Bādāmi. It portrays a large-scale crowned male figure resting one knee on the rear of a small centauress who stands to his left. As with all the centauresses featured in this paper, the Aihole *kinnarī* is unclothed on her upper-half but wears jewellery, in this instance, two beaded necklaces and a snake armlet. The face of the centauress is missing (possibly having been deliberately vandalised). She places a hand on the left thigh of the male figure. His hands are lost, but his left arm rests above the head of the centauress and it is possible that he was portrayed pulling her hair or harming her in some way. This hypothesis is strengthened by the sculpture on one of the adjoining faces of the same pillar. This image depicts a large-scale crowned female tugging at the hair of a subjugated kneeling male figure, his head pulled backwards.[32] The Bādāmi museum describes the centauress reliefs

31 Michael Meister and M.A. Dhaky, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture, South India Upper Drāviḍaseśa Early Phase, A.D. 550–1075* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 40.

32 Another image type features on both the Lāḍ Khān Temple and the Hucchappaya Maṭha at Aihole, depicting a voluptuous nude horse-headed woman (*Aśvamukhī*) with a styled

from Aihole and Bādāmi as each depicting a *dvārapāla* (door guardian) preventing Chāyā (Savarnā) from entering the shrine and casting a shadow across it.[33] This myth will be examined below.

mane, forcibly taking hold of a male ascetic. In both images the subjects stand in the shade of a tree. In the Lāḍ Khān bas-relief the woman holds a rope around the neck of her captive, while he holds something in his raised left hand, possibly a water bottle (*kamaṇḍalu*). In the Hucchappaya Maṭha image the open-mouthed ascetic is holding a rosary (*mālā*). Is he crying out for help, or praying/ chanting aloud while moving the beads of his *mālā*? Surprisingly, James Harle describes the *Aśvamukhī yakṣiṇī* as having a demure character and as being approached by excitable men (see James C. Harle, *The Art and Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994, 2nd revised edition, 1st edition 1986), 178). Monika Zin describes the man with the rosary as having a satisfied expression (see Monika Zin. *Ajanta. Handbuch der Malereien/ Handbook of the Paintings 2* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 231). Like me, Chiara Policardi thinks he looks terrified (see "The Case of the Yakṣiṇī Aśvamukhī: Remarks between Jātaka and Art," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali. Nuova Serie* 91.1–4 (2018): 137–162 (150)). As an aside, this difference in perception brings to mind James Elkins work on seeing (James Elkins, "The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing," in *Religion, Art and Visual Culture: A Cross-cultural Reader*, edited by S. Brent Plate (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 40–45 (45). He writes:

> No two people will see the same object: that's a truism that is proved each time two artists try to draw the same object and end up with two irreconcilable versions of it. What makes it more than a common truth is that it applies just as well *within* a single person. I am divided, and at times my modes of seeing are so distinct from one another that they could belong to different people.

In the Buddhist *Padukasalamāṇava-jātaka* (number 432 of the Pāli *Jātakatthavaṇṇanā*) the horse-headed *yakṣiṇī* is described as capturing and eating men; when she falls in love with a victim – an unfortunate young brahmin – he is forced to cohabit with her in captivity (Policardi, "Yakṣiṇī Aśvamukhī," 138–9, and Wendy Doniger, *On Hinduism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 459. Policardi hypothesises that the *Padukasalamāṇava-jātaka* might have its origins in non-Buddhist folklore (Policardi, "Yakṣiṇī Aśvamukhī," 139). *Aśvamukhī yakṣiṇī* are also depicted in the painted murals at Ajantā. An example in Cave 17 depicts a horse-headed woman approaching a male ascetic or mendicant from behind. See Benoy K. Behl, *The Ajanta Caves: Ancient Paintings of Buddhist India* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2005), 177; Policardi has located fourteen examples of *Aśvamukhī yakṣiṇīs* in the art historical corpus of South Asia, she notes five further examples reported but not furnished with photographs. To this I add another example on a sixth century CE *Rāmāyaṇa* frieze from Rājaona in Lakhisarai district, Bihar.

33 Carol Radcliffe Bolon has accepted this identification in her paper: "The Durga Temple, Aihole, and the Saṅgameśvara Temple, Kūḍavelli: A Sculptural Review," *Ars Orientalis* 15 (1985): 47–64 (48). Aschwin Lippe describes both the Mālegitti Śivālaya Temple sculpture and the Durgā Temple sculpture as depicting a *dvārapāla* subduing a *kinnarī*. See: Aschwin Lippe, "Some Sculptural Motifs on Early Cālukya Temples," *Artibus Asiae* 29 (1967): 5–24 (10).

Figure 12: Centauress sculpture on a pillar of the Durgā Temple at Aihole. Photograph courtesy of Elizabeth A. Cecil.

4 Myths Associated with the ACI Panel Depiction

Before exploring the various textual narratives involving *kinnarīs*, it might be proposed that since the centauress with male rider images are found not only in temple or *stūpa* contexts but also on portable terracotta medallions, this image

type might have been regarded as possessing talismanic powers, quite possibly for aiding strength and fertility – qualities commonly associated with horses in South Asia.

Returning now to the Ahichhatrā ACI plaque, Agrawala writes:

> The kinnara-mithuna was a popular motif in the time of Bāṇabhaṭṭa, who refers to it as being pursued by prince Chandrapida and then disappearing on a hill-top (achala-tunga-sikharam=aruroha). It is stated that Śiva as Dakṣiṇāmūrti should be the object of special adoration by kinnaras, devas and others. This plaque may, therefore, have been juxta-posed with . . . [the Dakṣiṇāmūrti plaque], in the frieze of the temple.[34]

Mythical *kinnaras* feature in Bāṇabhaṭṭa's seventh century play, *Kādambarī*.[35] The story narrates that while out hunting on his horse, prince Candrāpīḍa spies a pair of *kinnaras* in a forest. He wishes to capture them but as he approaches they flee.[36] He follows, chasing them for miles until they disappear over the top of a mountain. Aside from its later date, other aspects of the play assure us that this is not the story depicted in our plaque. Not once does Candrāpīḍa alight upon a *kinnarī*, nor does he have any dalliance with one – the object of his affections being the heroine of the tale, Kādambarī.

Agrawala believes the plaque to be depicting a fleeting reference in the *Rāmāyaṇa* to a *kinnara-dvandva* (a *kinnara* couple) frolicking on the hillside, a theory also supported by K.M. Shrimali.[37] However, only one of the figures on the ACI plaque can be described as a *kinnara*, thus this is not a representation of a *kinnara-dvandva*.

K.N. Sastri suggests that the panel depicts Prajāpati (Manu Vaivasvata) riding to the heavens seated on the back of the earth goddess who has temporarily assumed the form of a mare.[38] This scene occurs in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 14.1.3.25 which reads: "Thou (Earth) are Manu's Mare, for, having become a mare,

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34 Agrawala, 66. The plaque identified as depicting Dakṣiṇāmūrti by Agrawala has been tentatively re-interpreted by myself. Greaves, "Śiva Dakṣiṇāmūrti or Sage Nārāyaṇa?" Hans Bakker and Peter Bisschop have the following to say on the subject of this plaque: "It has been described by Agrawala and Banerjee as a panel depicting a Śiva Dakṣiṇāmūrti, an identification that is, however, untenable in our understanding of a Dakṣiṇāmūrti." See Hans T. Bakker and Peter C. Bisschop, "The Quest for the Pāśupata Weapon: The Gateway of the Mahādeva Temple at Madhyamikā (Nagarī)," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 59 (2016): 217–258 (232).

35 A *kinnara* is a male centaur, while *kinnaras* can mean a male and female pair, or a male pair.

36 *The Kādambarī of Bāṇa*, trans. by C.M. Ridding (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1896), 90–91.

37 Agrawala: 59; *Kinnaras* are mentioned in passing frequently in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, along with *gandharvas* and other celestials; Shrimali, *History of Pañcāla*, 129.

38 K.N. Sastri, "Some Unidentified Rare Sculptures from Ahicchatra (Now in the National Museum, New Delhi)," *Indian Historical Quarterly* 37 (1961): 225–239 (229).

she (Earth) indeed, carried Manu, and he is her lord, Prajāpati."[39] Moreover, the passage is elaborated upon by its commentator, Harisvāmin, who notes that:

> In the course of performing this particular ceremony, the ritual of solemnly touching the earth and inaudibly whispering the incantation was extraordinarily auspicious and beneficial to the performer (Yajamāna). In times gone by this Earth converted herself into a mare and carried her lord Manu Vaivasvata (to heaven), because he (Manu) was her husband etc.[40]

Sastri argues that a passage in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* which describes Prajāpati leaving the city of Ayodhyā for heaven in his corporeal frame, adds weight to his theory.[41] However, no mention of a mare, or indeed any vehicle, is made in this latter tale. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.4 describes a less savoury story in which Prajāpati in the form of a stallion pursues his daughter Uṣas in the form of a mare. From their coupling humans and animals were created.[42] Some of the Brāhmaṇas instead narrate that Uṣas morphed into a deer and Prajāpati a buck.[43] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* myth corresponds well with the iconography of the Ahichhatrā panel except for the earth goddess being described as a mare and not as a centauress. It is imperative, though, that we query the popularity, or lack thereof, of this story in the Gupta period. To the best of my knowledge, this brief episode does not feature in another extant text, suggesting that it was not well-known to the general populace, making it an unlikely choice to adorn a fifth century CE temple, unless the story had endured in oral tradition or in texts that have not survived.

Few tales survive which speak of a *kinnarī* and a human or divine lover, although one of the most popular Buddhist *jātakas* (tales) from the *Divyāvadāna* (also found in other Buddhist texts) tells of the rescue of the *kinnarī* Manoharā by Prince Sudhana.[44] In this story, though, the *kinnarī* is described as a human-like woman and not as a composite creature.[45] Another Buddhist story in the

39 Sastri, "Sculptures from Ahicchatra," 228.

40 Sastri, "Sculptures from Ahicchatra," 228.

41 Sastri, "Sculptures from Ahicchatra," 228.

42 See Wendy Doniger's discussion of this myth in *On Hinduism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 459.

43 Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa 3.262; Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 3.33.1 as explored in Catherine Ludvik, *Sarasvatī: Riverine Goddess of Knowledge: From the Manuscript-carrying Vīṇā-player to the Buddhist Weapon-wielding Defender of the Dharma* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 66–72.

44 Padmanabh S. Jaini, *Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2001), 297; 299.

45 See Monika Zin, "Śabaras, the Vile Hunters in Heavenly Spheres. The Inhabitants of the Jungle in Indian Art, Especially in the Ajanta Paintings," in *South Asian Archaeology 1999*, *Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Conference of the European Association of South*

Mahāvaṁsa 10.53.88 (*c*. fifth century CE) centres on a beautiful equine *yakṣinī* called Cetiyā and a Sri Lankan prince (and later king), Paṇḍukābhaya. Cetiyā roams around the Dhūmarakka Mountain. She is described sometimes as *vaḷavarūpa* (with a mare form) and sometimes as *vaḷavamukha* (with the face of a mare). The prince spies her and goes in pursuit. She flees and renders herself invisible. Eventually Paṇḍukābhaya threatens Cetiyā with his sword and she surrenders. She becomes advisor to Paṇḍukābhaya, who bridles her and takes her into battle.[46] The presence of a Buddhist narrative on the Śaiva temple at Ahichhatrā is, however, highly unlikely. Moreover, the tale is not a romantic one and no suggestion is made of a loving or passionate relationship between Paṇḍukābhaya and Cetiyā.

The text accompanying the Ahichhatrā ACI plaque at the National Museum in New Delhi describes the image as portraying King Vikrama (elsewhere known as Purūravas) with his lover, the celestial nymph Urvaśī. This interpretation initially appears convincing, in part because the myth of Urvaśī and Purūravas was popular in early India, and certainly so during the Gupta period. Secondly, the terracotta plaque appears to represent a loving scene between an exquisitely beautiful celestial being and a regal or god-like warrior figure. A dialogue of eighteen verses in the *Ṛgveda* (10.95. 1–18) is the first recorded version of the Purūravas-Urvaśī myth, but as Barbara Stoler Miller writes:

> The Vedic hymn presupposes a floating body of stories about the pair, suggested by scattered references elsewhere in the Veda, and by the hymn's own vagueness: the author appears to have written a dialogue epitomizing events with which he assumes his audience to be familiar.[47]

The obscure conversation in the *Ṛgveda* takes place between the mortal but mighty king Purūravas – who we are informed was nurtured from birth by the gods so that he would later fight the *dasyus* (enemies) – and the celestial water nymph Urvaśī who has been married to the king for four years. Urvaśī has abandoned her husband because he has not kept to certain conditions. The narrative consists of his desperate pleas for her to stay, and Urvaśī's persistent refusal. During their conversation she recalls how they used to make love three times daily although reluctantly on her part. In addition, we are told that eating

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Asian Archaeologists, Held at the Universiteit Leiden, 5–9 July, 1999," edited by Ellen Raven (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2008), 375–394 (384–385).

46 *Mahanama, The Mahāvaṃsa*, translated from Pali by Ananda W.P. Guruge (Pondicherry: The M.P. Birla Foundation, 1990), 70; and Policardi, "Yakṣiṇī Aśvamukhī," 140.

47 Barbara Stoler Miller, *Theatre of Memory: The Plays of Kālidāsa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 348.

only a drop of ghee a day satisfied her hunger. Urvaśī reveals that she is pregnant (or has already had a son) and agrees to send Purūravas the child. Finally, she promises that after his death he will rejoice (with her?) in heaven. Lightning and the bleating of lambs are mentioned, and both feature centrally in later variations of the myth. The story is further developed in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (11.5.1.1–17). Here, Urvaśī is said to adore Purūravas and allows him to make love to her three times daily but never against her will. She sets further conditions for their marriage including that he must never let her see his nudity. They live happily together and have a child. The *gandharvas*, however, long for her to return to the heavens and so they formulate a plan; they steal the beloved lambs (who Urvaśī calls her sons) from her bedside and Purūravas, wishing to prove his manliness, leaps out of bed in a bid to rescue them. At that moment the *gandharvas* dispatch a flash of lightning, illuminating Purūravas's naked form. Immediately Urvaśī leaves him. Sometime later Purūravas chances upon Urvaśī bathing in a lake with her companions and begs her to return. Urvaśī promises to spend one night with the king. In an unexpected twist of fate, the following morning the *gandharvas* offer Purūravas a boon; he asks to become one of them.

Variations of the myth are also found in the *Baudhāyana-Śrautasūtra*, *Mahābhārata*, *Matsya Purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, *Harivaṃśa* and elsewhere. During the Gupta period, Kālidāsa adapted the story for a play entitled *Vikramorvaśīyam*. Briefly, Kālidāsa's version of the story unfolds as follows.[48] King Vikrama (Purūravas) rescues the celestial nymph Urvaśī from the clutches of the demon Keśin and they fall in love (significantly Keśin is a horse demon). At one point the king muses about how impossible it seems that an old sage (Nārāyaṇa) could have created such an astounding beauty.[49] Indra allows her to marry Vikrama on one condition: that she must return to the celestial realms once the king sees the face of their first-born child. Despite a few misadventures, the couple live happily for many years until their son Ayus, whom Urvaśī had hidden away in a hermitage in order to prolong her marriage, is brought to Vikrama. When Vikrama sees the face of Ayus, Urvaśī laments that she must return to the heavens. Happily, at that moment Sage Nārada arrives with a message from Indra and announces that Urvaśī may remain with Vikrama

48 *Vikrama and Urvasi, or the Hero and the Nymph*, trans. Harold Hayman Wilson (Calcutta: V. Holcroft, 1826), 14–104.
49 *Vikrama and Urvasi*, 20.

until his death.[50] Interestingly, neither the Purāṇas nor the *Vikramorvaśīyam* describe Urvaśī as equine, or part equine. In both the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Ṛgveda*, Urvaśī is a water nymph (possibly a bird); however, the *Ṛgveda* also alludes to her being horse-like, but whether these musings are metaphorical or not is unclear. Purūravas, for instance, "says that immortal women who shy away from mortal men are like horses grazed by a chariot" (10. 95. 8).[51] Moreover, "he also says that Urvaśī is as hard to catch as a winning racehorse (10. 95. 3), and Urvaśī admits that immortal women, when they respond to a mortal's caresses, are like water birds or like horses who bite in their love play (10. 95. 9) . . ."[52] Doniger takes this to mean that Urvaśī is equine.[53] Interestingly, according to J.C. Wright, Purūravas is described as a bird in the *Ṛgveda* and has the ability to fly, while Urvaśī walks and is "described as constantly subject to metamorphosis (*virūpā*)."[54] Wright further suggests that Kālidāsa "completes the humanisation of Purūravas."[55] If, however, the Ahichhatrā ACI plaque is a visual manifestation of the Urvaśī Purūravas myth then the comparable images discussed in this paper would indicate that the heroic king was already depicted with human form by the Śuṅga period or the Kuṣāṇa period at the very latest, long before Kālidāsa's *Vikramorvaśīyam* was composed , unless the ACI panel is not related to the earlier images in terms of the story it represents. The inexplicit nature of the textual sources in relation to Urvaśī's appearance, aside from her being unequivocally beautiful,

50 The version in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* for the most part is quite close to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*; after the couple fall in love, Urvaśī outlines three conditions for their marriage. Firstly, Purūravas must protect her two rams whom she loves as her children; secondly, he must not let her see him naked; and lastly, he must feed her only clarified butter. Their marriage is a happy one until the celestial *gandharvas* begin to resent the absence of their friend and arrange to have Urvaśī's rams stolen in the night. Misfortune occurs when as Purūravas leaps out of bed to try and save the animals, the *gandharvas* illuminate the sky with lightning and Urvaśī sees the naked form of her husband. She instantly returns to the celestial realms. After a number of years apart, the continued devotion of Purūravas for his wife is rewarded with a boon. He is to perform a fire sacrifice after which he is permitted to join Urvaśī in the heavens. See, *The Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, trans. Horace Hayman Wilson (London: Trübner, 1840), 394–397.

51 Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 181.

52 Doniger O'Flaherty, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts,* 181.

53 Wendy Doniger, *The Hindus, an Alternative History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 230.

54 J.C. Wright, "Purūravas and Urvaśī," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 30 (1967): 526–547 (528).

55 Wright, "Purūravas and Urvaśī," 528.

raises questions about whether the centauress in the Ahichhatrā plaque is a representation of the celestial nymph or not. We must take into account that the oral telling of myths would have sometimes deviated or at least differed from the narratives recorded in the texts. This brings us to question whether the sources used by artists were always textual ones. Arguing along the same lines, though on a separate topic, Richard D. Mann writes about his approach to the study of the early history of Kārttikeya:

> The two sources, textual and material, often appear to narrate differing characterizations of Kārttikeya, and we need to appreciate that the perspective of these sources and the stories they attempt to narrate differ, at times considerably. While we might hope that these various sources will help us uncover 'the' story of Skanda, they instead demonstrate that there were several competing versions of the deity during the period of study examined here.[56]

Notably, the celestial nymphs (including Urvaśī) depicted in a Nara Nārāyaṇa plaque on the *śikhara* of the Gupta period brick temple at Bhītargāon.

We turn now to a different myth with an equine element. An episode in the *Harivaṃśa* (8)[57] tells the complicated tale of the union, separation and reunion of Vivasvat or Sūrya (the grandson of Dakṣa), and his consort Saṃjñā (also known as Sureṇu), daughter of Tvaṣṭṛ.[58] Owing to his extraordinary fiery energy Vivasvat was born without limbs and was dark in colour. After giving birth to three children (Manu Vaivasvata, Yama and Yamunā), Saṃjñā could no longer endure Vivasvat's unattractive appearance. Her solution was to secretly create an identical but mortal replica of herself from her own shadow to replace her in the household; this replica was named Savarṇā. Savarṇā promised Saṃjñā that she would keep her secret with the *proviso* that no one grab her hair or curse her. Saṃjñā then disguised herself by taking the form of a mare and left her home to graze in the fields. Vivasvat, believing Savarṇā to be his wife, had a child with her called Manu whom Savarṇā showed favouritism towards. Yama not realising that Savarṇā was only the shadow of his mother was deeply upset by the preference shown towards his youngest brother. He confronted Savarṇā, threatening her with his foot. In retaliation she cursed Yama that he would lose his foot. Her 'husband' Vivasvat responded by threatening to curse her. With the hope of

56 Richard D. Mann, *The Rise of Mahāsena, The Transformation of Skanda-Kārttikeya in North India from the Kuṣāṇa to Gupta Empires* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 3.

57 The *Harivaṃśa* is believed to date between the first and third centuries CE.

58 I have used the critical translation by Simon Brodbeck: *Krishna's Lineage, The Harivamsha of Vyāsa's Mahābhārata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 25–28. I am grateful to Simon for sharing his manuscript with me before publication.

avoiding this curse Savarṇā confessed to the deception. In a raging fury Vivasvat visited his father-in-law, Tvaṣṭṛ. The latter told Vivasvat that Saṃjñā had not been able to bear his appearance but had remained faithful to him. Tvaṣṭṛ proceeded to make Vivasvat handsome by removing his excessive fiery energy. Disguised as a stallion, the sun god approached his wife who was practising yoga in a field. The mare Saṃjñā rejected his advances but turned her head towards him. As she did so she inhaled his semen and subsequently blew it out of her nostrils and the Aśvin twins were born.[59] Importantly, the turned head is one of the most salient features of many of the centauress/ male rider plaques explored in this paper. Saṃjñā is overjoyed when Vivasvat reveals his true, and much improved godly form and the story ends happily with the birth of their equine sons.

Many variations on this myth are told, for example, in the *Ṛgveda* 10.17.1–2, in which Vivasvat's wife is not described as morphing into a mare but does give birth to the Aśvins;[60] and in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* 103–105,[61] which does not drift far from the telling in the earlier *Harivaṃśa*, but differs in certain aspects, for instance, Saṃjñā abandons Vivasvat not because of his unattractive appearance but because she cannot bear his fiery splendour or his anger.[62]

Finally, we turn to an interesting and potentially unique myth embodied in the *Skandapurāṇa* 116.92–128.[63] This story has yet to be translated into English and has not yet been critically edited.[64] The episode occurs during a pilgrimage taken by Viṣṇu following a series of battles involving his various *avatāras*. The beginning

59 Brodbeck notes that: "In vedic literature the Ashvins are called the Nāsatyas, a name whose oft-cited connection with the nose (*nās*) could explain some details of the present story." Brodbeck, *Krishna's Lineage*, 27.

60 Doniger refers to the following version of the *Ṛgveda: Rig Veda, with the commentary of Sāyaṇa, 6 vols.* (Benares: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series no.99, 1966).

61 Doniger refers to the following version of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa: *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (Bombay: Biblioteca Indica, 1890).

62 Wendy Doniger, "Saraṇyū / Saṃjñā, The Sun and the Shadow," in *Devī, Goddesses of India,* ed. by John S. Hawley and Donna M. Wulff (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996), 155–172 (163).

63 There is a myth involving Vāmadeva, a dynasty of kings and a pair of stolen horses in the *Mahābhārata* 3.441. The story differs considerably from the *Skandapurāṇa* myth, however, and does not involve a centauress.

64 This episode from the *Skandapurāṇa* is found in the earliest surviving recension of the text, a Nepalese version edited by Bhaṭṭarāī. I am indebted to Elizabeth Cecil for drawing my attention to this myth after a talk I gave on the ACI terracotta panel at the Seventh Coffee Break Conference at Leiden University (September 2016). She also sought out the Early Cālukyan centauress sculptures on my behalf during a recent trip to Karnataka (which I have since visited). Sanne Mersch who is currently working on a PhD at Leiden University on

of the myth is narrated by the demon king Bali, who himself was vanquished by Viṣṇu in the latter's form as Vāmana, the dwarf.[65] Incidentally, Bali is depicted on Gupta period temples at Pawāyā and Deogaṛh. Bali begins the story by telling how there was once a contented sage called Vāmadeva, who, having laid eyes on the nymph Urvaśī, through a state of delusion emitted his seed. A mare ate that fallen seed and subsequently gave birth to Aśvatarī. Although no description of her is forthcoming it would make sense that she has the appearance of a centauress. The sage was very fond of his child and brought her up for many years until one day a strong *daitya* king called Aṣṭaka arrived at Vāmadeva's *āśrama*. As soon as he laid eyes on the beautiful Aśvatarī he wanted her as his wife. Aṣṭaka decided that he would deceive the sage if the latter would not part from his daughter. The sage Sanatkumāra then narrates how the deceitful king bowed to Vāmadeva showing a false veneer of respect. Bali continues the narrative: Aṣṭaka told the sage that he needed Aśvatarī for an unspecified purpose or task for one year. Vāmadeva gave his consent. The king left with Aśvatarī, happily believing her to be his for time ever after. At the end of the year, however, the sage asked the king for his daughter back and was refused. In a fit of rage Vāmadeva killed Aṣṭaka. Aṣṭaka's son then became king. He too refused to return Aśvatarī and so too was slain by Sage Vāmadeva. Likewise, this king's son described as "best of the sons of Diti" also held on to Aśvatarī, saying that he would not give her to the wicked slayer of his father. Thus, he met with the same fate shared by his forefathers. Finally, his very luminous son Bāla became king.[66] Sage Vāmadeva warned the new king that he would slay the entire family of the wicked Aṣṭaka. Having listened to Vāmadeva's speech Bāla informed him that he would consult his ministers. They narrate to Bāla how Aṣṭaka, after refusing to return Aśvatarī met with a cruel fate at the hands of Vāmadeva whom they describe as a wicked mortal in the guise of a sage, and how his father and grandfather also met with this terrible end. The ministers stress that it would be wrong under these circumstances to return Aśvatarī to Sage Vāmadeva. After hearing their speech, Bāla who had performed great *tapas*, informed them that he would no longer listen to their stupidity as he had done in the past, and to their unlawful, dishonourable advice which no good person should follow. Instead, he vowed to save his forefathers –

"Counter-Narratives: Parallel Themes in Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Mythology" has very generously shared her draft translation and her thoughts on the myth with me.

65 It is plausible that Bali likens himself to Bāla as the similarity in names might suggest. Likewise, the similarity between the names Vāmana and Vāmadeva are unlikely to be accidental.

66 Instead of being a name, Bāla could simply mean 'the boy.' For the sake of clarity, however, I have kept it as a name here.

a common theme in Indian mythology. He approached Sage Vāmadeva and after respectfully garlanding him and worshipping him with incense etc., he returned Aśvatarī. Vāmadeva told Bāla that because of the latter's goodness, his forefathers would be saved from hell. Indeed, so pleased was the sage that he gifted Aśvatarī to the king and retired to the forest. Aśvatarī and Bāla then roamed together in perfect happiness. The tale comes to a close with the moral that all twice-borns and other *dharma*-knowers do not approve the deeds of their forefathers if they were without *dharma*.

If this is the myth depicted on the ACI panel then we might conclude that it is the righteous King Bāla shown with Aśvatarī, rather than any of his forefathers, since the plaque seems to be representing an auspicious and love-filled scene.

5 Conclusions

Below, the competing myths and readings will be evaluated, and those which are a better fit with the images explored in this paper will be highlighted.

1) Firstly, there is a chance that this image is an auspicious subject popular in early India and not illustrating a specific myth. In this instance, such an image would play a role similar to that of the nameless *mithuna* couples with human form. Moreover, it may indeed illustrate a passing reference in the *Rāmāyaṇa* to a *kinnara mithuna*, as Agrawala asserts. The male figure, though, is definitely not a *kinnara* – and moreover, the presence of the *vidyādhara* calls Agrawala's interpretation into question since the latter character would seem to raise the importance of these figures beyond being simply emblematic. One of the reliefs explored in this paper, however, might possibly fall into the category of "auspicious image," namely, the third century BCE carving at Sāñcī. K. Krishna Murthi describes *kinnaras* in the Buddhist context (more often than not half-bird, half-human) as being harmless, kind, loving and musical, and adorned with flowers; creatures sometimes captured for the delight of kings.[67]

2) The tale in the Buddhist *Mahāvaṁsa* (10.53.88) about the equine *yakṣinī* Cetiyā who eventually surrenders to the sword-wielding prince, Paṇḍukābhaya, is compelling in light of the iconography of the ACI plaque. Here we have a story

67 K. Krishna Murthy, *Mythical Animals in Indian Art* (Abhinav Publications: New Delhi, 1985), 14–15.

which involves a male warrior *and* an equine female. It is also stated that the male bridles the equine *yakṣinī* and rides her into battle. The love and tenderness clearly demonstrated by the pair in the ACI panel, however, is not mirrored in the text. Moreover, it would be surprising to find a Buddhist tale on a Hindu temple, though, it is quite possible that a no-longer extant version of this story circulated in the Hindu domain.

3) K.N. Sastri's identification of the couple in the Ahichhatrā panel as Prajāpati (Manu Vaivasvata) riding on the back of the earth goddess in the guise of a mare is rather persuasive. It is, however, likely to be a misleading interpretation since the episode in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* does not appear in later texts. If the story were well-known we would expect it to have undergone many retellings over the centuries. There is nevertheless a small possibility that this story was still being transmitted orally during the period when our images were being produced, or that it featured in a no-longer extant text from the early centuries CE.

4) Arguments in support of the Urvaśī and Purūravas interpretation are as follows: the Ahichhatrā panel depicts a celestial being and a royal personage or *deva* and this couple show signs of being in love. The unusually elaborate coiffure and jewellery of the *kinnarī* indicates that we are supposed to think of this creature as especially beautiful as we know Urvaśī is. The male figure wears a *channavīra* and carries a bow and textual sources emphasise that Purūravas was a great warrior. We know that this myth was popular during the Gupta period because Kālidāsa adapted it for a play, and even before this point in time the popularity of the myth was well-established. In addition, in Kālidāsa's telling, Urvaśī is kidnapped by the horse demon Keśin. This could be an indication that she is also equine, or part-equine, but this is rather tenuous suggestion. Since another panel from Ahichhatrā ACI might potentially depict Sage Nārāyaṇa after having created Urvaśī from a drawing on his thigh, identifying the *kinnarī* as Urvaśī is tempting, but not necessarily accurate. The arguments against this attribution are equally as compelling. Most importantly, the texts do not conclusively describe Urvaśī as half-woman, half-horse, although we do know that she is capable of metamorphosis. Likewise, to the best of my knowledge, the texts do not describe a moment when Urvaśī carries Purūravas on her back. Indeed, in some versions of the story, such as in the *Vikramorvaśīyam*, Purūravas rescues a fainting Urvaśī and carries her away in his chariot. It is possible that there was a version of this myth in circulation between the Śuṅga and Gupta periods in which Urvaśī was characterised as a centauress who bore her lover upon her back.

5) Next we come to the tale of Vivasvat and Saṃjñā – a myth describing the turbulent marriage of the couple and the births of their children. The iconography of the plaque arguably fits more easily with this myth than with the Urvaśī Purūravas tale, largely because Saṃjñā is known to have transformed herself into a mare, yet she is never described as having a human upper body. Though perhaps a rather far-fetched hypothesis, Saṃjñā could be portrayed in the moment of transforming back into her original form. Alternatively, she might be depicted as half-goddess, half-mare in order to identify her as Saṃjñā rather than just as a regular horse. The manner in which the *kinnarī* twists her head awkwardly towards the male rider in all the visual examples discussed in this paper, with the exception of those at Sāñcī and in Karnataka, might possibly allude to the moment when Saṃjñā turns her head to look at Vivasvat after he approaches her at her grazing spot. As described earlier in the paper, Sūrya (Vivasvat) is represented in several fragmentary plaques at Ahichhatrā and was evidently popular in the ancient city.[68] As compelling as this identification might seem, nevertheless, the warrior paraphernalia of the male character in the ACI plaque is not a feature of known versions of this myth.

As touched upon earlier in the paper, the centauress images at Bādāmi and Aihole have previously been interpreted as depicting Savarṇā (Chāyā), Saṃjñā's shadow, being forcibly prevented from entering the *garbhagṛha* of the temple by a *dvārapāla*. One anomaly that cannot be overlooked, however, is that Savarṇā is not described in the texts as having a half-woman, half-horse form. In point of fact, we would expect her to be the exact replica of the goddess Saṃjñā *before* she morphs into a mare. On the other hand, we must allow for artistic license, after all, the myths do not furnish either Savarṇā or Saṃjñā with any defining characteristics aside from the latter being beautiful and fair-complexioned prior to taking the form of a mare. That the two temples were both likely to have been dedicated to the sun god Āditya (Sūrya/Vivasvat) undoubtedly makes this hypothesis more persuasive. There is another tentative possibility worth noting; that the male figure could represent Yama, who is usually depicted carrying a club and a noose. After all, it is Yama who threatens Savarṇā with his foot, and both of the Early Cālukya images show the male character subduing the centauress, in one instance with his knee, and in the other, with his foot. Moreover, if the relief carvings do depict the male grabbing the hair of the centauress this might also allude to the moment in the myth when Savarṇā tells Saṃjñā that she will reveal her true

68 The significant of this is unclear, however, since representations of Sūrya are ubiquitous across South Asia.

identity if her hair is grabbed. Lastly, the Bādāmi image portrays the male character holding a small loop-shaped article which might represent a noose.

6) Of all the myths explored here, the episode in the *Skandapurāṇa* describing the conflict between the flawed Sage Vāmadeva and the wicked King Aṣṭaka and his descendants, is the first to involve a female character who, as daughter of a sage and a mare, can confidently be imagined as half-horse, half-woman. Furthermore, if a second panel from ACI does indeed depict Sage Nārāyaṇa and Urvaśī, which is open to debate, then the Vāmadeva myth would be a very fitting accompaniment as Aśvatarī is conceived after the latter sage observes Urvaśī. In some ways the dispositions of the two sages are wholly antithetical. Sage Nārāyaṇa personifies creative power, absolute detachment and mastery over his senses. His creation of the lovely nymph Urvaśī from his thigh is evidence of these qualities. In stark contrast, Sage Vāmadeva lusts after Urvaśī which then leads to the birth of Aśvatarī. He also exhibits a deadly temper. Thirdly, in spite of the fact that we are never acquainted with Aśvatarī's side of the story, we might assume that she is kept captive until she is freely given to Bāla. Lastly, I have tentatively interpreted a fearsome character in another terracotta plaque from ACI as representing Rudra Nīlalohita after he has slain the buffalo demon Hālāhala – a story which features in the *Skandapurāṇa* 7.[69] Hence, the *Skandapurāṇa* might well have been the source of a number of the myths depicted on the walls of ACI at Ahichhatrā.

Bāla and Aśvatarī are described as roaming together happily so we can assume that this tale concludes as a love story. A potential problem with this interpretation, however, is that the couple depicted on the Ahichhatrā panel had seemingly been depicted on medallions and on architectural elements from *circa* the Śuṅga period. The iconography might represent a well-established and popular story. In contrast, the myth narrated in the *Skandapurāṇa* stands alone, and in addition post-dates (at least in its textual form) most of the images. As explored at the start of this paper, however, a story could potentially exist in oral form for a considerable length of time before being absorbed into the texts. As such the Vāmadeva/Aśvatarī myth should not be ruled out as a possible reading for the North Indian centauress images, but it should be treated with considerable caution.

Ultimately, a cast-iron identification of the characters in the Ahichhatrā ACI plaque is not achievable at present because of the paucity or absence of familiar attributes, signs and additional *dramatis personae* and because of the existence of many celestial or deific mares in Indian mythology. From this we

69 See my thesis pp. 435–439; the panel is on display at the National Museum, New Delhi.

can surmise that during the lengthy period in which they were being illustrated on temples and portable medallions, the colourful duo would have been instantly recognisable without the need for additional details which might have been considered superfluous in the visual context. All of these factors have contributed towards the difficulty in confidently pairing the images with a text or a specific version of a myth.[70]

It needs to be stressed that of all the images depicting a centauress with male rider, only the Ahichhatrā ACI panel can be confidently assigned a Hindu affiliation. Because of the uncertain religious affiliation of the other panels and portable discs, it is not possible to draw any conclusions from this. But notably Ahichhatrā had a large and thriving Buddhist community who had been erecting sacred monuments from the third century BCE onwards. Thus, there is every possibility that iconographic influences were exchanged, borrowed, adapted or even appropriated.

Having come to the close of this study, Vincent Smith's reflections on minor divinities and semi-zoomorphic celestials in ancient India quoted at the start of this paper, seem all the more pertinent. I finish with his words: "these diminished godlings must be regarded as the last remnant of a whole host of forgotten powers, once mighty and to be placated, each in its own place."[71]

Glossary Of Sanskrit Terms

añjalimudrā: holding the palms of the hands together in a gesture of reverence
apsaras: a celestial nymph
āśrama: the rural/ forested dwelling of a sage
avatāra: the incarnation of a deity
cakraka: medallion
channavīra: cross belt
daityas: a race of *asuras* (demons)
deva: a god

70 About the *Aśvamukhī yakṣiṇī* depictions, whose iconography does not neatly align with the *Padukasalamāṇava-jātaka*, Policardi concludes: . . . "we cannot exclude beyond doubt that a literary narrative, circulating also in Hindu contexts, was transmitted, maybe for a certain period, but has not survived, as is unfortunately the case for much of the ancient Indian literature. At the same time, we cannot exclude the possibility that the story may somehow lie concealed under different appearances or in unsuspected texts, and waits further research to be identified."

71 Smith, *History of Fine Art*, 7.

dharma: there are multiple meanings, but generally speaking it means path of righteousness
dhotī: lower garment worn by men (a long length of cloth wrapped around the legs and tied at the waist)
dvārapāla: door guardian
ekāvalī: a necklace made of a single strand of beads or pearls
gandharva: celestial musician
garbhagṛha: the sanctum sanctorum of a temple
jātaka: Buddhist tale
kakṣyābandha: band worn horizontally around the body of the horse
kamaṇḍalu: water vessel
kinnarī/kinnara: a divine composite-creature with a human head and torso and the lower body of an animal or bird
kinnara-dvandva: a *kinnara* couple
mithuna: an amorous couple
pāśa: noose
paryāṇapaṭṭa: saddle
pradakṣiṇa-patha: circumambulatory path
śikhara: temple tower
tapas: austerities for a spiritual purpose
tripatāka: a gesture which involves raising the middle and index fingers, while the thumb and other fingers are folded into the palm of the hand
vidyādhara: celestial being
yajñopavīta: sacred thread

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Sanne Dokter-Mersch

2 Visual Story-Telling in Text and Image: The Nāga as Inhabitant of the Cosmic Ocean and the Netherworld

Just like many other ancient myths, the myth of the manifestation of the boar (*varāha*) has been reworked numerous times. It is retold in many texts, starting as early as the Vedas.[1] It is the story of a god, first identified with Prajāpati[2] and later with Viṣṇu,[3] who becomes a boar in order to rescue the earth from the subterranean regions. He dives into the cosmic ocean, lifts the earth with his tusk,[4] and brings her back to her original spot. The myth is often told in a cosmogonical narrative framework and introduces the creation of the universe.[5]

The boar manifestation is also visualized in material art from at least the fifth century and possibly even earlier. Many of these Varāha images do not simply depict the god in his boar aspect, but provide a visual narration of the myth's climactic moment of Varāha lifting the earth. In this article, I explore the use of both text and image as means to narrate the Varāha myth. After providing an overview of relevant Varāha iconography, I focus on one particular element that is present in almost all images, but appears to have no textual counterpart: the inclusion of one or more Nāgas,[6] mythical

1 For an overview of Sanskrit sources narrating the myth, see for example R. C. Agrawala, *Solar Symbolism of the Boar: Yajña-varāha, an Interpretation* (Varanasi: Devkumar, Prithivi Prakashan, 1963); Jan Gonda, *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism*, 2nd ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1969); Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Dokter-Mersch, "Counter-Narratives: Parallel Themes in Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Mythology" (PhD diss., Leiden University, forthcoming).

2 Prajāpati is the main character in the Vedic texts and in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

3 Viṣṇu is the main character in the *Mahābhārata*, *Harivaṃśa*, and the Purāṇas.

4 This narrative component is relatively new, and the *Harivaṃśa* is one of the first available texts that incudes it as a standard element.

5 In the earliest sources, the universe is created for the first time (an event known as *sarga*, "creation"), whereas in the epics and the Purāṇas, the universe is recreated at the beginning of a new time cycle (known as *pratisarga*, "recreation"). The era of the manifestation of the boar is called Varāhakalpa; see Thomas Kintaert, "On the Role of the Lotus Leaf in South Asian Cosmography," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 54 (2011–2012): 92.

6 The number of Nāgas varies per image. For brevity's sake, I generally do not specify the number, only when I deal with a particular image.

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serpents[7] that live in the Nāgaloka ("world of the Nāgas"), a subterranean, underwater world.[8]

For this, I include a text that heretofore has not been used in secondary literature: the *Skandapurāṇa*.[9] It is a Śaiva Purāṇa, ascribed to the sixth to seventh century[10] and centering on Śiva and his wife Pārvatī. It also incorporates a few Vaiṣṇava myths that have been reworked into a Śaiva framework. The Varāha myth, with Viṣṇu as the main character, has undergone several substantial changes as well. For example, the *Skandapurāṇa* version of the myth contains long battle descriptions, lively characterizations of the scenery, and an entirely new ending.[11] Thanks to some of these additions and alterations, the *Skandapurāṇa* can shed new light on the presence of the Nāga in Varāha images. With the *Skandapurāṇa* in mind, I discuss some interpretations of the

7 For a study on Nāgas and references to other secondary literature, see Laurie Ann Cozad, "Nāgas," in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, vol. 6, *Index*, eds. Knut A. Jacobsen, Helene Basu, Angelika Malinar, and Vasudha Narayanan (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 72–80; Knut A. Jacobsen, "Sacred Animals," in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, vol. 1, *Regions, Pilgrimages, Deities*, eds. Knut A. Jacobsen, Helene Basu, Angelika Malinar, and Vasudha Narayanan (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 711–13.

8 The Nāgaloka is associated both with water and with the netherworld. For example, Cozad describes the *Mahābhārata* interpretation of the Nāgaloka as "a beautiful, bejeweled, underwater kingdom" (Cozad, "Nāgas," 78). Vogel and Kirfel rather situate (the world of) the Nāgas in the netherworld (*pātāla*), based on the Purāṇas; see J. Ph. Vogel, *Indian Serpent-Lore or the Nāgas in Hindu Legend and Art* (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1926), 30 and W. Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Inder nach den Quellen dargestellt* (Bonn: Kurt Schröder, 1920), 143–47.

9 Approximately half of the text (95 out of 183 chapters) has now been edited and the editing process is still ongoing. The entire Sanskrit text can be found in Bhaṭṭarāī's editio princeps: Kṛṣṇaprasāda Bhaṭṭarāī, ed., *Skandapurāṇasya Ambikākhaṇḍaḥ*, Mahendraratnagranthamālā 2 (Kathmandu: Mahendrasaṃskṛtaviśvavidyālayaḥ, 1988).

10 Yuko Yokochi, *The Skandapurāṇa*, vol. 3, *Adhyāyas 34.1–61, 53–69. The Vindhyavāsinī Cycle: Critical Edition with an Introduction & Annotated English Synopsis* (Brill: Leiden, 2013), 57–58.

11 The *Skandapurāṇa* version of the myth tells how Viṣṇu becomes a boar in order to save the earth from the hands of the evil Hiraṇyākṣa. Hiraṇyākṣa is the king of the Daityas, who are the enemies of the gods, living in the netherworld called Rasātala. After a long fight, Viṣṇu conquers Hiraṇyākṣa and finds the earth kept hostage in Rasātala. He brings her back to her own abode, and his task is completed. Viṣṇu would then normally leave his manifestation and resume his own form. However, in the *Skandapurāṇa*, he continues to live as a boar and it is Śiva's son Skanda, with the help of Śiva, who makes him return to his own body. As a reward, Śiva teaches Viṣṇu the *Pāśupatavrata*, the highest Śaiva teaching. For a summary and study of this newly added part, see Phyllis Granoff, "Saving the Saviour: Śiva and the Vaiṣṇava Avatāras in the Early Skandapurāṇa," in *Origin and Growth of the Purāṇic Text Corpus: With Special Reference to the Skandapurāṇa*, ed. Hans T. Bakker (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004), 111–138; Dokter-Mersch, "Counter-Narratives: Parallel Themes in Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Mythology."

Nāga suggested in previous studies, reexamine some Varāha images, and demonstrate how limited textual sources can still support the study of material art.

1 Material Representation of the Varāha Myth

There are two types of Varāha images: the zoomorphic boar, which is a depiction of Varāha in his animal form, and the anthropomorphic boar, which shows the deity with the head of a boar and the body of a man. Whether zoomorphic or anthropomorphic, the boar carries the earth, personified as a woman, and he is usually accompanied by a Nāga. The depiction is highly standardized, and only the details develop through time. For the present article, two phases in the development of Varāha iconography are worth highlighting: the Gupta-Vākāṭaka period (fifth to early sixth century) and the period in which the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, Cāḷukyas, and Pallavas were in power (mid-sixth to ninth century).[12]

Most Varāha images from the Gupta-Vākāṭaka period were produced in Madhya Pradesh.[13] The boar has two arms and wears a necklace and a rope

12 In "Viṣṇu als Eber in Mythos und Bild," Gail identifies four phases of the development of Varāha images, with the Gupta-Vākāṭaka period being preceded by the Kuṣāṇa period, when the production of Varāha images took place in and around Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh (second/third century). Gail discusses a rather exceptional exemplar from the Government Museum of Mathurā, earlier studied by Joshi; see Adalbert Gail, "Viṣṇu als Eber in Mythos und Bild," in *Beiträge zur Indienforschung: Ernst Waldschmidt zum 80. Geburtstag gewidmet*, ed. H. Hartel (Berlin: Museum für Indische Kunst, 1977), 147–48 and Nilakanth Purushottam Joshi, "Kuṣāṇa Varāha Sculpture," *Arts Asiatiques* 12 (1965): 113–19. It concerns a panel with various figures, the one in the center having four arms, a thick neck, a necklace, and a rope around the waist, but his head is missing. To his right, there is a female figure draped on his shoulder. Based on a comparison with Varāha images, this indeed seems to be a depiction of Varāha. However, the fact that the figure has four arms appears exceptional for this period, for this detail only emerges in the period under the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, Cāḷukyas, and Pallavas (see below). The dating is based on an inscription at the bottom of the slab, identified by Joshi as second-century Brāhmī script (Joshi, "Kuṣāṇa Varāha Sculpture," 115). Another Varāha image that is assigned to the Kuṣāṇa period (third century) is kept at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Its head and other features are remarkably similar to the Udayagiri Varāha panel from the Gupta period, discussed below, so perhaps the dating should be slightly later. For the fourth phase in Gail's article, see note 25. Other studies on Varāha images, besides those mentioned below are Frederick M. Asher, *The Art of Eastern India, 300–800* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1980); Shanti Lal Nagar, *Varāha in Indian Art, Culture and Literature* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 1993); and Alexandra van der Geer, *Animals in Stone: Indian Mammals Sculptured through Time* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

13 Gail, "Viṣṇu als Eber in Mythos und Bild," 148 enumerates Badoh, Bhitargaon, Eran, Kutari, and Udayagiri. Joanna Gottfried Williams, *The Art of Gupta India: Empire and Province* (Princeton:

around his waist. He stands in *ālīḍha* position: one leg stretched behind and the other leg bent in front.[14] This position is commonly used for figures with a bow and arrow, but can be applied more generally to heroic figures to express power. He generally stands on a Nāga with one foot. The earth, personified as a woman, clings to his right tusk and is sometimes supported by a lotus under her feet. One of the prime examples of this iconographical type is the Varāha panel in Udayagiri Cave 5, Madhya Pradesh, from the early fifth century (Figure 1).[15] It is an impressive image, showing Varāha surrounded by dozens of gods, sages, and other beings.[16]

In the Gupta-Vākāṭaka period, the first zoomorphic exemplars appear as well. The boar stands on his four legs and his body is often covered with figures, which are probably deities and sages. The earth, personified as a woman, hangs from his tusk. The boar does not stand on a Nāga. Rather, if a Nāga is present, it coils freely between the boar's legs. Among the most impressive examples of this type is the zoomorphic boar from Eran, Madhya Pradesh.[17] The image is decorated in an extremely detailed fashion. Numerous rows of small figures are shown. These are "sages (all bearded, with matted locks, holding holy-water jars)"[18] and some may

Princeton University Press, 1982) adds Rājghat (p. 81), Nāchnā (p. 112), Pipariya (p. 116), and Gaḍhwa (p. 154). For Gaḍhwa, I have only found one Varāha image from the tenth century though; see, for instance, Stella Snead, *Animals in four worlds: Sculptures from India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 38 and 144, plate 122. An overview of Varāha images in Madhya Pradesh is given in Haripriya Rangarajan, *Varāha Images in Madhya Pradesh: An Iconographic Study* (Mumbai: Somaiya Publications, 1997).

14 On this position, see, for example, Jitendra Nath Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, 2nd ed. (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1956), 266–67; and V. Ganapati Sthapati, *Indian Sculptures & Iconography: Forms & Measurements* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Society, 2002), 64–65.

15 J. C. Harle, *Gupta Sculpture: Indian Sculpture of the Fourth to the Sixth Centuries A.D.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 35; Williams, *The Art of Gupta India*, 43; Michael Willis, *The Archaeology of Hindu Ritual: Temples and the Establishment of the Gods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 41.

16 Several attempts have been made in identifying the figures. See, for example, Debala Mitra, "Varāha-Cave of Udayagiri: An Iconographic Study," *Journal of the Asiatic Society* 5, nos. 3–4 (1963): 99–103; and Williams, *The Art of Gupta India*, 44. For an overview of studies on the Udayagiri panel, see Willis, *The Archaeology of Hindu Ritual*, 46–55.

17 According to Williams, the image is "executed close to 490 [. . .] or in 510" (Williams, *The Art of Gupta India*, 129). An extensive study of the Eran boar has been done in Catherine Becker, "Not Your Average Boar: The Colossal Varāha at Erāṇ, an Iconographic Innovation," *Artibus Asiae* 70, no. 1 (2010): 123–49.

18 Williams, *The Art of Gupta India*, 130.

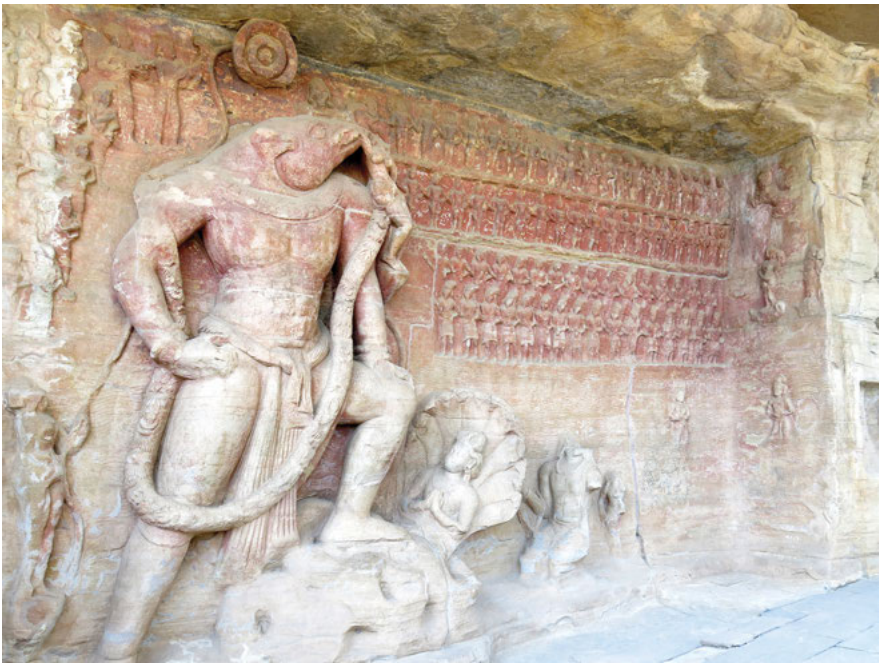

Figure 1: Varāha at Udayagiri Cave 5. Photo: Sanne Dokter-Mersch.

be identified as particular gods.[19] Between the legs of the boar on the base, two Nāgas are sculpted.[20]

Although the production of Varāha images still continued in North India after the Gupta-Vākāṭaka period,[21] most images from the mid-sixth to the ninth century come from the area below the Narmadā River and were produced under the dynasties of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, Cāḷukyas, and Pallavas.[22] The anthropomorphic

19 For example, Williams identifies Sūrya at the front, and the "small female figure above the tongue may aptly represent the personification of speech, Vāc" (Williams, *The Art of Gupta India*, 130).

20 According to Harle, *Gupta Sculpture*, 38, however, there are three serpents: one male and two females.

21 For instance, Rao describes an exemplar from Phalodi (Rajasthan); see T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. 1, part 1 (Madras: The Law Printing House, 1914), 141.

22 For studies on Southern (Varāha) art and architecture from this period, see Aschwin Lippe, "Early Chālukya Icons," *Artibus Asiae* 34, no. 4 (1972): 273–330 and *Indian Medieval Sculpture* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1978); K. V. Soundara Rajan, *Cave Temples of the Deccan* (New Delhi: Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, 1981); and George

boars of this period[23] can be recognized by their more explicit association with Viṣṇu. Varāha is now depicted with four arms, two of them carrying a conch and a discus (*cakra*), Viṣṇu's attributes.[24] He stands in *ālīḍha* position, often with his foot placed on one or two Nāgas. The position of the earth varies, but she is no longer clinging to the boar's tusk. Instead, she sits, for example, on the boar's elbow (Aihole Rāvaṇaphadi Temple) or stands on a lotus held in his hand (Bādāmi Cave 2).[25]

To summarize, there are several standard elements in the iconography of Varāha. The anthropomorphic boar is distinguished by the following elements:

1. The earth is personified as a woman;
2. She holds on to the boar's tusk in the Gupta-Vākāṭaka period and has a different, varying position in the next phase;
3. The boar stands in *ālīḍha* position like a man; and
4. He generally stands on one or more Nāgas.

Zoomorphic boars can be recognized by the following standardized elements:

1. The earth is personified as a woman;
2. She holds on to the boar's tusk;
3. The boar stands on his four feet; and
4. One or more Nāgas coil freely between his legs.

Michell, *Temple Architecture and Art of the Early Chalukyas: Badami, Mahakuta, Aihole, Pattadakal* (New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2014). Examples come from Ellora (Ravana ka Khai, Daśāvatara, Kailasa, and Milkmaid's Cave), Bādāmi (Caves 2 and 3), Aihole (Rāvaṇaphadi and Durgā Temple), Paṭṭadakal (Virupakṣa Temple), and Māmallapuram (Varāha Cave).

23 Eliky Zannas, *Khajuraho* ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton & Co Publishers, 1960), 132 notes that the production of zoomorphic boars appears only to have taken place in North India and never reached the Southern part.

24 This is not to say that the boar in the preceding phase cannot be identified with Viṣṇu. Varāha images often appear in a Vaiṣṇava context, such as a Viṣṇu temple or in the vicinity of other Viṣṇu images. For example, the Udayagiri Varāha panel is surrounded by other representations of Viṣṇu.

25 Gail, "Viṣṇu als Eber in Mythos und Bild," 150 has identified one more phase after this period, in which the boar can have more than four arms and carries at least one additional attribute of Viṣṇu, the club. The earth has various positions, although she usually sits on his elbow. Varāha stands in *ālīḍha* position, placing his foot on one or two Nāgas or in some cases on a pedestal made of or held by Nāgas.

2 Text and Image

Most of the standard iconographical components also appear in textual sources. The earth is often described as a woman,[26] and even the detail that she holds on to the boar's tusk when he rescues her becomes a standard textual element.[27] The description of the *Skandapurāṇa* in particular is remarkably similar to the way she is depicted in the Udayagiri panel. The text compares the earth hanging from the boar's tusk to dangling lotus fiber clinging to an elephant's tusk.[28] This is highly comparable to the loosely hanging earth in Udayagiri. The similarities between text and image suggest that the authors and sculptors were aware of the same notion of how Varāha lifted the earth.

The possibility to portray Varāha as either anthropomorphic or zoomorphic is also available in both media. Whereas the anthropomorphic boar is preferred over the zoomorphic type for visual images, almost all texts describe the boar in his zoomorphic aspect as having four legs, a tail, and other animal characteristics. His limbs are usually inhabited by sacrificial elements and sacrificial deities, and sages reside between his hairs.[29] Only a small number of texts depicts the boar as semihuman, semianimal, with Varāha having two arms, two feet, and the head of a boar.[30]

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26 For example, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* qualifies the earth as a goddess: *devī* [. . .] *vasuṃdharā*, "goddess earth" (*ViP* 1.4.11a, d). The *Harivaṃśa* reports that the goddess earth is lifted by the boar: *uddhṛtā pṛthivī devī*, "the goddess earth is lifted" (*HV* app.1.42.188a).

27 For example, *HV* 31.29:

daṃṣṭrayā yaḥ samuddhṛtya lokānāṃ hitakāmyayā |
sahasraśīrṣo devādiś cakāra jagatīṃ punaḥ || 29 ||

"Having lifted up [the earth (*mahīṃ* in *HV* 31.28a)] with his tusk, for the welfare of the worlds, the thousand-headed one, who is the first of [all] gods, created the world again."

28 *SP* 108.14:

sa tāṃ daṃṣṭrāṅkure lagnāṃ vahan bhāti mṛgeśvaraḥ |
viṣāṇalagnāṃ lambantīṃ mṛṇālīṃ gajarāḍ iva || 14 ||

"The lord of animals, carrying her, who had clung to the sprout of his tusk, was like a king of elephants [carrying] a dangling lotus fibre clinging to his tusk."

29 For a study on this "sacrificial boar" (*yajñavarāha*), see Agrawala, *Solar Symbolism of the Boar*, 1963.

30 The *Skandapurāṇa* is probably the first text that uses the term *naravarāha*, "man-boar." *SP* 97.11:

vārāhaṃ rūpam āsthāya na devatvaṃ na mānuṣam |
na ca tiryakṣu taj jātaṃ naravārāham asti vai || 11 ||

The only standard iconographical component that is usually not reflected in the textual versions of the Varāha myth is the Nāga. From the *Mahābhārata* to the Purāṇas, neither Nāgas in general nor one particular Nāga king appear at the moment that Varāha rescues the earth, nor in the Varāha myth as a whole. There is one exception, however: the *Skandapurāṇa*.

There are three references to Nāgas in the *Skandapurāṇa*. Two refer to Nāgas as a class of beings, and a third to Śeṣa and other Nāga kings. The first reference is in the preamble of the myth. It is said that after a long battle with the gods, Hiraṇyākṣa, the king of the Daityas, wins and conquers the Triple World. He takes the earth with him to the *pātāla* ("netherworld") called Rasātala, where she is kept hostage. She is guarded by thousands of Daityas and is bound with *nāgapāśa*s, "ropes that are Nāgas" (*SP* 95.13).[31]

This theme is again taken up at the conclusion of the myth, which is the second reference. As soon as Varāha kills Hiraṇyākṣa, he goes out to find the earth. He discovers her in Rasātala, being tied down by Nāga lords, and releases her from them (*SP* 108.13).[32] In neither passage are the Nāgas actual characters, but rather tools for Hiraṇyākṣa to shackle the earth. Since Nāgas are known to live in *pātāla*, they are an understandable choice for this scene.

The third relevant passage explicitly mentions Śeṣa and other Nāga kings. When the gods ask Viṣṇu to kill Hiraṇyākṣa, he takes on the form of a boar and dives into the ocean toward Rasātala. During his descent, Varāha passes fabulous

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"Having established a boar form that is neither divine, nor human, nor born among animals, he [i.e. Viṣṇu] indeed becomes a man-boar."

The same idea is found in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, *VDhP* 1.53.14:

nṛvarāho bhaviṣyāmi na devo na ca mānuṣaḥ |
tiryagrūpeṇa caivāhaṃ ghātayiṣyāmi taṃ tataḥ || 14 ||

"I will become a man-boar, [which is] not a god, nor a human being, but [joined] with an animal body; I will kill him then."

31 *SP* 95.13:

tato rasātalaṃ gatvā svapurasya samīpataḥ |
babandha nāgapāśais tāṃ duṣṭām iva yathāṅganām || 13 ||

"Then, having gone to Rasātala, which is near his [i.e. Hiraṇyākṣa's] own city, he [i.e. Hiraṇyākṣa] bound her [i.e. the earth] with ropes that are Nāgas, as if she were a sinful woman."

32 *SP* 108.13:

tato vidrāvya nāgendrān pragṛhya pṛthivīṃ balāt |
jagāma daityān saṃdṛśya ratnāny ādāya sarvaśaḥ || 13 ||

"Having rushed upon the Nāga lords, having forcefully taken the earth [from them], he [i.e. Varāha] went along, after seeing the Daityas and taking jewels from everywhere."

water creatures and places (*SP* 99.9ff.), like Hayaśiras (*SP* 99.13b), Bhogavatī (*SP* 99.13d), and the Milk Ocean (*SP* 99.16a). Then he passes the cities of several Nāga kings, such as those of Vāsuki, Takṣaka, and Śeṣa, the last called Ramaṇā, where he pauses for a short conversation (*SP* 99.17–22ab).[33] Śeṣa is one of the primary kings of Nāgas and, in various other myths, one of Viṣṇu's attendants.[34] Varāha asks Śeṣa not to pose any obstacles to what needs to be done for the world (*SP* 99.20cd). Śeṣa replies that if Varāha wants, he could even do the task together with him (*SP* 99.21cd). However, Śeṣa does not reappear in the myth, and Viṣṇu is able to complete the task himself.

This means that even in the *Skandapurāṇa*, where both Nāgas in general and Śeṣa in particular are mentioned, the mythical serpents do not play an essential role either in the story or at the moment that Varāha lifts the earth. Rather, they are introduced by the authors in order to enliven the scene. It is a narrative technique to textually visualize the place where the story is set at that

33 *SP* 99.18—23ab:

uṣitvā tatra so 'gacchat kaṅkasya puram avyayam |
vāsukeś ca puraṃ prāpya takṣakasya ca dhīmataḥ || 18 ||
tataḥ śeṣasya deveśo viditāṃ ramaṇām iti |
ramyāṃ manojñāṃ divyāṃ ca svargād api ca tāṃ varām || 19 ||
śrutvānantaś ca taṃ rājā argheṇa ca sa pūjayat |
praṇamya bahumānāc ca upāmantrayad avyayaḥ || 20 ||
mahat kāryam idaṃ deva kartavyaṃ tridivaukasām |
bhūyo vayaṃ tvayā sārdhaṃ kariṣyāma yadīcchasi || 21 ||
taṃ pūjayānaṃ madhuhā prītyā paramayā yutaḥ |
uvāca lokakāryasya na vighnaṃ kartum arhasi |
mā ca kālo 'yam udyukto daityasya na bhaved iti || 22 ||
sanatkumāra uvāca |
tato visṛjya taṃ nāgaṃ rasātalam upāgamat |

"18: Having spent the night there [i.e. at the lake Kṣīroda], he [i.e. Varāha] went to the imperishable city of Kaṅka. Having reached the city of Vāsuki and of the wise Takṣaka, 19: he then [reached the city] of Śeṣa, called Ramaṇā, which is beautiful, charming, divine and even better than heaven. 20: Having heard [about Varāha's arrival], king Ananta ["the one without end", i.e. Śeṣa] honoured him with a guest-water. Having bowed down out of great respect, the imperishable one [i.e. Śeṣa] addressed [Varāha]. 21: 'This is a big task, oh god, that needs to be done by the heaven-dwellers. If you want, I can do it together with you. 22: The slayer of Madhu, filled with great affection, said to the worshipping one: 'Please do not create an obstacle for what needs to be done for the world. The Daitya's death should be undertaken.' 23: Sanatkumāra said: Having dismissed the Nāga then, he [i.e. Varāha] reached Rasātala."

34 For example, Viṣṇu sleeps on Śeṣa before the universe is recreated (see Gonda, *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism*, 89ff. and 151).

moment, viz. in or near Rasātala. Since Nāgas are known to live in the subterranean regions, they are included as exemplary of *pātāla*. In other words, if we are looking for a Nāga as an active player in the story, then even the *Skandapurāṇa* cannot serve as the textual counterpart of the Nāga in the Varāha images.[35] How should the iconographical Nāga then be interpreted?

3 Alternative Interpretations

One possibility is that the presence of a Nāga is only a convention among sculptors and not among authors. According to the iconographic sections (*pratimālakṣaṇa*, "characteristics of images") of several Sanskrit sources, a Nāga is indeed required. For example, the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* has a long passage on what Varāha images should look like,[36] and the Nāga king Śeṣa is to be included.[37] The author of this part of the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* does not explain why he understands the Nāga to be Śeṣa, and this is probably his own interpretation. Since Viṣṇu is associated with Śeṣa and a Nāga is present in almost all Varāha images, it would seem logical to identify the Nāga as Śeṣa. Although this association could have been the reasoning of the sculptors as well, there is no textual evidence for this.

Still, the Nāga is often taken to be Śeṣa in the secondary literature as well.[38] The fact that Śeṣa does not play a role in the Varāha myth is usually neglected,

35 An instance in which this is the case is the story of the churning of the Milk Ocean. When Viṣṇu manifests himself as a turtle (*kūrma*) to help the gods churn nectar from the Milk Ocean, the Nāga king Vāsuki assists them. He has a key role in the story and is visualized as such in material art (for example, in Pāwāya; Williams, *The Art of Gupta India*, 53–55).

36 The *Agnipurāṇa* (*AgP* 1.49.2–3) and the *Matsyapurāṇa* (*MtP* 260.28–30ab) have similar descriptions.

37 *VDhP* 3.79.2ab, 4cd:

nṛvarāho 'thavā kāryaḥ śeṣoparigataḥ prabhuḥ | 2 |
[. . .] *ālīḍhasthānasaṃsthānas tatpṛṣṭhe bhagavān bhavet* || 4 ||

"Alternatively, a man-boar should be made. The lord should stand on Śeṣa. [. . .] The lord should be standing on his back in *ālīḍha* position."

38 For example, Banerjea writes about the Varāha image in Udayagiri: "The colossal two-armed Varāha Avatāra treads with his left foot on the coils of Ādiśeṣa" (Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, 414). As Rao remarks on a Varāha image in Bādāmi, "At the foot of Varāha is Ādiśēsha's wife; on the proper left is standing erect Ādiśēsha himself" (Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, 140). Lippe discusses the Dūrga temple at Aihole as follows: "Varāha once more steps on the coil of the adoring king of the ocean who is placed to the right, with his queen" (Lippe "Early Chālukya Icons," 281).

and an alternative explanation for his presence is not provided. However, there are a few exceptions to this.

The first is Bakker's study on the fifth-century zoomorphic boar from Rāmagiri (Ramtek Hill), Mahārāṣṭra. Between the legs of the boar, a Nāga is freely moving around. According to Bakker, the Nāga is "the cosmic serpent Śeṣa, who supports the universe and serves as a prop for Varāha."[39] This refers to a story in the *Mahābhārata* (*MBh* 1.32), in which Brahmā assigns the task of always carrying the earth to Śeṣa. This is why Śeṣa lives in the subterranean regions, with the earth on top of him.[40] If we take Śeṣa to represent the earth's base, then the place to which Varāha brings the earth back – *svasthāna*, "her own abode" – could possibly refer to Śeṣa.[41] From the perspective of the position of the Nāga in this and other zoomorphic Varāha images, the interpretation seems fitting. However, the position of the Nāga in the anthropomorphic images is significantly different: instead of coiling around freely, the mythical serpent is stepped upon by Varāha, which suggests that Varāha suppresses the animal. Since the anthropomorphic type outnumbers

39 Hans T. Bakker, *The Vākāṭakas: An Essay in Hindu Iconology* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1997), 138.

40 *MBh* 1.32.24:

adho bhūmer vasaty evaṃ nāgo 'nantaḥ pratāpavān |
dhārayan vasudhām ekaḥ śāsanād brahmaṇo vibhuḥ || 24 ||

"So the majestic Snake Ananta dwells underneath the ground, ubiquitous, holding good earth up at the bidding of Brahmā"; translation from J. A. B. van Buitenen. *The Mahābhārata: 1. The Book of the Beginning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 93.

41 Usually, only the word *svasthāna* is used (*MBh* 12.326.71cd–72, *HV* app.1.42.183–84, *VāP* 6.25, and *SP* 108.16). The *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, however, makes explicit that the earth is put on the great ocean, *mahārṇava* (*ViP* 1.4.45). To the best of my knowledge, the *Padmapurāṇa* is the only text that, in the Varāha myth, qualifies Śeṣa as the place to which the earth is returned.

PdP Uttarakhaṇḍa 264.18:

patitāṃ dharaṇīṃ dṛṣṭvā daṃṣṭrayoddhṛtya pūrvavat |
saṃsthāpya dhārayāmāsa śeṣe kūrmavapus tadā || 18 ||

"Having seen the earth fallen down, having lifted [her] up with his tusk like before, having raised [her], he, having the form of a turtle, then carried [her] on Śeṣa."

The passage tells us that Viṣṇu raised the earth in the form of a boar, and in the form of a turtle, he put her back on Śeṣa. If the Nāga in the Varāha images would indeed be Śeṣa as the home of the earth, then the *Padmapurāṇa* would still not be a textual parallel, because it is Viṣṇu in the form of Kūrma who puts the earth back. The combination of the two animals is in any case "rather confusing. As is well known, Viṣṇu assumed the form of the tortoise in the second incarnation to give support to the mountain Mandara which served as a churning rod for gods who wanted to acquire Amṛta from the Milky Ocean"; see N. A. Deshpande, *The Padmapurāṇa*, part 9 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991), 3197.

the zoomorphic one, there appears still to be a discrepancy between text and image.[42]

Another interpretation worth mentioning is Willis's study of the Udayagiri Varāha panel. He describes the boar as "in triumphant control of the waters for he holds down their personification, the serpent king, with his foot."[43] He later specifies the waters as *ekārṇava*, "single ocean."[44] In other words, according to Willis, the Nāga, identified as Śeṣa, does not refer to an idea in a different myth, but rather to a metaphorical idea: the Nāga as a representative of the cosmic ocean.[45]

A similar approach to the Nāga has been suggested by Gail. Without specifying the Nāga by name, he argues that the mythical being is a representative of the netherworld.[46]

This interpretation brings us back to the *Skandapurāṇa*. After all, as demonstrated above, the insertion of the scenes with Nāgas in this text is a narrative technique to visualize the place where the scene takes place. The Nāgas are added as representatives of the netherworld. If Nāgas can indeed stand for a particular cosmic realm (whether it be the cosmic ocean or the netherworld), both in texts and in iconography, let us revisit the textual description of the moment that Varāha lifts the earth from the subterranean regions and see whether the place of rescue found in the texts corresponds to the place where the Nāgas live and thus to the Nāga in Varāha images.

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42 Additionally, the Rāmagiri boar and its accompanying Nāga can be interpreted as a political allegory. Rudrasena II, who erected the image, was married to Prabhāvatī Guptā, affiliated with the Gupta kingdom and the Nāga kingdom (Bakker, *The Vākāṭakas*, 15–16). The Rāmagiri Varāha then stands for the Vākāṭaka rulers and the Nāga for their special relationship with the Nāga court. The image celebrates the union of these two royal families.

43 Willis, *The Archaeology of Hindu Ritual*, 45.

44 Willis, *The Archaeology of Hindu Ritual*, 59.

45 Śeṣa as the personification of the cosmic ocean is mentioned earlier by Zimmer: "Shesha, the serpent Endless, representative of the cosmic waters, who is the source of all water whatsoever, is his [i.e. Viṣṇu's] animal representative"; see Heinrich Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1946), 76.

Additionally, the Udayagiri Varāha panel is probably also a political allegory. According to Willis and several scholars before him (for an overview, see Willis, *The Archaeology of Hindu Ritual*, 46–55), Varāha stands for Samudragupta and "the prominent *nāga* figure on which the Varāha places his foot [. . .] is a justification for Samudragupta's well-known suppression of the Nāga kings who rose up against him in the fourth century" (Willis, *The Archaeology of Hindu Ritual*, 59).

46 "Ein Nāga oder Nāgapaar als Vertreter der Unterwelt zu Füßen des Mannebers oder Ebers gehört [. . .] zu den charakteristischen Bestandteilen späteren Kompositionen" (Gail, "Viṣṇu als Eber in Mythos und Bild," 174).

4 Place of Rescue

The place of rescue does not remain the same place over time, and a development in two phases can be observed. First, in the Vedic sources, the *Mahābhārata*, and one early *Harivaṃśa* passage,[47] Varāha rescues the earth from water. For example, the *Taittirīya Saṃhita* reads in its Varāha episode *āpo* [. . .] *salilam*, "water [. . .] ocean" (*TS* 7.1.5.1.1);[48] the *Mahābhārata* reads *samudrāt*, "from the ocean" (*MBh* 3.100.19b);[49] and in the main text of the critical edition of the *Harivaṃśa*, the term *ekārṇava*, "single ocean" is used.[50] In each example, the

47 The critical edition of the *Harivaṃśa* is divided into two parts: the "critical text," in Parashuram Lakshman Vaidya, *The Harivamsa, Being the Khila or Supplement to the Mahābhārata*, vol. 1, *Critical Text* (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1969); and the "appendices," considered to have been added later, in Parashuram Lakshman Vaidya, *The Harivamsa, Being the Khila or Supplement to the Mahābhārata*, vol. 2, *Appendices* (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1971). The division is based on manuscript evidence. If a passage is found in "the extremes" (Vaidya, *The Harivamsa*, 1:xxiv), i.e. the most divergent manuscripts from the northwestern, northeastern, and southern manuscript groups, then it is placed in the "critical text." Although this division and difference in dating may be true for a number of the appendices, there is reasonable doubt whether this also holds for three manifestation myths of Viṣṇu: Varāha (appendix 1.42), Narasiṃha ("man-lion," appendix 1.42A), and Vāmana ("dwarf," appendix 1.42B). For a discussion on this topic, see Vaidya, *The Harivamsa*, 1: xxxiv; John Brockington, *The Sanskrit Epics* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 320; Marcelle Saindon, *Trois Manifestations de Vishnu, le Sanglier, l'Homme-Lion, le Nain: Les récits du Harivamsha* (Paris: Presses de l'université Paris-Sorbonne, 2009), 22ff.

48 *TS* 7.1.5.1.1–5:

âpo vâ idám ágre salilám āsīt | tásmin prajâpatir vāyúr bhūtvâcarat | sá imâm apaśyat | tâṃ varāhó bhūtvâharat | tâṃ viśvákarmā bhūtvâ vyàmārṭ |

"This was in the beginning the waters, the ocean. In it Prajāpati becoming the wind moved. He saw her, and becoming a boar he seized her. Her, becoming Viçvakarma, he wiped"; translation from Arthur Berriedale Keith, trans., *The Veda of the Black Yajus School, Entitled Taittiriya Sanhita*, part 2, *Kāṇḍas IV–VII* (Reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967), 560.

49 *MBh* 3.100.19:

tvayā bhūmiḥ purā naṣṭā samudrāt puṣkarekṣaṇa |
vārāhaṃ rūpam āsthāya jagadarthe samuddhṛtā || 19 ||

"When of yore the earth was lost, lotus-eyed God, thou didst rescue it from the ocean, assuming the form of a boar, for the sake of the world"; translation from J. A. B. van Buitenen, *The Mahābhārata: 2. The Book of the Assembly Hall, 3. The Book of the Forest* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 420.

50 *HV* 31.HV 31.28–29:

mahīṃ sāgaraparyantāṃ saśailavanakānanām |
ekārṇavajale bhraṣṭām ekārṇavagatiḥ prabhuḥ || 28 ||

water should be understood as cosmic or primordial water because these versions of the myth appear in cosmogonical sections dealing with the creation of the universe.[51]

The term *ekārṇava* continues to be used in later versions of the myths – the second phase – but the Rasātala is added as the final place of rescue. The *Harivaṃśa* appears to be right at the intersection of this development, for in the long version of the Varāha myth, relegated to the appendix of the critical edition (*HV* app.1.42), a combination of both elements is found.[52] The boar first dives into the ocean and then continues his journey down to Rasātala, to which the earth had sunk and where the actual rescue takes place. This combination becomes the standard in various Purāṇas.[53]

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daṃṣṭrayā yaḥ samuddhṛtya lokānāṃ hitakāmyayā |
sahasraśīrṣo devādiś cakāra jagatīṃ punaḥ || 29 ||

"The lord, going to the single ocean, having lifted up the earth, who is surrounded by the oceans [and covered] with mountains, forests and groves, who had fallen into the water of the single ocean, with his fang for the welfare of the worlds, the thousand-headed one, who is the first of [all] gods, created the world again."

51 Slaje shows that a combination of *salila* and *agre* in Vedic sources indicates the primordial salt water; see Walter Slaje, "Water and Salt (III): An Analysis and New Translation of the Yājñavalkya-Maitreyī Dialogue," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 45 (2002): 218, n. 38.

52 *HV* app.1.42.150–52 (water):

tato mahātmā manasā divyaṃ rūpam acintayat | 150 |
kiṃ nu rūpam ahaṃ kṛtvā uddharāmi vasuṃdharām || 151 ||
jale nimagnāṃ dharaṇīṃ yenāhaṃ vai samuddhare | 152 |

"Then the great soul thought about a divine body with his mind: 'What kind of body shall I make, with which I will raise the earth, the world, who had sunk into the water [and with which] I shall lift [her]?'"

HV app.1.42.181–82 (Rasātala):

rasātalatale magnāṃ rasātalatalaṃ gataḥ | 181 |
prabhur lokahitārthāya daṃṣṭrāgreṇojjahāra gām || 182 ||

"The lord, who had gone to the bottom of Rasātala, lifted up the earth, who had sunk to the bottom of Rasātala, with his tusk for the welfare of the world."

53 The combination is found, for example, in the *Vāyupurāṇa*.

VāP 6.2 (single ocean):

ekārṇave tadā tasmin naṣṭe sthāvarajaṅgame |
tadā samabhavad brahma sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāt || 2 ||

"When [the earth with] the moving and unmoving had disappeared into that single ocean, then Brahmā, the thousand-eyed, the thousand-footed, arose."

A comparison between the *Harivaṃśa* passage in the first phase (*HV* 31.28–29) and the texts of the second phase shows that often the same standardized verse is used. It reports that Viṣṇu lifts the earth, who "has sunk" or "is lost," with his tusk for the sake of the world. The only element that changes structurally from the first *Harivaṃśa* passage in the former phase to the Purāṇas and the *Harivaṃśa* passage in the latter phase is the place of rescue: from *ekārṇava* to Rasātala.[54]

5 The Cosmos Visualized

Is this development also visible in the iconography of Varāha? Does the Nāga represent the cosmic ocean in one image (as proposed by Willis) and Rasātala in the other (as proposed in more general terms by Gail)? To answer this question, I have chosen anthropomorphic boar images – because the element of suppression is absent in the zoomorphic exemplars – which moreover have enough additional details that can show in which realm the Nāga and the rest of the image are located.

The first relevant image is the anthropomorphic boar of Udayagiri Cave 5 (See Figure 1). The panel is divided into two parts, each representing a different realm. The lower half shows various traces of the ocean. The rippling, horizontal carvings are waves, and a few lotuses are still visible. The upper part is carved with numerous gods, who represent heaven. The Udayagiri panel hence depicts a division between heaven and the cosmic ocean.

The other relevant images appear in cave temples sponsored by the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, Cāḷukyas, and Pallavas. At least five panels from this period display many details of the setting of Varāha's heroic deed. The first is the Māmallapuram Varāha Cave panel, which is divided into two parts (Figure 2). In the lower part, we find the Nāga under the foot of Varāha, surrounded by swirls and lotuses, which suggest the ocean. The figures surrounding Varāha on the upper part of the

VāP 6.24 (Rasātala):

rasātalatale magnāṃ rasātalatale gatām |
prabhur lokahitārtāya daṃṣṭrayābhyujjahāra gām || 24 ||

"The lord lifted up the earth, who had sunk to the bottom of Rasātala, who had gone to the bottom of Rasātala, with his tusk for the welfare of the world."

54 Compare *ekārṇavajale bhraṣṭām ekārṇavagatiḥ prabhuḥ* (*HV* 31.28cd) and *rasātalatale magnāṃ rasātalatalaṃ gataḥ* (*HV* app.1.42.181).

Figure 2: Varāha at Māmallapuram Varāha Cave. Photo: American Institute of Indian Studies.

panel are celestial beings,[55] representing heaven. The Māmallapuram panel therefore also visualizes a division between heaven and the cosmic ocean.

The distribution is less clear in the case of Bādāmi Cave 2 (Figure 3). The only element that could indicate the ocean is the lotus on which Varāha puts his foot and which rests on the coil of a Nāga. However, according to Boner, it is significant that the Nāgas' tails are not coiled: "This may be another way of signifying

55 Boner identifies the celestial beings as the sun and the moon, Brahmā, and the Yogins from the Janaloka; see Alice Boner, *Principles of Composition in Hindu Sculpture* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), 132. She concludes that "Varāha lifts Bhūdevī from the depth of the abyss to the regions of Sun and Moon" (Boner, *Principles of Composition*, 138).

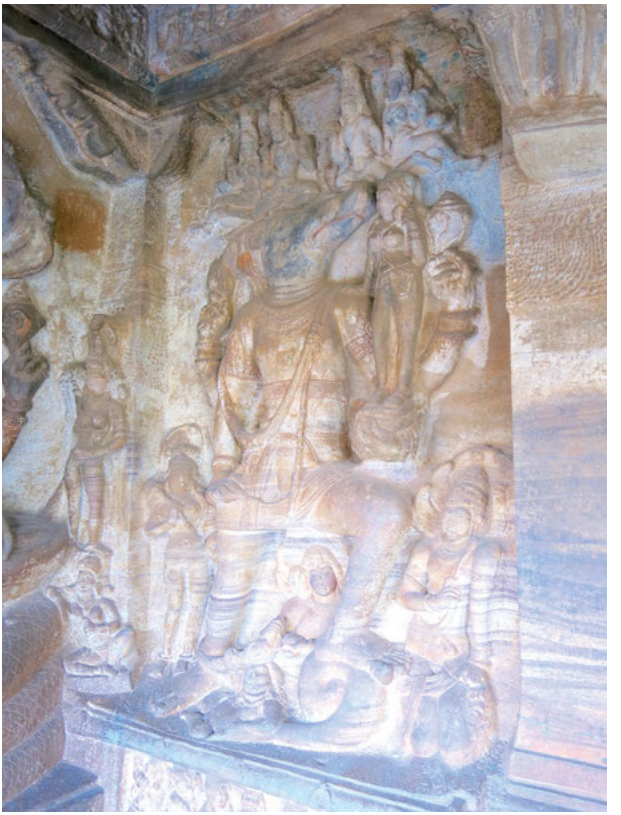

Figure 3: Varāha at Bādāmi Cave 2. Photo: Elizabeth A. Cecil.

the horizontal extension of the Waters."[56] The upper part is probably heaven, suggested by the flying couples above Varāha's head, usually interpreted as *vidyādhara*s.[57] These "wisdom carriers," however, may also function as worshippers of Viṣṇu.

The bottom part of the Varāha panel at Ellora Cave 14 (Ravana ka Khai, Figure 4) shows no sign of either the cosmic ocean or the netherworld. The upper part, on the other hand, has several elements pointing to heaven.

56 Boner, *Principles of Composition*, 124.

57 For a definition of *vidyādhara*, see, for example, Boner, *Principles of Composition in Hindu Sculpture*, 259; Sthapati, *Indian Sculptures & Iconography*, 435–36. Compare Banerjea's identifying the flying beings in Bādāmi Cave 2 as "*gandharvas*" (Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, 16).

Figure 4: Ellora Cave 14 (Ravana ka Khai). Photo: Elizabeth A. Cecil.

There are flying figures in the upper corners, and above Varāha's head there are "conventional representations of the heavens in the form of semi-circular cloud patterns."[58] Although there are indications that the upper part is heaven, it is not possible to identify the lower part.[59]

The final two panels are Bādāmi Cave 3 (Figure 5) and Ellora Cave 16 (Kailasa, Figure 6). These however show details on the lower part of the panel. The upper part of Bādāmi Cave 3 merely shows two pairs of flying celestials above Varāha's head, and there is no further indication of heaven. At the bottom of the panel, there are two Nāgas and a male figure between the legs of Varāha. His lower left arm rests on the tip of the Nāga's coil and his right hand holds on to

58 Soundara Rajan, *Cave Temples of the Deccan*, 110.

59 According to Boner, however, the lower part can be classified as the ocean. The *madhyaprastha*, the "central horizontal middle-line in a diagram" (Boner, *Principles of Composition,* 253), "divides the lower worlds of the waters from the upper worlds of earth and heaven," and the goddess earth "carries her head victoriously in the region of the clouds, which represent Svārloka ["heaven"]" (Boner, *Principles of Composition*, 114).

Figure 5: Bādāmi Cave 3. Photo: Elizabeth A. Cecil.

Varāha's sacrificial cord. He has no coils, so it cannot be a Nāga.[60] Several other interpretations have been given, such as a "figure of a dwarf, lying on the ground,"[61] "a *gaṇa* in the nether waters,"[62] or "a dwarf between the legs"; in fact, "Hiraṇyākṣa is caught in the flowing wash of *nāgas* and garlands."[63] Although the figure resembles the *gaṇa*s in the frieze below the Varāha panel,

60 According to Boner, the figure is, in fact, a "small Nāga floating between his [i.e. the boar's] legs." She takes this lower space to be "the Nāga-world, the Primordial Waters," with two realms on top of it. One of these "is the middle region, the antarikṣa, which, in contrast to the nether worlds, has an atmosphere and breathing space, and in which the sight becomes free to the heavenly regions, where the Vidyādharas, the holders of divine knowledge, dwell" (Boner, *Principles of Composition*, 116; 119).

61 R. D. Banerji, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, no. 25, *Basreliefs of Badami* (Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1928), 36.

62 Soundara Rajan, *Cave Temples of the Deccan*, 68.

63 Preeti Sharma, "The Meaning and Symbolism of Varāha Motif: With Special Reference to the Chālukyan Rock-cut Caves at Bādāmī," *Journal of History & Social Sciences* 1, no. 1 (July–December 2010), http://jhss.org/archivearticleview.php?artid=94.

Figure 6: Ellora Cave 16 (Kailasa). Photo: Elizabeth A. Cecil.

the ocean is not a common place for a *gaṇa*. I am not convinced by the identification of Hiraṇyākṣa either, for, although the Daitya king is closely related to the Varāha myth, the figure does not display any signs of Hiraṇyākṣa in particular. Despite the fact that the panel has various figures in the bottom part, it is not possible to determine where they are located because it is not clear who they are.

The Varāha image in Ellora Cave 16 is partly damaged, which complicates its interpretation. However, it may be the first sculpture showing heaven and the netherworld. Heaven appears to be intended through the presence of the celestial beings flying above Varāha's head, but there are no further details referring to heaven. In the lower part of the image, a Nāga is present, but he is not stepped upon by Varāha. Instead, Varāha places his foot on a pedestal, which is made clearly distinct from the rest of the image by the coarse line under the right foot of Varāha. The pedestal is decorated with at least eight figures. Due to damage to this section, it is difficult to identify them. The two creatures on the left may be Nāgas, if the halolike circles behind their heads are snake hoods and if the elongated bodies flowing below their torsos are their

coils. There is one figure next to them that has a similar shape in head and torso. The figures on the right seem to be kneeling before the three on the left. Since the pedestal is separated from the rest of the image, it looks like a separate world, from which Varāha arises and which he presses down with his foot. If the artist had the ocean in mind, then he would probably have sculpted the bottom part differently, namely more clearly as water. The artist instead seems to have had another realm in mind, which by the time of this Ellora cave (eighth century)[64] could very well have been *pātāla*.

6 Conclusion

I began this study by showing that there is great correspondence between, on the one hand, the textual description of the Varāha myth in general and the moment that Varāha rescues the earth in particular, and their iconographic representation on the other hand. I have noted one exception. Whereas one of the standard elements of the Varāha images is the presence of a Nāga, there is no mention of any Nāga in most of the texts. The *Skandapurāṇa* is probably the only text that mentions Nāgas in general and some Nāga kings in particular (especially Śeṣa), but it does not ascribe the mythical serpents any particular role in the story. The text, therefore, does not provide a textual counterpart of the Nāga in the Varāha images. However, what the *Skandapurāṇa* does demonstrate is that Nāgas can represent a certain realm of the cosmos, viz. a part of the netherworld, (near) the *pātāla* called Rasātala. Taking Nāgas as exemplary of a part of the cosmos has helped in identifying the Nāga in Varāha iconography, as well as in finding a textual counterpart after all: the place from which Varāha rescues the earth.

In almost all the texts, the description of the moment that Varāha lifts the earth contains several standard elements, including the place of rescue. The place develops from the cosmic ocean (in Vedic sources and early epic-Purāṇic texts) to Rasātala (in later epic and Purāṇic texts). If we take the Nāga to represent one of these two places in Varāha iconography, the place of rescue is then visualized. In material art, there appears to be a clear preference for the cosmic ocean, for the images showing water greatly outnumber the instances in which

64 "The Kailāsa temple was the result of the munificence of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa I (A.D. 756–773) and was named after him as Kṛṣṇēśvara." Michael Meister, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture: South India – Upper Drāviḍadēśa – Early Phase, A.D. 550 – 1075* (New Delhi: American Institute of Indian Studies, 1986), 111.

the netherworld is depicted. In fact, only Ellora Cave 16 seems to represent *pātāla*, for it is clearly distinct from the other images in the way it depicts its bottom part. If the sculptor would have wanted to show an underwater world, he would probably have done this differently.

To conclude, even though the depiction of a Nāga seemed to point to a discrepancy with the textual version of the Varāha myth, this problem is solved when we construe the Nāga as a representative of a cosmic realm. This appears to have been a cultural idiom in both text and image; the two forms of media therefore do not seem so different after all.

Abbreviations

AgP	*Agnipurāṇa*
HV	*Harivaṃśa*
MBh	*Mahābhārata*
MtP	*Matsyapurāṇa*
PdP	*Padmapurāṇa*
SP	*Skandapurāṇa*
TS	*Taittirīya Saṃhitā*
VāP	*Vāyupurāṇa*
VDhP	*Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*
ViP	*Viṣṇupurāṇa*

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Peter C. Bisschop

3 *Vyoman*: The Sky is the Limit. On the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*'s Reworking of the *Liṅgodbhava* Myth

1 Introduction

One of the most celebrated myths of Śiva tells about "The Origin of the Liṅga" (*Liṅgodbhava*), the material icon that is the central object of Śiva worship. Once, as the story goes, Brahmā and Viṣṇu were quarrelling with each other about who was the greatest god of all, each claiming to be the primary creative agent that animates the world. To dispel their pride, a massive *liṅga* appears in between them. Brahmā travels upwards in order to find its end, while Viṣṇu goes down, but to no avail: neither can find the end of the *liṅga*. Through this experience, they realize that Śiva, the lord of the *liṅga*, is, in fact, the supreme god. The narrative concludes with Viṣṇu and Brahmā praising Śiva and worshiping him in the form of the *liṅga*.[1]

This popular etiological myth stands at the intersection of text and material culture, recounting the mythical origin of the material object of devotion. Textual accounts of the *Liṅgodbhava* myth are found in the Śaiva Purāṇas in particular, but one of the earliest versions may be the one told in the *Śivadharmaśāstra* (ca. sixth to seventh century CE), a foundational work of Śaiva devotionalism that advocates *liṅga* worship as the means of salvation.[2] The image has also found expression in narrative tableaux decorating the walls of Śiva temples, most notably in the Tamil South, but also in North India, as illustrated by this magnificent panel from Mount Harṣa in Rajasthan, now in the Ajmer Museum (Figure 1).[3]

1 For studies of different versions of the *Liṅgodbhava* myth, see Raju Kalidos, "*Liṅgodbhavamūrti* in Early Medieval Art and Literature," *Acta Orientalia* 64 (2003): 77–136; Nirajan Kafle, "The *Liṅgodbhava* Myth in Early Śaiva Sources," in *Puṣpikā. Tracing Ancient India Through Texts and Traditions. Contributions to Current Research in Indology I*, eds. Nina Mirnig, Péter-Dániel Szántó, and Michael Williams (Oxford: Oxbow, 2013), 241–263; Angela Wagner-Hohenberger, "On the Composition of Parallel Versions of the Story 'The Appearance of the *Liṅga* (*Liṅgodbhava*)' in the Purāṇas," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 68, no. 3 (2014): 831–848.

2 See Kafle, "The *Liṅgodbhava* Myth in Early Śaiva Sources" for a first edition and study of the *Liṅgodbhava* myth in the *Śivadharmaśāstra*. On the question of the time and place of composition of the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, see the introduction in Peter C. Bisschop, *Universal Śaivism. The Appeasement of All Gods and Powers in the Śāntyadhyāya of the Śivadharmaśāstra* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

3 On the *liṅgodbhavamūrti* in Pallava art, see Valérie Gillet, *La creation d'une iconographie śivaïte narrative. Incarnations du dieu dans les temples pallava construits* (Pondicherry: IFP/

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Figure 1: *Liṅgodbhava* panel. Mount Harṣa (Rajasthan), now in the Ajmer Government Museum. Photo: author.

The *Liṅgodbhava* myth is well known and has received much attention. However, a remarkable adaptation of this myth in the context of Sūrya worship, recorded in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* (*BhavP* 1.153–156), has gone unnoticed.[4] In this text, Śiva's *liṅga* has been replaced by Sūrya's *vyoman*, a mysterious object presented as the supreme form of the Sun god. As I have argued elsewhere, the

EFEO, 2010), 173–186. On the archaeological remains of Mount Harṣa, see Elizabeth A. Cecil, "The Medieval Temple as Material Archive. Historical Preservation and the Production of Knowledge at Mount Harṣa," *Archive Journal* (August 2017), https://www.archivejournal.net/essays/the-medieval-temple-as-material-archive/.

4 The *Epic and Purāṇic Bibliography* does not list any publication referring to the relevant chapters of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*; cf. Heinrich von Stietencron, ed., *Epic and Purāṇic Bibliography (up to 1985) Annotated and with Indexes*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992).

Bhaviṣyapurāṇa has incorporated and revised large parts of the *Śivadharmaśāstra* and the *Śivadharmottara*, the two texts that make up the earliest part of the Śivadharma corpus, and transformed them into the teachings of "Sauradharma."[5] As part of this Saura adaptation, the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* has also revised the *Liṅgodbhava* myth told in chapter 3 of the *Śivadharmaśāstra* and turned it into a myth about the manifestation and worship of Sūrya's *vyoman*. But what is this *vyoman*? While the *Liṅgodbhava* narrative describes the origins of a familiar object of devotion (i.e. the Śiva *liṅga*), the identity of the *vyoman* as an object of worship is more difficult to trace. Does the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*'s description of the Saura emblem represent a textual innovation, or does it describe an actual object?

With these questions in mind, the first part of the present paper introduces the *Vyomodbhava* myth of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, with reference to the underlying parallels with the *Liṅgodbhava* myth of the *Śivadharmaśāstra*. The second part examines the possible identity of the *vyoman* as an object of worship in medieval India in relation to the surviving material evidence as well as other textual descriptions.

2 The *Vyomodbhava* Myth of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*

The *Vyomodbhava* myth covers chapters 153 to 156 of the *Brāhmaparvan* of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*. The *Brāhmaparvan* is generally considered to be the oldest part of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, as suggested by R. C. Hazra's study of quotations from the text in medieval Dharmanibandha literature.[6] Although the precise date of composition of the *Brāhmaparvan* remains uncertain, it seems likely that a large part of it was composed sometime during the second half of the first millennium CE. This part of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* is primarily concerned with teachings about Sun worship. While worship of the Sun has been part and parcel of the Vedic tradition from a very early period,[7] the type of cultic Sun worship taught in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* is markedly different, in that it presents Sun worship as a distinct religion centered on a single supreme deity, with its own class of priests

5 Bisschop, *Universal Śaivism*, 21–25; Peter C. Bisschop, "Vyāsa's Palimpsest. Tracking Processes of Transmission and Re-creation in Anonymous Sanskrit Literature," in *Perspectives on Lived Religion: Practices – Transmission – Landscape*, eds. N. Staring, H. Twiston Davies, and L. Weiss (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2019), 165–172.

6 R. C. Hazra, *Studies in the Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, 2nd ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972), 167–173.

7 The *Ṛgveda*'s Sāvitrī or Gāyatrī mantra, dedicated to the Sun, is regarded as the quintessence of the Vedas to the present day.

(Māghas and Bhojakas), its own community of worshippers, and its own form of ritual practice. The text reflects on and engages with the traditions of Sun worship, strongly rooted in ancient Iran, that had spread to northern India during the first millennium CE.[8] The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* presents Sun worship in accordance with a Brahmanic model of worship and teaches that the sun is the highest and ultimate Lord (*īśvara*), encompassing and ruling over all other deities.[9]

At the beginning of a kalpa, as the story goes, Brahmā, who was creating the world, became arrogant, thinking, "There is no one in the world who is superior to me." Likewise, Viṣṇu became arrogant while he was protecting the world, and Śiva while he was destroying it.[10] They start quarrelling with each other, each claiming to be the one who creates, preserves, and destroys the universe.[11] As they are quarrelling, the darkness of ignorance enters them and they can no

8 On the history and incorporation of Iranian traditions of sun worship in the formation of the Saura religion, see François Chenet, "Les Sauras de l'Inde: Le brilliant échec d'une identité religieuse inclusiviste?" *Journal Asiatique* 281 (1993): 317–392; Adalbert J. Gail, "Der Sonnenkult im alten Indien – Eigenwächs oder Import?" *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 128 (1978): 333–348; H. Humbach, "Mithra in India and the Hinduized Magi," in *Études Mithriaques. Actes de Congrès* 4 (Tehran: Bibliothèque Pahlavi, 1978), 229–253; Michael Stausberg, "Hinduism and Zoroastrianism," in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, vol. 4, eds. Knut Jacobsen et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 605–616; and Heinrich von Stietencron, *Indische Sonnenpriester. Sāmba und die Śākadvīpīya-Brāhmaṇa* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966).

9 This paragraph reproduces some information from Bisschop, "Vyāsa's Palimpsest," 167.

10 *BhavP* 1.153.2–3:

> *kalpādau sṛjato vīra brahmaṇo vividhāḥ prajāḥ |*
> *ahaṃkāro mahān āsīn nāsti loke maduttamaḥ || 2||*
> *tathā pālayato vīra keśavasya dharāpate |*
> *tathā saṃharato jajñe 'haṃkāras tryambakasya ca || 3||*

Compare *ŚiDhŚ* 3.2:

> *pūrvam ekārṇave ghore naṣṭe sthāvarajaṅgame |*
> *vivādaḥ sumahān āsīd brahmaviṣṇoḥ parasparam ||*

All references to the *Śivadharmaśāstra* in this paper are to my draft edition of chapter 3.

11 *BhavP* 1.152.6–8:

> *ahaṃ kartā vikartāhaṃ pālako 'haṃ jagatprabhuḥ |*
> *ity āha bhagavān brahmā kṛṣṇabhīmau samarcitau || 6||*
> *tathaitya śaṃkaraḥ kruddhaḥ kaḥ śakto madṛte bhuvi |*
> *saṃhartuṃ jagad etad dhi sraṣṭuṃ pālayituṃ tathā || 7||*
> *nārāyaṇo 'py evam eva manākkrodhasamanvitaḥ |*
> *na vā śakto jagat sraṣṭuṃ saṃhartuṃ rakṣituṃ tathā || 8||*

longer see anything.[12] They do know what to do, however, and cry out for each other in despair:

> Mahādeva said:
> "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa! Great-armed one! Where have you gone, great-minded one? And where has Brahmā gone, hero? I don't see the two of you anywhere! [15]
>
> I am truly bewildered by great delusion and darkness. What can I do? Where can I go? And where can I stay now? [16]
>
> For not at all do I see the mountain, the earth, the trees, Devas, Gandharvas, or Dānavas, the broad ocean, the rivers! [17]
>
> How can I see the world, both stationary and nonstationary? Tell me, best of gods, I am overcome with shame!" [18]
>
> On hearing Śaṃkara's words, Hari replied in a voice stammering with misery, deluded by darkness, o king. [19]
>
> Viṣṇu said:
> "Bhīma, Bhīma! I do not know where you are now! My mind is also greatly deluded by darkness, Śaṁkara! [20]
>
> Where do I go, where do I stand, how can one gain comfort? For the entire world is filled with darkness, Parameśvara! [21]
>
> If that god, the best of the gods, the one arisen from the lotus, is seen, let us ask him, the great soul, if you agree, o Hara, [22]
>
> abandoning arrogance, pride, remaining even, alone, the lotus-faced one, he who originates from the lotus, whose eyes are like lotus petals." [23]
>
> On hearing the words of Viṣṇu of immeasurable splendor, who was speaking thus, Lord Brahmā spoke to the Bearer of the Gaṅgā (Śiva) and the Bearer of the Earth (Viṣṇu): [24]
>
> "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa! Great-armed one! Bhīma, Bhīma! Great-minded one! Where are you two? Say something! What were you two saying to each other? [25]

Compare ŚiDhŚ 3.3:

> *ahaṃ kartā hy ahaṃ kartā na madanyo jagatpatiḥ* |
> *evam āha hariṃ brahmā brahmāṇaṃ ca haris tathā* ||

12 *BhavP* 1.152.9–10:

> *evaṃ teṣāṃ pravadatāṃ kruddhānāṃ ca parasparam* |
> *samāviśat tadājñānaṃ tamo mohātmakaṃ vibho* || 9||
> *tena krāntadhiyaḥ sarve na paśyanti parasparam* |
> *atyarthaṃ moham āpannā na jānantīha kiṃcana* || 10||

> My mind and intellect are greatly subjugated by darkness! I do not hear, I do not see, being subjugated by sleep and delusion! [26]
>
> Alas! The entire world, with its gods, demons, and men, is struck by darkness, you two gods! I do not know where the light has gone!" [27][13]

Following this lively exchange, which pokes fun at the three gods who find themselves in the pitch-black darkness of ignorance, the *vyoman* makes its appearance:

> As the gods, headed by Brahmā, were speaking like this, afflicted by pride, anger, and fear, with their minds overcome by darkness, [28]

13 *BhavP* 1.153.15–27:

mahādeva uvāca |
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahābāho kva gatas tvaṃ mahāmate |
brahmā ca kva gato vīra nāhaṃ paśyāmi vāṃ kvacit || 15||
mohena mahatāhaṃ vai tamasā ca vimohitaḥ |
kiṃ karomi kva gacchāmi kva cāham adhunā sthitaḥ || 16||
kṣmādharaṃ pṛthivīṃ vṛkṣān devagandharvadānavān |
vipulaṃ sāgaraṃ sindhūn na hi paśyāmi kiṃcana || 17||
kenopāyena paśyeyaṃ jagat sthāvarajaṅgamam |
brūhi me devaśārdūla vrīḍā me 'tīva jāyate || 18||
śaṃkarasya vacaḥ śrutvā harir vacanam abravīt |
śokagadgadayā vācā tamasā mohito nṛpa || 19||
viṣṇur uvāca |
bhīma bhīma na jāne 'haṃ kva bhavān vartate 'dhunā |
mamāpi mohitaṃ cetas tamasātīva śaṃkara || 20||
kva gacchāmi kva tiṣṭhāmi kathaṃ tat svasthatāṃ vrajet |
tamasā pūritaṃ sarvaṃ jagad dhi parameśvara || 21||
yady asau dṛśyate devaḥ surajyeṣṭho 'mbujodbhavaḥ |
pṛcchāvas taṃ mahātmānaṃ yadi te rocate hara || 23||
hitvā darpam ahaṃkāraṃ samam āsthāya kevalam |
padmānanaṃ padmayoniṃ padmapatranibhekṣaṇam || 24||
ity evaṃ gadato vākyaṃ viṣṇor amitatejasaḥ |
śrutvovāca vibhur brahmā gaṅgādharamahīdharau || 25||
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahābāho bhīma bhīma mahāmate |
kva bhavantau brūta kiṃ ca kiṃ yuvām ūcathur mithaḥ || 26||
mamātīva manobuddhī tamasā vaśam āgate |
na śṛṇomi na paśyāmi nidrāmohavaśaṃ gataḥ || 27||
aho bata jagat sarvaṃ sadevāsuramānuṣam |
tamasā vyāhataṃ [corr.; *vyāṣṭataṃ* Ed.] *devau na jāne kva gataṃ mahaḥ* || 28||

> in order to remove their pride and to teach them, the luminous form of Gopati (Sūrya) appeared, with eight projections,[14] unparalleled, [29]
>
> unmarked by evil or darkness, o king. It shone, covered in a wreath of flames, o hero, and with many forms, [30]
>
> one hundred *yojana*s in extent, rising upwards and flickering, in the midst of the stars, o great king, like the pericarp of a lotus. [31][15]

This passage clearly models its account of Sūrya's material epiphany on the description of the appearance of the *liṅga* in *Śivadharmaśāstra* 3.4–5, even including some of the same vocabulary:

> In order to remove their pride and to teach them, the mighty *liṅga*, consisting entirely of fire, appeared in the middle of the two gods, [4]
>
> covered in a wreath of flames, divine, endowed with immeasurable qualities, ten thousand *yojana*s in extent, it stood in the pure water. [5][16]

Astonished by the sight of the *vyoman*, Brahmā travels upwards, Śiva goes down, and Viṣṇu goes crosswise, but they are unable to measure it.[17] The passage is a

14 The meaning of *aṣṭaśṛṅga* will be discussed in the second part of this paper.

15 *BhavP* 1.153.28–31:

> *atha teṣāṃ pravadatāṃ brahmādīnāṃ divaukasām* |
> *darpakrodhabhayārtānāṃ tamasākrāntacetasām* || 28||
> *teṣāṃ darpāpahārāya prabhodhārthaṃ ca gopateḥ* |
> *tejorūpaṃ samudbhūtam aṣṭaśṛṅgam anaupamam* || 29||
> *alakṣyaṃ pāpatamasā mahadvyoma narādhipa* |
> *jvālāmālāvṛtaṃ vīra bahurūpaṃ ca bhāsate* || 30||
> *śatayojanavistīrṇaṃ gatam ūrdhvaṃ bhramat tathā* |
> *gomadhyato mahārāja karṇikevāmbujasya tu* || 31||

16 *ŚiDhŚ* 3.4–5:

> *tayor darpāpahārāya prabodhārthaṃ ca devayoḥ* |
> *madhye samutthitaṃ liṅgam aiśvaryaṃ tejasaḥ param* || 4||
> *jvālāmālāvṛtaṃ divyam aprameyaguṇoditam* |
> *yojanāyutavistīrṇaṃ sthitaṃ tad vimale 'mbhasi* || 5||

17 *BhavP* 1.153.34–37:

> *tejasā mohitaṃ tasya mahadvyoma narādhipa* |
> *tato vismayam āsīnā dṛṣṭagopatayo nṛpa* || 34||
> *paśyamānā maho vyomni mitho vacanam abruvan* |
> *aho tejaḥ samudbhūtam asmākaṃ śreyase nṛpa* || 35||

logical adaptation of the *Liṅgodbhava* myth in which Brahmā travels up and Viṣṇu goes down to find the end of the *liṅga*.[18] In the *Vyomodbhava* myth, there are three gods involved and the object is the disk of the sky (*vyoman*), so they each have to go up, down, and crosswise. The outcome, however, is the same: they are unable to find the end of the *vyoman* and all the gods start reciting praise. Sūrya appears and shows himself to the gods in the *vyoman* as the supreme lord.[19] Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva each praise Sūrya individually.[20] There follows an extensive exchange between Sūrya and the gods, in which Sūrya offers each of them boons. Brahmā requests to have devotion, while Śiva asks to be instructed about his true form, which Sūrya does in extenso. He teaches them about his own four forms: the *rajas* form of Brahmā, the *sattva* form of Viṣṇu, the *tamas* form of Śiva, and the fourth supreme form, which is free from *guṇa*s.[21] They cannot experience it without worshiping him in the form of the *vyoman*:[22]

---

prakāśāya ca lokānāṃ sarve paśyāma kiṃ nv idam |
jñānāyordhvaṃ gato brahmā cādhastāt tripurāntakaḥ || 36||
tiryag jagāma deveśaś cakrāmbujagadādharaḥ |
alabdhvā tasya te sarve pramāṇaṃ gairikādhipāḥ || 37||

18 *ŚiDhŚ* 3.7:

gatāv ūrdhvam adhas tasya saṃpradhārya parasparam |
adho 'valambayad viṣṇur agād ūrdhvaṃ pitāmahaḥ || 7||

19 *BhavP* 1.153.41–42:

stuvatām apy athaiteṣāṃ sahasrakiraṇo raviḥ |
ātmānaṃ darśayām āsa kṛpayā parayā vṛtaḥ || 41||
jñātvā bhaktiṃ mahābāho brahmādīnāṃ mahopamām |
atha te vyomni deveśaṃ dadṛśuḥ parameśvaram || 42||

20 *BhavP* 1.153.50–80.

21 *BhavP* 1.154.15–19:

caturmūrtir ahaṃ deva jagad vyāpya vyavasthitaḥ |
śreyase sarvalokānām ādimadhyāntakṛt sadā || 15||
ekā me rājasī mūrtir brahmeti parikīrtitā |
sṛṣṭiṃ karoti sā nityaṃ kalpādau jagatāṃ vibho || 16||
dvitīyā sāttvikī proktā yā parā parikīrtitā |
jagat sā pālayen nityaṃ duṣṭadaityavināśinī || 17||
tṛtīyā tāmasī jñeyā īśeti parikīrtitā |
trailokyaṃ saṃharet sā tu kalpānte śūlapāṇinī || 18||
caturthī tu guṇair hīnā satyādibhir anuttamā |
sā cāśakyā kvacid draṣṭuṃ sthitā sā cābhavat sadā || 19||

22 *BhavP* 1.154.23:

That which is known as the Primeval Lord, that is praised as the *vyoman*. For at the end of a kalpa, all gods are dissolved in this *vyoman*. [28]

Brahmā is dissolved in the right side, Janārdana in the left, and you, Tripurāntaka, are dissolved in the top. [29]

Gāyatrī, mother of the world, is dissolved in its heart; the Veda, along with the six *aṅga*s, the *pada*[*pāṭha*], and the *krama*[*pāṭha*], is dissolved in its head. [30]

The entire world, both moving and unmoving, is dissolved in the belly. From it again arises Brahmā, etc., and all that is moving and unmoving. [31]

Space, they say, is *vyoman*; the earth is held to be *nikṣubhā* (unshakable). I am space, the most excellent of beings, and Nikṣubhā is my wife. [32]

By me and Nikṣubhā all the world is pervaded, Three-eyed One. Therefore you, Brahmā, and Keśava should worship the *vyoman*. [33][23]

This passage draws directly upon *ŚiDh* 3.14–18:

At the end of a kalpa all the gods are dissolved in this *liṅga*. Brahmā is dissolved in the right [side], the eternal Viṣṇu in the left. [14]

And Gāyatrī, the most supreme of all the gods, in the heart. The Vedas, along with the six *aṅga*s, the *pada*[*pāṭha*], and the *krama*[*pāṭha*], reside in the head. [15]

The entire world, both moving and unmoving, is dissolved in the belly. From it again arises Brahmā, etc., and all that is moving and unmoving. [16]

Space, they say, is the *liṅga*; the earth, its pedestal. It is the dwelling (*ālaya*) of all beings. Due to dissolving (*līyanāt*) into it, it is called *liṅga*. [17]

---

na sā spraṣṭuṃ tvayā śakyā hariṇā brahmaṇā na ca |
mām anārādhya bhūteśa vyomarūpaṃ kadācana ||

23 *BhavP* 1.154.28–33:

yat tv ādyam īśvaraṃ jajñe tad vyoma parikīrtitam |
kalpānte hy atra vai vyomni līyante sarvadevatāḥ || 28||
dakṣiṇe līyate brahmā vāme tasya janārdanaḥ |
tvaṃ sadā kacadeśe tu līyase tripurāntaka || 29||
gāyatrī līyate tasya hṛdaye lokamātaraḥ |
līyate [corr.; *līyante* Ed.] *mūrdhni vai vedaḥ saṣaḍaṅgapadakramaḥ* || 30||
jaṭhare līyate sarvaṃ jagat sthāvarajaṅgamam |
punar utpadyate hy asmād brahmādyaṃ sacarācaram || 31||
ākāśaṃ vyoma ity āhuḥ pṛthivī nikṣubhā matā |
bhūtaśreyo 'ham ākāśo nikṣubhā dayitā mama || 32||
mayā nikṣubhayā sarvaṃ jagad vyāptaṃ trilocana |
tasmād ārādhaya vyoma tvaṃ brahma keśavas tathā || 33||

> Therefore, the one who installs a *liṅga*, the origin of all the gods, has thereby installed and worshiped everything, without a doubt! [18][24]

In this part of the text, the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* stays relatively close to the text of the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, yet introduces some significant changes in order to accommodate the new context of the origin of the *vyoman*. Most significant is the adaptation of the mystical identification of the *liṅga* in *ŚiDhŚ* 3.17. This verse identifies the *liṅga* with space and the earth with its pedestal (*pīṭhikā*), and provides a *nirukti* of the word *liṅga* that derives it from the root "dissolve" (*vlī*).[25] In *BhavP* 1.153.32, the *vyoman* is identified with space, while *nikṣubhā* (the unshakable) is identified with the earth. Nikṣubhā is the name of one of the wives of the sun and plays a key role in the legendary ancestry of the Magas. According to *BhavP* 1.139.33–43, the Magas are the descendants of Jaraśastra (i.e. Zaraθuštra), the son of the Sun and the goddess Nikṣubhā.[26] This statement should therefore also be read in the light of the legendary ancestry of the Maga priests, who are portrayed as the ideal Sun worshippers in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*.

The text then introduces a new element into the narrative. After he explains the nature of the *vyoman* to Śiva, Sūrya instructs Śiva to worship his *vyoman* on Mt. Gandhamādana; furthermore, Viṣṇu should worship it at Kalāpagrāma, and Brahmā at Puṣkara.[27] Viṣṇu asks Sūrya to instruct them on the precise form of

24 *ŚiDhŚ* 3.14–17:

> *kalpānte tasya liṅgasya līyante sarvadevatāḥ* |
> *dakṣiṇe līyate brahmā vāme viṣṇuḥ sanātanaḥ* || 14||
> *hṛdaye caiva gāyatrī sarvadevottamottamā* |
> *mūrdhni tiṣṭhanti vai vedāḥ saṣaḍaṅgapadakramāḥ* || 15||
> *jaṭhare līyate sarvaṃ jagat sthāvarajaṅgamam* |
> *punar utpadyate tasmād brahmādyaṃ sacarācaram* || 16||
> *ākāśaṃ liṅgam ity āhuḥ pṛthivī tasya pīṭhikā* |
> *ālayaḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ līyanāl liṅgam ucyate* || 17||
> *tasmāl liṅgaṃ pratiṣṭhāpya sarvadevabhavodbhavam* |
> *sthāpitaṃ tena sarvaṃ syāt pūjitaṃ na saṃśayaḥ* || 18||

25 On this verse, see Peter C. Bisschop, "Buddhist and Śaiva Interactions in the Kali Age. The *Śivadharmaśāstra* as a Source of the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra*," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 61 (2018): 396–410.

26 Edition and translation in von Stietencron, *Indische Sonnenpriester*. See also Humbach, "Mithra in India and the Hinduized Magi," 250.

27 These three places each have a traditional connection with the three deities. Kalāpagrāma is also referred to as Śālagrāma later on in the text.

BhavP 1.154.34–36:

the *vyoman* that they should worship.[28] In the subsequent chapter, Sūrya tells him that Brahmā should worship a quadrangular *vyoman* at daybreak; Viṣṇu, a discus-shaped *vyoman* at noon; and Śiva, a round *vyoman* in the evening.[29] This additional episode may have been inspired by the outcome of the *Liṅgodbhava* myth in the *Śivadharmaśāstra*: there, all the gods each install and worship their own *liṅga* made of different material. According to the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, they gain their divine positions because of this: Brahmā acquires the status of Brahmā by worshiping a stone *liṅga*; Indra, the state of Indra by worshiping a crystal *liṅga*; Kubera, the state of Kubera by worshiping a golden *liṅga*, etc.[30]

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tan me rūpaṃ mahadvyoma pūjayitvā trilocana |
divyaṃ varṣasahasraṃ hi girau tvaṃ gandhamādane |
tato yāsyasi saṃsiddhiṃ ṣaḍaṅgāṃ paramāṃ śubhām || 34||
kalāpagrāmam āśritya śaṅkhacakragadādharaḥ |
ārādhayatu māṃ bhaktyā vyomarūpaṃ janārdanaḥ || 35||
antarikṣagataṃ tīrthaṃ puṣkaraṃ lokapāvanam |
tatra gatvā viriñco me vyomarūpaṃ sadārcatu || 36||

28 *BhavP* 1.154.41:

kīdṛgvyoma tv ahaṃ brahmā haraś ca tripurāntakaḥ |
ārādhayāmahe deva bhaktyā śreyo'rtham ātmanaḥ ||

29 *BhavP* 1.155.2–4:

ārādhayatv ayaṃ devo mama rūpam anaupamam |
catuṣkoṇaṃ paraṃ vyoma adbhutaṃ gairikojjvalam || 2||
tvam ārādhya ca cakrāṅkaṃ śaṃkaro vṛttam ādarāt |
śabdādau satataṃ brahmā sagarādau trilocanaḥ || 3||
madhyāhne tvaṃ sadā deva bhaktyā mām arcayasva vai |
yatheṣṭam ṛbhavaḥ sarve bhaktyā māṃ pūjayantu vai || 4||

30 *ŚiDhŚ* 3.20–22:

brahmā pūjayate nityaṃ liṅgaṃ śailamayaṃ śubham |
tasya saṃpūjanāt tena prāptaṃ brahmatvam uttamam || 20||
śakro 'pi devarājendro liṅgaṃ maṇimayaṃ śubham |
bhaktyā pūjayate nityaṃ tenendratvaṃ avāpa saḥ || 21||
liṅgaṃ hemamayaṃ kāntaṃ dhanado 'rcayate sadā |
tenāsau dhanado devo dhanadatvam avāpa saḥ || 22||

The verses that follow (23–39) also mention the Viśvedevas, Vāyu, Viṣṇu, the Vasus, the two Aśvins, Varuṇa, Agni, Sūrya, Buddha, Arhat, Soma, the Nāgas, the Rākṣasas, the Piśācas, the Guhyakas, and the Mātṛs. For a discussion of this passage, see Peter C. Bisschop, "Inclusivism Revisited. The Worship of Other Gods in the Śivadharmaśāstra, the Skandapurāṇa and the

In the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, the three gods follow the advice of Sūrya and set out for Puṣkara, Śālagrāma, and Gandhamādana, each to worship their own *vyoman* in accordance with Sūrya's instructions.[31] After a thousand divine years have passed, the sun is satisfied and manifests himself to them.[32] First he goes to Brahmā, who bows down and praises him as the lord of the gods.[33] Sūrya addresses him as his "first-born son" and offers him a boon.[34] Brahmā asks for his creation to be successful, whereupon Sūrya informs him that he will take up birth as his son in the line of Marīci,[35] which will make his creation

Niśvāsamukha," in *Tantric Communities in Context*, eds. Nina Mirnig, Marion Rastelli, and Vincent Eltschinger (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie für Wissenschaften, 2019), 511–537.

31 *BhavP* 1.155.24–27:

jagāma puṣkaraṃ brahmā śālagrāmaṃ janārdanaḥ |
vṛṣabhadhvajo gato vīra parvataṃ gandhamādanam || 24||
tyaktvā mānam ahaṃkāraṃ kurvantas tapa uttamam |
ārādhayanti taṃ devaṃ bhāskaraṃ vāritaskaram || 25||
vyomni kṛtvā catuṣkoṇaṃ brahmā nityam apūjayat |
cakrāṅkitaṃ harir nityaṃ samyag vyoma tv apūjayat || 26||
haro 'pi satataṃ vīra tejasā vahnisaṃnibham |
apūjayat sadā vṛttaṃ vyoma bhaktyā samanvitaḥ || 27||

32 *BhavP* 1.155.28–30:

divyavarṣasahasrānte pūjayanto divākaram |
gandhamālyopahārais tu nṛtyagītapravāditaiḥ || 28||
atoṣayan mahātmānaṃ kurvāṇas tapa uttamam |
bhaktyācalena manasā vivasvantam anuttamam || 29||
atha teṣāṃ mahārāja prasanno bhuvanādhipaḥ |
darśayām āsa lokātmā yugapad vai vibhāvasuḥ || 30||

33 *BhavP* 1.155.37:

namas te devadeveśa namas te timirāpaha |
namas te bhūtabhavyeśa bhūtāde bhūtabhāvana ||

34 *BhavP* 1.155.39cd–40:

tvaṃ me prathamajaḥ putraḥ saṃbhūtaḥ kāraṇāt purā || 39||
varaṃ varaya bhadraṃ te varado 'smi tavāgrataḥ |
yam icchasi surajyeṣṭha mā tvaṃ śaṅkāṃ kuru prabho || 40||

35 *BhavP* 1.155.42–43:

na putratvam ahaṃ prāptas tava deva caturmukha |
tavānvaye gamiṣyāmi putratvaṃ hi marīcaye || 42||

thrive. Brahmā thereupon asks him where his abode shall be and Sūrya assigns him a place in the *vyoman*:

> You shall always dwell together with the multitudes of gods in the great *vyoman*, which is my form, with projections on the surface, most supreme: [46]
>
> Indra in the eastern corner, the son of Śāṇḍilī (Agni) in the southeast, Yama always in the south, Nirṛti in the southwest, [47]
>
> Varuṇa in the west, the one who constantly moves (Vāyu) in the northwest; the granter of wealth (Kubera) shall dwell in the northern part, [48]
>
> the god Śaṅkara in the northeast. You, together with Viṣṇu, [shall dwell] in the center. [49ab][36]

In other words, the *vyoman* with its eight projections is the abode of the eight deities of the directions (Lokapālas), while Brahmā and Viṣṇu together occupy the center.

Next, Sūrya proceeds to Mount Gandhamādana, where he finds Śiva engaged in the act of worshiping the *vyoman*.[37] He offers a boon to Śiva, who prostrates himself and requests that Sūrya "do that which a father does for his son."[38] He

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tato yāsyati te siddhiṃ kṛtṣnā srṣṭiś caturmukha |
bhavitaivaṃ na saṃdeho matprasādāj jagatpate || 43||

36 *BhavP* 1.155.46–49ab:

yan me rūpaṃ mahad vyoma prṣṭhaśṛṅgam anuttamam |
tatra devakadambais bhavān nityaṃ nivatsyati || 46||
indraḥ pūrvadiśo bhāge āgneyyāṃ śāṇḍilīsutaḥ |
dakṣiṇasyāṃ yamo nityaṃ nairṛtyām atha nirṛtiḥ || 47||
paścimāyāṃ tu varuṇo vāyavyāṃ tu sadāgatiḥ ||
uttare tu diśo bhāge nivased dhanadas tataḥ || 48||
aiśānyāṃ śaṃkaro devo madhye tvaṃ viṣṇunā saha |

37 *BhavP* 1.155.51cd–53:

ādityo 'pi varaṃ dattvā brahmaṇyo brahmaṇe 'nagha || 53cd||
jagāma saha devena parvataṃ gandhamādanam |
dadarśa tatra bhūteśaṃ tapas tīvraṃ samāśritam || 54||
kapardinaṃ śūladharaṃ candrārdha[corr.; *candrārka-* Ed.]*kṛtaśekharam* |
pūjayantaṃ paraṃ vyoma suvrataṃ tejasānvitam || 55||

38 *BhavP* 1.155.60:

tavāṅgasaṃbhavo deva putro 'haṃ vallabhas tava |
yat karoti mahādeva pitā putrasya tat kuru ||

then asks him for "unwavering devotion," which will help him destroy the universe at the end of time, and "a supreme place," which will help him conquer all weapons.[39] Sūrya grants him this boon and tells him that the *vyoman* that he has worshiped shall be his supreme weapon, the trident (*triśūla*), while his place shall be in the northwestern part of the *vyoman*.[40]

In the final chapter, Sūrya proceeds to Śālagrāma to give a boon to Viṣṇu. He finds him worshiping the *vyoman* in the shape of a discus.[41] After Viṣṇu has paid homage to Sūrya, saying that he is his "second son" (after Brahmā), he requests that he grant him his wishes, "like a father to his son."[42] Sūrya grants him a boon and Viṣṇu requests "unwavering devotion," which will allow him to conquer the enemy, as well as "a supreme place, skill in the protection of the

39 *BhavP* 1.155.63–65:

yadi tuṣṭo 'si me deva anugrāhyo 'smi te yadi |
prayaccha me varaṃ bhāno dehi bhaktiṃ mamācalām || 63||
devadānavagandharvayakṣarakṣogaṇāṃs tathā |
nirjityāhaṃ yathā deva yugānte saṃhare prajām || 64||
tathā prayaccha me deva sthānaṃ ca paramaṃ vibho |
yenāhaṃ heti sarvaṃ ca jaye deva jagatprabho || 65||

40 *BhavP* 1.155.67:

yad etat pūjitaṃ nityaṃ madrūpaṃ vyoma cottamam |
etat triśūlaṃ paramaṃ tava śastraṃ bhaviṣyati |
īśāne ca tathā bhāge vyomno vāso bhaviṣyati ||

41 *BhavP* 1.156.1–3:

itthaṃ dattvā varaṃ bhānur īśvarāya viśāṃ pate |
śālagrāmaṃ jagāmāśu varaṃ dātuṃ harer nṛpa || 1||
dadarśa sa hariṃ tatra tapantaṃ paramaṃ tapaḥ |
kṛṣṇājinadharaṃ śāntaṃ prajvalantaṃ svatejasā || 2||
pūjayantaṃ mahad vyoma cakrākāram anaupamam |
gandhamālyopahāraiś ca nṛtyagītapravāditaiḥ || 3||

42 *BhavP* 1.156.10:

putro 'haṃ tava deveśa dvitīyo brāhmaṇo 'nagha |
piteva putrasya rave dehi kāmāñ jagatpate || 10||

worlds, power, heroism, glory, and pleasure."[43] Sūrya grants him all this and tells him:

> This great *vyoman* shall become your discus, the best of all weapons, o hero, destroying all enemies, and [it shall be] your supreme place, worshiped by all the worlds.[44]

After he has given Viṣṇu this final boon, Sūrya returns home.[45]

3 The Form and Material Shape of the *Vyoman*

The *Vyomodbhava* myth summarized above clearly builds on the model articulated in the *Liṅgodbhava* myth of the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, but includes several important additions and elaborations. In replacing the *liṅga* with the *vyoman*, the authors of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* have significantly expanded upon the narrative, providing more detail and context. The three gods of creation (*sṛṣṭi*), preservation (*sthiti*), and destruction (*saṃhāra*) are granted their cosmic tasks along with their weapons on account of their worship of Sūrya's *vyoman*. The main question raised by the *Vyomodbhava* myth concerns the identity of the object at the heart of the story. While the *liṅga* is well known from material culture as the phallic icon installed in the Śiva temple, no object corresponding to the *vyoman* appears to be known from the tradition of Sūrya worship. The icon installed and worshiped in a Sūrya temple is typically the anthropomorphic form of the deity, not an abstract emblem. Are we confronted here with a textual invention that was designed to furnish a corresponding Saura parallel for the

43 *BhavP* 1.156.16–17:

> *yadi tuṣṭo mama vibhur bhaktyā krīto mayā yadi* |
> *prayaccha tv acalāṃ bhaktiṃ yathā śatruṃ parājaye* |
> *tathā mama varaṃ dehi sarvārātivināśanam* || 16||
> *mama sthānaṃ ca paramaṃ sarvalokanamaskṛtam* |
> *lokānāṃ pālane yuktiṃ balaṃ vīryaṃ yaśaḥ sukham* || 17||

44 *BhavP* 1.156.21:

> *etad eva mahad vyoma cakraṃ te prabhaviṣyati* |
> *sarvāyudhavaraṃ vīra sarvārātivināśanam* |
> *tathā sthānaṃ ca paramaṃ sarvalokanamaskṛtam* ||

45 *BhavP* 1.156.23:

> *bhāskaro 'pi varaṃ dattvā keśavāyāmitaujase* |
> *jagāmāśu mahārāja svapuraṃ vibudhādhipaḥ* || 23||

liṅga in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*'s telling of the story, or does this narrative describe an actual object venerated by devotees of the sun? The remainder of this paper is dedicated to addressing this question.

From the *Vyomodbhava* myth itself, we can discern the following. The most concrete piece of information is that it has "eight projections" (*aṣṭaśṛṅga* [*BhavP* 1.153.29d]). This description matches Sūrya's subsequent teaching to Brahmā that the eight Lokapālas each take up one of its eight corners (*BhavP* 1.155.46–49ab). Moreover, the *vyoman* has a center, for this is declared to be the space occupied by Brahmā and Viṣṇu. In contrast to the *liṅga,* the *vyoman* is not a vertical object (whose top and bottom Brahmā and Viṣṇu seek to find), but spreads in all directions, like the expanse of the "sky" (*vyoman*) that gives it its name. The fact that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva each worship the *vyoman* in a different form (quadrangular, discus-shaped, and round) may either be a narrative trope to account for the receipt of their individual weapons (taught to derive from their worship of the *vyoman*), or it could indicate that these are the three elements that jointly make up the three parts of the full form of the *vyoman.*

But the conceptualization of the *vyoman* in the *Vyomodbhava* myth is not a mere textual invention born of the need to retell the *Liṅgodbhava* myth in a Saura setting; this is evinced by the presence of other passages in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*'s *Brāhmaparvan* that likewise give instructions on the worship of the *vyoman*. These passages provide further details, some of which match the above.[46] Thus, for example, *BhavP* 1.203.2–3, the opening of the chapter on the *Vyomapūjāvidhi*, confirms that the *vyoman* has eight projections (Brahmā speaking):

> Learn from me, o Kṛṣṇa, the procedure for the worship of the *vyoman*, the way in which men worship the *vyoman* of eight projections. [2]
>
> After making a golden, silver, copper, or stone [*vyoman*] with eight projections, o great-armed one, he should worship [it] according to this procedure. [3][47]

46 The following survey is by no means complete, but should give an impression of the prominence of the *vyoman* teachings in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*.

47 *BhavP* 1.120.2–3:

> *vyomapūjāvidhiṃ kṛṣṇa nibodha gadato mama* |
> *aṣṭaśṛṅgaṃ yathā vyoma pūjayanti manīṣiṇaḥ* || 2||
> *sauvarṇaṃ rājataṃ tāmraṃ kṛtvā cāśmamayaṃ tathā* |
> *aṣṭaśṛṅgaṃ mahābāho anena vidhinārcayet* || 3||

Other passages in the text speak of the *vyoman* as having "four projections" (*catuḥśṛṅga*)[48] or "four corners" (*catuṣkoṇa*, *caturasra*).[49] This would seem to correspond to the form of the *vyoman* worshiped by Brahmā in the *Vyomodbhava* myth,[50] but it is possible that it rather represents a different layer of the same object.[51] In the remainder of the *Vyomapūjāvidhi*, Brahmā teaches the various mantras to be used in the worship of the different parts that make up the *vyoman*. The passage quoted above includes the important detail that, like the *liṅga*, the *vyoman* may be made of different types of durable material. This further makes it clear that the author intended to refer to an actual material object of worship.

One passage identifies the *vyoman* as the "weapon of Sūrya" (*sūryapraharaṇa*).[52] This may come as a surprise, since a lotus does not immediately suggest a

48 *BhavP* 1.67.14a; 1.124.3a; 1.124.3c; 1.130.59a.

49 *BhavP* 1.101.13b; 1.155.2c; 1.130.59a.

50 Compare also *BhavP* 1.68.2, according to which Brahmā worships a lotus-shaped *vyoman*:

padmākṛtiṃ sadā brahmā nalinair guggulena tu |
vyomarūpaṃ sadā devaṃ mahādevo 'rcate ravim ||

51 Note that the *Devyāmata*, an early Śaiva *Pratiṣṭhātantra*, likewise refers to the *vyoman* "with four or eight projections." Cf. *Devyāmata* 266cd–267ab:

atha vā vyomarūpaṃ tu caturśṛṅgaṃ tu kārayet ||
atha vā cāṣṭaśṛṅgaṃ tu ata ūrddhvaṃ na kārayet |

Edited in Anna Ślączka, "The Iconography of the Hindu Deities in the Devyāmata, an Early Śaiva Pratiṣṭhātantra," in *Interrelations of Indian Literature and Arts*, ed. Lidia Sudyka (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2011), 181–261. See Ślączka, 213–218 for a discussion of this passage.

Furthermore, a verse from the Tantric compendium the *Pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇasārasamuccaya* states that the *vyoman* may have "twelve, four, or eight projections" (*PLSS* 6.276):

vyomaṃ sūryāgrataḥ kuryāc chṛṅgair dvādaśabhir yutam |
caturbhir aṣṭābhir vāpi madhye 'bje 'ṣṭadalānvitam ||

Edited in Gudrun Bühnemann, *The Hindu Pantheon in Nepalese Line Drawings. Two Manuscripts of the Pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇasārasamuccaya* (Varanasi: Indica Books, 2003). The two seventeenth-century Nepalese manuscripts with line drawings depict the *vyoman* as a cow with four horns (Bühnemann, fig. 105). This certainly does not conform to the icon described by the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, and may be the later invention of the Nepalese artist.

52 *BhavP* 1.125.2:

hanta vyoma pravakṣyāmi sūryapraharaṇaṃ śubham |
yadātmakaṃ hi yatproktaṃ yathā vasanti devatāḥ ||

weapon, but it was probably considered to be a weapon modeled on the shape of a lotus:

> Just as Varuṇa has the noose, just as Vedhas has the *huṅkāra*, just as Viṣṇu has the discus, just as Tryambaka has the trident, and just as Indra has the thunderbolt, so is Sūrya known to have the *vyoman*.[53]

This verse suggests that the *vyoman* has the form of a lotus, being identified with the lotus(es) that Sūrya holds in his hands. Read together with the passages mentioning the *vyoman*'s eight projections, we can conjecture that these represent the eight petals of the lotus. Such an identification receives support from an important passage in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, whose *Pratimālakṣaṇa* section includes a brief chapter laying out the form of the *vyoman* (*ViDhP* 3.75: *Vyomarūpanirmāṇam*). It provides the most concrete description of the *vyoman* and matches some of what we have learned so far from the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*:

> It should be square at the base and then round, o long-armed one; then a small square and then another square, [2]
>
> Then another small square, so that it appears like Mt. Meru. This is taught as the *bhadrapīṭha*. The *vyoman* part is the third. [3]
>
> This is declared as the characteristic of all *bhadrapīṭha*s. The square that is like a pillar is proclaimed to be the middle part. [4]
>
> On top of the *bhadrapīṭha*, one should render a lotus with eight beautiful petals. In its center, up to the pericarp, is Divākara (the sun), [5]
>
> And one should arrange the guardians of the directions in its petals according to the quarters. Below the *bhadrapīṭha*, one should position the earth. [6]
>
> And they know the lotus, the part above it, as the intermediary space. All the supreme gods are present there. [7]
>
> The *vyoman* consisting of all the gods has been taught to you, great-armed one. After worshiping it, one obtains all desires. [8][54]

53 *BhavP* 1.125.5–6ab:

> *varuṇasya yathā pāśo huṅkāro vedhaso yathā* |
> *viṣṇoś cāpi yathā cakraṃ triśūlaṃ tryambakasya ca* || 5||
> *indrasya ca yathā vajraṃ tathā vyoma raveḥ smṛtam* |

54 *VDhP* 3.75.2–8:

> *caturasraṃ bhaven mūle tato vṛttaṃ mahābhuja* |
> *tato 'lpacaturasraṃ ca caturasraṃ tato bhavet* || 2||
> *tato 'lpacaturasraṃ ca meruvat saṃsthitaṃ tataḥ* |
> *bhadrapīṭham idaṃ proktaṃ vyomabhāgaṃ tṛtīyakam* || 3||

While the description is terse and some of the details remain ambiguous,[55] we can make out that the *bhadrapīṭha* includes a square and a circular part (which recall the square and circular parts worshiped respectively by Brahmā and Śiva) and that it is topped by an eight-petalled lotus in which the guardians of directions are positioned. There can be little doubt that the author of the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* had a similar object in mind.

In an article entitled "'Saura-Pīṭha' or the Solar Altar," Shetti (1992) has collected several examples of so-called "*saurapīṭha*s."[56] One beautiful example comes from Gangaikondacholapuram in Tamil Nadu, "which shows Sūrya as a large blossoming lotus at the top, the eight other *grahas* seated on the sides facing the eight directions and a row of seven horses facing east" (Figure 2).[57] Somewhat similar is a slab from Andhra Pradesh, now in the Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai (Figure 3).[58] This shows the lotus on top, surrounded by the signs of the zodiac, placed on a square base that includes the Dikpālas and their consorts seated on their *vāhana*s, as well as the seven horses along with Aruṇa. Shetti also draws attention to a slab, now in the Hyderabad Museum, that

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sarveṣāṃ bhadrapīṭhānām etal lakṣaṇam ucyate |
stambhavac [corr.; *stambhavaś* Ed.] *caturasraṃ tu madhyabhāgaṃ prakīrtitam* || 4||
bhadrapīṭhaṃ tato bhāge tatra padmaṃ niveśayet |
śubhāṣṭapatraṃ tanmadhye karṇikāsyād divākaraḥ || 5||
patreṣu kalpayet tasya dikpālāṃś ca yathādiśam |
bhadrapīṭham adhastāt tu pṛthivīṃ prakalpayet || 6||
antarikṣaṃ tathā padmam ūrdhvabhāgaṃ tato viduḥ |
tataḥ saṃnihitāḥ sarve bhavanti tridaśottamāḥ || 7||
sarvadevamayaṃ vyoma kathitaṃ te mahābhuja |
tasya saṃpūjanaṃ kṛtvā sarvān kāmān avāpnuyāt || 8||

55 For a different translation accompanied by hypothetical drawing of what the *vyoman* described in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* might look like, see Dipak Chandra Bhattacharya, *Pratimālakṣaṇa of the Viṣṇudharmottara* (New Delhi: Harman Pub. House, 1991), 178–181 and plate 77.

56 As Shetti observes, "The Āgamic texts specify the worship of Sūrya in the form of a lotus altar. Evidently this is a representation of *Saura pīṭha* (solar altar), intended for daily worship"; see B. V. Shetti, "'Saura Pīṭha' or the Solar Altar," in *Indian Numismatics, History, Art, and Culture: Essays in the Honour of Dr. P. L. Gupta*, vol. 2, eds. D. W. Macdowall, Savita Sharma, and Sanjay Garg (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1992), 335. I have not been able to identify the Āgamic texts in question, and unfortunately the author provides no specific textual reference. Some of the same objects are discussed in relation to Sūrya and the symbolism of the lotus in C. Sivaramamurti, *Approach to Nature in Indian Art and Thought*. New Delhi: Kanak Publications, 1980. For another comprehensive survey, see Krishna Deva, "Lotus-Symbolism of the Graharāja-Maṇḍala," *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, n.s., 22–23 (1993–95): 107–113, where they are referred to as "*sūryayantra*" or "*graharājamaṇḍala*."

57 Shetti, "'Saura Pīṭha' or the Solar Altar," 337, fig. 2.

58 Shetti, "'Saura Pīṭha' or the Solar Altar," 338–339, fig. 3a/b.

Figure 2: Saurapīṭha. Gangaikondacolapuram. Source: C. Sivaramamurti, *The Chola Temples. Thañjāvūr, Gaṅgaikoṇḍacholapuram & Dārāsuram* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1978).

shows the lotus surrounded by the Rāśis along with the Dikpālas below.[59] Another example, not mentioned by Shetti, is a slab at the Amriteshwara Temple at Amritpura, near Shimoga in Karnataka (Figure 4).[60] This again shows the lotus on top surrounded by the signs of the zodiac at the edges. More important, however, is the presence of a *praṇāla*, which indicates that the *saurapīṭha* (or *vyomapīṭha*) received the rites of *pūjā*, which conforms to the ritual prescriptions of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*.

From North India comes a ninth-century image, currently in the Gwalior Museum, that more closely resembles the tiered structure described in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (Figure 5).[61] Moreover, it has four prominent projections

59 Shetti, "'Saura Pīṭha' or the Solar Altar," 337, fig. 1d.

60 Srikumar M. Menon, "From Megaliths to Temples: Astronomy in the Lithic Record of South India," in *Growth and Development of Archaeology and Astrophysics in India and the Asia-Pacific Region. Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Oriental Astronomy*, eds. W. Orchiston, A. Sule, and M.N. Vahia (Mumbai: Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, 2018), 253–254, fig. 29.

61 Shetti, "'Saura Pīṭha' or the Solar Altar," 337, fig. 1c. See also Anne Casile, "Temples et expansion d'une centre religieux en Inde centrale. Lectures du paysage archéologique de Badoh-

Figure 3: Saurapīṭha. Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai. Photo: Elizabeth A. Cecil.

on the corners, which recall the projections (*śṛṅga*) mentioned in the descriptions of the *vyoman*. Placed on a rectangular tiered base, it has the lotus on top, below which are represented the planets as well as a personified Sūrya in niches on the sides of the base. A similar example from the same period comes from Gaḍarmal, Madhya Pradesh (Figure 6).[62] Casile (2009, 298), who has made an extensive study of the temple complex, refers to it as a "*balipīṭha* or *saurapīṭha*." In addition to the lotus on top, the *pīṭha* displays the Navagrahas, Daśāvatāras, Saptamātṛkās, and "11 divinités masculines assises," which I suggest represent the Ekādaśarudras. A sculpted set of the Dikpālas surrounding the lotus completes the set. The *pīṭha* is still in situ at the temple complex of Gaḍarmal, directly in front of the Sūrya temple.

In view of the argument of this paper, it is noteworthy that the Sūrya temple is the only one of the seven temples surrounding the main temple at Gaḍarmal

Paṭhāri du 5e au 10e siècle de notre ère" (PhD diss., Université Sorbonne Nouvelle–Paris 3, 2009), plate 70, fig. 5, from which I have taken the picture.

62 Casile, "Temples et expansion d'une centre religieux," plate 117, fig. 4. See also Deva, "Lotus-Symbolism of the Graharāja-Maṇḍala," fig. 8 and 8A.

Figure 4: Saurapīṭha. Amriteshwara Temple at Amritpura, Karnataka. Source: Menon, "From Megaliths to Temples."

that has such a *pīṭha*.[63] This strongly suggests its intrinsic connection with Sūrya worship. The siting of the object in front of the Sūrya temple conforms to the description of the *vyoman*'s location in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, which stipulates several times that the object should be in front of the deity or the temple:[64]

> The *vyoman*, which is seen in front of Sūrya, o brahmin.[65]
>
> The *vyoman*, with four corners and four projections, is in front of the temple.[66]

63 See Deva, "Lotus-Symbolism of the Graharāja-Maṇḍala," plate 107 and 117, fig. 5.
64 Compare also the verse from the *Pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇasārasamuccaya* quoted above (n. 51).
65 *BhavP* 1.125.1ab:

yad etad dṛśyate vyoma sūryasya purato dvija |

66 *BhavP* 1.130.59ab:

caturasraṃ catuḥśṛṅgaṃ vyoma devagṛhāgrataḥ |

Figure 5: Saurapīṭha. Gurjari Mahal Archaeological Museum, Gwalior. Source: Casile, "Temples et expansion d'une centre religieux en Inde centrale."

> The place of the *vyoman* should be prepared nearby in front of the deity.[67]

The *saurapīṭha* at Gaḍarmal thus provides a perfect match with the descriptions of the *vyoman* in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*. Some further examples of such altars from North India, adduced by Deva 1993–95, have either four, eight, or twelve projections on the corners.[68] One striking example, not discussed in any of the

67 *BhavP* 1.130.62cd:

devasya puratаḥ kāryaṃ vyomasthānaṃ samagrataḥ |

68 A remarkably early one is a terracotta piece from the Neolithic-Chalcolithic site of Chirand, Bihar, which shows "an altar with a full blown lotus flower enclosed by eight plain petals" (Deva, "Lotus-Symbolism of the Graharāja-Maṇḍala," 109, fig. 1). According to Deva, this was found in the Mauryan stratum. A seventh-century image from Mundesvari, Bihar (Deva, "Lotus-Symbolism of the Graharāja-Maṇḍala," 109, fig. 4), by contrast, shows the lotus surrounded by four projections, while a contemporary image from Kanauj (Deva, "Lotus-Symbolism of the Graharāja-Maṇḍala," 109, fig. 5) has twelve such projections, or "petals," as Deva calls them.

Figure 6: Saurapīṭha. Gaḍarmal, Madhya Pradesh. Source: American Institute of Indian Studies (Acc. No. 2674).

literature that I have seen, comes from the Kal Bhairava temple in Ujjain (Figure 7).[69] This has eight projections surrounding the eight petals of the central lotus. On the base below are displayed the other Grahas.

Finally, I wish to draw attention to a peculiar iconographical feature found in some Sūrya sculptures from ninth- to twelfth-century Northeast India, described by Ślączka as follows: "On these images the two open-blown lotuses held by the deity are often surmounted by more or less cubical elements resembling altars topped with a number of prongs."[70] This curious

69 I am grateful to Michael Willis for drawing my attention to this image and providing me with a photograph. It is now housed in a modern shrine, but may well come from an early sun temple in Ujjain.

70 Ślączka, "The Iconography of the Hindu Deities in the *Devyāmata*," 35.

Figure 7: Saurapīṭha. Kal Bhairava Temple at Ujjain. Photo: Michael Willis.

representation recalls the identification of the *vyoman* with Sūrya's "lotus-weapon" in the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* passage quoted above. The iconography is not restricted to Northeast India, however, for there is also a striking example from Kanauj (ca. eighth to ninth century), now in the National Museum in New Delhi (Figures 8a & 8b).[71] It looks as if the artist has tried to integrate the handheld lotuses that comprise a standard feature of Sūrya's iconography with the altarlike structure of the *vyomapīṭha* taught in the *Bhaviṣya-* and *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*.[72] In this way, the *vyomapīṭha* is represented

71 See also Casile, "Temples et expansion d'une centre religieux en Inde centrale," plate 70, fig. 7, where the image is described as follows: "Relief sculpté de Sūrya arborant deux petits balipīṭha au-dessus de chaque lotus tenu par la divinité."

72 The term *vyomapīṭha* is found in *BhavP* 1.203.9:

(a) (b)

Figure 8a and 8b: Sūrya. Kanauj, now in the National Museum, New Delhi. Photo: author.

as the ritual counterpart of the lotuses held in his hands. The extended shafts below the lotus motif on this particular image are curiously reminiscent of some of the fire altars depicted on the reverse of Sassanian coins. These, just like the Kanauj image, display a ribbon tied around the shaft of the altar (Figure 9).[73] The parallelism is certainly striking and may be indicative of Zoroastrian influence on the artist's depiction of Sūrya.[74]

namo 'stu sarvapāpebhyo vyomapīṭhaṃ sadārcayet |
te narāḥ satataṃ kāmān prāpnuvanti na saṃśayaḥ ||

73 These lower shafts are not present on the northeastern Sūrya examples adduced by Ślączka, "The Iconography of the Hindu Deities in the *Devyāmata*," plates 8 and 9 (along with references to Susan L. Huntington, *The "Pāla-Sena" Schools of Sculpture* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984], plates 66, 211, 217, and 218). On the typology of fire altars on Sassanian coins, see Nikolaus Schindel, "Sasanian Coinage," in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, ed. Daniel T. Potts (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 815–840.

74 Xuanzang reports the existence of a sun temple in Kanauj, which indicates that the city had become a center of sun worship by the seventh century; see Samuel Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World. Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (A.D. 629)*

Figure 9: Gold Coin of Shapur (CE 383–388 CE). Source: Wikimedia Commons.

4 Concluding Remarks

The *Vyomodbhava* myth of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* has much to offer to the historian of religion. The textual parallel with the *Liṅgodbhava* myth of the *Śivadharmaśāstra* attests to the intensive nature of religious exchange in early medieval India, in which one of the founding myths of Śiva and the *liṅga* cult was reused and adapted to demonstrate the supremacy of Sūrya and his worship in the form of the *vyoman* instead. The parallel with the *Liṅgodbhava* myth and the apparent lack of a corresponding icon in Sūrya worship may at first sight give the impression that the *vyoman* at the heart of the myth represents a textual innovation, motivated by the necessity to recast the *Liṅgodbhava* myth in the context of Sūrya worship. A closer study of the text, however, shows that the worship of an object called *vyoman* forms a core element of the teaching of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*'s *Brāhmaparvan*, which has been overlooked in existing scholarship on the Saura religion.[75] Moreover, the *vyoman* also appears as a form of Sūrya in iconographical texts such as the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, the *Devyāmata*, and the *Pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇasārasamuccaya*. As I have argued in this paper, the descriptions in these sources suggest a plausible connection

(1884; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981), 223. See also Deva, "Lotus-Symbolism of the Graharāja-Maṇḍala," 109–110.

75 No mention of the *vyoman* is made, for example, in Lalata Prasada Pandeya, *Sun-Worship in Ancient India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971); V. C. Srivastava, *Sun-Worship in Ancient India* (Allahabad: Indological Publications, 1960); or von Stietencron, *Indische Sonnenpriester*.

with certain material objects from medieval India that have been identified as *saurapīṭha*s in art-historical literature. The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*'s *Vyomodbhava* myth may thus represent a doctrinal overlay of an existing material practice, providing it with a powerful new explanation and ideology based on the model of the *Liṅgodbhava* myth.

The present paper is meant as a first step toward bringing the various materials into conversation with each other. More research is needed to put them into context, which will also require looking into *vyoman*-related rituals and taking into account other sources that could not be dealt with in the context of the present study. To mention just one example of the former, the thirteenth-century Dharmanibandha author Hemādri quotes a *vyomaṣaṣṭhī* and a *vyomavrata* from the "*Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*" in the *Vratakhaṇḍa* of his *Caturvargacintāmaṇi*.[76] Furthermore, for evaluating the materials of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, the descriptions of the *vyoman* in the *Sāmbapurāṇa*, a text that has strong textual links with the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, should be taken into account as well.[77] I plan to do so in a future study.

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76 Hemādri, *Caturvargacintāmaṇi of Śrī Hemādri. Vratakhaṇḍa*, eds. Bhāratacandra Śiromaṇi, Yajñeśvara Smṛtiratna, and Kāmākhyānātha Tarkavāgīśa (Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica), 1.1: 616–617, 2:904–905. I have not been able to identify these two passages in the printed edition of the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*. The first passage also quotes from the *vyoman* description in *VDhP* 3.75.

77 See R. C. Hazra, *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, vol. 1, *Saura and Vaiṣṇava Upapurāṇas* (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1958), 39, 49, 50, and 52.

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4 Bronze Temple Bells from the Tibetan Imperial Period: Buddhist Material Culture in Context

1 Introduction

From at least the beginning of the Common Era, bells or gongs have formed a part of daily ritual practice and rites of passage in the Buddhist temples and monasteries of South Asia. Yet it is in the countries to which Buddhism spread that we find the most evidence of large temple bells bearing epigraphy in both an artistic and literary register.[1] Chinese donors of both the Buddhist and Daoist traditions commissioned or supported the casting of such bells, and the technology spread to Inner Asia, Korea, and Japan from at least the seventh century, to Tibet from about the eighth century, and to Southeast Asia from perhaps the tenth century CE. Temple bells were used to mark time, raise alarm, and, according to their written inscriptions, emit spiritual sounds into the universe. Such epigraphy, either inscribed or cast into the bells, may praise the quality of their peal, record the sponsorship of the bell's founding, or proclaim the religion it represents. Later indigenous literature and folk stories in these lands then creatively recast the bells to serve new narrative purposes. However, early examples of this difficult, costly, and prestigious art form are now rare. The undoubtedly many examples that once existed in the second half of the first millennium have either broken, been destroyed, or been melted down at some point over the intervening centuries. Thus, those we do possess provide precious data regarding the early form, technology, and use of large temple bells in Buddhist Asia.

In Tibet, a handful of bronze temple bells have been recorded whose epigraphy suggests that they were created during Tibet's imperial period (ca. 600–850 CE) – their inscriptions either mentioning Tibetan emperors or being written in the Old

1 A good general introduction to this theme is Percival Price, *Bells and Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 9–13.

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110557176-005

Tibetan language of that period. This marks them out as among the earliest examples of cast temple bells from Asia and precious sources of knowledge regarding the movement of material culture across Buddhist Asia at this time. However, the scholars who brought these bells to wider attention or worked on deciphering their epigraphy – Giuseppe Tucci, Hugh Edward Richardson, and Li Fang-Kuei and W. South Coblin – focused almost exclusively on the content of the inscriptions as texts of historical interest. In brief opening remarks, these men describe the bells as "shaped like the Chinese bells," "of Chinese pattern," and "Chinese-style," respectively.[2] However, one may ask, what does that really mean? Is there one "Chinese" type or design for bells? In what ways and to what extent do the Tibetan exemplars adhere to this/these form(s)? This chapter focuses on art-historical aspects of Tibetan imperial temple bells, attempting to answer these questions by comparing the bells with the few examples extant in Buddhist Asia.

Over the course of this chapter, it will become clear that Chinese temple bells of the late first millennium display a variety of designs rather than a homogeneity. Their artisans or patrons could choose a simpler or more ornate style and whether or not to include epigraphy; these aesthetic trends spread to surrounding states like Korea, Japan, and Tibet, which each followed their own styles and could blend external influence with indigenous bell traditions at will. It will be shown that the bronze temple bells of the Tibetan imperial period resemble the simpler contemporaneous Chinese and later Japanese models rather than the floral design of some other Chinese temple bells or the complex religious and ritual imagery of Korean examples of a similar antiquity. Beyond the design of the main bodies of Chinese temple bells, the form is split into two types, the more typical flat-bottomed variety and the rarer sort with scalloped bases (sometimes referred to as "lotus-petalled"). The flat-based bell predominates in Asia, but the scalloped model seems to have influenced other countries' forms of bell to a limited extent. It will be seen that no extant antique Tibetan temple bells are flat bottomed. Their scalloping is generally rounded, but can also tend toward the more pointed nadirs found in eleventh-century Chinese bells. This is in contrast to the flatter concave design of some important early Korean Buddhist bells or the low relief convex scallops seen (with exceptions) in Japan. It is hoped that this discussion will inspire further dialogue between Tibetan studies and campanology for the benefit of both fields.

2 Giuseppe Tucci, *The Tombs of the Tibetan Kings* (Roma: Is.M.E.O, 1950), 69; Hugh Edward Richardson, "A Ninth Century Inscription from Rkoṅ po," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3–4 (1954): 166; Li Fang-Kuei and W. South Coblin, *A Study of the Old Tibetan Inscriptions* (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academica Sinica, 1987), 332.

2 Main Types of Temple Bell

The "classic" Chinese temple bell design in the (mostly Korean) works on this subject includes both flat-bottomed and "scallop-edged" forms.[3] Figure 1 provides representations of four types of bell, using the following as models (clockwise from top right):

1. the earliest extant Chinese bell, cast in 575 CE, lacking measurements (but 39.1 cm high and 21 cm wide; see below);
2. an early Japanese temple bell, perhaps the Kanzeon-ji (観世音寺) Bell of 698;
3. a Chinese bell probably dating from the tenth century; and
4. the Korean Sangwŏnsa (상원사) Bell, founded in 725.

As Figure 1 makes clear, East Asian temple bells display certain family resemblances. For example, they share dragon-shaped supporting loops at the tops, from which they are hung to be hit by a mallet or other object from outside. This is in contrast to clapper bells of the European tradition and smaller Asian bells, which contain a free-swinging object that hits the inside wall of the bell. Another similarity between the pictured bells is the use of lotuses as design motifs. These are depicted either as open-faced whole lotuses used as the striking points on the outside wall (in the center of bells 1 and 2, and displayed in profile on the left and right of bell 4) or as petals on decorative bands (depicted in bells 3 and 4, but also found in the others).

Despite such shared features, these bells also display their own distinctive forms or characteristics. Three of the four bells are convex in aspect, less familiar to people in the West than the concave European bell shape from which we take the term "bell curve." Bell 3, though, displays a lightly concave outline. This bell, the second of the Chinese exemplars and the youngest bell depicted in Figure 1, also lacks the flat bottom of the other bells. Instead, it exhibits an undulating wave curvature, almost like a sine wave, traveling all around its rim, resembling the convex "scalloped edge" of a piece of lace. From this small sample, it is clear that Chinese temple bells evidently came in both a flat-bottomed and scallop-rimmed form from an early period, around the second half of the first millennium CE.[4]

3 Yŏm Yŏng-ha, *Han'guk Ŭi Chong: Korean Bell* (Seoul: Sŏul Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1991), 3–10.

4 In using the term "scalloped" to refer to the rim of this type of bell, I am following the usage found in Price, *Bells and Man*.

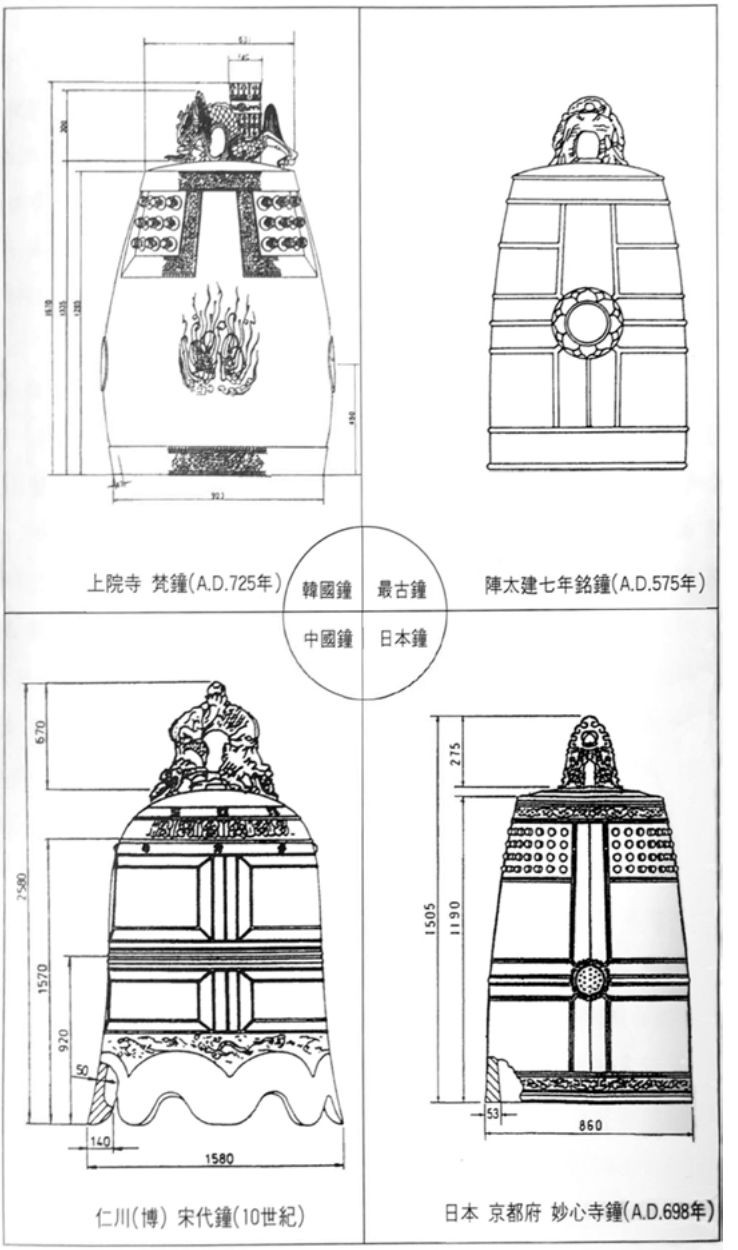

Figure 1: Diagram of four types of East Asian bell in Kungnip Kyŏngju Pangmulgwan, *Sŏngdŏk Taewang Sinjong* (Gyeongju: Kungnip Kyŏngju Pangmulgwan, 1999), vol. 1, 211.

The scallop-rimmed type of temple bell should be particularly interesting to scholars of Tibetan studies, since it is the only form represented among the extant candidates for Tibetan imperial-period bells. These five candidates display Old Tibetan epigraphy and other indications suggestive of being used in an imperial context. A heuristic distinction can be made between concave, convex, and "undulating curve" scalloping on the base of Tibetan bells that each connects them with *only some* of their East Asian contemporaries and antecedents. The concave type links Tibetan temple bells with a few extant Korean examples; the convex type is found in an old Japanese temple bell; and the undulating wave lies somewhere in the middle. Other East Asian temple bells have flat bottoms, a feature not found in any of the Tibetan examples discovered so far. Given the scarcity of examples of early temple bells across Buddhist Asia, a proper analysis of the bronze temple bells dating from the Tibetan imperial period should not only help to illuminate the Tibetan empire's relation to this aspect of wider East Asian material culture, but also shed light on the choices made by artisans and patrons further afield who helped to uphold the tradition of large bell casting in contemporaneous China, Japan, Korea, Japan, and even perhaps northern Vietnam.

3 East Asia

As the above typology makes clear, the study of early Buddhist temple bells focuses on East Asia, specifically comparing Chinese, Korean, and Japanese examples. According to Claudine Salmon, an expert on Asian campanology,

> Chinese bells seem to have the longest and most completely documented history. Fanzhong appeared in China soon after Buddhism was introduced there during the Han Dynasty. Since then these bells have been closely linked to temples and to the religious life of the Chinese. Bells of small size, usually hung inside the prayer hall, were struck when Buddhist monks chanted scripture or conducted other rituals. The large bell, like the drum, was sheltered inside a small edifice located in the courtyard in front of the prayer hall. Such bells, differing only slightly in their decoration, made their way into Daoist temples. They also entered the court, where they served to announce various ceremonies. Similar bells were used to mark urban time, especially to sound night watches and to warn the population.[5]

5 Claudine Salmon, "Transnational Networks as Reflected in Epigraphy: The Case of Chinese Buddhist Bells in Southeast Asia," in *Chinese Overseas: Migration, Research and Documentation*, eds. Tan Chee-Beng and Julia Zimmerman (Sha tin, N.T., Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2007), 23–24.

The oldest dated Chinese Buddhist bell (founded in 575) is now kept in the Museum of Nara in Japan. It is a plain, small bell in comparison with the others described below, 39.1 cm high and 21 cm in diameter at the mouth, simply decorated with vertical and horizontal ribs converging on a striking point that takes the shape of an eight-petalled lotus.[6] Its written epigraphy is inscribed on the bell, rather than forming part of the original mould, and simply records the date of its casting, those responsible, and the weight.[7] The bell is flat mouthed rather than scalloped, and so is of less importance to us here than other, later examples.

Certain surrounding states and dependent regions soon emulated the Chinese model of temple bells, and Salmon identifies one early example in modern-day Vietnam. Southeast Asian Buddhists appear to have relied more on gongs, stone chimes, and sonorous rocks for their timekeeping and rituals.[8] They perhaps also shared this practice with older Chinese cultural traditions, if they were not influenced by them. However, Vietnam was more deeply Sinicized during the latter part of the first millennium. The bell, founded in 798, possesses a striking point (*zhongyue*) depicting a lotus with ten petals and epigraphy in Chinese.[9] Salmon states, "The text of the Sino-Vietnamese bell [inscription], in 41 characters, merely commemorates the day of casting and donation while indicating the weight, and so do the inscriptions on the oldest bell of 575 and that of 748 (except the weight)."[10] Later bells of southern China and Southeast Asia, including scalloped bells, are described in Salmon's later work on the subject.[11] She argues that this Sino-Vietnamese bell, "although probably not the first to have been cast in the Protectorate of Annam, may be regarded as a marker of Buddhism and Chineseness in an environment in which the bronze drum cul-

6 Claudine Salmon, "Tang-Viet Society as Reflected in a Buddhist Bell Inscription from the Protectorate of Annam (798)," in *Guangdong: Archaeology and Early Texts / Archäeologie und frühe Texte (Zhou-Tang)*, eds. Shing Müller, Thomas O. Höllemann, and Putao Gui, South China and Maritime Asia 13 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), 197. See also the journal *Nihon no bijutsu*日本の美術 [Art of Japan] 355 (1995): plate 25.

7 Salmon, "Tang-Viet Society," 197 and 199.

8 Salmon, "A Tentative Interpretation of the Chinese Inscription (1231) Engraved on a Bronze Gong Recovered in Muara Jambi (Central Sumatra)," *Archipel* 66 (2003): 91–112. See also Arsenio Nicolas, "Gongs, Bells and Cymbals: The Archaeological Record in Maritime Asia from the Ninth to the Seventeenth Centuries," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 41 (2009): 62–93.

9 Salmon, "Tang-Viet Society," 197.

10 Salmon, "Tang-Viet Society," 199.

11 Salmon, "Tang-Viet Society," especially 70–74.

ture was still alive, even if at the end of the eighth century the casting of drums had already declined in the Red River Delta, as compared to what it was during the three first centuries A.D."[12]

4 The Sŏngdŏk Bell, Korea

Korea, toward the end of the Silla period (ca. 57 BCE–935 CE), was another region bordering China to make bell casting their own. A 1976 work on Korean temple bells estimates that 158 were already known to be extant, with the lion's share still present in Korea itself.[13] Although most postdate the period that interests us here, one of the earliest known examples, after the Sangwŏnsa Bell cast in 725 CE,[14] was cast with a shallowly scalloped bottom. This is the so-called Sŏngdŏk Bell (성덕대왕신종), founded in 771 (Figure 2). A very large and finely detailed bell, it was cast using the *cire-perdue* or lost-wax method and is said to embody the last of several attempts at founding it.

The bell was housed for most of its life in the temple of Pongdŏk in Kyŏngju (today's Gyeongju), and so is also named the Kyŏngju Bell. In 1902, H.B. Hulbert stated,

> This is the monster bell that for centuries tolled for the opening and shutting of the gates of Kyŏng-ju, or as it was then called, Sŭ-ya-bŭl, from which by contraction is probably derived the modern word Seoul. [. . .] History says it was cast by King Hyo-jong [=Hyegong (r. 765–780)], the thirty-sixth of the dynasty, 765, that it was originally intended as a monastery bell and was placed at Pong-dŭk Monastery a short distance to the east of the town but that King Chŭn-sun [=Gyeongsun (r. 927–935)?] in his fourth year moved it to its present site.[15]

12 Salmon, "Tang-Viet Society," 27–30.

13 Lee Ho-Kwan, "A Study on the Temple Bell Style in the Koryo Style," in *Koryŏ Sidae Pŏmjong Yangsik Ŭi Yŏn'gu*, ed. Yi Ho-gwan (Seoul: Tanguk Taehakkyo, 1976), 189.

14 See Yŏm Yŏng-ha and Hanguk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏnguwŏn, *Hanguk Chong Yŏngu* (Seongnam: Hanguk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏnguwŏn, 1984), 8–49 for a complete study of this bell, and *Hanŭl Kkotŭro Naerinŭn Kkaedarŭmŭi Sori* (Kimchun: Chikchi sŏngbo Pangmulgwan, 2003), 8–11 for rubbings of its detailing. It is 167 cm tall (133.5 cm, minus the supporting loop) and 90.3 cm wide at its mouth (the rim is 4.7 cm thick), which is flat rather than scalloped. The design contains a more protruding set of nine "nipples"/lotuses on the squarish "lotus field" than the Sŏngdŏk Bell, but it is also decorated with celestial beings and lotus strike points.

15 Homer B. Hulbert, "The Great Bell," *The Korea Review*, September 1902, 387; also quoted in in E. M. Cable, "Old Korean Bells," *Royal Asiatic Society Korea Branch* 16, no. 1 (1925): 7.

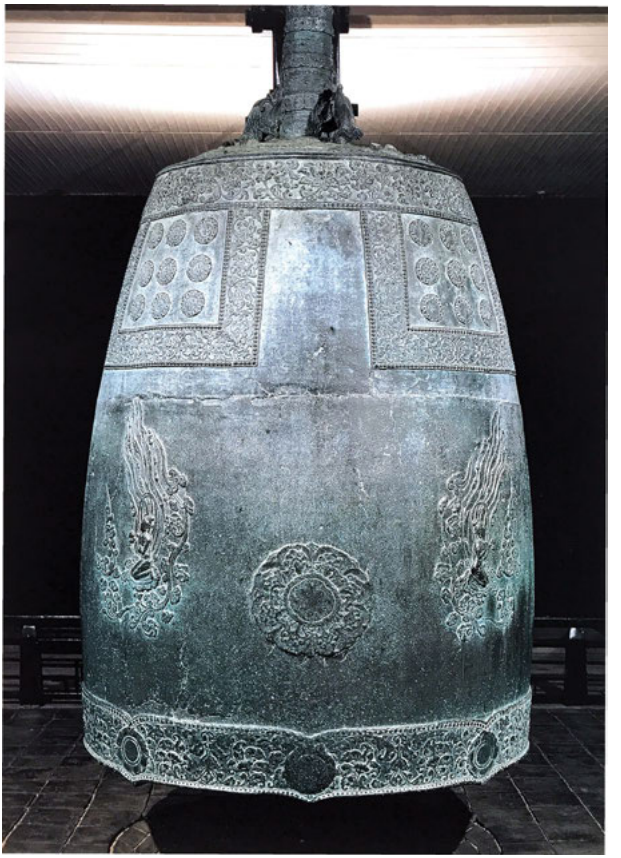

Figure 2: Photograph of the Sŏngdŏk Bell in Kungnip Kyŏngju Pangmulgwan, *Sŏngdŏk Taewang Sinjong* (Gyeongju: Kungnip Kyŏngju Pangmulgwan, 1999), vol. 2, 13.

One of the main differences between Chinese and Korean bells is the way that they were hung. Percival Price provides the following explanation, as well as offering a little of the Sŏngdŏk Bell's history:

> The Chinese Buddhist bell was hung a storey above the ground, so that emanations would come down on to a deity, exemplified by a statue, who would know how to distribute it. The Korean bell was hung close to the ground, only about thirty centimetres above it in some cases, and the ground hollowed out underneath and kept clear of earth so as to facilitate the entry of its emanations into the earth. [. . .]
>
> As it was believed that the ringing of the bell sent these spiritual emanations out to the ends of the world as well as down into the earth, so it was held that by making the bell

> larger, and thus increasing the power of its tone and the length of time it continued, the spiritual emanations would be stronger at distant points. The most effective bell would be the largest it would be possible to cast. Only a sovereign had the resources for this. In the second half of the eighth century the Silla king, Kyŏngdŏk [r.742–765], planned to offer such a bell to his deceased father, Sŏngdŏk [r.702–737], but he died before the bell was cast, and his son, king Hyegong [r.765–780], completed it in AD 771.[16]

The completion of the Sŏngdŏk Bell in 771 CE makes it roughly contemporaneous with the bSam yas Bell in Tibet, commissioned for Emperor Khri Srong lde brtsan (r.756–c.800) after he had begotten at least one son (see below). However, it is much larger than any of the Tibetan examples, 366.3 cm tall from its base to the top of the ingenious hollow tube (*umt'ong*, *umgwan*) rising above its dragon-shaped supporting loop (*yongnyu*; 303 cm excluding this) and 222.7 cm wide at its mouth. The bell wall is on average 13 cm thick, but it gets thicker as it goes down to the mouth rim, which is 20.3 cm thick.[17] It is estimated to weigh 72,000 kg and is one of only a handful of extremely large and heavy functioning bells in the world.[18] The bell body is rather barrel-shaped, unribbed, and decorated at the top with three large square "fields" of nine lotuses (perhaps a throwback to the "nipples" or rowed protuberances on Zhou and Han bells). Below these, four heavenly *apsara*s or *gandharva*s make offerings on clouds interspersed with written epigraphy and two lotus-patterned striking points (*tangjwa*).[19]

The rim of the bell mouth (*chonggu*) is lightly scalloped to form a concave rather than a flat base, though creating small points in a manner quite unlike the Tibetan bells. The mouth's decorative band (*hadae*) follows the contours of the bell mouth's scallops (Figure 3). The mouth's decoration consists of tendrils reflecting the design of the shoulder edge (*kyondae*) above it, into which are placed six lotuses at each lowest point, or nadir, of the concave scallops. The circumference of the mouth is perhaps less strictly round than hexagonal when seen in cross section (no diagram of the exact measurement of the circumference seems to have been published), with the six points at each angle of the hexagon at regular intervals of 88.2 cm and protruding perhaps 5 or 6 cm downwards (again, the depth of the scallops has not apparently received

16 Price, *Bells and Man*, 36, col. i.

17 Yŏm and Hanguk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏnguwŏn, *Hanguk Chong Yŏngu*, 3 and 55, fig. 3. The hollow tube at the top means that the bell itself is open at both ends, yet it is unclear whether this addition improves the sound quality of its peal, simplifies the casting process, neither, or both.

18 Price, *Bells and Man*, 36, col. i.

19 *Hanŭl Kkotŭro Naerinŭn Kkaedarŭmŭi Sori*, 8–11 contains rubbings of some of its major details. All aspects of the bell are photographed in color in Kungnip Kyŏngju Pangmulgwan, *Sŏngdŏk Taewang Sinjong*, vol. 2 (Gyeongju: Kungnip Kyŏngju Pangmulgwan, 1999), 7–30.

Figure 3: Photograph of the scalloping of the Sŏngdŏk Bell in Kungnip Munhwajae Yŏn'guso, and Ko Sŭng-gwan, *Chuch`ŏlchang: Chungyo Muhyŏng Munhwajae 112-ho*, (Daejeon: P'ia, 2006), 20.

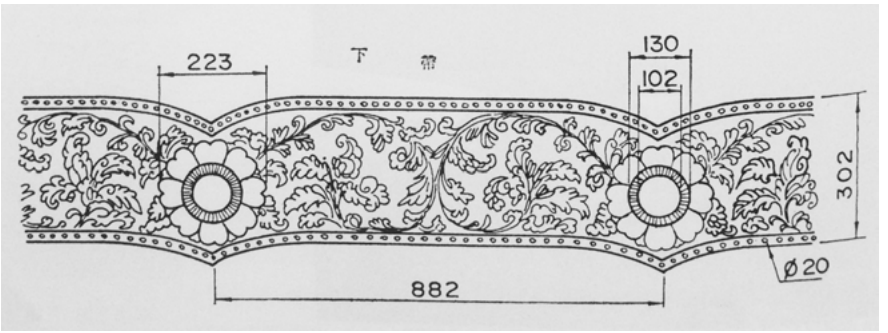

Figure 4: Drawing and measurements of the scalloping of the Sŏngdŏk Bell in Yŏm Yŏng-ha, and Hanguk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏnguwŏn, *Hanguk Chong Yŏngu* (Kyeonggi-do, Seongnam: Hanguk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏnguwŏn, 1984), 60, fig. 12.

detailed attention) (Figure 4).[20] A photograph of the underside of the rim shows that the nadirs of the concave scallops are indeed points, and that they reach their nadir at the outer surface of the bell (Figure 5).

This division into six scallops does not seem to have a direct relation to the number of petals on a lotus, at least when compared to the more obvious lotus

20 Yŏm and Hanguk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏnguwŏn, *Hanguk Chong Yŏngu*, 60, fig. 12.

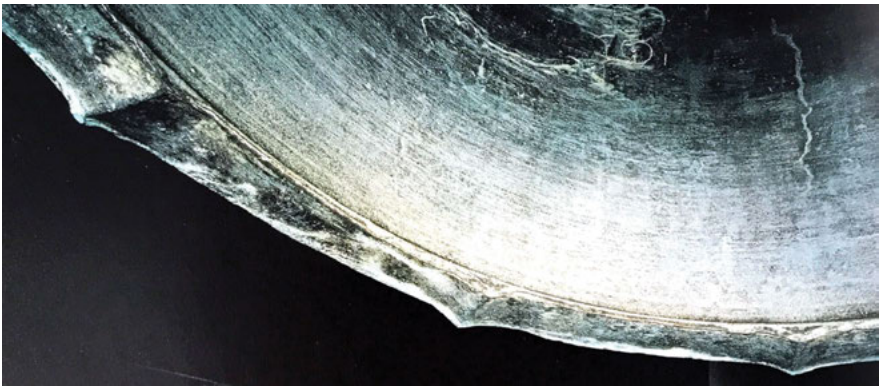

Figure 5: Photograph of the inside of the Sŏngdŏk Bell in Kungnip Kyŏngju Pangmulgwan, *Sŏngdŏk Taewang Sinjong*, vol. 2, 30.

depictions on the body of same bell. The lotus design on the hood (*chonp'an*) of the bell consists of thirteen inner and thirty-four outer petals. The nine lotuses arranged in three rows of three in the squarish "lotus field" (*yon'gwak*, *yolloe*) on the bell's shoulder (*sangdae*) each possess eight petals. The lotuses serving as striking points on the body of the bell possess eight inner and eight outer petals. The lotuses on the mouth's decorative band (*hadae*, showing tendrils reflecting the design of the shoulder edge [*kyondae*] above it) that follows the contours of the rim's scallops also possess eight petals. However, the hollow tube at the top *appears* to be designed with six-petalled double lotuses.[21] There would be a fitting symmetry in a six-petalled lotus appearing at the top and bottom of the bell, but this line of inquiry requires further comparison with the tubes atop other Korean temple bells to corroborate or falsify it.

The scalloped bell is rare for Korean temple bells – thorough studies of contemporaneous and later Korean temple bells have found almost all of them to be flat mouthed.[22] Scalloped bases are found on only two later exemplars, one of which dates to 1346, suggesting that the style did not completely die out after

21 See photographs in Kungnip Kyŏngju Pangmulgwan, *Sŏngdŏk Taewang Sinjong*, 2: 28–29.

22 See Yŏm and Hanguk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏnguwŏn, *Hanguk Chong Yŏngu*, 8–49 and 83ff. For a study devoted to the later maturation of temple bells during the Koryŏ period (918–1392 CE), see Yi Ho-gwan, *Koryŏ Sidae Pŏmjong Yangsik Ŭi Yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Tanguk Taehakkyo, 1976). A side-by-side comparison between three typical bells of different periods of Korean history is provided in Kungnip Munhwajae Yŏn'guso and Ko Sŭng-gwan, *Chuch`ŏlchang: Chungyo Muhyŏng Munhwajae 112-ho*, (Daejeon: P'ia, 2006), 17.

the Silla period.[23] Nonetheless, the Sŏngdŏk Bell still stands as a key example of the early art of scalloped bell casting and has thankfully been studied in great depth.[24] This should act as a standard of best practice in the study of temple bells, to be emulated in the future with respect to Tibetan bells as well. At present, however, the quality of the data available on bells and bell-founding processes in other countries does not really compare to Korean-language scholarship, with the possible exception of Japanese literature on the subject.

5 Japanese Bells

Almost all extant Japanese temple bells are flat mouthed. However, the temple bell from Kasagi Temple (笠置寺鐘), Kyoto, cast in 1196, appears to be one of a small number of exceptions and a rare example of a very different form of scalloping (Figure 6).[25] Its rim takes almost the opposite shape of that of the Sŏngdŏk Bell. Instead of six points sticking out of a flat mouth and creating a series of shallow concave lines from point to point, this bell has six grooves "cut" into the rim, creating a series of convex lines (more similar in this respect

23 The 1346 bell is tall and narrow, measuring 324 cm (263.9 cm without the supporting loop; 240.3 cm from the shoulder down) by 188 cm (described in Yŏm, *Han'guk Ŭi Chong*, 276–77; photographed in *Hanŭl Kkotŭro Naerinŭn Kkaedarŭmŭi Sori*, 212). Another, undated bell is smaller but maintains more barrel-like proportions, at 110 cm (92 cm without the supporting loop; 82 cm from the shoulder down) by 70 cm (described in Yŏng-ha Yŏm, *Han'guk Ŭi Chong*, 424–25; photographed in *Hanŭl Kkotŭro Naerinŭn Kkaedarŭmŭi Sori*, 216).

24 Especially in the two-volume work, Kungnip Kyŏngju Pangmulgwan, *Sŏngdŏk Taewang Sinjong*. The study also includes detailed sound recordings and sonographic analyses of its peal (Yŏm and Hanguk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏnguwŏn, *Hanguk Chong Yŏngu*, 69–80), drawings and measurements of all its parts both inside and out, and even creating replicas of the bell itself in order to imitate the process of its casting. This work (pp. 29; 32) describes how two replicas of this bell were cast in 1983, one measuring 255 cm by 150 cm and the other measuring 167 cm by 90 cm. They are pictured in plates 40 and 43, respectively. A further replica was constructed in 1984, measuring 277.5 cm by 160 cm and weighing 7500 kg (p. 33; pictured in plate 46), just over a tenth of the weight of the original. The same work (pp. 64–69) deals with the ancient method of casting bells.

25 This image is taken from a special issue of *Nihon no bijutsu* on Buddhist bells (*Nihon no bijutsu* 日本の美術 [Art of Japan] 355: fig. 9). The description accompanying the figure states that the cuts into the mouth are 1 cm deep and "form a six-petalled shape" (六葉形に作る). Furthermore, it claims that this follows a Chinese model, and that a further example of a six-petalled temple bell is housed at the Todaiji Great Exhibition Centre (東大寺大勧進所). See also Hashizume Kinkichi (橋爪金吉) and Asano Kiichi (浅野喜市), *Bonshō Junrei* 梵鐘巡礼 (Tokyo: Bijinesukyōikushuppansha ビジネス教育出版社, 1976), 185 and plate 138.

Figure 6: Photograph of the Kasagi Temple Bell in *Nihon no bijutsu*日本の美術 [Art of Japan] 355 (1995): fig. 9.

to the scalloping of Korean tantric handbells).[26] In all other respects, it appears to be a classic Japanese-style temple bell, with its striking points and "nipples" or rowed protuberances emulating earlier East Asian (predominantly Chinese) models like the Sŏngdŏk Bell does in a different way.

A more standard scalloped bell, probably from the early part of the Muromachi period (ca. 1336–1573), is found in the Jissō-ji temple (実相寺) in Nishio, Aichi

26 On the design of Korean tantric handbells, see for example Ch'oe Ŭng-ch'ŏn and Kim Yŏn-su, *Kŭmsok Kongye* (Seoul: Sol, 2004), 180–90.

prefecture (Figure 7).[27] The rim of this bell is molded into eight scallops, conforming to the number of petals in classical lotuses or following a later stylistic trait of bells, most likely cast in Japan in imitation of Chinese design.[28] However, it lacks a striking point or lotuses in the rest of the design and instead the body is split into three rows of four panels, separated by triple bands and ornamented with twelve vertically elongated hexagons that are situated either in the middle of the panels (middle row) or at the panel changeovers (top and bottom rows).[29]

6 The Jingyun Bell, China

Closer in space and time to imperial Tibet, the scalloped bronze Jingyun Bell (景雲钟), cast in 711, was hung in the bell tower of a Daoist monastery in Chang'an (modern-day Xi'an), but has resided in the Beilin "Forest of Stone Steles" Museum since 1953 (Figure 8).[30] The bell measures 247 cm in height,

27 The bell measures 138.7 cm high (112.3 cm without the loop; 106.5 cm from the shoulder), 80.4 cm wide at its rim (which is 9.2 cm thick). See Tsuboi Ryōhei (坪井良平), *Bonshō No Kenkyū* 梵鐘の研究 [A study of the bell] (Tokyo: Bijinesu Kyōiku Shuppansha ビジネス教育出版社, 1991), 108–11.

28 Tsuboi, *Bonshō No Kenkyū*, 108–109. On page 110, Tsuboi compares this exemplar with the very similar diagram of the Chinese design that likely inspired this fine imitation.

29 Two other such plain, large, eight-scalloped Chinese temple bells dating from the early fifteenth century are associated with Beijing's famous bell tower and the Yongle emperor (1360–1424); an iron bell of 420 x 240 cm (25 tons) that was replaced by a larger bronze bell of 700 x 340 cm (46.5 tons) that produced a better peal (see Ben Nijhoff's entry on the Beijing bell tower: "Bell Tower Platform & Yongle Era Bronze Bell," The China Report, www.drben.net, last modified June 18, 2017, http://www.drben.net/ChinaReport/Beijing/Landmarks-Hotspots/DongCheng/Zhong_Lou-Bell_Tower/Bell_Tower5-Bell_and_Platform1-South.html). Both lack striking points and are patterned with two rows of oblongs separated by horizontal bands. These stand in contrast to the contemporaneous Yongle Grand Bell housed in the Great Bell Temple (Da Zhong Si) just outside Beijing, which weighs 50 metric tons and measures about 700 cm high (500 cm without the suspension loop) and roughly 450 cm in diameter (Price, *Bells and Man*, 13, col. ii). That bell is also scalloped but is covered top to bottom with epigraphy in Chinese script. The first two exemplars therefore resemble the Japanese example more closely but lack the elongated hexagonal design.

30 See Michael Yang's entry on the Xi'an bell tower ("The Bell Tower," Xi'an Travel Guide, China Highlights, last modified October 4, 2017, http://www.chinahighlights.com/xian/attraction/bell-tower.htm), where he also states: "The Xi'an Cultural Relics Bureau made a replica of [the] Jingyun Bell and hung it in the north-west corner of the Bell Tower on January 30th, 1997, which is 2.45 meters (8 feet) tall and 6.5 tons (14,330 pounds) in weight, with an inscription carved on it." One can ring the replica for a fee, but the original apparently was deadened

Figure 7: Photograph of the Jissō-ji Bell in Tsuboi Ryōhei (坪井良平), *Bonshō No Kenkyū* 梵鐘の研究 [A Study of the Bell] (Tokyo: Bijinesu Kyōiku Shuppansha ビジネス教育出版社, 1991), 109.

165 cm in width across the bottom, and weighs 6,500 kg.[31] Price writes, "The form is Korean and suggests Korean workmanship. Korean bellfounders are

during a move of the bell tower in 1582, during the Ming Dynasty (Marilyn Shea, "Forest of Steles," Xi'an in Pictures, China, last modified March 2010, http://hua.umf.maine.edu/China/Xian/pages/205_Xian_Forest_of_Steles.html).

31 Dimensions given in "The Bell Tower," Top China Travel, accessed November 22, 2019, http://www.topchinatravel.com/china-attractions/the-bell-tower.htm.

Figure 8: The Jingyun Bell, Marilyn Shea copyright 2005.

said to have cast the first very large bells in China, having cast large bells in Korea earlier."[32] The bell was commissioned by the Tang dynasty (618–907) emperor Ruizong (662–716) and was cast in the second year of the Jingyun era.[33] This bell evidently remains popular to this day, though undoubtedly some confuse the replica for the original.[34]

32 Price, *Bells and Man*, 11, col. ii.

33 Shea, "Forest of Steles."

34 Jumei Yang, in a blog on the Beilin Museum (though I suppose with reference to the replica; see above on the deadened original), says, "its ring is so beautiful that it was recorded by CCTV (A mainstream Chinese television station) and played on New Years' eve to celebrate the coming

Like the Sŏngdŏk Bell, the Jingyun Bell possesses a hexagonal rim because of its six scallops. It is not possible to see the underside of the original bell, but images of the replica now hanging in the Xi'an bell tower (Figure 9)[35] suggest that, unlike the Sŏngdŏk Bell, the concave arches of the Jingyun Bell's scallops end in edges rather than points, though the nadirs are still on the outer face of the bell. Of course, the replica makers may not have followed every design trait of the original.

Figure 9: Scalloping on the Jingyun Bell, Wikimedia Commons copyright 2008.

The sixfold scallops are mirrored in three rows of six panels, separated by vertical and horizontal bands containing tendrils and clouds respectively. Clouds, which are incidentally a feature of the Sŏngdŏk Bell's design too, also feature within the nine illustrated panels, surrounding symbolic animals such as the dragon, phoenix, lion, and ox. These illustrated panels are interspersed with a design comprising two crossed diagonal lines intersecting at an eight-petalled lotus striking point. From the middle of each of the triangles created by the crossed lines blossoms a single lotus striking point, and around these are four "nipple" protuberances, perhaps, like the Sŏngdŏk Bell, harking back to those of earlier musical bells. On the bottom row, this interspersal is broken by the inclusion of one panel bearing epigraphy in 293 characters. This inscription describes the benefits and mysteries of Daoism, while also in part praising the bell.[36]

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of a new year. Moreover, the Bell was printed on the Chinese stamp in 2000 and was at the time thought of as 'the best bell in the world' by local people." Source accessed January 14, 2017, http://www.guidewetravel.com/the-stele-forest-xian-beilin-museum/ (site discontinued).

35 "Jingyun Bell," 2007, Xi'an, China, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jingyun_Bell.JPG.

36 See Shea, "Forest of Steles."

Price states that the scallop-rimmed bell style continued to be popular in northern China, whereas flat-mouthed bells were preferred in the south.[37] Another six-scalloped temple bell, probably founded in the tenth century, was given as the second type of Chinese temple bell (bell 3) in the diagram in Figure 1, above.[38] It was cast in Song-dynasty (960–1279) China, but is now apparently held in Incheon, South Korea. It is 258 cm high (191 cm without the loop; 157 cm from the shoulder), 158 cm wide at the mouth. The rim is 14 cm thick, unlike the rest of the bell wall, which is on average 5 cm thick. It possesses two rows of three oblong panels, and a lower decorative band ornamentation that resembles the Jingyun Bell's lower decorative band in terms of its pattern. A slightly later, but similar six-scalloped iron bell, measuring 164 cm x 100 cm and weighing 1 ton, is now also kept in Incheon, at the Jeondeungsa Temple (전등사철종) on Ganghwa island (Figure 10). It was cast in 1097 in Northern Song-dynasty China and shares the simpler design of the scalloped example in Figure 1, above. However, it lacks that bell's lower decoration, and its scallops end in longer points.[39] The continued popularity of the scallop-rimmed temple bell up to the Manchu period is evidenced in the famous Nanking Bell, from the Manchu Temple in Nanjing.

Reviewing the extant early East and Southeast Asian temple bells shows their variety of size, form, and style across this part of Buddhist Asia. This is due in part to the fruitful aesthetic dialogue that took place especially between Chinese, Korean, and Japanese artisans and the borrowing of stylistic elements across porous borders during this period. Furthermore, we have seen that even within first-millennium China, which appears to be at the heart of this nexus, there is a lack of homogeneity in temple-bell design, and so no single "Chinese pattern" that Tibetans of this era could easily emulate.

7 Tibetan Bells

No doubt the eighth-century Tibetans who came to the Tang capital of Chang'an (now Xi'an) heard or saw Buddhist or Daoist temple bells and perhaps the scalloped Jingyun Bell itself. One could even imagine such a bell being sounded in

37 Price, *Bells and Man*, 12.

38 The following description is based on Kungnip Kyŏngju Pangmulgwan, *Sŏngdŏk Taewang Sinjong*, vol. 1, 211 and "강화 전등사 철종," Wikipedia, last modified November 17, 2019, https://ko.wikipedia.org/wiki/강화_전등사_철종.

39 Ch'oe and Kim, *Kŭmsok Kongye*, 90–91.

Figure 10: Photograph in Ch'oe and Kim, *Kŭmsok Kongye*, 90.

warning as the Tibetan military attacked Chang'an to sack it in 763.[40] In the context of the westward spread of temple bells, Walther Heissig states that inscribed Chinese Buddhist bells were found "at sites of the seventh-century Kirghiz

40 On this brief conquest, see Christopher I. Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: A History of the Struggle for Great Power among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs, and Chinese During the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 146.

kingdom in the region bordering the Yenisei river."[41] However, I have been unable to find corroboration of this assertion elsewhere, including in the passage that he cites from C. B. Kiselev.[42] Notably, the Tibetan bronze exemplars appear to imitate the simpler Chinese designs that were described at the end of the last section, rather than the complex imagery and extensive epigraphy of Tang China's Jingyun Bell or Silla Korea's Sŏngdŏk Bell (though see below on the iron bell recently discovered in dPa' ris, དཔའ་རིས་).

Giuseppe Tucci was one of the first Western scholars to take an interest in Tibetan temple bells seeming to date from the imperial period (ca. 600–850). In his *Tombs of the Tibetan Kings*, Tucci identifies three bells from central Tibet – the bSam yas (བསམ་ཡས་), Khra 'brug (ཁྲ་འབྲུག་), and Yer pa (ཡེར་པ་) Bells – as candidates for inclusion within such a group, because they all hung at sites important to the imperial propagation of Buddhism as a state religion and, he believed, included the name of a Tibetan emperor cast into the bell as part of its epigraphy.[43] Tucci also includes in this work a photograph of the bSam yas Bell in situ at the entrance to the famous bSam yas Monastery, and a transcription and translation of its inscription.[44] Hugh Richardson has since revisited and improved the readings and translations of the bSam yas, Khra 'brug, and Yer pa Bell inscriptions.[45] Further afield, Michael Aris has brought attention to

41 Walther Heissig (Geoffrey Samuel transl.), *The Religions of Mongolia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 4. In the original German, Heissig refers to "Buddhistische Templeglocken mit chinesischen Aufschriften, die auf Fundstellen des Kirgisenreichs des 7. Jahrhunderts im Jenisseigrenzgebiet zutage gefördert wurden, weisen darauf hin, daß buddhistische Einflüsse in diesen Gebietenweiterhin andauerten" (Giuseppe Tucci and Walther Heissig, *Die Religionen Tibets und der Mongolei* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1970), 302).

42 Footnote 16 on the same page of the German edition refers to page 615 of the 1951 work of the C.B. Kiselev (Tucci and Heissig, *Die Religionen Tibets und der Mongolei*, 320, n. 16 (translated in an endnote in Heissig, *The Religions of Mongolia*, 114, n. 16). However, the corresponding page of Kiselev's work (and pages around it) do not appear to mention bells at all, but rather a Chinese inscription on a bronze altar monument that Kiselev dates to the sixth century (and its appearance near the Yenisei to the ninth century). Furthermore, Kiselev interprets the monument as booty, rather than as showing the influence of Buddhism in the area. See C.B. Киселев [Kiselev], *Древняя история Южной Сибири* [*Drevniaia Istoriia Iuzhnoĭ Sibiri*] (Moscow: Изд-во Академии наук СССР [Izd-vo Akademii nauk USSR], 1951), 614–16.

43 Tucci, *The Tombs of the Tibetan Kings*, 69–71. Tucci believed that the Yer pa Bell had included the name of a Tibetan emperor in the area of the bell inscription that had been lost when the bell cracked (Tucci, *The Tombs of the Tibetan Kings*, 71). Hugh Edward Richardson has since rightly disputed this (Richardson, "A Ninth Century Inscription": 166).

44 Tucci, *The Tombs of the Tibetan Kings*, fig. 5; 108, Appendix VIII; 69.

45 See Richardson, "A Ninth Century Inscription": 166–71; Hugh Edward Richardson, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1985), 32–35, 82–83 and 144–47. This has been followed by further discussion, transliteration and translation of all three bell

an antique bell in Bumthang (བུམ་ཐང་), Bhutan, also bearing epigraphy indicative of an imperial-period date.[46] Finally, a bell made of iron (rather than bronze) has recently surfaced in dPa' ris near Xining in China, purportedly founded during the Tibetan imperial period and showing more prominent ornamentation (Figure 11).[47] However, here I shall deal with the bronze bells alone and focus less on the inscriptions (except where those elements have a bearing on the form of the bells) than on their design and the extent and shape of their scalloping. Though there is some variation among the exemplars, it will be seen that they tend to be rounded or pointedly concave at their bases, forming scallops in higher relief than the Sŏngdŏk Bell or Japanese examples above (Figures 2 to 7). In this way (as in their simpler design), they resemble the Song Chinese bells discussed at the end of the last section, as well as the Jingyun Bell to an extent (Figures 8 to 10).

inscriptions in Li and Coblin, *A Study of the Old Tibetan Inscriptions*, 332–39, 340–46 and 347–52. More recent transliterations of the bell epigraphs are found in Iwao Kazushi (岩 尾 一 史) et al., *Old Tibetan Inscriptions: Old Tibetan Documents Online Monograph Series II* (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2009), 70, 71 and 72.

46 Michael Aris, *Bhutan: The Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1979), 33–36 and plate 6.

47 See lHa mchog skyabs (兰却加), "Btsan po khri lde btsug brtsan skabs kyi jag rog dga' ldan byin chen gtsug lag khang gi dril bu'i kha byang gi yi ger dpyad pa" [Remarks on the text of a bell of the Jag rog dga' ldan byin chen sanctuary from the time of Emperor Khri lDe btsug brtsan]. *Bod ljongs zhib 'jug*/西藏研究/*Tibetan Studies* 1 (2001): 1–9. This relatively small and squat 54 cm x 52 cm iron bell bears a Tibetan inscription prominently featuring Emperor Khri lDe gtsug brtsan (r. 712–ca. 754) and stating that it was cast by a monk (*dge slong*). See also Michael Willis's blog: "Bell at dPa' ris," Indological Notes and Queries, last modified October 16, 2001, http://dogankoy.blogspot.com/2011/10/bell-at-dpa-ris.html. Mention of the emperor is not proof that the bell dates to his reign, but if it does date that early, then it would be the earliest extant example of both Tibetan temple bells and also imperial Tibetan epigraphy. The image in figure 11 is taken from journalist bDe lHa mo's Tibetan-language article online concerning the discovery: last modified May 4, 2011, http://zw.tibetculture.org.cn/news_1/tplt/201105/t20110504_1022719.htm. The six scallops are in high relief and undulating in quality, ornamented with what resemble the faces of the mythical *kīrtimukha* beast (my thanks to Amy Heller for pointing out the similarity). The body of the bell lacks a striking point, like other Tibetan temple bells (with the possible exception of the Bumthang Bell, below), but also lacks the ribbing present in Tibetan examples, and the epigraphy is not confined to panels or the top of the bell, but covers the whole (admittedly smaller) surface area of the body. Lastly, the dPa' ris Bell's cloud patterns resemble those on the Jingyun Bell (Figure 8), although other, more proximate sources for this design element exist in central Tibet.

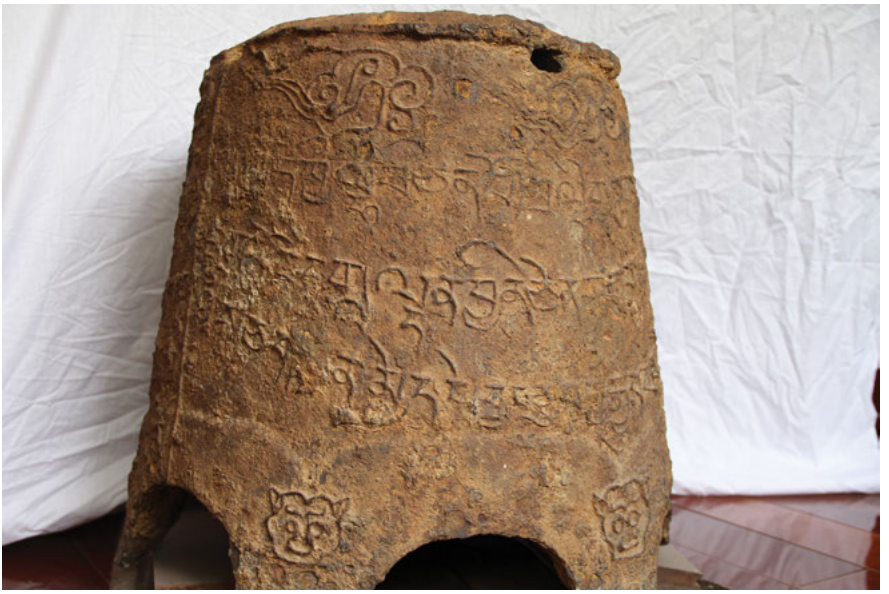

Figure 11: The dPa' ris Bell, China Association for Preservation and Development of Tibetan Culture (CAPDTC) copyright 2011.

8 The bSam yas Bell

The Tibetan empire reached its greatest extent during the reign of the Tibetan emperor (*btsan po*) who is the focus of the bSam yas Bell inscription, Khri Srong lde brtsan (r. 756–ca. 800). In the northwest, the empire threatened the Caliphate of Harun Al-Rashid on the banks of the Oxus; in the east, as mentioned above, Tibetan armies even briefly sacked the Chinese capital Chang'an in 763 CE.[48] This Tibetan emperor also presided over the growing institutionalization of Buddhism in his realm, epitomized by his patronage of bSam yas Monastery. From Tucci's image, as well as other photographs taken since, we can see the brightly colored beams and ceiling of the entrance hall leading to the main temple, into which spectacular location the bell is placed like a hanging jewel to catch the eye of visitors entering the monastery's central place of devotion.

These photographs, taken from below the bell looking up, also clearly show the bSam yas Bell's six scallops and the similarity of their design to the

48 See Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire*, 143–57.

Figure 12: The bSam yas Bell in 'Jam dbyangs (甲央), and Wang Mingxing (王明星), *Baozang* 寶藏 [Precious deposits: Historical relics of Tibet, China], vol. 1 (Beijing: Chaohua chubanshe 朝華出版社 [Morning Glory Publishers], 2000), 164, plate 97.

larger Jingyun Bell.[49] Like the Sŏngdŏk Bell, however, the concave arches reach points at their nadirs, which lie on the outer face of the bell. These points are perhaps most rounded on the bSam yas Bell, which lacks the tendril design that decorates the Jingyun Bell above the mouth's decorative band and the Sŏngdŏk Bell's band itself. Instead, the bSam yas Bell is more plainly decorated with vertical and horizontal ribs (the former positioned in line with the nadir of each scallop). At the top, two lines of epigraphy are cast into the bell, split by the ribs into twelve segments (six are visible in Figure 13). A few of the syllables

49 See also Takeuchi Tsuguhito's (武内 紹人) photograph, showing another side of the bell, in Iwao et al., *Old Tibetan Inscriptions*, xv, plate 9.

Figure 13: Takeuchi Tsuguhito's (武内 紹人) photograph of part of the bSam yas Bell Inscription in Iwao Kazushi (岩 尾 一 史) *et al.*, *Old Tibetan Inscriptions*: *Old Tibetan Documents Online Monograph Series II* (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2009), xvi, plate 10.

of the inscription, *bsod*, *brtsan*, and *dbyal*, even cross over the ribs (the syllable "*b- -rtsan*" can be seen at the far left of Figure 13), perhaps suggesting that the placement of these ribs took precedence over the epigraphy among the design priorities of the bell founder. As can also be seen in Figure 13, the horizontal ribs are less than completely horizontal, and the vertical ribs are broken up by the joins of the slabs used to mold the inscription into the bell.

The inscription, whose raised letters display paleographic and orthographic features of the ancient Old Tibetan writing style, dedicates the bell (*cong* < *zhong* 鐘) to Emperor Khri Srong lde brtsan, on behalf of his queen, Jo mo rGyal mo brtsan, and their son (*sras*), who both commissioned the bell's construction. Because of these references, Richardson dates the bSam yas Bell to between 780 and 790.[50]

50 Richardson, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions*, 33.

A sense of the bell's proportions is more easily discerned in a photograph taken when it was lying in a courtyard or open area (Figure 14). Unfortunately, no scholar appears to have published measurements of these bells. Although Tucci refers to the bSam yas Bell as "huge," we have no reason to think it was much over 100 cm tall.[51] However, the bell is still in the entrance to bSam yas Monastery (where it was photographed in Figure 12), and so it may still be possible to discover its exact dimensions.

9 The Khra 'brug Bell

As Michael Walter points out, bSam yas is "not the oldest, but the most famous early Tibetan monastery."[52] The Khra 'brug Monastery is considered another of the oldest Tibetan monasteries or temple complexes in existence.[53] It lies in the Yar klung valley, home of the imperial dynasty.[54] From the roof of its outer gateway (leading onto a courtyard in front of the main temple) hung a large, cracked bell whose whereabouts are unknown today,[55] but which from the images available resembles the bSam yas Bell quite closely (Figures 15 and 16).

The Khra 'brug Bell also lacks measurements. However, roughly comparing its size with the people in Figure 16 suggests that it measured about 100 cm in

51 Tucci, *The Tombs of the Tibetan Kings*, 69. Richardson, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions*, 82, states that it is smaller than the Khra 'brug Bell, which appears to measure roughly 100 cm x 60+ cm (see below), giving some indication of the size of bSam yas Bell and placing Tucci's "huge" in context.

52 Michael L. Walter, *Buddhism and Empire: The Political and Religious Culture of Early Tibet* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 187.

53 See especially Per K. Sørensen, Guntrum Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo, *Thundering Falcon: An Inquiry into the History and Cult of Khra-'Brug, Tibet's First Buddhist Temple* (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005). The mention of a "bKra shis lha yul of Khra 'brug" in the explanatory proclamation (*bKa' mchid*) of Khri Srong lde brtsan (Richardson, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions*, 26) suggests that it was in existence before the reign of Khri lDe srong brtsan (mentioned in the Khra 'brug Bell inscription). Therefore, while bSam yas Monastery contains a bell dedicated to the emperor who built it as a monastery or complex of temples, this may not be the case with the Khra 'brug Monastery (unless he turned a fledgling religious community into a full-blown monastery with ordained residents), in contrast to the opinion of Tucci (*The Tombs of the Tibetan Kings*, 71).

54 The coordinates 29.1° N and 91.7° E are given in Iwao et al., *Old Tibetan Inscriptions*, 71.

55 The Khra 'brug Bell's condition is still "lost" according to Iwao et al., *Old Tibetan Inscriptions*, 71; Li and Coblin (*A Study of the Old Tibetan Inscriptions*, 340) report that it was lost sometime between 1965 and 1987.

Figure 14: A photograph of the bSam yas Bell in An Xu (安 旭), "Xizang Sangyuan si zhudian bihua lüekao 西藏桑鸢寺主殿壁畫略考 ["Notes on the Wall Paintings in the Main Hall of Sang Yuan Temple Xizang (Tibet)"], *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics] 1982(8): 6, plate 10.

height and over 60 cm in diameter. Until it was lost, the bell was evidently hung up high, like the bSam yas Bell, and most scholars report that a ladder was needed in order to read both their inscriptions. Here, the Khra 'brug and bSam yas Bells stand in contrast to Korean temple bells, which are hung close to the ground (see above). They were hung even higher than Chinese temple bells, which are designed to be hit on their striking points and thus hung with their middles at around chest height. Yet we cannot be sure about the original

Figure 15: The Khra 'brug Bell in the Tibet Album, 2001.59.13.48.1; http://web.prm.oxac.uk/tibet/photo_2001.59.13.48.1.html.

hanging position of any of these bells (or, indeed, at what time and in what context the Khra 'brug Bell gained that handprint visible in Figure 15 on its bent scallop-point, opposite the missing one).

The bell possesses more ribs, both vertical and horizontal, than the bSam yas Bell – making more of a geometric pattern than a mere paneling effect. Richardson reports that it "is larger than that at Bsam-yas but less graceful, and part of it has been broken off."[56] One of those six scallops is missing and another is little bent, but they appear to splay out at the bottom, unlike the bSam yas Bell. The epigraphy, though, is likewise high up on the body of the bell and broken up by the ribbing into twelve segments that run in two lines around the bell from left to right.

Again, like the bSam yas Bell, the inscription shows Old Tibetan characteristics. Although it is slightly more damaged than the bSam yas Bell inscription, its readings were almost all clear enough to Richardson, who states that both "are votive offerings by royal persons in honour of Tibetan kings whose names are

56 Richardson, "A Ninth Century Inscription," 166. See also Richardson, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions*, 82–83.

Figure 16: Giuseppe Tucci inspecting the Khra 'brug Bell, 1948; Per K. Sørensen, Guntrum Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo, *Thundering Falcon: An Inquiry into the History and Cult of Khra-'Brug, Tibet's First Buddhist Temple* (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005), 161, fig. 92.

given in each case."[57] The Khra 'brug Bell refers to its support as a *dril chen po*, in other words a "big bell," donated by Jo mo Byang chub ("Queen Enlightenment") for the sake of Emperor Khri lDe srong brtsan (r. ca. 800–815), the son of Khri Srong lde brtsan, as well as for gaining herself merit and encouraging all sentient beings to be virtuous. The inscription also says that the queen intended the bell to be "like the sound of the drum roll of the gods in the heavens" (*lha'i rnga sgra bar snang la grag pa dang 'dra bar*). The bell is also said to have been cast (lit. "poured," *blugs*) by the abbot/preceptor (*mkhen po* = *mkhan po*), the Chinese monk (*rgya'i dge slong*) named Rin cen (later *rin chen*; Skt. *ratna*; Ch. *bao* 寶). Therefore, not only do the scalloping, the ribbing, and the general proportions of

57 Richardson, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions*, 82.

the Khra 'brug Bell suggest East Asian influence, but also the inscription identifies the founder as a Chinese Buddhist monk. Furthermore, the epigraphy appears to compare the bell (*dril*) with a drum (*rnga*), just as in China, the *dharma* bell (*fanzhong*) is sometimes called a *dharma* drum (*fangu*).[58]

The information given in this inscription has possible consequences for the bSam yas Bell also. Given the overwhelming similarity between the bSam yas and Khra brug Bells' proportions, scalloping, ribbing, and epigraphy, it appears that the Chinese-inspired term *cong* in the former is synonymous with the indigenous term *dril chen po*. Moreover, Jo mo Byang chub is thought to be none other than the ordination name of Khri Srong lde brtsan's queen, Jo mo rGyal mo brtsan. However, it seems that Khri lDe srong brtsan was not her son (or the son mentioned in the bSam yas Bell inscription?), but rather her stepson.[59]

There is an implication inherent in the identification of Queen Jo mo Byang chub with Queen Jo mo rGyal mo brtsan that Tibetan temple bells may have been getting bigger. If the queen of the bSam yas Bell inscription had been ordained by the time of the founding of the Khra 'brug Bell, and Richardson has stated that the latter is larger, this suggests that the smaller bSam yas Bell predates the bigger Khra 'brug Bell. We may then add to that the possible evidence of the dPa' ris Bell: if it is genuinely older than both the bSam yas and Khra 'brug Bells, and of the smallest measurements, this would suggest that Tibetan imperial temple bells were becoming successively larger in size (though keeping roughly the same proportions) over the eighth century and into the ninth century. Perhaps the very similar bSam yas Bell was "poured" by the same monk, Rin c(h)en, or another Chinese *mkhan po*/*dge slong*, who may have gained the ability to cast bigger bells and so not only create more religious merit for the donors but also show off their cosmopolitanism by commissioning examples of this marvelous East Asian technology. As Richardson suggests,

> The making of such large bells was a considerable undertaking and although the Tibetans had a reputation as metal workers there is no evidence that they had acquired by that time the art of metal casting. According to later tradition Chinese craftsmen were employed on the decoration of Bsam-yas. A Chinese monk supervised the casting of the Khra-'brug bell at the beginning of the 9th century. Chinese monks had been invited to Tibet in 781 A.D. according to the Tse (*sic*) Fu Yuan Kuei [the Song-dynasty encyclopaedia titled *Cefu Yuangui* 冊府元龜] and it is possible that one of them, perhaps the same one

58 See Paul W. Kroll, *Dharma Bell and Dhāraṇī Pillar: Li Po's Buddhist Inscriptions* (Kyoto: Scuola Italiana di Studi sull'Asia Orientale/Italian School of East Asian Studies, 2001), 18.

59 Richardson, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions*, 32; Li and Coblin, *A Study of the Old Tibetan Inscriptions*, 338, n. 1; 341; 346, n. 10. See also Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo, *Thundering Falcon*, 160–61, n. 5.

> who cast the Khra-'brug bell, was commissioned by the queen to make that at Bsam-yas with its unmistakably Chinese shape.[60]

This Rin cen could be a monk of a Chinese Chan Buddhist school, if the queen's attributed links to this school are to be believed.[61] It is uncertain whether the bells were found in Tibet by an artisan who knew the art of bronze casting from the east, or made elsewhere (in collaboration with someone who knew the Tibetan script for the written epigraphy) and then brought to central Tibet. Intriguingly, Per K. Sørensen, Guntrum Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo identify a place near Khra 'brug and in the Yar klung valley of the emperors that is today named Cong (i.e. "bell").[62] Thus, as they suggest, the raw materials may have been excavated from this place, whereas another possibility is that this was the site of a Tibetan imperial bell foundry.

10 The Yer pa Bell

The Yer pa Bell was thought to be no longer extant, like the Khra 'brug Bell, but has recently reappeared at the Dunhuang Academy in Gansu Province. Until more research can be carried out on it, we must rely on the photographs of Richardson (Figure 17) and Heinrich Harrer (Figure 18).[63] These show its body design to consist of vertical and horizontal ribs forming the inscription panels and perhaps a lower horizontal band, most closely resembling the bSam yas Bell. Its scallops seem quite solid and tend to bend inwards, like those of the bSam yas Bell, rather than splay out like those of the Khra 'brug Bell. Yet the scallops appear to be more pointed than either of the above two Tibetan bells. Beading has been cast into the bell at the top, above the inscription panels, as is also found in the Bumthang Bell (below) but not in the above Tibetan examples. There may be some ornamentation below the panels, but it is unclear

60 Richardson, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions*, 82.

61 See the discussion of slightly later sources on Jo mo Byang chub in Paul Demiéville, *Le Concile de Lhasa*: *Une controverse sur le quiétisme entre Bouddhistes de l'Inde et de la Chine au VIIIe. siècle de l'ère chrétienne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1952), 25–33; Richardson, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions*, 33; Li and Coblin, *A Study of the Old Tibetan Inscriptions*, 338. Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo, *Thundering Falcon*, 161, n. 6, speculate on his possible identification with other Rin chens known as monks or monk-artisans during the Tibetan imperial period.

62 Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo, *Thundering Falcon*, 161, n. 7; 250; 114, sat-map 2.

63 The Yer pa Bell's condition is also "lost" according to Iwao et al., *Old Tibetan Inscriptions*, 72.

Figure 17: Photograph of the Yer pa Bell in the Tibet Album, 2001.59.2.44.1; http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/tibet/photo_2001.59.2.44.1.html.

from the photographs. The inscriptions positioned at the top of the bell across four panels comprise two prayers in an Indic and Tibetan script, respectively. Unlike the bell inscriptions above, both prayers are ritual rather than commemorative and contain no reference to imperial people or places.[64]

The inscription is again written on the upper part of the bell, as in the above examples. However, unlike the epigraphy on the bSam yas and Khra 'brug Bells, the Yer pa Bell's inscription is arranged in four panels rather than six that are to be read from right to left. Although the actual content of the epigraphy is taken from the prayer genre, and so offers no direct proof of an imperial date, the style

64 Richardson, "A Ninth Century Inscription," 166.

Figure 18: The Yer pa Bell in Heinrich Harrer, and Heinz Woltereck, *Meine Tibet-Bilder* (Seebruck am Chiemsee: Heering-Verlag, 1953), 65.

of the bell itself is similar to the those above, and the paleography and orthography of its inscription (which is molded into the bell) suggest that it was founded in the eighth or ninth century.[65] One of the collaborators would have had to have known not only Tibetan script but also an Indic script and the prayer written in that language, suggesting once again the close involvement of a monk or abbot.

11 The Bumthang Bell

Finally, mention should be made of a *cong* bell incorporating Tibetan epigraphy, housed in the small temple of dKon mchog gsum in Bumthang in Bhutan, of which Michael Aris has published a photograph and short contextualization

65 Richardson, *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions*, 144.

(Figure 19).[66] He states that the temple is small for Bhutanese religious edifices, which along with other indicators may suggest its link to Buddhism during the Tibetan imperial period. No other such ancient artifacts exist in this region, and so Aris suggests, "The bell thus carries great potential significance for the early history of the area: if the *cong* can be shown to belong to the temple where it is

Figure 19: The Bumthang Bell in Michael Aris, *Bhutan: The Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1979), plate 6.

66 Aris, *Bhutan*, 33–38 and plate 6.

now found it would be the single and indisputable relic of Tibetan missionary activity south of the Himalayas in this early period."[67] As he freely admits, though, even large temple bells are ultimately mobile and so this exemplar could have been brought to Bhutan after the Tibetan empire fell.

The bell is broken, and only the largest part of it is extant. However, the general outline is still recognizable, which Aris in his earlier PhD thesis describes as similar to the other imperial temple bells and a certain Chinese model: "all the later temple bells of China belonging to this type preserve the characteristic shape and features of these bells in Tibet: side panels divided by vertical ribbing and an 'undulating' lower edge (most pronounced in our example here)."[68]

As Aris rightly notes, the scalloping is markedly pronounced in this example. The bell is scalloped in a concave way with sharp points at the nadirs, but with fewer scallops than any of the bells above, perhaps only four. It also appears, from this image at least, to possess a much wider bottom than top (more "A-shaped" than the bells above), though we again lack any measurements or other indications of the proportions of this bell. Uniquely among the Tibetan bells, it possesses a striking point consisting of an eight-petalled lotus and banner design. The striking point is too high up the bell to be a safe means of ringing it, and so would presumably have been intended as a purely decorative design feature. If it was used as a striking point, however, perhaps this was responsible for the cracking of the bell.

Like the Yer pa Bell, this Bumthang Bell is divided into large panels, delineated by ribbing, but with one extra set of horizontal and vertical ribs forming an enclosing frame around the panels. The shoulder of this bell above the written epigraphy is lined with horizontal beading, also like the Yer pa Bell (but in this case two rows of beading, one within the panel and one above the top horizontal band). The Bumthang Bell also seems to include both an Indic and Tibetan inscription. The Indic part at the top is in Tibetan transcription, however, and placed above the Tibetan, one that is molded much lower down the bell than any of the above examples. The form of the bell is thus more complex than that of the Yer pa Bell, and so may postdate it. Among the details of the Tibetan inscription that Aris has recorded, including terms such as *byang chub*, "enlightenment," is the statement that the bell was cast by the bell founder

67 Aris, *Bhutan*, 36.

68 Michael Aris, "A Study on the Historical Foundations of Bhutan: With a Critical Edition and Translation of Certain Texts in Tibetan" (PhD diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1978), 79–80.

(*cong mkhan*, lit. "one knowledgeable about *cong*s") named Li'u sTa(n)g (*cong mkhan li'u sta*(n)*g cong bya* [. . .] *blugs*).[69] This suggests that an expert or specialist in bell founding – with a Chinese ethnonym or patronym, but lacking a name such as Rin chen, reminiscent of an ordained monk or abbot[70]– was brought to Bhutan, if indeed this is where the bell was cast and not elsewhere (in central Tibet and merely carried here). Thus, Aris is correct that the Bumthang Bell is similar to *some* temple bells of China, and a Chinese artisan is apparently credited with its founding. However, the design, scalloping, and epigraphy of this bell are quite dissimilar to the Tibetan imperial model of the bSam yas and Khra 'brug bells. The Yer pa Bell stands somewhere between these two types, whereas the more rounded dPa' ris Bell stands at the other extreme altogether. This may conform to a possible chronological order of the Tibetan imperial bells that begins with the small and squat dPa' ris Bell (with its rounded scallops) and runs through the taller bSam yas, Khra 'brug, and Yer pa Bells, ending with the more A-shaped Bumthang Bell (with its pointed scalloping).

12 Conclusion

We unfortunately do not possess all of the exemplars of temple bells of Tibet or the countries surrounding it. Far from it, in fact, given that each monastery may have had its own bell and that new monasteries would have appeared in many of the areas into which Buddhism spread – and so inscribed bells surely spread with the religion. Nevertheless, those exemplars that remain allow us to draw some conclusions about the early design(s) of temple bells in comparison with examples from East and Southeast Asia. The extant Tibetan imperial temple bells are all convex, as opposed to bell 3 in Figure 1, above. Yet in all other ways, they follow this simpler Chinese model most closely. All except the Bumthang Bell lack complex ornamentation and a striking point. All except the dPa' ris Bell use horizontal and vertical ribbing in their designs. These ribs help form panels into which the epigraphy is cast rather than inscribed (unlike the earliest Chinese and Vietnamese examples above). Further, there is a marked tendency (excluding the dPa' ris Bell) to place the written epigraphy in the top half of the bell (though inscriptions below can be made in addition) – in contrast to the Jingyun and Sŏngdŏk Bells. Including Tibetan script in the mold must have been a difficult undertaking, but it is very well realized (again

69 Aris, *Bhutan*, 34.

70 See Aris, "A Study on the Historical Foundations of Bhutan," 80–82; Aris, *Bhutan*, 36.

excluding the supposedly early dPa' ris Bell), even if this means that some syllables are split across the panels, as in the bSam yas Bell.

With respect to the scalloping specifically, examples from China, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan may all once again prove instructive. The scalloped bell seems to be the only form of temple bell cast in imperial Tibet, but it is neither the only option available nor a homogenous type either in China or elsewhere in Buddhist Asia. Thus, a number of decisions appear to have been made during the Tibetan imperial period with regard to the scalloping: first, whether to scallop the bell; second, with how many "petals" or points; and third, to what extent. The first question was seemingly always answered in the affirmative. The second has led in all cases except the Bumthang Bell to a six-scalloped mouth, which outside of Tibet is also the standard (excepting the later Japanese example in Figure 7). This is despite the fact the most lotuses in other aspects of the bells' design have eight petals. It is in answering the third question that we find the most variety.

Perhaps a useful distinction can be made between concave, convex, and "undulating curve" scalloping in all these Tibetan bells as well as in their East Asian contemporaries and antecedents. The concave type is where, if the bell were laid on its rim, it would rest on small points (and, in theory, be least stable); the convex type would rest on the majority-flat rim (and be most stable); and the undulating wave bell would rest on rounded scallops or slightly flattened circular edges. Most of the bells surveyed above are of the concave variety. The Japanese bell in Figure 6 is of the convex type. Of the Tibetan examples, the Yer pa and Bumthang Bells definitely rest on their points, with the latter being especially pointed. The others have undulating scallops, perhaps even tending toward the convex in that they have more flattened mouths; yet none reach the convex extreme of the Japanese exemplar (Figure 6). This tentative typology may be worth expanding through future research in order to incorporate Tibetan imperial temple bells into an East (and Southeast) Asian typology. Comparing how the technology entered each area, and how each region's types of bell differ from each other in their relative rarity or divergent design, can illuminate the decisions taken by artisans and patrons during the Tibetan imperial period.

This can help reframe the Tibetan temple bell as art rather than merely the bearer of a text mined for its historical value alone. Contextualizing Tibetan imperial temple bells within a wider aesthetic context would also aid the wider study of temple bells in Buddhist Asia, since the Tibetan examples reviewed above seem to rank among the earliest extant exemplars of the form. Such a comparative approach to temple bells could complement similar studies of other examples of eighth- and ninth-century Tibetan imperial material culture,

where the flows of technology may prove to be the same. That is why there are still wide vistas opening up beyond the text in Buddhist Asia.

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Part II: **Philosophy & Intellectual Spaces**

Evgeniya Desnitskaya

5 Nonagonistic Discourse in the Early History of Indian Philosophical Debates: From *Brahmodya*s to the *Mahābhāṣya*

1 Introduction

One of the main problems in the contemporary study of premodern Indian culture is the search for the appropriate conceptual means of interpretation. In the case of textual studies, this problem may appear less acute since, in many instances, traditional modes of interpretation are provided by the commentaries. Still, it would certainly be naive, from a gnoseological perspective, to deny conceptual means and modes of interpretation merely on account of their absence in the commentaries. In the following passage, W. Halbfass underlines the inevitable difficulties a modern scholar confronts in studying an ancient culture:

> [. . .] Understanding cannot amount to slipping into somebody else's skin, as it were, and to comprehend or experience the foreign, the other simply in its own identity, or by coinciding with it. Understanding ancient Indian thought cannot mean "becoming like the ancient Indians," thinking and seeing the world exactly like them. We are not capable of such "objectivity," and if we were, we would obviously not be "like the Indians." The goal of a radical "philosophical εποχη," an unqualified abstention from one's own background and presuppositions, is unrealistic and undesirable. We cannot and need not "disregard" ourselves in the process of understanding.[1]

While recognizing the utility of emic ("insider") concepts within Indian culture, etic ("outsider") concepts can be introduced for the sake of the comprehensiveness of inquiry. Etic concepts are needed especially when we study those aspects of Indian culture that were not categorized "from within," i.e. by the innate means of self-reflection elaborated in Indian culture. To undertake historiographical work and philosophical analysis, scholars can productively make use of conceptual tools from the contemporary humanities.

One relevant example of a concept of this kind is the central topic of this volume, i.e. confrontation as social interaction. Initially elaborated in social sciences and anthropology, this concept has a long history in studies of premodern Indian

1 Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), 164.

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culture. Confrontation or agonism can be traced back to Indo-Aryan mythology and social practices; to the "potlatch festivals" depicted in Indian epics and elsewhere; and to contests between Vedic poets (*vivāda*). The competitions between priests in the Brāhmaṇas (*brahmodya*) that evolved from these contests were less agonistic. Later, a different tradition of intellectual confrontation, namely rational philosophical disputes (*vāda*), contributed a new layer to the Indian landscape of argumentation. As the dynamics of *vāda* (elaborated in the *Carakasaṃhitā* or *Nyāyasūtra*s) were generally accepted in subsequent generations of intellectual discourse, it may seem self-evident that a "normal" intellectual discussion in premodern India exhibited the properties of confrontation: with participants striving to justify their own respective viewpoints and disprove those of their rivals.

Perhaps surprisingly, there are also passages in early prephilosophical texts that contradict this general statement. Ritualized *brahmody*as, disputes in the Upaniṣads, and discussions in grammatical works were structured as dialogues, but ones that did not fit the agonistic pattern that later became normative. The study of these nonagonistic intellectual practices in the early history of Indian philosophy is promising, because it may shed light on possible discrepancies between normative ideals and intellectual life as practiced. As the early history of Indian debates is generally reconstructed through textual evidence, the question may arise whether dialogues in these texts represent actual communication practices, or merely serve as narrative devices adopted by the authors for other reasons. To answer this question, I will analyze instances of nonagonistic argumentation in Brāhmaṇic *brahmodya*s, the Upaniṣads, and the *Mahābhāṣya* with the aim of revealing shared patterns and identifying possible affinities between ritual debates, the philosophical strategies of the Upaniṣadic thinkers, and those of the ancient grammarians. While it may be tempting to consider textual debates to be reflections of the structure and dynamics of human communication, my analysis of the pragmatic structure of the texts shows that, in many cases, dialogic discourse was a textual strategy intended to create a multivocal perspective. This strategy can be also designated as polyphony, the plurality of voices in the text, with each voice expressing a single aspect of reality.[2] Instances of this strategy and its evolution can be traced over a considerably extended period of Indian textual history.

2 The concept of polyphony in textual studies was introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin, who applied it in order to describe the poetics of Dostoevsky's work: "A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels"; see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's*

2 Classical *Brahmodya*: Agonistic or Ritualistic?

2.1 The Origin of *Brahmodya*s

Indo-Aryan culture is generally considered agonistic, since features of contest or confrontation pervade both its ideology as well as its social life. The foundational cosmological myth was agonistic: the battle of Indra with his enemies. Definitive social practices such as chariot races, gambling, gift-giving, and word contests were similarly agonistic. All these activities can be considered parts of the general "potlatch festival," the ceremonial contest of two parties,[3] that constituted the background of Aryan culture.[4] Agonistic performances in Indo-Aryan society were highly ritualized, generally being related to seasonal rituals. The intellectual component of the potlatch – the ceremonial contests of poets (*vivāc*, *vivāda*) – was carried out at the New Year feast as a part of a "ritual that aimed at a renewal of life and the winning of the sun."[5] These contests constituted the part of reciprocity relations in which poets were involved. The rules of these contests have not been explicitly defined, as they belong to the "preclassical" period of Vedic ritual as opposed to the classical ritual of the Brāhmanas and Śrautasūtras.[6] They can be only reconstructed on the basis of comparative analysis of Ṛgvedic passages and the textual evidence of other Indo-European societies.[7]

These agonistic practices of poetic contests gave birth to *brahmodya*s, the earliest type of intellectual confrontation in India represented in textual form. *Brahmodya* (literally "uttering Brahman") is a formal exchange of riddles on ritual or cosmogony performed by priests in the course of sacrifices (especially royal ones, such as the Aśvamedha, Rājasūya, and Vājapeya).[8] Examples of

Poetics, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 6. In the Upaniṣads, however, a single voice expresses not an individual consciousness or personality, but rather a different standpoint on some aspect of reality.

3 The division of Aryan tribal society into rival phratries may account for the agonistic narratives of Aryan mythology and in Indian epic; see Yaroslav Vasilkov, *Mif, ritual iistoria v "Mahabharate"* (St. Petersburg: Evropeyskiye issledovaniya, 2010), 98–111.

4 Franciscus Kuiper, "The Ancient Aryan Verbal Contest," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 4 (1960): 238, 264–274.

5 Kuiper, "The Ancient Aryan Verbal Contest," 279.

6 Johannes Cornelis Heesterman, "Brahmin, Ritual and Renouncer," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens* 8 (1964): 1–31.

7 Calvert Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 70.

8 Louis Renou, "Le Passage des Brahmaṇa aux Upaniṣad," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 73, no. 3 (1953): 141.

*brahmodya*s can be found in late *sūkta*s of the Ṛgveda (ṚV) (e.g. I.168, X.129), and there is a number of them in the Brāhmaṇas. In comparison with ancient verbal contests, the classic riddle-type *brahmodya* is less agonistic: it is not a real contest, but a formal exchange of riddles and answers with a fixed form and contents. The participants of such a performance would have been priests, but not necessarily poets.

A well-known example of *brahmodya* can be found in the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* (VS 23.9–10):

> Who travels alone?
> And who is born again?
> What is the remedy for cold?
> What is the big bowl?
>
> The sun travels alone.
> The moon is born again.
> Fire is the remedy for cold.
> The earth is the big bowl.[9]

*Brahmodya*s of this kind are tautological, as the question here is identical to its answer.[10] These riddles were evidently not intended for gaining new information. Thompson has proposed they were probably connected with the Vedic practice of secret names (*gúhyā nā́māni*), belonging to the poetic/esoteric language of the *ṛṣi*s and initially of the gods.[11] The gods, in accordance with the Brāhmaṇic saying, are fond of the hidden and dislike the obvious.[12] In the poetic language of the Vedas, there are sets of synonyms to substitute words from ordinary language. This diglossia of ordinary and poetic language was not uncommon even in other ancient Indo-European cultures. Generally characterized

9 káḥ svid ekākī́ carati ká u svij jāyate púnaḥ /
kíṃ svid dhimásya bheṣajáṃ kíṃ u āvápanaṃ mahát //
sū́rya ekākī́ carati candrámā jāyate púnaḥ /
agnír himásya bheṣajáṃ bhū́mir āvápanaṃ mahát //
Albrecht Weber, ed., *The Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā in the Mādhyandina and Kānva-Śākhā with the Commentary of Mahidhara* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba, 1972), 711. All the translations with the Sanskrit text in the footnotes are mine. In other cases, the name of the author of the translation is provided.

10 Tatyana Elizarenkova and Vladimir Toporov, "O vediyskoy zagadke tipa brahmodya," in *Paremiologicheskiye issledovaniya*, ed. Grigiriy Permyakov (Moscow: Nauka, 1984), 16–19.

11 George Thompson, "The Brahmodya and Vedic Discourse," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 117 (1997), 15–16.

12 parokṣakāmā hi devāḥ; cf. Charles Malamoud, "The Gods Have No Shadows: Reflections on the Secret Language of the Gods in Ancient India," in *Cooking the World: Ritual and Thought in Ancient India*, trans. David White (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 195–206.

as the opposition of the "language of the gods" and the "language of men," in some cases it appears to be an elaborate hierarchy of languages belonging to other types of beings.[13] The use of secret names instead of ordinary ones may indicate the transfer from ordinary reality to the sacral sphere of ritual. Thus the abovementioned *brahmodya*s can be considered a kind of glossary for a secret lexicon that might have looked something like this:

1. sun = [he who] travels alone;
2. moon = [he who] is born again;
3. fire = remedy for cold;
4. earth = big bowl.

The description introduced in the interrogative part of the *brahmodya* is the "secret" counterpart of the word from ordinary language in the answer. Questions in *brahmodya*s are intended to test whether the person questioned knows the "secret speech."[14] At the same time, the agonistic nature of these dialogues must not be overestimated: the examination was quite formal, because the participants knew the questions and answers in advance.[15]

2.2 *Brahmodya*s without Answers

The "classical" *brahmodya* is a question with an answer. In a broader sense, however, this term is used with respect to questions without answers, and enigmatic passages that concern secret knowledge that should not be articulated or explained in an explicit manner. Over the course of time, the genre of *brahmodya* changed significantly, with interpretation becoming even more problematic. Some enigmatic passages cannot be interpreted unambiguously, either by traditional commentators or by modern scholars.

A transitional type between the riddlelike *brahmodya*s and enigmatic passages are those *brahmodya*s containing questions without an explicit answer. In these *brahmodya*s, the person questioned just pledges to know the answer

13 Tatyana Elizarenkova and Vladimir Toporov, "Drevneindiyskaya poetika i ee indoevrioeyskiye istoki," in *Literatura i kultura drevney i srednevekovoy Indii*, eds. Georgiy Zograf and Vladimir Erman (Moscow, Nauka: 1979), 43–52; Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon*, 38, 269.

14 Thompson, "The Brahmodya and Vedic Discourse," 15–16.

15 Johannes Cornelis Heesterman, "On the Origin of the Nāstika," *Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens* 12–13 (1968–69): 172–177.

that most probably belongs to the realm of secret inexpressible knowledge. This type is exemplified in this dialogue in VS 23.59–60:

> Who knows the navel of this world?
> Who [knows] heaven and earth and the intermediate space? [. . .]
> I know the navel of the world.
> I know heaven and earth and the intermediate space.[16]

*Brahmodya*s of this kind can be compared with the Vedic practice of *satyakriyā*, i.e. acts of uttering truth, where the truthfulness of the speech act allows the speaker to attain supernatural results.[17] The accent on the personal power of the speaker, rather than on the content of the answer, can be considered a premise to the transfer from the "physical" ritual performed by different priests to the internalized "mental" ritual performed by a single priest in his own mind.[18]

This tendency to transfer the ritual performance from the physical realm to the mental one can clearly be traced in later Vedic texts. For example, it influenced the narrative structure of ṚV X.129 (the "*Nāsadīyasūkta*"). This hymn has been composed as an answer to the ultimate question: what existed in the very beginning, when there was nothing – when neither the nonexistent nor the existent existed?[19] The verses of the hymn do not provide a single solution; instead, different hypotheses are specified: were there waters (ṚV X.129.1)? Was there breathing (ṚV X.129.2), heat (ṚV X.129.3), or desire (ṚV X.129.4)? The set of questions concludes with the claim that the connection between existent and nonexistent was discovered by wise men/poets in their own hearts by means of intuition.[20] Different options are reported to represent the variety of possible explanations for the origin of the universe that existed at the time. None of them is satisfactory; still, none of them is explicitly refuted. Taken all together, they contribute to the polyphonic character of the *Nāsadīyasūkta*.

Brereton underlines the importance of the narrative structure of this hymn, which, he claims, makes the audience understand that the true origin of the universe is thought or the process of thinking:

> By making its listeners reflect, the hymn causes them to recover the fundamental creative principle, thought itself. It does not offer a detailed picture of the origin of things nor

16 kó asyá veda bhúvanasya nā́bhiṃ kó dyā́vāpṛthivī́ antárikṣaṃ [. . .]
védāhám asya bhúvanasya nā́bhiṃ véda dyā́vāpṛthivī́ antárikṣaṃ
(Weber, *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā*, 730).

17 Thompson, "The Brahmodya and Vedic Discourse," 19.

18 Heesterman, "On the Origin of the Nāstika," 177.

19 nā́sad āsīn nó sád āsīt tadā́nīm (ṚV X.129.1a).

20 hṛdī́ pratī́ṣyā kaváyo manīṣā́ (ṚV X.129.4d).

> describe the nature or agent of primordial thought, because to do so would defeat its own purposes. For if its function is to create thinking through questioning, then the poem must avoid a final resolution which would bring an end to questioning and an end to thought. Just as the poem begins with something between existent and non-existent, it must leave its readers between knowledge and ignorance. Thus, the openness of the poem points to the process of thinking as an approximate answer to the unanswerable riddle about the origin of things.[21]

This open-endedness and the lack of an explicit answer in this hymn can be considered an example of the shift from the externalized/objective to the internalized/subjective paradigm of thought and action.

Another interpretation was proposed by Thompson, who suggested that enigmatic passages of the Ṛgveda avoid explicit answers and interrogative forms due to "poetic, rather than hermeneutic, intent," as the Ṛgveda, "unlike the more hermeneutical Brāhmaṇas," is "a highly poetic text."[22] It seems, however, that the pragmatic aspect of Vedic passages must be taken into account. Even if the interchange of questions without answers served poetic purposes, still the very practice of their utterance remained a kind of communication intended for information exchange. Compared to the verbal contests of the previous period, these dialogues had lost their agonistic features but remained a form of interaction, with a gradual shift from communication between different participants to the internalized search for the secret knowledge hidden in one's own heart.

2.3 "Enigmatic" *Brahmodya*s

To even less agonistic *brahmodya*s belong the enigmatic passages of the Vedas, which do not contain explicit questions and as such cannot be designated as riddles. Despite their neutral, nonagonistic form, *brahmodya*s of this type are still challenging, since their meaning is quite incomprehensible. The most striking example of this type of *brahmodya* is the verses of ṚV I.164. This unusually long *sūkta* (52 verses) is well-known as the "Riddle Hymn", as it contains a series of enigmatic verses, the interpretation of which has baffled both traditional commentators as well as modern scholars.[23] In the first verse of the hymn,

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21 Joel P. Brereton, "Edifying Puzzlement: Ṛgveda 10. 129 and the Uses of Enigma," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119, no. 2 (1999), 258.

22 Thompson, "The Brahmodya and Vedic Discourse," 22.

23 For the survey of available interpretations, cf. Jan E. M. Houben, "The Ritual Pragmatics of a Vedic Hymn: The 'Riddle Hymn' and the Pravargya Ritual," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 120, no. 4 (2000): 499–536.

three brothers are enumerated: the old *hotṛ* priest, his ravenous middle brother, and the third brother, who has ghee on his back. This verse has been subject to numerous interpretations. According to Sāyaṇa, the three brothers are the sun, wind, and sacrificial fire; Haug has suggested they are the celestial fire (sun), fire of the intermediate space (lightning), and terrestrial (sacrificial) fire; Geldner has claimed that the verse speaks about three sacrificial fires (*āhavanīya*, *dakṣiṇāgni*, *gārhapatya*).[24] Some other verses are less problematic. For example, ṚV I.164.11 concerns the wheel of *ṛta*, with twelve spokes and 720 sons standing on it in pairs. Most probably, the wheel can be interpreted as the sun, whose yearly cycle lasts twelve months, whereas the 720 sons standing in pairs refer to the 360 days and 360 nights comprising a year.[25] Disagreements also arise with respect to other verses. The well-known passage ṚV I.164 20–22, which describes two birds sitting on a tree and either eating or refraining from eating a fruit, has been interpreted in radically different ways: ranging from Śaṅkara's interpretation of the birds as souls creating karma or releasing from it,[26] to Johnson's view of the birds as poets taking part in poetic assemblies and being either allowed or not allowed to drink *soma*.[27]

Houben has proposed a completely different interpretation of the hymn based on its ritual pragmatics. According to the Śrautasūtras, several verses of the hymn are pronounced over the course of the Pravargya ritual. The action in this ritual is generally focused around the pot (*gharma*), which is filled and anointed with ghee and placed on the fire. A cow and a goat are milked, and some of their milk is put into the boiling ghee in the *gharma*, making a pillar of fire arise from it. This central episode of Pravargya, Houben claims, correlates with the verses ṚV I.164.26–29:

> The cow has lowed after the calf which blinks its eye. [. . .] This one is humming, by which the cow is enveloped. She lows a lowing (when she is) placed on the sparkling (fire). With her cracklings she has indeed put down the mortal. Transforming herself to lightning (*vidyut*), she pushed back her covering.[28]

These verses can be considered another example of the use of secret language. The cow enveloped by the calf, through metonymical transfer, may refer to the

24 Tatyana Elizarenkova, *Rigveda: Mandaly I–IV* (Moscow: Nauka, 1999), 645; Houben, "The Ritual Pragmatics of a Vedic Hymn," 516.

25 Elizarenkova, *Rigveda*, 646.

26 Śaṅkara's interpretation is indeed anachronistic, since the doctrine of karma belongs to a more recent period.

27 Willard Johnson, "On the ṚG Vedic Riddle of the Two Birds in the Fig Tree (RV 1.164. 20–22), and the Discovery of the Vedic Speculative Symposium," Journal of the American Oriental Society 96, no. 2 (1976): 248–258.

28 Translated by Houben (Houben, "The Ritual Pragmatics of a Vedic Hymn," 535).

milk (cow) enclosed inside the pot (calf). It is the *gharma* pot, which is humming while being heated. The milk (cow), after being put into the pot full of hot ghee, crackles and "transforms to lightning."[29] Another important identification in the figurative system of the hymn is that of the *gharma* and the sun: the heated pot can be considered a substitute for the sun. Accordingly, the three brothers from the first verse are the fires of the three worlds: the sun/old *hotṛ* is the fire of celestial world; the third brother, with ghee on his back, is the *gharma*, the fire of terrestrial world; and the ravenous middle brother is probably the lightning, the fire of the intermediate space.[30] The sun and the *gharma* pot may also be inferred from the symbolism in ṚV I.168.20–22, where the two birds embracing a tree – the world tree as a symbol of the unity of the universe – correspond to the sun (at the top) and *gharma* (at the bottom). The pot filled with ghee, a substitute for *amṛta*, is the bird that eats the fruit, whereas the sun is the bird that watches without eating. *Gharma* is initially inanimate, but when heated it comes to life, and as such can be compared with the mortal person that partakes in the secret knowledge or attains the immortality associated with the sun.[31]

All these interpretations are indeed hypothetical, being based on different presuppositions. And we should not forget that they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. From the tradition of the Brāhmanas onwards, three different modes of interpretation of a Vedic passage have been accepted, depending on the intention of the interpreter: *adhyātma* (referring to the self), *adhiyajña* (referring to the sacrifice), and *adhidaiva* (referring to the deities or the cosmos).[32] Thus, it can be assumed that one and the same passage could intentionally be left open to different interpretations. From a semiotic perspective, *brahmodya* is a practice of dealing with symbols that join together different levels of description. A "tautological" *brahmodya* that sets up correspondences between the pairs of the utterances belonging to ordinary and secret speech can be characterized as a structure of a single signified aspect (meaning) and two signifiers. On the contrary, enigmatic *brahmodya*s, which have several different modes of interpretation, are structures combining one utterance (signifier) with several signified aspects.

29 Houben, "The Ritual Pragmatics of a Vedic Hymn," 504–507.

30 Houben, "Ritual Pragmatics," 516–518. The use of the epithet "ravenous" (*áśna*) with respect to lightning remains problematic. Houben suggests a connection with the fierce and voracious character of Indra, "the god of thunder."

31 Houben, "Ritual Pragmatics," 520–522.

32 Cf. Michael Witzel, *On Magical Thought in the Veda (Inaugural Address, Leiden University)* (Leiden: Universitaire Pers Leiden, 1979), 8, 18.

Brahmodya can be considered an early stage in the development of a tradition of public communication. Derived from the agonistic poetic contests, it took shape in the ritualized exchange of riddle-type questions and answers, as well as in enigmatic passages in which the questions are always implicit. However, even the latter type of *brahmodya*s was intended to transmit some information, and as such can be considered a kind of communicative practice. Some *brahmodya*s may very likely be interpreted in the context of ritual pragmatics, and some may refer to cosmological doctrines or the secret knowledge of the self. This understanding of the form and function of *brahmodya*s does not align with Thompson's argument, namely that enigmatic *brahmodya*s were motivated by "poetic, rather than hermeneutic, intent."[33] Indeed, it can be assumed that Vedic *ṛṣis*, like Vedic gods, "were fond of the hidden and disliked the obvious,"[34] but it is also plausible that they really wanted to convey information that for some reason was not to be expressed in an unambiguous manner. The form of the *brahmodya* challenged the audience, yet this challenge did not imply agonistic confrontation, but rather something like a shift of paradigm.

*Brahmodya*s of the enigmatic type are also distinctive in that they do not presuppose that there must be a single point of view. The admission of the diversity of interpretation, each being justified in a certain context, can originate from the functional attitude of Vedic ritualism. In any case, *brahmodya*s can be considered as an early example of nonagonistic – or not entirely agonistic – communication practices in ancient Indian texts.

3 Intellectual Confrontation in the Early Upaniṣads

3.1 *Brahmodya*s in the Upaniṣads

The early Upaniṣads are considered a part of the Vedic canon, and these texts share common features with some earlier Vedic texts, particularly the Brāhmaṇas. These shared features are clearly evident in the old prose Upaniṣads, containing extensive intellectual debates – the Bṛhadāraṇyaka (BAU) and Chāndogya (ChU) Upaniṣads. In this section I will not focus on the philosophical, ritual, or religious ideas expressed in the dialogues of the early Upaniṣads; instead, I will consider

33 Thompson, "The Brahmodya and Vedic Discourse," 22.
34 Cf. fn. 13.

these dialogues as cases of intellectual confrontation, analyzing the rules and shared presuppositions on which the communication of the different parties is based. My analysis emphasizes the parallels between the dialogues of the Upaniṣads and the earlier Vedic *brahmodya*s. In addition, I will outline the features of their subsequent evolution: from formal, fixed *brahmodya*s to looser agonistic debates, and from exchanges between anonymous interlocutors to personified teacher-pupil relations.

The classic riddle type of *brahmodya* is not at all alien to the Upaniṣads. BAU II.2 contains an example of an explicit *brahmodya*:

> There is a cup turned upside down;
> its mouth at the bottom,
> its bottom on top.
> In it is placed dazzling splendor;
> On its rim the seven seers sit,
> as also an eighth –
> speech joined to brahman.[35]

Immediately after this verse comes the explanation: the bowl is the head, the seven *ṛṣi*s are the *prāṇa*s, etc. Still, *brahmodya*s of this kind are not very common at this stage. The typical *brahmodya*s of the Upaniṣads differ significantly from the enigmatic and riddle-type *brahmodya*s of the Vedas and Brāhmaṇas. These are vivid dialogues on ritual and philosophical matters held by participants, each possessing a name and an implicit or explicit personal history. The dialogues are of an agonistic nature and as such are closer to ancient Indo-European verbal contests than to the fixed *brahmodya*s of Brāhmaṇic ritual. At the same time, it would be too straightforward to consider the Upaniṣadic *brahmodya*s to be the immediate predecessors of the classical philosophical *vāda*. The agonistic and nonagonistic features of these disputes in the Upaniṣads demand closer consideration.

The dialogues of the early prose Upaniṣads can be generally divided into two types: debates and instructions. The agonistic nature of the debates is evident from the very exposition of the circumstances in which they take place. For example, as we learn at the outset of the dispute between Yājñavalkya and other priests (BAU III.1):

> Janaka, the king of Videha, once set out to perform a sacrifice at which he intended to give lavish gifts to the officiating priests. Brahmins from the Kuru and Pañcāla regions had flocked there for the occasion, and Janaka of Videha wanted to find out which of those Brahmins was the most learned in the Vedas.

35 Translated in Patrick Olivelle, *The Early Upanishads: Annotated Text and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 65.

> So he corralled a thousand cows; to the horns of each cow were tied ten pieces of gold.
>
> He then addressed those Brahmins: "Distinguished Brahmins! Let the most learned man among you drive away these cows." But those Brahmins did not dare.
>
> So Yājñavalkya called to his pupil: "Sāmaśravas! Son, drive these cows away." And he drove them away. The Brahmins were furious and murmured: "How dare he claim to be the most learned?"[36]

In what follows, the adversaries ask Yājñavalkya various challenging questions; he gives answers, poses questions to each of his opponents in turn, and eventually claims victory.

Generally, the participants of Upaniṣadic *brahmodya*s – wise men (and also women), *brahmin*s, and *kṣatriya*s – engage in verbal contests in order to prove the superiority of their own knowledge and (in the case of the *brahmin*s) to receive cows, gold, and other wealth as a prize for the winner. As a rule, the loser becomes the pupil of the winner, and in some cases, he is also threatened with losing his head. No wonder, as initially, *brahmodya* was a part of a ritual in which a single mistake in performance – even an incorrect accent in a word of a *mantra* – could have devastating consequences for the priest as well as for the sacrificer.[37] A formal way of acknowledging defeat was to fall silent.

3.2 The Structure of Upaniṣadic *Brahmodya*s

At the same time, the agonistic tendencies in Upaniṣadic debates should not be overestimated. Agonistic disputes between *brahmin*s and other wise people might have been practiced in India in the middle of the first millenium BCE. Still, the question may arise whether the early prose Upaniṣads depict this practice literally. This is not a question of whether "the Upanishadic *brahmodya*s record real events,"[38] but rather, of whether we may identify the practices described in the texts with the actual practices of the debates that took place in India at that time. Obviously, both have much in common, with the literary descriptions following actual practice in a certain way. However, we should not forget that the Upaniṣads were composed and edited over a long duration and, as a result, were texts of deliberate composition.

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36 Translated in Olivelle, *The Early Upanishads*, 75.

37 Cf. the well-known story from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (I.6.3.8, 10) about Tvaṣṭṛ mispronouncing the accent in a word of a *mantra*.

38 Brian Black, *The Character of the Self in Ancient India: Priests, Kings, and Women in the Early Upanishads* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 60.

This is especially true in the case of the BAU. Brereton has argued against the widespread view that this Upaniṣad is "a loosely structured collection of assertions, observations and aphorisms about the nature of things" that can be interpreted as "gathering together the diffuse passages in which certain terms or themes occur and then constructing out of them a synthesis or even a system."[39] He has suggested interpreting the passage in BAU III as a highly structured textual unit, since its formal composition recalls the ring composition of a typical Vedic sacrifice in which the end recapitulates the beginning. In BAU III, this recapitulation is accomplished by means of a frame story. Moreover, Brereton demonstrates that there are many cases of double narrative episodes (two *gandharva* dialogues, two conversations with Gārgī) and of thematic double repetitions (questions concerning one's fate after death, the principles that underlie the worlds, the nature of Brahman).[40] This interpretation was supported by Hock, who suggested that the passage in BAU III can be viewed as part of the larger ring composition of BAU II.1–4.5.[41]

Along with the general structure of the passages, it seems reasonable to focus on the form and content of certain dialogues. Although according to the frame story, these dialogues occur within an agonistic debate, they appear to be scripted rather than spontaneous. For example, BAU II.1 recalls a dispute between the *brahmin* Dṛpta-Bālāki Gārgya and the king Ajātaśatru. Dṛpta-Bālāki articulates twelve propositions for the location of the *puruṣa* that he venerates[42] as *Brahman*: sun, moon, lightning, space, wind, fire, waters, mirror, sound drifting behind the moving one (echo), directions, shadow, and the Self (*Ātman*). Ajātaśatru refutes every proposition, in each case providing a different description for each location: he venerates the sun as preeminent, the head and the king; the moon as the great king Soma in a white dress, etc. Eventually, Dṛpta-Bālāki falls silent, recognizing his defeat, and asks permission to become Ajātaśatru's pupil. After, Ajātaśatru reveals the secret teaching of *prāṇa* as the true basis of the *puruṣa*, which consists of cognition (*vijñānamaya*) and as such is the basis of all cognitive functions.

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39 Joel P. Brereton, "'Why Is a Sleeping Dog Like the Vedic Sacrifice?': The Structure of an Upaniṣadic Brahmodya," in *Inside the Texts, Beyond the Texts: New Approaches to the Study of the Vedas*, ed. Michael Witzel (Cambridge: Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University, 1997), 3.

40 Brereton, "Sleeping Dog," 3.

41 Hans Henrich Hock, "The Yājñavalkya Cycle in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122, no. 2 (2002): 278–286.

42 On the semantics of the verb *upās* (worship as a contemplation practice), cf. Vsevolod Sementsov, *Problemy interpretatsii brahmanicheskoy prozy* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), 12.

One can hardly consider the twelve options formulated by Dṛpta-Bālāki as spontaneous arguments in an agonistic dispute. His statements are uniform and monotonous, and the same can be said of Ajātaśatru's objections. None of the disputants rationally justifies his views, but only proposes different descriptions. At the same time, Dṛpta-Bālāki's arguments as a whole provide quite a comprehensive list of important natural phenomena. He enumerates the three sources of light (sun, moon, lightning), five primary elements (space, wind, fire, waters, direction), and some other natural phenomena (echo, reflection, shadow) that may seem enigmatic. It can be assumed that this list is not arbitrary. On the contrary, it can be viewed as a deliberate enumeration of possible views on the nature of *puruṣa* and/or of the constituent parts of the world. Indeed, Dṛpta-Bālāki's statements do not represent an elaborate nature-philosophical system, but they do catalogue relevant elements of the universe.

The same may be true for certain other sets of statements or questions. In BAU III.6, Gārgī Vācaknavī questions Yājñavalkya's understanding of the basis on which the world is "woven." Each answer he provides prompts a further question from her. From Yājñavalkya's answers, we learn that the world is woven on waters; the waters in turn on wind/air; wind/ air on the worlds of the intermediate space; the worlds of the intermediate space on the worlds of *gandharva*s, etc. With respect to this dialogue, Brereton notes, "These worlds through which the dialogue progresses mark the path to heaven, as the description of the way to heaven in *Kauśītaki Upaniṣad* shows."[43]

Moreover, in ChU V.11–17, the king Aśvapati instructs the householders, asking them one by one what they venerate as the Self (*Ātman*). They give various answers (sky, sun, wind, space, waters, and earth), and each time Aśvapati objects that it is not *Ātman*, but only one of its aspects (eye, breath, body, bladder, and feet). Again, this dialogue is not a sequence of arbitrary standpoints. On the contrary, it presents a systematic description of the universe on both the macro- and microcosmic levels.

Each set of questions of this type is generally focused on a single theme, with the traditional distinction between the *adhyātma*, *adhiyajña*, and *adhidaiva* levels being observed. For example, in BAU III.1, the *brahmin*s question Yājñavalkya about sacrificial issues (*adhiyajña*); BAU III.2 addresses cognitive functions (*graha*s and *atigraha*s),[44] an *adhyātma* topic (the same is true of BAU IV.1); and BAU III.9 concerns *adhidaiva*.

43 Brereton, "Sleeping Dog," 11.

44 On *graha*s and *atigraha*s, cf. Brereton, "'Why Is a Sleeping Dog Like the Vedic Sacrifice?'" 7.

The Upaniṣadic dialogues cannot be considered merely a depiction of an exchange of arguments in an agonistic dispute. Given the deliberate structure of the dialogues of the Upaniṣads, it can be supposed that dialogue is just a textual form intentionally adopted as a means of narration. The structure of the dialogue provides a comprehensive description of a certain topic, with each statement corresponding to a certain aspect of the object described. The adoption of this genre reflects the tendency of Brahmanic discourse to consider each problem from different perspectives, polyphonically combining different views in the frame of a single doctrine.

3.3 Means of Justification: Rational vs. Intuitive

Characteristically, the Upaniṣadic disputes illustrate no process of rational justification. The pattern of the classical *brahmodya* implies that for each question, there must exist only one right answer. In accordance with this, in every Upaniṣadic dialogue, there is a single participant who knows the right answers (Ajātaśatru in BAU II.1, Yājñavalkya in BAU III, Aśvapati in ChU V.11–17).[45] This participant articulates his answers either through being questioned or objecting to someone else's statements. The latter type of discourse (BAU II.1 and ChU V. 11–17) can be considered the most agonistic; still, even there, the speaker generally does not justify his view and merely states it, somehow persuading the opponent.[46] In the rare cases of rational inquiry, the speaker supports his views by means of analogy, as Yājñavalkya did in his well-known comparison of consciousness with a lump of salt (BAU II.4; IV.5).[47]

The Upaniṣadic dialogues concern secret knowledge that cannot be justified through logical argument. It is the knowledge to which one appeals in the

45 In the Brāhmaṇas, however, participants usually exchange roles in asking questions and giving proper answers, which corresponds to the archaic dualistic/cyclic pattern of exchanging roles in an agonistic contest; see Yaroslav Vasilkov, "Did East and West Really Meet in Milinda's Questions?" *Petersburg Journal of Cultural Studies* 1 (1993): 66.

46 Cf. Black, *The Character of the Self in Ancient India*, 79: "Yājñavalkya, for example, does not necessarily win because of his wisdom, but because he knows the rules of the game, and how to break them. He knows how to convince people through his timing, humor, cryptic remarks, and as we shall see, intimidation and threats."

47 On the meaning of the comparison, cf. Walter Slaje, "Water and Salt (I): Yājñavalkya's Saindhava Dṛṣṭānta (BĀU II 4, 12)," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 44 (2001): 25–57.

course of *satyakriyā*[48] or in Brāhmaṇic *brahmodya*s that does not imply an explicit answer;[49] the secret knowledge repeatedly referred to in the Brāhmaṇas by the formula *ya evaṃ veda* ("he [who] knows this").[50] This knowledge may somehow change the appearance of the person: after gaining such knowledge, both Satyakāma and Upakosala started shining "as the one who knows Brahman" (ChU IV.10, 14). But if someone's claim to possessing this kind of knowledge is ill-founded, the consequences will be devastating: his head will shatter in pieces as happened to Śākalya, who was unable to answer Yājñavalkya's question.[51] Notably, even Yājñavalkya is threatened that his head will shatter in pieces when he insists that he knows the answer without explicitly saying it (BAU III.7). But again, this refers to providing the answer, not to justifying it.

At the same time, it is not unusual that a question should not be answered aloud or explicitly. In BAU III.2, Yājñavalkya refuses to answer the most secret question in public, and the only thing we know from the text is that he taught about action (*karma*).[52] In other cases, the explication of the knowledge itself can be problematic, because it is evidently not the knowledge of linguistic formulas, but some intuitive nondiscursive information that the speaker wishes to express. This is true in the case of Yājñavalkya's teaching of the Self (*Ātman*) as something that cannot be categorized. Yājñavalkya's intention is to make his interlocutors experience their own Self in a nondiscursive way. For this reason, he does not talk about the Self in general, but tries to "show" the opponent his own Self ("your *Ātman*"). He insists that the Self is the basis of all cognitive processes and blames Śākalya for believing that Ātman is somewhere else, but not in him (BAU III.9.25).

48 Acts of uttering truth, in which the truthfulness of the speech acts allows the speaker to attain supernatural results. For details, cf. Thompson, "The Brahmodya and Vedic Discourse," 19.

49 Cf. section 1.2.

50 Sementsov, *Problemy interpretatsii brahmanicheskoy prozy*, 27–46.

51 On the phenomenon of the head splitting apart, cf. Black, *The Character of the Self in Ancient India*, 65, 80, 185.

52 Black interprets Yājñavalkya's refusal to speak in public as "a rather unusual method to silence his opponent," and supposes that Yājñavalkya's opponent had caught him in a contradiction (Black, *Character of the Self*, 76–77). Similarly, referring to conversations with *gandharva*s, Black suggests that the actual participants in the talk were females, but the male interlocutors totally denied their agency and attributed their words to *gandharva*s (Black, *Character of the Self*, 171) A modern reader could indeed discredit the existence of secret knowledge and *gandharva*s, but there is no doubt that the authors of ancient texts could have held another opinion. A positive attitude towards the supernatural phenomena described in the Upaniṣads is justified if we consider these texts a depiction of historical events. However, in a study of the worldview of the people of premodern India, positive criticism may appear redundant.

This kind of argument may have been unusual for the prevalent scholastic discourse at that time. For example, Uṣasta Cākrāyaṇa protests against the ostensive definitions (i.e. defining by pointing out examples) of Brahman and Ātman, which, he claims, are similar to pointing and uttering, "This is the cow and that is the horse."[53] Yājñavalkya objects that it is impossible to objectify and define something that is the basis of all cognitive processes. It is impossible to see the seer who sees, to hear the hearer who hears, to think of the thinker who thinks, to cognize the cognizer who cognizes (BAU III.4).[54]

Thus, verbal agonism in Upaniṣadic disputes was not a competition in logical debate. Such disputes were rather based on secret intuitive knowledge, which was the main criterion for the validity of verbal utterances. Participants in these disputes could only demonstrate in some nondiscursive manner that they possess this knowledge and win – or lose (and even lose their heads) if their claims were invalid.

3.4 From Agonistic Dialogues to Teacher-Pupil Discourse

In the dialogues of the early prose Upaniṣads, two general types can be distinguished: agonistic disputes between *brahmin*s, or *brahmin*s and *kṣatriya*s, and the instruction of a pupil by a teacher. Teacher-pupil relations were indeed important in the discourse of the Upaniṣads. Generally, in BAU, the majority of the dialogues are of the agonistic type, whereas in ChU, instruction prevails. However, in some cases, agonistic disputes end up as instruction, as the participant who loses a dispute becomes the pupil of the winner. In BAU II.1 and III.2, after their opponents recognize defeat, Ajātaśatru and Yājñavalkya take their hands. This gesture is usually associated with *upanayana*, meaning that they initiate their opponents as pupils.[55] Only after that do they instruct their former rivals in secret teachings (in the case of Yājñavalkya, this teaching is not to be explicated in public). Similarly, in BAU VI.2, Gautama asks Jaivali Pravāhaṇa to answer the questions that Jaivali had previously posed to Gautama's son, but Jaivali refuses to teach him unless Gautama declares himself his pupil.[56]

53 asau gaur-asāv-aśva iti.

54 na dṛṣṭer-draṣṭāraṃ paśyeḥ. na śruteḥ ṣrotāraṃ śṛṇuyāḥ. na mater-mantāraṃ manvīthāḥ. na vijñāter-vijñātāraṃ vijānīyāḥ.

55 Black, *The Character of the Self in Ancient India*, 77.

56 Similarly, in the *Milindapañha* (a work far removed from Vedic tradition), the king Milinda, after his defeat in the contest, moves to a deserted place together with Nāgasena, which might

Secret knowledge can be requested as a boon by a pupil (BAU IV.3). Alternatively, one may offer gifts to a teacher in order to become his pupil, as in the case of Jānaśruti, who offered Raikva hundreds of cows, gold, a vehicle, and, last but not least, his own daughter as a wife (ChU IV.2). But becoming a pupil does not guarantee receiving instruction. Prajāpati tried to deceive his pupils with false teachings (ChU VIII.7–12). Satyakāma Jābāla spent several years looking after his teacher's cows, and only once they numbered one thousand was he instructed: at first, by animals and fire, and only after that, by the teacher (ChU IV.4–9). Satyakāma, in turn, did not instruct his pupil Upakosala, who spent twelve years after *upanayana* keeping the sacrificial fires burning; only after Upakosala abstained from eating did he receive instruction from the fires (ChU IV.10–14). Both stories probably refer to a kind of trial that a pupil must pass through, becoming fit to receive knowledge. It was fitness of a supernatural kind that enabled them to receive instruction from natural phenomena.

Notably, in the Upaniṣads, instruction is usually received when a pupil is in some kind of stress.[57] Examples of such distressed parties are unsuccessful disputants whose views have been refuted; Maitreyī, whose husband is going to leave her (BAU II.4; IV.5); Śvetaketu, who is unable to answer his father's question after twelve years of study (ChU VI.1); and Naciketas, cursed by his own father and facing Yama, the god of death (Kaṭha Upaniṣad). It can be assumed that irrational nondiscursive knowledge of the Upaniṣads is to be comprehended by someone who suddenly becomes confused: whose former convictions and beliefs turn out to be invalid. In the narrative logic of the text, the agonistic dispute becomes just a preliminary episode that precedes instruction. The outcome of a real dispute is indeed unpredictable. But it is a written cliché in the Upaniṣads and some other texts that a potential pupil engages in a dispute with his future teacher and loses, giving the author of the text the opportunity to transmit his teaching.[58]

In summary, the *brahmodya* dialogues of the Upaniṣads are very diverse, as they represent different kinds of social interactions: from agonistic disputes to instructional tutorials. The participants of the dialogues possess names and personal history, and (contrary to the Brāhmaṇic tradition of the ritualized, cyclic exchange of questions) their contests end in victory or defeat. The validity of the statements

imply the practice of receiving instruction from the teacher. On the parallels between the structure of the archaic *brahmodya* and disputes in the *Milindapañha*, cf. Vasilkov 1993.

57 I thank Dr. Paribok for this observation.

58 This narrative device is quite common in Pali *sutta*s. In the *Payasi-sutta*, at the end of the dispute, Payasi admits that he was convinced by the very first parable of Kassapa, but continued to object, as he wanted to hear more of Kassapa's answers.

in Upaniṣadic contests is usually justified not by means of rational argument, but through the charisma of the participant and his association with nondiscursive knowledge. At the same time, the agonistic features of *brahmodya*s in the early prose Upaniṣads should not be overestimated, as these texts are distinguished by their deliberate composition, in the frames of which verbal contests can be considered a narrative device, adopted by anonymous authors in order to express certain views and teachings.

4 Nonagonistic Discussions in the *Mahābhāṣya*

4.1 Dialogues in the *Mahābhāṣya*

Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* (2nd century BCE) is a work that occupies an intermediate spot between Vedic texts and Śāstric philosophical discourse. The Indian grammatical tradition (*vyākaraṇa*) that this text belongs to was initially an auxiliary Vedic discipline (*vedāṅga*), intended to ensure correct linguistic usage in the course of ritual. Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (fifth to sixth century BCE), the fundamental text of this tradition, went far beyond this practical purpose by providing a comprehensive description of Sanskrit based on an elaborate technique of linguistic analysis. The *Mahābhāṣya* (*MBh*), the foundational commentary on the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, is generally concerned with linguistic problems. Still, it reveals certain affinities with Vedic ritualism as well as with later philosophical discourse.[59] In this section, I will analyze the dialogues in the introductory chapter of the *MBh* (the "Paspaśā"), aiming to reveal structural similarities with Brāhmaṇic *brahmodya*s and Upaniṣadic disputes.

The *MBh* is composed as a dialogue that echoes the discussion between a teacher and his pupils. Later on, this narrative form becomes typical of the commentary genre. The participants in a dialogue are generally anonymous, but their competence varies from that of a beginner to a more experienced speaker, and, finally, of an expert (Patañjali?), whose words are marked with *ity-āha* ("he said"). Discussing different grammatical and philosophical problems, speakers apply processes of rational inquiry or support their statements

59 The relation of the *MBh* with Vedic ritualism is evident in the discussion of the aims of grammar in the introductory chapter (the "Paspaśā"). Evidence of *śāstric* discourse in the *MBh* has recently been discussed in Émilie Aussant, "Vyākaraṇic Texts and Śāstric Discourse," *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 49, no. 4 (2015): 551–566.

by relying on authoritative opinion (quotations from the Vedas, opinions of the grammarians of the past). The dialogues are quite vivid. Speakers question why should one study grammar rather than learning words and phrases of ordinary language by heart. They also cite verses of uncertain origin and suspicious content.[60] In this section, I will analyze the structure of the conversations in the two passages of *MBh*: the definition of the word, and the discussion of Kātyāyana's *vārttika: siddhe śabdārthasaṃbandhe* ("word, referent, and relation [between them] being permanent [. . .]").[61] My intention here is to demonstrate that the discursive structure of these passages generally follows a pattern similar to that found in the Vedic and Upaniṣadic texts discussed in the previous sections. The use of the dialogue form is adopted here not as a literary depiction of an actual act of communication, but rather as a means to illustrate different perspectives on a problem.

4.2 Definition of the Word in the "Paspaśā"

The *MBh* begins with the claim that this text contains instruction concerning words. After that, the expected question arises: what is a word?

> "Now [I pronounce the word] 'cow'; what is the word [here]?[62] Is the word that which possesses a form endowed with dewlap, tail, hump, hooves, and horns?"
> "No," he said,[63] "That is called material (*dravya*)."[64]
> "Then, is the word that moving, stirring, twinkling?"
> "No," he said, "That is called action (*kriyā*)."
> "Then, is the word that white, dark, black, red, or gray?"
> "No," he said, "That is called quality (*guṇa*)."
> "Then, is the word that [which is] nondifferent in the differentiated, nondestroyable in destroyable, something general?"
> "No," he said, "That is called universal shape (*ākṛti*)."
> "What is the word, then?"

60 As in the case of the *pramattagīta*; see Franz Kielhorn, ed., *The Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali*, vol. 1 (Bombay: Government Central Book Depot, 1880), 3.

61 This is a provisional translation. In section 3.3, the translation of the *vārttika* will be discussed in more detail.

62 This way of reasoning is indeed similar to Yājñavalkya's ostensive definition of Ātman in BAU III.4.

63 The words "*ity-āha*" mark the most authoritative opinion, probably that of Patañjali.

64 The meaning of the term *dravya* in different contexts varies from individual thing to the material of which the thing is made (substance). Later, as we will see, Patañjali intentionally plays with these meanings.

> "The word is that from which, being uttered, the image of the object possessing a dewlap, tail, hump, hooves, and horns arises in mind. Or the word is the sound whose meaning is well-known among people."[65]

The definition of a word, as introduced in this passage, seems quite comprehensive, but the full dialogue leaves readers a bit confused. It is hard to assume that someone would really suppose a word to be identical with the material object it describes, or with certain actions, qualities, or a general/universal form. For the same reason, it is also unlikely that these assumptions express the views of some other school of grammar. Thus, most probably, these assumptions do not depict an actual conversation of the agonistic type or a dialogue between a teacher and his pupils.

At the same time, the parallels between the concepts mentioned in this dialogue and the four *padārthas* of *Vaiśeṣika* – *dravya*, *guṇa*, *karma*, and *sāmānya* – are quite obvious.[66] In sum, the four concepts used in the dialogue provide a framework for the description of the nonlinguistic reality the words refer to, as in order to define the word, one should also define or describe its possible referents. Thus it seems plausible that the dialogue in this passage of the *MBh* is a narrative device by means of which this important information is conveyed. The same narrative device was applied in the Upaniṣadic dialogues (cf. section 2.2) for the sake of exhaustiveness of description. There is no point in supposing direct affinities between early prose Upaniṣads and the *MBh*. This is likely an indication that the

65

- atra gaur-ity-atra kaḥ śabdaḥ? kiṃ yat-tat-sāsnā-lāṅgūla-kakuda-khura-viṣāṇi-artha-rūpaṃ sa śabdaḥ?
- nety-āha. dravyaṃ nāma tat.
- yat-tarhi tad-iṅgitaṃ ceṣṭitaṃ nimiṣitaṃ sa śabdaḥ?
- nety-āha. kriyā nāma sā.
- yat-tarhi tac-chuklo nīlaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ kapilaḥ kapota iti sa śabdaḥ?
- nety-āha. guṇo nāma saḥ.
- yat-tarhi bhinneṣv-abhinnaṃ chinneṣv-achinnaṃ sāmānyabhūtaṃ sa śabdaḥ?
- nety-āha. ākṛtir-nāma sā.
- kas-tarhi śabdaḥ?
- yenoccaritena sāsnā-lāṅgūla-kakuda-khura-viṣāṇināṃ saṃpratyayo bhavati sa śabdaḥ. athavā pratīta-padārthako loke dhvaniḥ śabda ity-ucyate (Kielhorn, *The Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali*, 1).

66 The *MBh* probably predates the *Vaiśeṣikasūtras*, though Patañjali might have been acquainted with the proponents of some proto-Vaiśeṣika school (such as the "knowers of substances, qualities, and motions" (*dravyaguṇakarmajña*) referred to in the *Mahābhārata*); see Wilhelm Halbfass, *On Being and What There Is: Classical Vaiśeṣika and the History of Indian Ontology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 75. In any case, this classification of categories is to a certain extent linguistically stipulated.

use of a dialogue not as a depiction of an agonistic dispute, but as a narrative device intended to create a comprehensive worldview, was utilized in premodern Indian literary tradition.

4.3 *Discussion of Kātyāyana's* vārttika "siddhe śabdārthasaṃbandhe"

Kātyāyana's *vārttika*s are supplementary to Pāṇini's *sūtra*s. The *vārttikas* were composed ca. third century BCE and exist only in the body of Patañjali's commentary. In this section, I will focus on Patañjali's commentary on the *vārttika* "*siddhe śabdārthasaṃbandhe*." This *vārttika* is preceded in the "Paspaśā" by the discussion of two questions:

(1) Is the referent of the word a *dravya* (material thing) or *ākṛti* (generic/universal form)?
(2) Is the word permanent (*nitya*) or to be produced [from the morphemes by means of grammatical procedures]) (*kārya*)?

Patañjali proposes nonphilosophical ("grammatical") answers for both questions. For the first question, he admits both possibilities, as each can be supported by Pāṇini's *sūtra*s. Regarding the second question, Patañjali relies on Vyāḍī's *Saṃgraha*,[67] where this problem has been examined with the final conclusion that, irrespective of how one may answer this question, grammatical rules should be elaborated.[68]

After that, the first part of the *vārttika* is introduced: "*siddhe śabdārthasaṃbandhe* [. . .]"[69] I will discuss the exact translation and interpretation of the *vārttika* in detail below, but it can be generally rendered as follows: "The word, referent,[70] and relation [between them] being permanent [. . .]"

67 An extensive grammatical work that predates Patañjali. It was lost in the period between Patañjali and Bhartṛhari.

68 Kielhorn, *The Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali*, 6.

69 The following parts are discussed later in the "Paspaśā." The complete *vārttika* is: *siddhe śabdārthasaṃbandhe lokato 'rthaprayukte śabdaprayoge śāstreṇa dharmaniyamaḥ yathā laukikavaidikeṣu.*

70 "Referent" seems to be the most neutral equivalent for Sanskrit *artha*. This term, in different contexts, means "thing," "object," "meaning," "aim," etc. In later linguistic philosophy, the meaning of *artha* may vary between "meaning," "thing meant," and "(external) thing"; cf. Jan E. M. Houben, *The Saṃbandha-samuddeśa. Chapter on Relation and Bhartṛhari's Philosophy of Language* (Groningen: Gonda Indological Studies, 1995), 35. Patañjali, as we will see, also

In the extensive subsequent commentary, Patañjali proposes different ways in which the compound in the *vārttika* can be analyzed and discusses their philosophical implications. The passage is composed in the form of a dialogue, but it remains uncertain whether different modes of interpretation, generally introduced with the words *athavā* "or," belong to different speakers or if they are articulated by the author of the text. In any case, this passage is of a polyphonic nature, as it comprises a number of mutually exclusive views without giving priority to any one of them.

The different opinions expressed in the passage under consideration are distinguished on the basis of the two criteria:

(a) The way in which the compound *śabdārthasaṃbandhe* is analyzed: either as *śabde 'rthe saṃbandhe ca* "the word, referent, and relation [between them]" or as *śabde 'rthasaṃbandhe*, "the word and its relation with the referent";
(b) The general view of the referent (whether it is *dravya* or *ākṛti*) and the way in which the concepts of *dravya* and *akṛti* are interpreted: as permanent entities (with the word *siddha* meaning "permanent") or as produced entities (with the word *siddha* meaning "accomplished").

In sum, the number of opinions discussed may be said to be five:

(1) The *vārttika* is analyzed as *siddhe śabde 'rthe saṃbandhe ca* "the word, referent, and relation [between them] being permanent." The referent is believed to be *ākṛti*, not *dravya*, since the word *siddha* is understood here as a synonym of *nitya* "permanent," and it is the universal (*ākṛti*) that is permanent, not the individual material object (*dravya*).[71]
(2) The *vārttika* is analyzed as *siddhe śabde 'rthasaṃbandhe ca* "the word and its relation with the referent being permanent." This reading does not imply that the referent per se is permanent, so in this case, the referent can be an impermanent *dravya* (individual material object).[72]
(3) The *vārttika* is analyzed as *siddhe śabde 'rthe saṃbandhe ca* "the word, referent, and relation [between them] being permanent." The referent is again

admitted different interpretations of *artha*, but in the context of the *vārttika*, it can be generally rendered as "referent," i.e. something to which a linguistic unit refers.

71 atha kaṃ punar padārthaṃ matvaiṣa vigrahaḥ kriyate siddhe śabde 'rthe saṃbandhe ceti? ākṛtim-ity-āha.
kuta etat?
ākṛtir-tarhi nityā dravyam-anityam (Kielhorn, *The Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali*, 7).

72 atha dravye padārthe kathaṃ vigrahaḥ kartavyaḥ?
siddhe śabde 'rthasaṃbandhe ceti. nityo hy-arthavatām-arthair-abhisaṃbandhaḥ (Kielhorn, *Patañjali*, 7).

dravya. But it is suggested that *dravya* is considered the permanent substance here. In this case, *dravya* is opposed to *ākṛti* as the impermanent form this substance temporarily acquires.[73]

(4) The *vārttikā* is analyzed as *siddhe śabde 'rthe saṃbandhe ca* "the word, referent, and relation [between them] being permanent." The referent is again *ākṛti*. *Ākṛti* here is understood as the form, previously considered to be impermanent. Now it is claimed that even the form can be considered permanent, since having ceased to exist in one place, it still exists somewhere else in some other material substrate (*dravya*).[74]

(5) The *vārttika* is analyzed as *siddhe śabde 'rthe saṃbandhe ca* "the word, referent, and relation [between them] being permanent." It is not important what the referent is: it is enough to underline that it is permanent.[75]

Different attitudes are enumerated in this passage in order to demonstrate that different views on the nature of the referent of the word can be supported by alternative readings of the *vārttika*. The problem of whether words refer to universals or to individual objects has been discussed by grammarians before Patañjali. In this passage, he evidently plays with different meanings of the terms *dravya* and *akṛti*, aiming to demonstrate that each interpretation can be justified. The fifth item on the list is probably intended to support the notion of grammar as the universal discipline, compatible with different philosophical doctrines. The same message is expressed in the prior discussion of whether the word is permanent, or to be produced.[76] Elsewhere, Patañjali claims that grammar embraces all other traditions: *sarvavedapāriṣadaṃ hīdaṃ śāstram*.[77]

It should be mentioned that Patañjali does not specify which view is the most convincing to him. It is probably his intention to discuss and justify mutually exclusive views in order to represent the full range of opinions. Different views may complement each other, highlighting different aspects of reality.

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73 athavā dravya eva padārtha eṣa vigrahaḥ nyāyyaḥ siddhe śabde 'rthe saṃbandhe ceti. dravyaṃ hi nityam-ākṛtir-anityā (Kielhorn, *Patañjali*,7).

74 ākṛtav-api padārtha eṣa vigraho nyāyyaḥ siddhe śabde 'rthe sambandhe ceti.
nanu coktam-ākṛtir-anityeti.
naitad-asti. nityākṛtiḥ.
katham?
na kvacid-uparateti kṛtvā sarvatroparatā bhavati dravyāntarasthā tūpalabhyate (Kielhorn, *Patañjali*, 7).

75 athavā kiṃ na etenedaṃ nityam-idam-anityam-idam-iti. yan-nityaṃ taṃ padārthaṃ matvaiṣa vigrahaḥ kriyate siddhe śabde 'rthe saṃbandhe ceti (Kielhorn, *Patañjali*, 7).

76 Kielhorn, *Patañjali*, 6.

77 Kielhorn, *Patañjali*, 400.

Similar trends were noticed in Brāḥmaṇic texts with their distinction of different levels of description (*adhyātma*, *adhiyajña*, *adhidaiva*), each being valid in a certain context. Later on, a similar approach became the distinctive feature of Bhartṛhari's perspectivism.

Despite the general expectation that a commentary text must contain dialogues of an agonistic type, with the *pūrvapakṣa* refuted and *uttarapakṣa* established, in these two passages from the "Paspaśā," dialogues appear as discursive devices. The dialogue form is employed for the sake of comprehensiveness because the utterances of different speakers complement each other, in sum creating a multidimensional outlook.

5 Conclusion

Indian traditions of dialogue on ritualistic, philosophical, and scholastic topics originated in the agonistic verbal contests of the Vedic poets and reached their pinnacle in the agonistic classical *vāda*. Textual evidence from the period in between presents a vast variety of dialogues that were not agonistic, ranging from the fixed, ritualized exchange of riddles to dialogue as a narrative device, and from disputes on secret, nondiscursive matters to the instruction of a pupil by a teacher. In many cases, the dialogues in the texts do not represent instances of actual communication; rather, they appear as narrative devices. As a result, the focus of my study has shifted gradually from matters of social interaction to textual practice. The dialogue form enables the authors to examine different viewpoints in order to present a comprehensive perspective of the universe or other issues under consideration. There would be no point in trying to trace the direct continuity between different types of nonagonistic communication, as represented in the Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads, and the *MBh*. But it was the general tendency toward inclusivism and polyphony that stipulated the development of textual practices of a nonagonistic character in premodern Indian culture. These tendencies can and should be traced in the further history of Indian philosophy.

Abbreviations

Ṛgveda	(ṚV)
Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā	(VS)
Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad	(BAU)
Chāndogya Upaniṣad	(ChU)

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Marie-Hélène Gorisse

6 The Legitimation of an Authoritative Discourse in Jainism

Jain theories of authority (*āptatva*) can be productively read as reactions to a fundamental philosophical issue – namely, in the situation of the coexistence of two contradictory discourses, both recognized as authoritative by different traditions, what are the means available to distinguish between them? Some of the solutions posed to address this problem of contradiction include consistency with practice, the consensus of a community, the conformity of the discourse at stake with universal laws such as coherence, or appeal to faith or extramundane knowledge.

This paper analyzes the development of critical strategies employed by Jain thinkers to establish the authority of the Jain corpus by refuting theses promoted by competitors from outside of the community. To trace this development, I focus on the *Āptamīmāṃsā* (*Investigation on Authority*; *ĀMī*), composed by Samantabhadra (530–590). This text provides an illustrative case study for my analysis because it marks a transition from a conception in which the reliability criterion of an authoritative discourse is the authoritative character of the speaker, to a conception in which the validity and soundness of the discourse itself are foremost. The text's authorship is also significant, since Samantabhadra is one of the first Jain authors to attempt to logically prove the omniscience of the Jain teachers, and the first one to link this doctrine to the celebrated Jain theory of "non-one-sidedness" (*anekāntavāda*).

1 Characteristics of Authoritative Discourse in Jainism

1.1 Why Rely on Authoritative Discourse?

Phenomena that escape our ability to know them are either knowable by ordinary cognition yet out of reach due to a given context, or unknowable by ordinary cognition. Representatives of the first category are the fact that I cannot know the color of Henry IV's horse due to temporal remoteness, nor the trajectory of a butterfly situated on another continent due to spatial remoteness. Likewise, establishing the railway timetables lies beyond my current understanding and knowledge of train traffic, because of an accidental lack of competence in this

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matter. Yet if a competent epistemic agent transfers his knowledge to me, it is then possible for me to have correct knowledge concerning these phenomena. Consenting to rely not only on one's own experience, but on the experience of others as well, is vital and we make constant use of this form of knowledge. To accept that we rely on the knowledge of others does not lessen the importance of personal experience, since indirect knowledge must be assimilated through personal experience. In this dynamic, even the Buddhists, who insist on the primacy of self-knowledge, recognize the importance of reliable instruction.

Examples of the second category – namely, phenomena that transcend human cognition in every context – include the nature of the soul, what happens after death, or the conditions that will cause the end of the world. Knowledge of these phenomena is essential, however, because this knowledge conditions our spiritual progress and realization of a proper human life. Furthermore, unlike a verifiable assertation, such as "quinine cures fever," the assertion that "we gain heaven by virtue"[1] cannot be verified. Therefore, if such assertions are uttered by more advanced epistemic agents, relying on those persons would require new methods of legitimation.

The Jain tradition recognizes the necessity of relying on figures of authority to verify assertations that require extraordinary cognition. Examples of this necessity are presented in the seminal works of Umāsvāti, the *Tattvārthasūtra* (*Treatise on What There Is*; henceforth *TS*) and his commentary on the same work, the *Tattvārthasūtrabhāṣya* (*TSBh*), written between 150 CE and 350 CE. In these works, Umāsvāti makes the following claims:

> *TSBh* 1.20.15. But knowledge from testimony (*śrutajñānaṃ*) has the three times as its range and perceives objects that have been produced, that have been destroyed, and that have not [yet] been produced.[2]
>
> *TSBh* 1.20.23. Knowledge from testimony, due to the quality of being conveyed by all-knowing beings and due to the infinity of what is to be known, has a greater range than knowledge by ordinary cognition.[3]
>
> *TSBh* 1.20.26. It is also for the sake of easy understanding, discerning, reasoning, and the operation of consciousness.[4]

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1 These two examples are from Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, vol. 2 (London: Georges Allen & Unwin, 1923), 94.

2 *śrutajñānaṃ tu trikālaviṣayam utpannavinaṣṭānutpannārthagrāhakam*. The author wishes to address her deepest thanks to Lucas Den Boer, who made available to her the draft of his edition and translation of the *TSBh* that will be part of his PhD dissertation. The translations of the *TSBh* used in this article are modifications of Den Boer's translation.

3 *sarvajñapraṇītatvād ānantyāc ca jñeyasya śrutajñānaṃ matijñānān mahāviṣayam*.

4 *sukhagrahaṇavijñānāpohaprayogārthaṃ ca*.

These quotes can be interpreted as showing the usefulness of authoritative discourse in the cases of phenomena that are temporally remote, phenomena that are unknowable by ordinary cognition, and phenomena on which a given epistemic agent is not competent, respectively. More importantly, these examples point to a remarkable attitude on the part of Jain philosophers, who collapse the two discrete categories of phenomena knowable by ordinary cognition and phenomena beyond the reach of ordinary cognition into one overarching category. The rationale for this collapsing of categories is that every aspect of the world is, in principle, knowable by human beings. There is no essential epistemic incompetence, but only a transitory, accidental one. Although metaphysical phenomena may exist that elude comprehension through conventional epistemic competencies and limits, human beings are in principle able to evolve and to attain higher epistemic competencies that would allow them to comprehend all phenomena. The aim of this paper is to investigate the consequences of this Jain stance on the methods of validating an authoritative discourse.

1.2 The Different Types of Authoritative Discourse

The *Tattvārthasūtra* is considered the first work of classical, postcanonical Jainism. Its inaugural characterization of an authoritative discourse exhibits a primarily religious and doctrinal perspective. The author's intent is to legitimize the Jain doctrinal corpus, which describes correct faith and knowledge and prescribes correct behavior; rather than an emphasis on the nature and function of the means to gain new knowledge, as one might expect.

This emphasis on legitimizing doctrine has two main consequences for our investigation. First, the kinds of cognition are "distinguished mainly on the basis of the role they play in religious practice."[5] More specifically, "knowledge by testimony" (*śrutajñānaṃ*), that is to say, knowledge acquired by relying on the report of speakers endowed with authority, is distinguished from ordinary knowledge because it has a deeper soteriological relevance. Indeed, as we have already mentioned, knowledge by testimony is foremost in this dynamic, because phenomena that transcend ordinary human cognition, such as the soul, are those that condition our spiritual progress toward the realization of a proper human life.[6] Second, the type of reliable discourses typically considered in Jain

5 Piotr Balcerowicz, "Siddhasena Mahāmati and Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa: A Revolution in Jaina Epistemology," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 44 (2016): 1000.

6 The soteriological relevance of testimony is important insofar that, as remarked by Balcerowicz (see n. 5), knowledge by testimony *precedes* ordinary knowledge in the classification enumerated

epistemic treatises of this early stage are not discourses on phenomena knowable by ordinary cognition, yet accidentally out of reach; rather, the focus is on phenomena inaccessible by ordinary perception or reasoning. As a result, (i) the text focuses on teachers who have experienced an epistemic transformation that has granted them extraordinary knowledge; (ii) since it is impossible to verify such statements, the validation of authoritative teaching depends upon the faith one has in the authoritative teachers. For the testimony of such teachers to be classified as valid knowledge requires that the status of the *speaker* and not the *content* of the teaching is the condition for validity.

In the following verse from his *Tattvārthasūtra*, Umāsvāti characterizes testimony as follows:

> *TS* 1.20. Testimony (*śruta*) is preceded by ordinary cognition (*mati*). [It consists of] two [varieties], the many [outer limbs], and the twelve [inner limbs].[7]

There are many classifications of the types of cognition in Jainism.[8] In the Agamic period (6th century BCE to ca. 4th century CE), five types are recognized: ordinary cognition (*mati*), testimony (*śruta*), cosmic knowledge (*avadhi*), mental knowledge (*manaḥparyāya*),[9] and absolute knowledge (*kevala*). Then, attempts are made to incorporate Naiyāyika conceptions, especially the distinction between direct and indirect cognition, as well as the classification into perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), analogy (*upamāna*), and authoritative discourse (*śabda*). Umāsvāti, who rejects the influence of Nyāya, but nevertheless has to take their contribution to epistemology into account, succeeded in maintaining the traditional fivefold Jain classification by incorporating perception, inference, and analogy into the Jain concept of "ordinary cognition."[10] As expressed in *TS* 1.20, Umāsvāti's definition of authoritative teaching as preceded

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in canonical texts such as the *Later Chapters*, the *Uttarādhyayanasūtra* (*UttS*), written in the first centuries CE. See *UttS* 28.4 in Herman Jacobi, *Jain Sūtras*, vol.2, Sacred Books of the East 45 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1895), 152: knowledge is fivefold: testimony, ordinary cognition, cosmic knowledge, mental knowledge, and absolute knowledge.

7 *śrutaṃ matipūrvaṃ dvyanekadvādaśabhedam*.

8 This is a specificity of Jainism. While other traditions admit one minimal and clearly defined set of kinds of cognition, Jains admit many types of cognition, and different authors offer different classifications.

9 The traditional translation of "*manaḥparyāya*," a perceptual-like awareness of mental phenomena, is "telepathy" or "mind-reading." Lucas Den Boer suggests translating it as "mental perception." In order to go further in the homogenization of the classification, I will adopt the expression "mental knowledge."

10 This is fully developed in Indra Chandra Shastri, *Jaina Epistemology*, Parshwanath Vidyapeeth Research Series 50 (Varanasi: Parshwanath Vidyapeeth Research Institute, 1990), 196–213. On the

by ordinary cognition means that acquiring knowledge through the instruction of a reliable person involves first the hearing of a discourse or the perceiving of a text. The knowledge content transmitted by the reliable speaker can in principle come from any type of cognition, that is to say not only from ordinary knowledge, visual or auditive perception, and reasoning, but also from extramundane knowledge such as mental knowledge or absolute knowledge.

What Umāsvāti intended with this definition is not just any type of trustworthy discourse, but rather, the Jain doctrinal corpus itself. The inner limbs he refers to consist of the twelve canonical texts recognized by Śvetāmbara Jains. These are explicitly enumerated by Umāsvāti in his commentary, at *TSBh* 1.20.10, and include *Ācāra*, *Sūtrakṛta*, *Sthāna*, *Samavāya*, *Vyākhyāprajñapti*, *Jñātadharmakathāḥ*, *Upāsakādhyayanadaśāḥ*, *Antakṛddaśāḥ*, *Anuttaropapātikadaśāḥ*, *Praśnavyakaraṇa*, *Vipākasūtra*, and *Dṛṣṭipāta*.[11] As for the outer limbs, they consist of the many texts of the Jain noncanonical corpus. Both types of teaching come from teachers versed in Jain doctrines, although the first type of teaching is more closely related to omniscient "godlike" teachers. According to the tradition, the canonical texts have been taught by the all-knowing Jinas and transmitted to humanity by their pupils, who are the leaders of the respective Jain lineages (*gaṇadhara*) and who have supernatural properties.[12]

While Umāsvāti includes both kinds of teaching in his commentary, he clearly puts an emphasis on the teaching of the Jinas. This emphasis is strong enough for him to formulate the following equivalence:

> *TSBh* 1.20.2. Testimony, the words of an authority, scriptural tradition, teaching, tradition, sacred tradition, sacred writings, and *the words of the Jinas* are synonyms.[13]

In order to better grasp the implications of this equivalence for the definition of authoritative discourse, I now move to discuss the characteristics of these authoritative teachers who are omniscient religious figures.

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evolution of the classification of types of knowledge in Jainism, including the status of testimony in them, see also Balcerowicz, "Siddhasena Mahāmati and Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa."

11 On this topic, the commentary of Pandit Sukhlalji on the *Treatise on What There Is* is an almost word-for-word exposition, in the form of a discussion, of this part of Umāsvāti's *TSBh*. This commentary is translated in English in K. K. Dixit, *Pandit Sukhlalji's Commentary on Tattvārthasūtra of Vācaka Umāsvāti*, Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Series 44 (Ahmedabad: Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology, 1974), 38.

12 *TSBh* 1.20.21–22.

13 *śrutam āptavacanaṃ āgamaḥ upadeśa aitihyam āmnāyaḥ pravacanaṃ jinavacanam ity anarthāntaram*.

1.3 Characterizing the Authoritative Teacher

The *Nyāyasūtra* (*Treatise on Logic*; *NS*), a treatise on Naiyāyika obedience written by Gautama around the second century CE, is the interdoctrinal reference work for epistemological considerations in classical India. There, an authoritative discourse is defined in the following terms:

> *NS* 1.1.7. Authoritative discourse is the teaching of a reliable person.[14]

In this seminal definition, the focus on the speaker is evident. This focus will remain in most later works of the pan-Indian epistemological paradigm. The construction of the omniscient teacher as the irrefutable single source of a diverse textual tradition is an effective tool for the philosopher who wishes to establish the validity of his entire doctrinal corpus. Alongside the refutation of selected conceptions of other traditions, Jain, Buddhist, and Naiyāyika philosophers have composed texts that validate the omniscience of their respective founders, and hence of the whole of their respective traditional corpora, the teachings of such extraordinary beings.

Now, one consequence of the fact that authoritative teaching depends upon a person is that it is embedded within the intention of this person, in the sense that no mundane speaker express herself in a decontextualized, universal manner. Yet, testimony is also presented as that which can properly function as an objective means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), that is to say, as knowledge *of what exists* and not knowledge *of a discourse on what exists*. It is important to understand that both characterizations, subjective teaching and objective means of knowledge, can coexist only if the teacher has no intention at all, as we will now see.

In the *NS*, the one teaching authoritative discourse is referred to as *āpta*, the "one who is apt," the "authoritative one." Let us investigate more precisely how this authoritative teacher is described in the Jain tradition. The first Jain to have formally defined the authoritative teacher is Kundakunda. "Kundakunda" is a name that stands for the collective authorship of a textual tradition to which belongs the *Niyamasāra* (*NSā*; *Essence of Restraints*), probably written in the third or fourth to fifth centuries. As Balcerowicz puts it, "traditionally believed by the Digambaras to have flourished in South India sometime before the first and third centuries CE, or even in the first century BCE, Kundakunda is

14 *āptopadeśaḥ śabdaḥ*. Edited and translated into French in Michel Angot, *Le Nyāyasūtra de Gautama Akṣapāda. Le Nyāyabhāṣya d'Akṣapāda Pakṣilasvāmin* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2009), 286; translated into English in Gaṅgānāṭha Jhā, *The Nyāyasūtra of Gautama with the Bhāṣya of Vātsyāyana and the Vārtika of Uddyotakara*, vol.1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984), 199.

most probably a collective author to whom a number of works are ascribed. These works, all in Prakrit, were composed, compiled, and expanded on over a span of a few centuries between the late third, early fourth and eighth centuries" and "Kundakunda represents a rare strand within Jainism that lays emphasis on reflection, meditation, and spirituality more than on asceticism and penance."[15] In his *Niyamasāra*, Kundakunda characterizes the supreme authoritative teacher in the following way:

> *NSā* 5–8. He who is free from all defects and who is possessed of all pure attributes is the supreme authority. The defects are hunger, thirst, fear, anger, attachment, delusion, anxiety, old age, disease, death, perspiration, fatigue, pride, indulgence, surprise, sleep, birth, and restlessness. One free from all these defects and possessed of sublime grandeur such as omniscience is called "the Perfect One." Words proceeding from his mouth, pure and free from the flaw of internal inconsistency, are called verbal testimony (*āgama*).[16]

A striking feature of this definition is that the authoritative speaker is presented as a godlike entity who has moral aptitudes before he has intellectual ones.[17] Henceforth, the source of reliable discourse, where "reliable discourse" stands for the Jain corpus, is morally perfect.[18] His omniscience is mentioned as one

15 Piotr Balcerowicz, "The Philosophy of Mind of Kundakunda and Umāsvāti," in *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Philosophy*, ed. Jonardon Ganeri (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1.

16 *vavagayaasesadoso sayalaguṇappā have atto. chuhataṇhabhīruroso rāgo moho cintā jarā rujāmiccu*; *svedaṃ kheda mado rai viṇhiyaṇiddā jaṇuvvego. ṇissesadosarahio kevalaṇāṇāiparamavibhavajudo*; *so paramappā uccai tavvivarīo ṇa paramappā. tassa muhaggadavayaṇaṃ puvvāvaradosavirahiyaṃ suddhaṃ*; *āgamamidi parikahiyaṃ teṇa du kahiyā havanti taccatthā*. Translation from Nagin J. Shah, *Akalaṅka's Criticism of Dharmakīrti Philosophy. A Study*, Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Series 11 (Ahmedabad: Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology, 1967), 35.

17 On the link between moral and intellectual aptitudes in the discourse on authority in Jainism, as well as in the other traditions of India, see also Jayandra Soni, "The Notion of Āpta in Jaina Philosophy," in *South Asian Studies Papers 17. Jain Doctrine and Practice: Academic Perspectives*, ed. Joseph T. O'Connell (Toronto: Centre for South Asian Studies, 2000), 55 and 67.

18 This moral requirement, systematically present in Jain texts, can also be found in the Naiyāyika and Buddhist traditions. For example, Candrakīrti (600–650), in his *Clarification* [*on Nāgārjuna's Fundamental Stances on the Way of the Middle*], *Prasannapadā* 268.2, also requires "the removal of all faults" (*prahīṇāśeṣadoṣa*); see Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *Madhyamakavṛttiḥ. Mūlamadhyamakakārikās de Nāgārjuna avec la Prasannapadā Commentaire de Candrakīrti*, Bibliotheca Buddhica 4 (Saint Petersburg: Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1905–1913). For further discussion on the topic, see Vincent Eltschinger, *Penser l'autorité des Écritures. La polémique de Dharmakīrti contre la notion brahmanique orthodoxe d'un Veda sans auteur. Autour de Pramāṇavarttika 1.213–268 et Svavṛtti*, Beiträge zur Kultur und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 56 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 80 or Sarah McClintock, *Omniscience and the Rhetoric of*

characteristic that appears as a consequence of his state of moral perfection. Some Jain texts that describe the authoritative teacher do not even mention his omniscient character, but focus entirely on the fact that he has annihilated passions. This is the case of the *Nyāyāvatāravivṛtti* (*Commentary to the Guide of Logic*; *NAv*),[19] Siddharṣigaṇi's tenth-century commentary on Siddhasena Mahāmati's *Nyāyāvatāra* (*Guide of Logic*; *NA*). We will investigate this later in paragraph 2.2.

The notion that intellectual competency is a correlate of moral competency is rooted in Jain conceptions of the world. More precisely, Jainism has developed within a framework in which virtue is the quality of the one whose acts preserve the best expression of the nature of everything.[20] Hence, there is no need to postulate an external absolute principle discriminating good acts from bad ones, ensuring that good actions are being pursued, because performing good acts is also performing acts that will enable one to give full expression to her own nature through acts that benefit the individual undertaking them.[21] Jains also believe that in every living being lies a self whose nature is that of unlimited consciousness. Therefore, realizing the nature of this self by acting in a virtuous, moral way is tantamount to reaching higher epistemic abilities. A metaphor will help to explain this process in more concrete terms. Let's conceive a windowpane through which a landscape can be seen. The presence of a person in front of it causes a reflection that distorts the viewer's vision of the landscape. *Karman*[22]

Reason. Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla on Rationality, Argumentation and Religious Authority (Boston: Wisdom, 2010), 16. The same holds for the Naiyāyika tradition, originating from the *Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya* (*Commentary on the Verses on Logic*; *NSBh*), composed by Vātsyāyana (450–500). See *NSBh* 1.1.7. That person is called "reliable," who possesses the direct and right knowledge of things, *who is moved by a desire to make known (to others) the things as he knows it*, and who is fully capable of speaking of it (*āptaḥ khalu sākṣātkṛtadharmā yathādṛṣṭasyārthasya cikhyāpayiṣayā prayukta upadeṣṭā*). See Angot, *Le Nyāyasūtra de Gautama Akṣapāda*, 286.

19 *NAv* 9.1–4 in Piotr Balcerowicz, *Jaina Epistemology in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2001), 1:50.

20 Such a conception also regularly forms the background of philosophical conceptions in Ancient Greece. The link between morality and the best expression of the nature of something is furthermore present in the use of the term "virtue," which originally comes from the Latin root *vir*, male force, in the discourse on morality.

21 In a conception of the world in which there is a place for every living entity.

22 There are eight types of *karman*. Amongst them, only four harmful ones (*ghātiyā*) obstruct one's omniscience, namely delusory *karman* (*mohanīya*), which brings about attachment to incorrect views; *karman* that obstructs knowledge (*jñānāvaraṇīya*); *karman* that obstructs perception (*darśanāvaraṇīya*); and the obstacle *karman* (*antarāya*), which obstructs the innate energy of the soul.

is the name of such reflections in Jain soteriology, a subtle form of matter that manifests the states of the self and, in doing so, reduces its epistemic potency. By means of ascetic practices aiming at detachment, as described in the Jain canon, it is possible to release the self from this karmic bondage, from wrong acts, acts that are not ultimately good for ourselves, nor for the order of the world, and to become omniscient. In addition, since detachment is the path of this release, moral perfections will be obtained on its course thanks to the removal of passions.

With this in mind, we can understand in greater depth Umāsvāti's characterization of the Jain canonical corpus as what comes from the teaching of the Jinas, the revered spiritual warriors who have reached omniscience. Since the Jinas are liberated beings, they have no passions, which means that they do not interact with human beings and have no intention. Therefore, their teaching emanates from them as a drum emits sound.[23] This explains why their teaching (i) does not depend upon a given intention and (ii) still needs to be interpreted and codified to be accessible to ordinary human beings.

By contrast, the noncanonical part of the Jain corpus – i.e. those teachings derived from the leaders of Jain lineages who have supernatural properties and from honored Jain teachers – derives from the teaching of beings who still have intentions and can still interact with the mundane world. Yet, as advanced Jain practitioners, they are already thoroughly detached from their passions and, in principle, have no delusive intentions. The moral superiority of the teachers also explains why Jain doctrinal texts are the only source of authoritative discourse. Only Jain texts have authors who *cannot* be delusive. A teacher who has enough knowledge to be an authoritative teacher has necessarily removed many harmful *karman*; she is therefore beneficial to other human beings *by essence*.[24]

23 In his *Ratnakaraṇḍaśravakācāra* (*RŚĀ*; *Manual for the Behavior of Laymen That Is a Jewel Casket*), Samantabhadra introduces this eloquent metaphor when he claims that an authoritative teacher who gives instructions does good for people without being motivated by passions, and that he acts for the benefit of humanity on account of his very nature, like a drum emitting sound at the touch of a drummer does not want anything for itself. See *RŚĀ* 1.8: *anātmārthaṃ vinā rāgaiḥ śāstā śāsti sato hitam. dhvanan śilpikarasparśān murajaḥ kiṃ apekṣate* ("Un-egoistically and dispassionately, a teacher instructs from truth what is suitable. What (else) does a *muraja* drum require to sound but the touch of a skillful hand?"); translation from Willem Bollée, *Acarya Samantabhadra Ratnakaraṇḍaśravakācāra* (Mumbai: Hindi Granth Karyalay, 2012), 15.

24 This can also explain in part the fact that "correct interpretation depends upon a teacher-pupil lineage or upon one's own seniority and wisdom"; see Mari Jyväsjärvi, "Retrieving the Hidden Meaning: Jain Commentarial Techniques and the Art of Memory," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 38 (2010): 135.

As the Naiyāyikas remind us, for a discourse to be reliable, it does not suffice for its teacher to be epistemically and morally competent; he also has to be linguistically competent. Vātsyāyana (450–500) makes this assertion in his *Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya* (*Commentary on the Verses on Logic*; *NSBh*), in which an authoritative person is described as possessing direct and correct knowledge of things; as being moved by a desire to make known the things as he knows them; and as being *fully capable of transmitting this by means of language*. Another peculiar feature of Jainism is that in the case of omniscient beings, this linguistic competency is transferred to other beings also endowed with higher epistemic abilities. The intellectual and moral competency of the Jinas transcends human abilities, but linguistic competency is the only one that human beings can access.[25] This explains the importance of theories of interpretation, and especially hermeneutics, in Jain philosophy. As Jyväsjärvi puts it, "the commentaries are regularly more important than the canon itself."[26]

2 The Legitimation of Authoritative Discourse

2.1 Choosing Reliability Criteria

In the pan-Indian tradition, the importance of the authoritative teacher is such that when attempting to establish the authoritative character of a discourse, Jains, as well as Naiyāyikas and Buddhists, first seek to establish the authoritative character of the speaker. We have seen that this is the case in the classical tradition of Jain epistemology, with Umāsvāti and Kundakunda focusing on the special qualities of the speaker. An interesting shift in Jain epistemology occurs with Siddhasena Mahāmati (720–780). His *Nyāyāvatāra* (*Guide of Logic*; *NA*), is the first Jain work to have a completely epistemic perspective, independent of devotion and tradition. In his work, authoritative discourse is defined as follows:

> *NA* 9. An authoritative treatise is that which has been discerned by an authoritative person, which is not negligible, which does not contradict what is accepted or what is

25 Incidentally, the sections on authority are usually the occasion for philosophers to develop their theories of meaning (the relation between words and objects).

26 Jyväsjärvi, "Retrieving the Hidden Meaning," 135.

> experienced, which gives the instruction about reality, which is for everybody and which obliterates errant paths.[27]

The first part of the definition establishes an authoritative treatise as the product of the knowledge of an authoritative person. This definition clearly aligns Jain conceptions of authority with the *Treatise on Logic*'s tradition of Naiyāyika obedience, in which the teacher with special powers is the keystone of reliable discourse. Authoritative teaching is still defined in terms of a doctrinal corpus, a "treatise" (*śāstra*), and not an isolated, albeit correct claim about an unknown phenomenon. The shift occurs in the second half of the definition, when it is claimed that in order to be recognized as authoritative, a teaching must satisfy a list of criteria of soundness. In other words, "it is not tradition as such that becomes a distinct source of knowledge, but rather a tradition *that has been systematised as a result of reasoned enquiry*."[28] To sum it up, considerations on authoritative teaching in Jainism started at an early stage as an attempt to present *tradition* as an efficient means to acquire knowledge of the world. As such, authoritative teaching is distinct from ordinary cognition because only special seers could evaluate its correctness. Authoritative teaching then evolved as an attempt to validate a doctrinal corpus that is the product of regulated reasoning as an efficient means to acquire knowledge of the world. As such, it is not distinct from ordinary cognition, because in this conception, testimony can be verified thanks to a competent use of sense faculties and reason combined. In this conception, the means to evaluate authoritative character do not principally rely on the characterization of its speaker.

Of course, the requirement that an authoritative set of assertions must stand the test of reason is not a novel claim by Siddhasena, but is found from in Jainism a very early stage. In fact, Bhadrabāhu (ca. 1st and 5th century CE), in his *Daśavaikālikaniryukti* (*Considerations on the Ten Evening Devotions*; *DVN*), is the sole Jain author to claim that authoritative scriptures (*āgama*) stand in no need of establishment by means of reasoning; they are infallible, and reasoning is only necessary to elucidate their meaning.[29] But besides this notable exception, already in Jain paracanonical texts of the early first centuries, contradiction

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27 *āptopajñam anullaṅghyam adṛṣṭeṣṭavirodhakam. tattvopadeśakṛt sārvaṃ śāstraṃ kāpathaghaṭṭanam*. Translation from Balcerowicz, *Jaina Epistemology in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, 50. Also quoted in Eltschinger, *Penser l'autorité des Écritures*, 105.

28 Puruṣottama Bilimoria, *Śabdapramāṇa: Word and Knowledge*, Studies of Classical India 10 (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988), 9; emphasis is mine.

29 Shah, *Akalaṅka's Criticism of Dharmakīrti Philosophy*, 36.

(*vāhasya*), the property of not being correct (*ayukta*), and contradiction with one's own doctrine (*samaya-viruddha*) are among the faults of a sacred text. The fact that a sacred text possesses reason (*hetu-yukta*) is considered one of its strong points.[30] Likewise, classical authors focusing on the speaker also recognize internal consistency and consistency with other types of cognition as a special feature of the sacred text. See, for example, Kundakunda on his own teachings in his *Samayasāra*[31] (*Essence of the Self*; *SSā*):

> *SSā* 5. I will try to reveal the nature of the Self as far as I can. Accept it if it satisfies the conditions of truth of the types of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). But if I fail in my description, you may reject it.[32]

But, as is most apparent in Kundakunda, standing the test of reason is second to the authority of the speaker:

> *NSā* 8. Words proceedings from his [i.e. the authoritative speaker, free from defects] mouth, pure and free from the flaw of internal inconsistency, are called verbal testimony (*āgama*).[33]

And this is only from Siddhasena that the sacred scriptures are not mainly established thanks to the special properties of the speaker. A similar position is held by Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa (720–780), a younger contemporary of Siddhasena Mahāmati.[34] Akalaṅka, as quoted by Prabhācandra (980–1065) in the *Nyāyakumudacandra* (*Moon on the Lotus of Logic*; *NKC*), claims,

> *NKC* 632: Reliable teaching is not opposed to other kinds of cognition and does not contradict the doctrine.[35]

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30 Nalini Balbir, "The Perfect Sūtra as Defined by the Jains," *Berliner Indologische Studien* 3 (1987): 9.

31 In this work, from "conventional definition" to "correct definition [of the Self]," *samaya* came to mean "the Self in its true nature."

32 *taṃ eyattavibhattaṃ dāyehaṃ appaṇo savihaveṇa. jadi dāyejja pamāṇaṃ cukkijja chalaṃ ṇa ghettavvaṃ*, edited in Appaswami Chakravarti, *Ācārya Kundakunda's Samayasāra* (New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 1950), 189.

33 *tassa muhaggadavayaṇaṃ puvvāvaradosavirahiyaṃ suddhaṃ. āgamamidi parikahiyaṃ teṇa dukahiyāhavaṃti taccatthā*, edited and translated in Uggar Sain, *Niyamasāra (The Perfect Law) by Sri Kundakunda Ācārya*, Sacred Books of the Jainas 9 (Lucknow: Central Jaina Publishing House, 1931), 4.

34 For the dating of these two authors, see Balcerowicz, "Siddhasena Mahāmati and Akalaṅka Bhaṭṭa," 2.

35 *śruteḥ pramāṇāntarābādhanaṃ pūrvāparāvirodhaś ca avisaṃvādaḥ*, edited in Mahendra Kumar Nyāyācārya, *Prabhācandra's Nyāyakumudacandra. A Commentary on Bhaṭṭākalaṅkadeva's Laghīyastraya* (Bombay: Manikacandra Digambara Jaina Grantha Mālā, 1941), 2: 632. Also edited

After Akalaṅka, Jain philosophers built on the innovative work of the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti[36] (550–610).[37] In his *Pramāṇavarttika* (*Verses on Knowledge*; *PV*) and *Pramāṇavārttikasvavṛtti* (*PVsV*), Dharmakīrti, himself building on his contemporary Kumārila's criticism of omniscience, insists that neither perception nor inference can give us access to the mental properties of other people. He concludes that a human being is unable to distinguish an authoritative teacher from a nonauthoritative one.[38] This, in turn, makes "being authoritative" (*āptatva*) a useless quality when what is at stake is to evaluate the reliability of a given set of assertions.

Confronted with this argument, thinkers from this major early Indian school of thought attempted to identify a standard for reliability that did not depend on the perfection of the speaker, but on the soundness of the corpora of authoritative assertions (*śāstra*) themselves. Dharmakīrti, expanding on ideas found in Pakṣilasvāmin, Dharmapāla, and Bhāvaviveka, provides a systematic account of these criteria in his *PV* 1.108–109. First of all, a treatise must be worthy of evaluation, which means that it must be consistent, appropriate to the result it strives to attain, and have one of humankind's goals as its object. If a treatise merits study, we can ask ourselves whether it is prudent to regard it as reliable. As a test of reliability, one may strive to determine whether the propositions are verifiable (i.e. respectively falsifiable) by means of mundane types of knowledge. More concretely, (i) perception helps us to evaluate the textual passages concerning perceptible objects by establishing whether statements from the evaluated treatise are in accordance with what one experiences and sees; (ii) inference based on states of affair helps us to evaluate the sections concerning nonperceptible objects by establishing whether statements from the evaluated treatise are in accordance with what the laws of rationality enable us to infer from what one experiences and sees; and (iii) inference based on scriptures (*āgamāpekṣānumāna*) helps us to evaluate sections concerning radically nonperceptible objects – that is to say,

in *Akalaṅkagranthatraya* (*The Sum of Akalaṅka's Three [Treatises]*), in Mahendra Kumar Shastri, *Akalaṅkagranthatrayam of Sri Bhaṭṭākalaṅkadeva*, Saraswati Oriental Series 8 (Ahmedabad: Saraswati Pustak Bhandar, 1939).

36 See for example Eltschinger, *Penser l'autorité des Écritures*, 59 : "Pour le Mīmāṃsaka, le Veda fait autorité *parce qu'il n'a pas d'auteur*; pour le naiyāyika, le jaïniste, le sivaïte ou la plupart des bouddhistes eux-mêmes, l'Écriture fait autorité *parce que son énonciateur possède telles ou telles qualités*. [. . .] la doctrine méta religieuse de Dharmakīrti invite au contraire à rechercher le critère de l'autorité dans l'Écriture elle-même, l'autorité de son auteur n'étant au mieux que dérivée."

37 For this dating of Dharmakīrti, see Piotr Balcerowicz, "On the Relative Chronology between Samantabhadra and Dharmakīrti," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 44 (2016), 437–483.

38 *PV* 2.218–219.

nonverifiable propositions – by establishing whether statements from the evaluated treatise are in accordance with what authoritative teachers have said.[39] Suggesting such a method, Dharmakīrti is also aware of another tradition, namely the Naiyāyika one. Indeed, in his *Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya*, at *NSBh* 1.1.8, Vātsyāyana employs a similar strategy to evaluate reliability. He claims that, since the assertions of sages (*ṛṣi*) on mundane matters (*dṛṣṭārtha*) – their Ayurveda prescriptions and Vedic mantras – were consistently deemed to be true, we should act from the assumption that their assertions on extramundane matters (*adṛṣṭārtha*), like parts of Veda concerning cosmic order (*dharma*), are also reliable.[40]

It is evident that Siddhasena Mahāmati and Akalaṅka place their teachings within this pan-Indian epistemological tradition, as evinced by their claims in *NA* 9 and *NKC* 632 (quoted above) that an authoritative discourse is a traditional text that has been systematized as a result of reasoned inquiry.

2.2 The Problem of a Speaker's Intention

The fact that Jain philosophers of this period share this method to evaluate reliability with the Buddhists and the Naiyāyikas does not mean that they share all the premises that support it. Akalaṅka, in particular, strives to prove that the use of these rational criteria to evaluate the reliability of an authoritative discourse does not necessarily mean that it is impossible to infer the intention of its speaker. In fact, the Jain tradition specifies that the intention of a speaker can be inferred by means of reasoning from observation. More precisely, in his *Aṣṭaśatī* (*Eight Hundred Verses*; *AŚ*), Akalaṅka defends the thesis that states "a well-examined overt behaviour would always enable us to infer its cause, the internal quality. It is a rule that a well-scrutinised effect would never frustrate our efforts to infer its proper cause."[41]

While it is hard to determine precisely the conception of Jain philosophers concerning the nature of the states of the soul, it is clear that laws of causality apply to these states. Furthermore, these states are expressed within a karmic network, which is a type of subtle matter upon which physical laws apply. In this conception, the apparent inaccessibility of the intention of a speaker is merely due to the complexity of the situation to untangle, but mundane types

39 Eltschinger, *Penser l'autorité des Écritures*, 105 on *PVsV* 1.109.1–3.

40 This is developed for example in Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 2:94 and in Eltschinger, *Penser l'autorité des Écritures*, 96.

41 *AŚ* 72 as quoted by Shah, *Akalaṅka's Criticism of Dharmakīrti Philosophy*, 286: *yatnataḥ parīkṣitaṃ kāryaṃ kāraṇaṃ nātivartata iti cet stutam prastutam*.

of knowledge can be used to track back the causal chains of these phenomena. Of course, also extramundane types of knowledge, especially the direct perception of these subtle elements, are available to the advanced Jain. This last fact is well documented both in theoretical treatises and in literary texts, as is made apparent by the following description from Cort: "like any mendicant who is far advanced on the Jain spiritual path, Sudharman[42] had the ability to see the hidden karmic state of the soul of other living beings, and so could reveal to anyone his or her true condition."[43] Here, we see that even mundane types of knowledge can be used to evaluate a given karmic network and, in doing so, the equivalent state of the soul.

3 Samantabhadra: A Specifically Jain Way to Establish Authority

3.1 Between Different Reliability Criteria

Akalaṅka's thesis on the knowability of intention can be found in a commentary on the *Āptamīmāṃsā* (*Investigation on Authority*; *ĀMī*) of Samantabhadra (530–590).[44] Three important authors have commented on the *ĀMī*: namely, Akalaṅka in the work just quoted, the *Aṣṭaśatī*, *Eight Hundred Verses* (*AŚ*); Vidyānandin in the *Aṣṭasahasrī* (*AS*), *Eight Thousand Verses*, 940; and Yaśovijaya in the *Aṣṭasahasrīvivaraṇa* (*ASV*), *Explanation of the Eight Thousand Verses* (1688). There is also one commentary by a Vasunandi, namely the *Āptamīmāṃsāvṛtti* (*ĀMīV*), the *Commentary on the Investigation on Authority* (8th c.). The *Āptamīmāṃsāvṛtti*[45] is an interesting case for the present study because

42 Sudharman, a follower of Mahāvīra, is a leader of a lineage (*gaṇadhara*) believed to have supernatural powers, and he is considered a father of the community by Śvetāmbara Jains.

43 John Cort, "An Epitome of Medieval Śvetāmbara Jain Literary Culture. A Review and Study of Jinaratnasūri's Līlāvatīsāra," *International Journal of Jaina Studies* 5, no. 1 (2009): 5.

44 Balcerowicz, "On the Relative Chronology between Samantabhadra and Dharmakīrti," develops a proof that Samantabhadra is after Dharmakīrti, which redefines Dharmakīrti's dates.

45 The *Investigation on Authority* is traditionally considered to be the commentary on the opening benediction (*maṅgalācaraṇa*) of Umāsvāti's *On What There Is*, which is meant to salute the Jinas, by stating "I bow to him who is the guide on the path to liberation, the destroyer of mountains of *karman* and the knower of the principles of the universe, so that I may attain these qualities belonging to him" (*mokṣamārgasya netāraṃ bhettāraṃ karmanbhūbhṛtām, jñātāraṃ viśvatattvānāṃ vande tadguṇalabdhaye*); see Saratchandra Ghoshal, *Āptamīmāṃsā of Ācārya Samantabhadra* (New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 2002), 8.

Samantabhadra's conception is a combination of Jain elements present in pre-Dharmakīrti, as well as in post-Dharmakīrti frameworks. In the rest of this paper, I will focus on Samantabhadra's work for three main reasons. First, because it offers a relevant case study with which to investigate the transition from a conception in which the reliability criterion of an authoritative discourse is the authoritative character of the speaker, to a conception in which the criteria of validity and soundness of the discourse itself are foremost; second, because Samantabhadra is one of the first Jain authors to undertake to logically prove the omniscience of the Jain teachers; and third, because he links these questions to the celebrated Jain theory of non-one-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*).

The following verse could lead us to think that for Samantabhadra, the soundness of a discourse is a criterion for validity:

> *ĀMī* 1.6. Only you, whose words are unopposed to logic, perception, and scriptures, are free from all faults, because what it is you desire is not opposed to proof.[46]

However, Samantabhadra does not claim in this verse that scriptures are authoritative because they are consistent with reason and perception. Rather, he claims that consistency with reason and perception is the external sign of the presence of an authoritative speaker. The authority of the speaker is, in turn, the effective validating criterion of the authoritative character of a given discourse. In his *Aṣṭasahasrī*, Vidyānandin comments on the above verse, arguing that it must be understood in light of the latter's devotion to the Jina Saṃbhava, the third awakened Jain teacher who had become omniscient and freed of passions in the current cosmic age.[47] Samantabhadra has compared Saṃbhava to a physician: just as a physician helps people to be cured by a combination of reasoning and knowledge of medical treatises, in the same way, an awakened Jain teacher helps people to free themselves from the cycle of reincarnation by means of teachings that are, by nature, in accordance with both reasoning and the scriptures. In this conception, the internal (consistence of the discourse itself with reason and perception) and external (authoritative character of the speaker) criteria used to establish an authoritative discourse are intertwined.

In this framework, it becomes important to precisely enunciate the properties that make a speaker an authority. In the *ĀMī*, this issue is tackled through Samantabhadra's attempts to enunciate the properties of the omniscient teacher. First, Samantabhadra is careful to specify the properties that cannot be used to

46 *sa tvam eva āsi nirdoṣo yuktiśāstrāvirodhivāc. avirodho yad iṣṭaṃ te prasiddhena na bādhyate*. In his commentary on this sentence in *ĀMīV* 6.18–19, Vasunandi analyzes *yukti* as meaning "inference and perception."

47 See Ghoshal, *Āptamīmāṃsā of Ācārya Samantabhadra*, 46.

determine omniscience. These include extraordinary acts, extraordinary properties, and prophecy. These acts are not sufficient to prove the omniscient character of a teacher, since extraordinary acts can be imitated by magicians[48]; some superior beings endowed with extraordinary external and internal properties do still have passions, and harmful *karman*[49]; and non-Jain teachers such as Kapila and the Buddha offer contradictory teachings, which is proof that they are not omniscient.[50] It is in *ĀMī* 4 that Samantabhadra delineates the essential properties of an omniscient teacher, namely the total destruction of *karman*.[51] Claiming this, he defends the traditional Jain thesis. What is interesting for us in this argument is the metaphor Vasunandi uses to comment on this verse. He likens the removal of *karman* to the act of "the purifying of a piece of metal of gold which might have external impurities like mud, etc. attached to it and internal impurities like alloy mixed with the same. By washing or scouring we can do away with the external impurities and by melting we can destroy the alloy bringing out the pure gold. In a soul also *karman* internally obstruct right knowledge."[52] I claim that we can take this literally enough to understand that the removal of *karman* follows physical

48 *ĀMī* 1. The miraculous attainments like an attendance offered by the celestial beings, a walk in the sky, a fan service (worked by the celestial beings), and so on and so forth are found in the possession of even jugglers; these (miraculous attainments, which you certainly possess) are (therefore) not what make you great in our eyes (*devāgamanabhoyānacāmarādivibhūtayaḥ, māyāviṣvapi dṛśyante nātastvamasi no mahān*). Edited and translated by Nagin J. Shah, *Samantabhadra's Āptamīmāṃsā. Critique of an Authority. Along with English Translation, Introduction, Notes and Akalaṅka's Sanskrit Commentary Aṣṭaśatī*, Sanskrit-Sanskriti Granthamālā 7 (Ahmedabad: Jagruti Dilip Sheth, 1999): 1.

49 *ĀMī* 2. The divine excellence of body, etc. – an excellence that might be of an internal or external sort – is a genuine possession of even the denizens of heaven who are (by nature) under the sway of the spiritual deficiencies like attachment, etc. (*adhyātmaṃ bahirapyeṣa vigrahādimahodayaḥ, divyaḥ satyo divaukassvapyasti rāgādimatsu saḥ*); Shah, *Samantabhadra's Āptamīmāṃsā*, 2.

50 *ĀMī* 3. As for the preaching of the various sect founders, they cannot be all authentic because they are mutually contradictory; (hence) of these sect founders, someone at the most can be worthy of reverence (*tīrthakṛtsamayānāṃ ca parasparavirodhataḥ, sarveṣāmāptatā nāsti kaścideva bhaved guruḥ*). See Shah, *Samantabhadra's Āptamīmāṃsā*, 2.

51 *ĀMī* 4. The total destruction of faults and impediments [to perfect knowledge of the Self] occurs because excellence [in this gradual process toward the completion of the Self's own nature occurs], just as the external and internal impurities of a thing are wiped out when the appropriate methods are used (*doṣâvaraṇayor hānir niḥśeṣā'sty atiśāyanāt, kvacid yathā svahetubhyo bahir-antar-mala-kṣayaḥ*). Edited in Shah, *Samantabhadra's Āptamīmāṃsā*, 3; my translation.

52 Ghoshal, *Āptamīmāṃsā of Ācārya Samantabhadra*, 36; edited in Pandit Pannalal Jain Bakaliwal, *Śrīsamaṃtabhadrasvāmiviracitā Āptamīmāṃsā syādvādavidyāpatiśrīvidyānaṃdasvāmiviracitā Pramāṇaparīkṣā ca*, Sanātanajainagranthamālā 10 (Vārāṇasī: Jaina Grantha Mālā, 1914).

laws and that a theory of the precise mechanism of this removal is possible. Interestingly enough, the metaphor of the gold is also the one used in the Buddhist tradition of the same period to refer to the (direct) criteria of the reliability of a discourse. Indeed, the Buddhists Śāntarakṣita (725–788) and Kamalaśīla (740–795) comment on Dharmakīrti's three tests of the reliability of an authoritative discourse by claiming that, just as we can determine whether something is pure gold or not by means of calcination, abrasion, or rubbing it on a touchstone, in the same manner, we can determine whether something is an authoritative teaching by means of perception when the authoritative treatise deals with perceptible objects, inference when it deals with contextually nonperceptible objects, and noncontradiction with what is already established when it deals with essentially nonperceptible objects.

3.2 Proving the Existence of an Omniscient Jain Teacher

In his *ĀMī*, Samantabhadra not only characterizes the omniscient Jain teacher, but also advances a proof of her existence.[53] According to him:

> *ĀMī* 5. The objects that are minute, concealed, or distant must be amenable to somebody's perception, because they are amenable to inferential knowledge, just like fire, etc. It is this argument that establishes the existence of an omniscient personage.[54]

I summarize the argument as follows: the common way to establish inference is to have recourse to a previously perceived situation that displays a paradigmatic example analogous to the one under investigation. The traditional example is that of the smoke and the fire, in which I am able to infer the presence of an unperceived fire from the perception of a type of smoke, because there are former analogous paradigmatic situations in which smoke of this type has been seen with a fire underneath it. In other words, inference is accepted in situations of nonperception only if it is possible to draw a link to

53 He is usually presented as the first philosopher to do so. More on this topic in Olle Qvarnström,"The Jain-Mīmāṃsā Debate on Omniscience," in *Studies in Jaina History and Culture. Disputes and Dialogue*, ed. Peter Flügel (London: Routledge Advances in Jain Studies, 2006), 89–106.

54 *sūkṣmāntaritadūrārthāḥ pratyakṣāḥ kasyacid yathā, anumeyatvato'gnyādiriti sarvajñasaṃsthitiḥ*, (Shah, *Samantabhadra's Āptamīmāṃsā*, 4). This argument is also translated and commented on in Sin Fujinaga, "Determining Which Jaina Philosopher Was the Object of Dharmakīrti's Criticisms," *Philosophy East and West* 50, no. 3 (2000): 378–384, and Fujinaga, "Why Must There Be an Omniscient in Jainism?" in *Studies in Jaina History and Culture. Disputes and Dialogue*, ed. Peter Flügel (London: Routledge Advances in Jain Studies, 2006), 107–116.

another specific situation in which phenomena of each type involved were actually perceived.[55] Therefore, every time an inference is justified, there exists at least one situation in which objects of the same type as the objects involved have actually been perceived by someone.

But this argument is not sufficient to conclude that inferences about objects that are not perceivable by mundane faculties have necessarily been perceived in some way or another, for example by means of extramundane perception like that of a yogin. To explain, it is possible to acquire knowledge concerning phenomena that are inaccessible to mundane perception through inference by analogy. With inference by analogy, for example, it is sufficient to have already perceived a paradigmatic case of relationship between an effect and its cause – e.g. the perception of the breaking of a cup because of its falling on the ground can be sufficient – in order to be able to deduce from this a list of the characteristics of the cause-effect relationship in general, and to then infer the characteristic of a transcendental cause. From this, the only way to understand Samantabhadra's argument is to say that the range of legitimate inferences on the nature of the world is so wide and all-pervasive that only the existence of an omniscient teacher can guarantee that *in any case* the direct perception of one instance of the related phenomena or of one instance of this type of relation is possible. As mentioned earlier, Jain philosophers believe that the two categories of phenomena – knowable by ordinary cognition yet accidentally out of reach, and unknowable by ordinary cognition – come down to one category, inasmuch as every aspect of the world is, in principle, knowable by human beings.

3.3 Authoritativeness of the Jain Corpus and the Non-one-sidedness of Things

Samantabhadra's next step is to advance a third, and specifically Jain, method of discriminating between reliable and nonreliable teachings. This method, which retains Samantabhadra's attention for the rest of the *Āptamīmāṃsā*, is based on the following judgment:

> *ĀMī* 7. Those who are alien to your nectarlike doctrine are the upholders of utterly extremist theses; they are the victims of their own vainglorious claims to be an authority (on the

55 This is, by the way, the key defense of Jain and Buddhist philosophers who try to refute the Naiyāyika proof of the existence of God. More precisely, when the Naiyāyikas try to argue that whenever there is an effect, there is a conscious cause involved at some point in the process of production, the Jains and Buddhists will counterattack by pointing to the fact that no human being has ever experienced a situation in which the growing of the grass was involving at some point the activity of a consciousness.

> subject matter they deal with); they are persons who seek to establish something that is contradicted by what is seen to be the case.[56]

Understanding this verse presupposes some knowledge of the Jain theory of non-one-sidedness (*anekāntavāda*) and of viewpoints (*nayavāda*). According to these theories, the object of knowledge is fundamentally complex and human epistemic faculties tend to resolve this complexity by subsuming diversity within a larger unity. Human knowledge functions by recognizing familiar features or patterns. Without this, nothing would be intelligible, nor communicable. In this process of subsuming diversity within unity, it is possible to create a continuum ranging from specific to more general categories. For example, we can describe something according to the general category "green," the more specific "olive green," or even list a series of chemical components that create the color. This plurality of possible valid and specific types of attention to the knowable is also what explains the existence of different philosophical attitudes, especially in consideration of the primary problem of the articulation of the one and the many. In consequence, there is a favored type of attention that is active during the construction of any body of knowledge and human beings necessarily state their knowledge in dependence on a set of presuppositions of which they are not aware, and that determine the very scope and meaning of their knowledge statements. The Jain theory of viewpoints is precisely the specification of the main types of epistemic attention active in the elaboration of these presuppositions. It is a metatheory of knowledge that offers a classification of the great types of theories of knowledge, called "viewpoints" (*naya*). With this theory, Jains are able to explain the specific aptitudes, as well as the specific limits, of every historical philosophical tradition of India. For example, the viewpoint called "collective viewpoint" (*saṃgrahanaya*) brings together all the theorists who believe that the single robust reality, the one that is not subjected to change, is a permanent reality that includes everything. Theorists of Advaita-Vedānta, as well as theorists of Sāṃkhya, are representative of this viewpoint because they excel at identifying the imperceptible connections and unity underlying the diversity of objects of knowledge. They especially understand how everything is a manifestation of the same spiritual substance. Moreover, they believe it is only due to the structure of the human mind that we consider things as being independent entities. Yet, at the same time, they fail to understand the

56 *tvanmatāmṛtabāhyānāṃ sarvathaikāntavādinām, āptābhimānadagdhānāṃ sveṣṭaṃ dṛṣṭena bādhyate*; see Shah, *Samantabhadra's Āptamīmāṃsā*, 6.

fundamental differences between the types of objects of knowledge. In opposition to this epistemic stance, the "direct viewpoint" (*ṛjusūtranaya*) brings together all the theorists who believe that the single robust reality is the less possible inclusive reality, the one that persists neither in space nor in time. Buddhist thinkers are representative of this viewpoint, because they excel at identifying the transitory character of objects of knowledge as well as the epistemic constructions active when operations of synthesis are performed during the knowledge process. However, they fail to understand the fundamental elements of permanence in these objects of knowledge.

Let us now return to the seventh verse of the *Āptamīmāṃsā*, namely "those who are alien to your nectarlike doctrine are the upholders of utterly extremist theses; they are the victims of their own vainglorious claims to be an authority (on the subject matter they deal with); they are persons who seek to establish something that is contradicted by what is seen to be the case." In this verse, "what is seen to be the case" is non-one-sided objects. The argument is that, since a knowable entity is always multifaceted, the Jain corpus, which recognizes the non-one-sided essence of the knowable, is not opposed to perception, inference, or the other types of knowledge. What I would like to stress here is that it was the need to establish the authoritative character of a teacher that led Samantabhadra to the theory of non-one-sidedness in this work. Samantabhadra's method to establish the validity of the Jain corpus was to systematically refute the assertions of non-Jina teachers by means of showing that these are one-sided assertions. A large part of the *Āptamīmāṃsā* is directed toward these refutations, which can be read as a model that could be used to refute other seemingly absolute assertions.

Here, it seems that in order to establish the authority of the Jain corpus and doctrine, Samantabhadra could have used Dharmakīrti's direct method to prove that the Jain corpus is taught by an authoritative person because it is in accordance with perception and inference and it is coherent. Instead, Samantabhadra aims to establish the authority of the teaching of the Jinas. This special teaching calls for a special methodology because one has to refute the fact that a given assertion can be established in an unconditioned way. Samantabhadra cannot himself establish an assertion directly in an unconditioned way, otherwise it would contradict this very thesis and no thesis is ultimately established. In this situation, refuting everything that is opposed to the teaching of the Jinas is actually the only efficient strategy.[57]

57 The Buddhist Nāgārjuna is famous for having faced a similar situation when he aimed to refute the fact that an ultimate assertion could be made without making such an ultimate claim himself, and for having adopted a similar strategy when he undertook to refute any ultimate assertion he encountered.

4 Conclusion

In their efforts to define the nature, scope, and reliability of authoritative teaching, Jain philosophers were building on pan-Indian conceptions of this matter while also expressing their fundamental specificities of the Jain conception. First, pan-Indian theories of authoritative teaching include (i) a primary focus on sacred texts; (ii) a primary focus on the omniscient source that emits this nonfalsifiable body of teaching; (iii) a soteriology enabling the acquisition of extramundane epistemic faculties; and (iv) an epistemological turn around the sixth century promoting reasoned inquiry. In this framework, Jain philosophers go further than philosophers from other systems concerning the recognition of human epistemic abilities. Indeed, there is no essentially unknowable state of affair in Jainism, not only because human beings are omniscient in principle and some advanced Jains are omniscient in fact, but also because phenomena that are seemingly inaccessible to mundane knowledge follow the laws of causality and *karman* is a concrete substance that follows the laws of physics. Second, there is a multitude of omniscient Jinas and of teachers with extramundane epistemic faculties. Third, when refuting the theses of other traditions, the Jain Samantabhadra makes use of a specific type of refutation that consists in showing the ultimate inadequacy of any one-sided view and, at the same time, establishes the Jain doctrine of non-one-sidedness. This strategy is not only mandatory for the one avoiding the "contextually valid" labeling of his own claims, but it is also an efficient strategy for survival in the case of a minority tradition like Jainism. Indeed, this insistence on the contextual validity of every claim not only resolves apparent contradictions between Jain conceptions and the conceptions of others, but also provides Jainism an intellectual authority over other traditions.[58]

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58 In the words of Qvarnström, "the fact that the Jains, through such theories of perspectives, were both difficult to influence, and, at the same time, sympathetic towards others, made them perhaps also better equipped to cope with matters challenging their survival and growth" ("The Jain-Mīmāṃsā Debate on Omniscience," 35).

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Ana Bajželj

7 Clay Pots, Golden Rings, and Clean Upper Garments: Causality in Jaina Philosophy

1 The Jaina Doctrine of Causality as *Sad-Asat-Kārya-Vāda*

In his *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*, Karl H. Potter systematically outlines and classifies various models of causality that have emerged in the history of Indian philosophy.[1] He describes the Jaina model of causality as an attempt to steer the middle course between what are commonly referred to as two principal competing Indian philosophical doctrines on the nature of causal relations, namely, *sat-kārya-vāda* and *asat-kārya-vāda*. According to the first, an effect is a continuation of its causal base, and thus preexistent (*sat-kārya*) in its cause. According to the latter, an effect is a commencement of something radically new with regard to its cause, and hence not preexistent (*asat-kārya*) in it. A typical representative of the *sat-kārya-vāda* position is the philosophical school of Sāṃkhya. Potter uses the standard example of the causal relation between milk and curds to explain its argument for the preexistence of the effect in its cause:

> Milk, it is maintained, is the cause of curds, which is the effect. But the milk is the same stuff as the curds; it is merely transformed into a solid state, being the same material that was previously in a liquid state. The effect is already existent in the cause – in fact, it is

1 Karl H. Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991, reprint 1999), 106–116. Some other introductions to the doctrine of causality in Indian philosophies that take Jaina philosophy into account are Mahesh Chandra Bhartiya, *Causation in Indian Philosophy: With Special Reference to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* (Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1973), 106–111; Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975, reprint 1997), 174–175; Bimal Krishna Matilal, *Logic, Language and Reality: Indian Philosophy and Contemporary Issues* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985, 2nd ed. 1990, reprint 2008), 284–294; Roy W. Perrett, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 155–167; Vetury Ramakrishna Rao, *Selected Doctrines from Indian Philosophy* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1987), 73–74; and Chandradhar Sharma, *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1960, reprint 1964), 151. These introductions provide broad overviews of the Jaina doctrine of causality rather than thorough analyses of how specific Jaina texts treat the topic of causality.

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> the very same stuff as the cause, being altered merely in what we should call its "secondary" qualities.[2]

Rather than being an entirely novel occurrence in relation to its cause, an effect is thus a transformation (*pariṇāma*), and therefore a continuation, of its cause.[3]

A typical representative of the *asat-kārya-vāda*, on the other hand, is the philosophical school of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Potter explains its position in regard to the nature of causal relations with the help of two standard examples:

> Where the *satkāryavādin* tends to unify the ultimate stuff in the universe, the *asatkāryavādin* multiplies the number of basic entities which enter as relata into the causal relation. [. . .] The favorite examples offered by Naiyāyikas to illustrate the workings of causation are the production of a pot from the combination of its two halves and the production of a piece of cloth from the combination of some threads.[4]

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2 Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*, 106. See also Bhartiya, *Causation in Indian Philosophy: With Special Reference to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, 36–54; K. Chenchulakshmi, *The Concept of Pariṇāma in Indian Philosophy: A Critical Study with Reference to Sāṃkhya-Yoga* (New Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 2005); Indukala H. Jhaveri, *The Sāṃkhya-Yoga and the Jain Theories of Pariṇāma* (Ahmedabad: Gujarat University, 1990); Gerald James Larson, *Classical Sāṃkhya: An Interpretation of Its History and Meaning* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1969, 2nd ed. 1979, reprint 1998), 164–167; Gerald James Larson, "Introduction to the Philosophy of Sāṃkhya," in *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, vol. 4, *Sāṃkhya: A Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy*, eds. Gerald James Larson and Ram Shankar Bhattacharya (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), 65–73; and Roma Ray, "Is *Pariṇāmavāda* a Doctrine of Causality?" *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 10, no. 4 (December 1982): 377–396.

3 Another philosophical tradition that is frequently described as a proponent of the *sat-kārya-vāda* model is Advaita Vedānta. In contrast to Sāṃkhya, Advaita Vedānta understands the transformation of a cause that brings about an effect to be an illusory rather than a real occurrence, and therefore substitutes *pariṇāma-vāda*, the doctrine of transformation, with *vivarta-vāda*, the doctrine of illusion. Due to this distinct view, according to which only the "cause" is real, while the "effects" are illusory, the causal doctrine of Advaita Vedānta is often referred to as *sat-kāraṇa-vāda*. See, for example, Bhartiya, *Causation in Indian Philosophy: With Special Reference to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, 58–83; Eliot Deutsch, *Advaita Vedānta: A Philosophical Reconstruction* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, University of Hawaii, 1969), 35–43; Nataliya Isayeva, *Shankara and Indian Philosophy* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993), 161–162; Richard King, *Early Advaita Vedānta and Buddhism: The Mahāyāna Context of the Gauḍapādīya Kārikā* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1995), 84–85; Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*, 157–182; Arvind Sharma, *Advaita Vedānta: An Introduction* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004), 55–61; and J. G. Suthren Hirst, *Śaṃkara's Advaita Vedānta: A Way of Teaching* (London: Routledge, 2005), 89–115.

4 Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*, 111–112. See also Bhartiya, *Causation in Indian Philosophy: With Special Reference to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, 119–275; Wilhelm Halbfass, *On Being and What There Is: Classical Vaiśeṣika and the History of Indian Ontology* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992), 57–58; ShashiPrabha Kumar, *Classical Vaiśeṣika in Indian Philosophy: On Knowing and What Is to Be Known* (London: Routledge, 2013), 34–35; Bimal Krishna Matilal, "Causality in the

In accordance with the examples provided, an effect is not a continuation of its cause, but rather a novel and therefore nonpreexistent event.[5]

Embracing continuity and novelty – the characteristic features of both abovementioned doctrines on the nature of causal relations – in a distinctly *all-inclusive* or, better, *non-one-sided* (*anekānta*) manner, Jainism, as noted, endeavors to mediate and pacify the tension between them.[6] Potter explains:

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika School," *Philosophy East and West* 25, no. 1 (January 1975): 41–48; Bimal Krishna Matilal, "Naïve Realism, Nyāya Realism and the Causal Theory," in *The Collected Essays of Bimal Krishna Matilal: Mind, Language and World*, ed. Jonardon Ganeri (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 97–113; Karl H. Potter, "Introduction to the Philosophy of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika," in *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, vol. 2, *Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology: The Tradition of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika up to Gaṅgeśa*, ed. Karl H. Potter (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977, reprint 1995), 54–68.

5 Buddhism, which rejects the possibility of anything persisting through the causal operation, is also commonly included in the group of the *asat-kārya-vāda* proponents, even though the doctrines of causality of certain Buddhist schools have been described as either subscribing to *sat-kārya-vāda* or evading both *sat-kārya-vāda* and *asat-kārya-vāda*. See Bhartiya, *Causation in Indian Philosophy: With Special Reference to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, 29–30, 88–105; K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), 443–457; David J. Kalupahana, *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1976), 26–35; David J. Kalupahana, *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1982); Matilal, *Logic, Language and Reality: Indian Philosophy and Contemporary Issues*, 318; and T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Mādhyamika System* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955, 2nd ed. 1970, reprint 1980), 166–178.

6 Matilal describes the non-one-sided approach of Jainism as "a resolution of the paradox of causality." See Bimal Krishna Matilal, *The Central Philosophy of Jainism (Anekānta-Vāda)* (Ahmedabad: L. D. Institute of Indology, 1981), 26. See also Johannes Bronkhorst, "Jainism's First Heretic and the Origin of Anekānta-vāda," in *Jainism and Early Buddhism: Essays in Honor of Padmanabh S. Jaini*, part 1, ed. Olle Qvarnström, 95–111 (Fremont, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 2003); Johannes Bronkhorst, "*Anekāntavāda*, The Central Philosophy of Ājīvikism?" *International Journal of Jaina Studies* 9, no. 1 (2013): 1–11; W. J. Johnson, "The Religious Function of Jaina Philosophy: *Anekāntavāda* Reconsidered," *Religion* 25 (1995): 41–50; Bimal Krishna Matilal, "*Anekānta*: Both Yes and No?" *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research* 8 (1991): 1–12; Satkari Mookerjee, *The Jaina Philosophy of Non-Absolutism: A Critical Study of Anekāntavāda* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1944, 2nd ed. 1978); Y. J. Padmarajiah, *A Comparative Study of the Jaina Theories of Reality and Knowledge* (Bombay: Jain Sahitya Vikas Mandal, 1963); Tara Sethia, ed., *Ahiṃsā, Anekānta, and Jainism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004); Nagin J. Shah, ed., *Jaina Theory of Multiple Facets of Reality and Truth (Anekāntavāda)* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass & Bhogilal Leherchand Institute of Indology, 2000); Jayandra Soni, "Philosophical Significance of the Jaina Theory of Manifoldness," *Philosophie aus interkultureller Sicht – Philosophy from an Intercultural Perspective*, ed. Notker Schneider et al., 277–287 (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1997); Jayandra Soni, "Kundakunda and Umāsvāti on *Anekânta-vāda*," in *Essays in Jaina Philosophy and Religion*, ed. Piotr Balcerowicz (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass,

> [T]he relation we are concerned to analyze has to do with the relation between a substance at one moment having quality A and the same substance at the next moment lacking quality A and having quality B. [. . .] Considering the relation of the substance at one moment to the substance at the next, the *satkāryavādin* is right, the effect is contained in the cause, but considering the relation of quality A to quality B, the *asatkāryavādin* is right, the effect is not contained in the cause. But furthermore, why must the [. . .] views be mutually exclusive? Cannot both be right, particularly if there is reason to believe that it will *not* do to *separate* entities into substance and quality though one may distinguish those two aspects of any entity – a different thing from separating them. This last is, in fact, what the Jain holds.[7]

Potter is referring to the Jaina understanding of causal relations with regard to a substance as it exists in two different moments in time. According to Jaina metaphysics, reality is constituted of an infinite number of substances (*dravya*), each of which possesses certain essential attributes (*guṇa*). These attributes *incessantly* and *momentarily* undergo modification in the form of arising and ceasing modes (*paryāya*), which Potter refers to as *qualities*. Substances as such are eternal and persist through these modal modifications. A substance in a particular moment in time is, thus, a *continuation* of the numerically identical substance that existed in the previous moment, since its substantial aspect has endured through both moments, as well as a *novel event*, since its modal aspect has changed from the previous to the present moment. If we take an example of a living substance (*jīva*) with one of its essential attributes of consciousness (*cetanā*), the *jīva* as a substance persists through the modal modification of its attribute of consciousness, whereas the modes of this attribute – as the different degrees to which consciousness is manifested – fluctuate momentarily. Furthermore, as Potter points out, a substance with its qualifiers comprises a single entity, and the various facets of its configuration can never be separated. Every substance in a temporal perspective, then, according to Jainism, embodies a compromise between *sat-kārya-vāda* and *asat-kārya-vāda*, which some scholars have referred to as *sad-asat-kārya-vāda* or *sat-kāryāsat-kārya-vāda*.[8]

2003), 25–35; and Himal Trikha, *Perspektivismus und Kritik: Das pluralistische Erkenntnismodell der Jainas angesichts der Polemik gegen das Vaiśeṣika in Vidyānandins Satyaśāsanaparīkṣā*, Publications of the De Nobili Research Library 36 (Vienna: Institut für Südasien-, Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde der Universität Wien, 2012).

7 Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*, 114–115.

8 See, for example: Bhartiya, *Causation in Indian Philosophy*, 30; Chenchulakshmi, *The Concept of Pariṇāma in Indian Philosophy: A Critical Study with Reference to Sāṃkhya-Yoga*, 33; Jhaveri, *The Sāṃkhya-Yoga and the Jain Theories of Pariṇāma*, 172; Nancy McCagney, *Nāgārjuna and the Philosophy of Openness* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), 67; Mohan Lal Mehta, *Outlines of Jaina Philosophy: The Essentials of Jaina Ontology, Epistemology*

Potter, however, concludes his introductory description of the Jaina causal model with the following reservation regarding its persuasiveness: "The question about Jainism, philosophically speaking, is whether or not it constitutes a genuinely alternative position or merely an *ad hoc* eclecticism, and this once again, depends on how successful an analysis of relations it can provide upon close examination."[9] This paper will address the question Potter poses, an unequivocal answer to which he does not provide. Rather than evaluate the credibility of the Jaina causal model as such, the intent is to thoroughly examine the coherence of the strategies that Jainas employ in order to distinguish their understanding of causality from the more dominant rival approaches and establish their position as one that reconciles them. The paper will do so through a close analysis of the Jaina accounts of the nature of causal relations, as suggested by Potter, with a particular focus on the descriptions of continuity and novelty and the relation between them.

The paper will mainly draw from Amṛtacandra Sūri's *Tattva-dīpikā* (*Light on Reality*), a tenth-century Digambara Sanskrit commentary on Kundakunda's *Pavayaṇa-sāra* (*Essence of the Teaching*),[10] written in Prakrit (Jaina Śaurasenī).[11] Despite the uncertainty regarding its dating,[12] Kundakunda's *Pavayaṇa-sāra* is undoubtedly one of the most authoritative early Digambara philosophical texts, and its systematic and comprehensive approach lays a foundation for the further

and Ethics (Bangalore: Jain Mission Society, 1954), 116; and Sharma, *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, 151.

9 Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*, 115.

10 *Pravacana-sāra* in Sanskrit.

11 Amṛtacandra Sūri also wrote commentaries on the *Paṃcatthiya-saṃgaha* (*Pañcāstikāya-sāra* in Sanskrit; *Essence of the Five Extensive Existents*) and the *Samaya-sāra* (*Essence of the Doctrine*), two of Kundakunda's other influential texts, called *Tattva-pradīpikā-vṛtti* (*Exposition of the Light on Reality*) and *Ātma-khyāti* (*Declaration on the Self*), respectively. For a discussion on the authorship of the texts that are ascribed to Kundakunda, see A. N. Upadhye, *Śrī Kundakundācārya's Pravacanasāra (Pavayaṇasāra): A Pro-Canonical Text of the Jainas, The Prakrit Text Critically Edited with the Sanskrit Commentaries of Amṛtacandra and Jayasena and a Hindī Commentary of Pāṇḍe Hemarāja, with an English Translation of the Text, a Topical Index and the Text with Various Readings, and with an Exhaustive Essay on the Life, Date and Works of Kundakunda and on the Linguistic and Philosophical Aspects of Pravacanasāra* (Agas: The Parama-Śruta-Prabhāvaka Mandal, Shrimad Rajachandra Ashrama, 1984), 23–46.

12 The dates ascribed to Kundakunda vary from the first century BCE to the sixth century CE. See Upadhye, *Śrī Kundakundācārya's Pravacanasāra (Pavayaṇasāra)*, 10–23; and F. W. Thomas, "Introduction," in *The Pravacana-sāra of Kunda-kunda Ācārya, Together with the Commentary, Tattva-dīpikā, by Amṛtacandra Sūri*, trans. Barend Faddegon, ed. with an introduction by F. W. Thomas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935, new ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), xii–xix.

understanding and explication of Jaina metaphysics. Amṛtacandra Sūri's *Tattva-dīpikā* is the first known commentary that was written on it.[13] The commentary has received only scarce scholarly attention, but it is valuable for the purpose of this paper since it reflects a mature period in the development of Jaina philosophy, and thus provides a methodical and thorough treatment of Jaina metaphysics at a time when the focus of Jaina philosophy had turned significantly toward epistemology and logic. Its detailed treatment of the topic of causal relations challenges the doubt regarding the deliberation and comprehensiveness of the Jaina doctrine of causality. In the *Tattva-dīpikā*, Amṛtacandra Sūri organizes the *Pavayaṇa-sāra* into three parts (*śruta-skandha*): 1. "Jñāna-tattva-prajñāpana" ("Exposition of the Reality of Knowledge"), 2. "Jñeya-tattva-pra jñāpana" ("Exposition of the Reality of the Knowable"), and 3. "Caraṇānusūcikā-cūlikā" ("Appendix with Advice on Conduct"). Concerned with metaphysics, this paper will mainly focus on the second part of the text.

2 Outlining the Jaina Understanding of Causal Relations and Their Relata

The Jainas maintain that all events are causally generated and that every effect (*kārya*) is a result of a multiplicity of causes (*kāraṇa*), rather than a result of a single cause. Causes that operate in the production of an effect are categorized into two basic types, namely, the internal (*antar-aṅga*) and the external (*bahir-aṅga*) causes. These are also referred to as the material/substantial causes (*upādāna-kāraṇa*) and the auxiliary/efficient/instrumental causes (*nimitta-kāraṇa*), respectively.[14] The various causes operate within the confines of the basic causal model, the dynamics of which are characterized by both continuity and novelty, as noted in the previous section. Similarly to the expositions of causality put forward by the Sāṃkhya and the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika traditions, Amṛtacandra Sūri provides an informative depiction of the Jaina understanding of the different aspects of causal dynamics involved in the production of an effect through the familiar example of the making of a clay pot:

> So, just as, for example, when the completion (*saṃskāra*) [of the clay pot], effected (*āropyamāṇa*) by the potter, the stick, the wheel, and the rag, is present (*sannidhi*), the

13 Upadhye, *Śrī Kundakundācārya's Pravacanasāra (Pavayaṇasāra)*, 94.

14 Jinendra Varṇī, ed., *Jainendra Siddhānta Kośa*, vol. 2 (Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 1971, 10th ed. 2014), 51.

> moment of the production (*janma-kṣaṇa*) of the arising (*vardhamāna*) [clay pot] is the [same as the] moment of the annihilation (*nāśa-kṣaṇa*) of the clod of clay (*mṛtpiṇḍa*), and the [same as the] moment of the stability (*sthiti-kṣaṇa*) of the clayness (*mṛttikātva*), which is engaged (*adhirūḍha*) in [both of] the two aspects (*koṭi-dvaya*), so too, when the completion [in general] effected by the internal (*antar-aṅga*) and the external (*bahir-aṅga*) causes (*sādhana*) is present, is the moment of the production of the subsequent mode[15] (*uttara-paryāya*) [the same as] the moment of the annihilation of the preceding mode (*prāktana-paryāya*), and [the same as] the moment of the stability of the substantiality (*dravyatva*), which is engaged in [both of] the two aspects.[16]

The moment the effect, i.e., the finished clay pot, is arising, explains Amṛtacandra Sūri, the clod that was the clay's previous form is perishing. Jointly with the emerging of the pot and the perishing of the clod, there is further the clayness of the clay. The moments of production, annihilation, and stability thus converge in the event of the arising of the effect. The example draws a causal relation between the material substance of the clay in the time prior to the current moment, when it was still formless, and the material substance of the clay at the moment when it is just being formed into a pot. Although with the arising of a novel form, the clay suffers a change in its features, it also remains stable in its clayness, that is, in its character of being clay, which is "engaged in [both of] the two aspects," i.e., in both the production of a novel feature of clay and the annihilation of the previous one – neither of which, as Amṛtacandra Sūri indicates, can take place without a certain aspect of the clay remaining stable throughout the change. Applied to the general dynamics of substances, the moment a new mode is arising, the prior mode is vanishing, yet the substantiality of the substance persists throughout the change, engaging as a support in both the production of the new and the destruction of the previous modal character of the substance.

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15 In *TD* II.3, Amṛtacandra Sūri defines attributes as crosswise particular properties (*vistāra-viśeṣa*), and modes as lengthwise particular properties (*āyata-viśeṣa*), pointing to the temporal character of the latter. In *TD* I.10, he describes attributes as coexistent particular properties (*sahabhāvi-viśeṣa*), indicating that, temporally speaking, attributes are coexistent with the substance they qualify. Modes, on the other hand, he describes as successive particular properties (*kramabhāva-viśeṣa*); thus, as already indicated in the general introduction to the Jaina doctrine of causality in the first part of this paper, modes are qualifiers that are sequential, meaning that they are not coexistent with the substance, but rather arise and pass away in succession.

16 *TD* II.10: tathā hi yathā kulāla-daṇḍa-cakra-cīvarāropyamāṇa-saṃskāra-sannidhau ya eva vardhamānasya janma-kṣaṇaḥ sa eva mṛtpiṇḍasya nāśa-kṣaṇaḥ sa eva ca koṭi-dvayādhirūḍhasya mṛttikātvasya sthiti-kṣaṇaḥ. tathā antar-aṅga-bahir-aṅga-sādhanāropyamāṇa-saṃskāra-sannidhau ya evottara-paryāyasya janma-kṣaṇaḥ sa eva prāktana-paryāyasya nāśa-kṣaṇaḥ sa eva ca koṭi-dvayādhirūḍhasya dravyatvasya sthiti-kṣaṇaḥ.

The arising of an effect in the framework of such causal dynamics, as noted, demands the collaboration of several different causes. In the case of a substance, the above example, without specification, mentions that the arising of a new mode of a substance involves the operation of internal and external causes, whereas in the case of the clay pot, the example lists particular causes that assist its production. Specifically mentioned are the potter, the stick, the wheel, and the rag, which are all – as instruments that lie outside the substance of the clay – external or instrumental causes of the effect that is the clay pot. Commenting on Kundakunda's definition of a substance as "that which is coupled with origination, loss, and continuance (*utpāda-vyaya-dhruvatva-saṃyukta*) without leaving its own-being (*aparityakta-svabhāva*), endowed with attributes (*guṇavat*) and accompanied by modes (*saparyāya*),"[17] Amṛtacandra Sūri provides another example, which elaborates on the nature of causal relations indicated in the example of the clay pot, both with regard to the variety and nature of causes involved in the causal process as well as its features of novelty and continuity. This is the example of the upper garment. Amṛtacandra Sūri says,

> A substance (*dravya*) is that which is characterized by the diad of attributes and modes (*guṇa-paryāya-dvaya*) and the triad of origination, loss, and continuity (*utpāda-vyaya-dhrauvya-traya*), without commencing a change in its own-being (*anārabdha-svabhāva-bheda*). Here the own-being (*svabhāva*) of substance means [its] connection to existence in general (*astitva-sāmānyānvaya*).[18] Existence will be described as twofold: existence of a characteristic nature (*svarūpāstitva*) and existence of a common nature (*sādṛśyāstitva*). Origination means appearance (*prādurbhāva*), loss means destruction (*pracyavana*), and continuity means stability (*avasthiti*). Substance, being different from the origination, etc., or attributes and modes just as that which is to be characterized [is different] from that which characterizes (*lakṣya-lakṣaṇa-bheda*), does not undergo a change in its own-nature (*svarūpa-bheda*), since in its own-nature (*svarūpa*), the substance is suchlike (*tathā-vidhatva*), like an upper garment (*uttarīya*). Just as an upper garment that has

17 *PS* II.3: apariccatta-sahāveṇuppāda-vvaya-dhuvatta-saṃjuttaṃ / guṇavaṃ ca sapajjāyaṃ jaṃ taṃ davvaṃ ti vuccaṃti //

18 As pointed out by the anonymous reviewer of this paper, Amṛtacandra Sūri might have borrowed the term *astitva* from Vaiśeṣika and gave it a new meaning. In his *Padārtha-dharma-saṃgraha*, Praśastapāda defines *astitva* as a property that, along with *abhidheyatva* (nameability) and *jñeyatva* (cognizibility), belongs to all six ontological categories (*padārtha*). In the context of Vaiśeṣika, Piotr Balcerowicz translates *astitva* as "existentiality," discerning it from existence as the highest universal, *sattā*, which is a property of the first three ontological categories (substance, quality, and action) only. See Piotr Balcerowicz, "What Exists for the Vaiśeṣika?" in *Logic and Belief in Indian Philosophy*, ed. Piotr Balcerowicz (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2010, 2nd rev. ed., Warsaw: self-pub., 2016), 249–360. However, it should be pointed out that the term is already used by Kundakunda as well. See, for example, *PS* II.52. This means that Amṛtacandra Sūri could also have taken the term from the text he is commenting on.

> acquired (*upātta*) a dirty state (*malināvasthā*), when washed (*prakṣālita*), is originating (*utpadyamāna*) with reference to the state of not being dirty (*amalāvasthā*), is characterized by this origination, and in connection with this does not undergo a change in its own-nature, but by its own-nature adheres to being suchlike, so too does a substance that has acquired (*samupātta*) a previous state (*prāktanāvasthā*) in the presence of proper external effecting factors (*samucita-bahir-aṅga-sādhana-sannidhi-sadbhāva*) [acquire] a state that is diverse or greater (*vicitra-bahutarāvasthāna*), and, supported (*anugrahīta*)[19] by its own-being in its capacity as own-nature, agent, and cause (*svarūpa-kartṛ-karaṇa-sāmarthya*) – which agrees (*upāgata*) with the internal efficacy (*antar-aṅga-sādhanatā*) [of the substance] – is originating with reference to the later state (*uttarāvasthā*), is characterized by this origination, and in connection with this does not undergo a change in its own-nature, but by its own-nature adheres to being suchlike.[20]

Amṛtacandra Sūri here provides an interesting set of details regarding the different causes involved in the arising of an effect. While describing the variety of causes required for a substance's acquisition of a novel state, he first says that *proper external effecting factors* (*samucita-bahir-aṅga-sādhana*) must be present in order for the novel state to emerge. This means that the external causal factors have an indispensable role in bringing about the arising of every effect, and that for a specific effect to arise, a set of the right external causes must be in operation. Drawing parallels with various external or instrumental causes that were mentioned as being involved in the production of a clay pot, we might here imagine a washer, water, and soap as instruments that assist the generation of the effect that is the clean upper garment.[21]

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19 Faddegon suggests reading this as *anugṛhīta*. See *The Pravacana-sāra of Kunda-kunda Ācārya, Together with the Commentary, Tattva-dīpikā, by Amṛtacandra Sūri*, trans. Barend Faddegon, ed. with an introduction by F. W. Thomas, 66, fn. 1.

20 *TD* II.3: iha khalu yad anārabdha-svabhāva-bhedam utpāda-vyaya-dhrauvya-trayeṇa guṇa-paryāya-dvayeṇa ca yal lakṣyate tad dravyam. tatra hi dravyasya svabhāvo 'stitva-sāmānyānvayaḥ, astitvaṃ hi vakṣyati dvividhaṃ, svarūpāstitvaṃ sādṛśyāstitvaṃ ceti. tatrotpādaḥ prādurbhāvaḥ, vyayaḥ pracyavanaṃ, dhrauyvam avasthitiḥ. [. . .] na ca tair utpādādibhir guṇa-paryāyair vā saha dravyaṃ lakṣya-lakṣaṇa-bhede 'pi svarūpa-bhedam upavrajati, svarūpata eva dravyasya tathā-vidhatvād uttarīyavat. yathā khalūttarīyam upātta-malināvasthaṃ prakṣālitam amalāvasthayotpadyamānaṃ tenotpādena lakṣyate. na ca tena saha svarūpa-bhedam upavrajati, svarūpata eva tathā-vidhatvam avalambate. tathā dravyam api samupātta-prāktanāvasthaṃ samucita-bahir-aṅga-sādhana-sannidhi-sadbhāve vicitra-bahutarāvasthānaṃ svarūpa-kartṛ-kara ṇa-sāmarthya-svabhāvenāntar-aṅga-sādhanatām upāgatenānugrahītam uttarāvasthayotpadyamā-naṃ tenotpādena lakṣyate. na ca tena saha svarūpa-bhedam upavrajati, svarūpata eva tathā-vidhatvam avalambate.

21 The instrumental causes mentioned so far have been all specific objects or subjects. It should be noted that in the *Niyama-sāra* (*NS* 30, 33) Kundakunda also speaks about substances as such acting as instrumental causes. He notes, for example, that the substances of the

Even though a set of proper external causal factors is required for the arising of an effect, this alone is not sufficient for it, according to Amṛtacandra Sūri. He says that in the arising of an effect, a substance is also charged with its own internal efficacy (*antar-aṅga-sādhanatā*), pointing out that it is the combination of external causes and the internal causal power of the substance that generates an effect. In connection with this, he describes a changing substance not only as a cause (*karaṇa*), but also as an agent (*kartṛ*). A substance, then, is not a passive element in the process of causation, being molded according to the operation and directive of external causal factors, but is rather an agent, an active force internally causing the arising of an effect. This means that in the case of the upper garment, the operation of the washer, the soap, the water, and any other external causes are not sufficient for the upper garment to become clean. In order for it to change from being dirty to being clean, the material substance of the upper garment itself must promote the arising of the novel event from within.

In *TD* II.4, Amṛtacandra Sūri repeats the idea of a substance being an agent and a cause, but he adds that a substance is also a substratum (*adhikaraṇa*) of the dynamics of origination, loss, and continuity. He gives the example of gold (*kārtasvara*), which functions as a substratum for the origination, loss, and continuity of a ring, a bracelet, yellowness, etc. (*kuṇḍalāṅgada-pītatādi*), respectively. Apart from being a cause and an agent, then, a substance is, by providing a seat for the causal process to occur, also its support. Needless to say, the implication of substances being the seats of origination, loss, and continuity is that, in the Jaina doctrine of causality, the discourse on novelty and continuity between a cause and its effect refers to the relation between a substance as an internal cause and its effect – that is, between a substantial cause and its effect, rather than between an instrumental cause and its effect.[22]

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medium of motion (*dharma*), the medium of rest (*adharma*), space (*ākāśa*), and time (*kāla*) function as the instrumental causes that assist motion (*gamana*), rest (*sthiti*), spatial immersion (*avagāhana*), and alteration (*parivartana*), respectively.

22 Bhartiya points out that Indian philosophers have tended to focus on the material rather than the instrumental/efficient cause: "We have seen that in western treatment of causation it is mainly the efficient cause that has figured. They have, for the most part, neglected material cause or the material cause has come into consideration there only secondarily, as when considering the whole cause preceding the effect, where actually the difference between the material and the efficient cause has disappeared. But when we come to the Indian treatment of causation, we find an altogether different approach in this matter. Indian thinkers, though they mostly accept the efficient cause (*nimitta-kāraṇa*) as one of the causes, have not bothered much about it. Their main subject of treatment is the material cause, i.e., the matter, which, due to the activity of the efficient cause, takes a new shape. This material cause has of course appeared in

Returning to the example of the upper garment, Amṛtacandra Sūri adds that, apart from having a capacity as an agent and a cause, a substance also has a capacity as *own-nature* (*svarūpa*). He does not define *svarūpa*, so it is not clear what the word means in this context, but the Jainas generally understand the peculiar nature of a substance to be twofold: (1) atemporal, i.e., the specific substance-attributes-modes structure, and (2) temporal, i.e., the specific dynamics of origination, loss, and continuity. A substance, then, undergoes a causal process in its capacity of having this particular twofold character. Following this interpretation, the factor of *svarūpa* would be connected with *own-being* (*svabhāva*), another factor that Amṛtacandra Sūri, in the example above, mentions in relation to the arising of the effect. He first emphasizes that a substance does not suffer a change in its own-being (*anārabdha-svabhāva-bheda*) despite its specific structure and dynamics. He then continues by saying that a substance acquires a novel state "supported by its own-being," a characteristic he defines as the substance's connection with *existence in general* (*astitva-sāmānyānvaya*), noting that existence will be explained as being of two kinds – namely, existence of a characteristic nature (*svarūpāstitva*) and existence of a common nature (*sādṛśyāstitva*). As indicated in the commentary itself, these two kinds of existence are references to *PS* II.4 and *PS* II.5, where Kundakunda says that the "being of existence (*sadbhāva*) is the own-being (*svabhāva*) of substance, with qualities [and] its own various modes, with origination, loss, and continuance at all times,"[23] and that "one, omnipresent (*sarva-gata*) characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) 'existing' (*sat*) belongs [. . .] to those with manifold characteristics (*vividha-lakṣaṇa*)."[24] In reference to *PS* II.4, Barend Faddegon notes,

> Whilst here existence is said to be the innate nature of the substance, it is taught in II.5 that existence is *sarva-gata*, omnipresent, or belonging to everything, and is a *lakṣaṇaṃ vividha-lakṣaṇānām*, a common characteristic of that which for the rest shows the greatest variety of characterization. This variation in expression has led the commentator to think that the author distinguishes existence-in-reference-to-the-substance or existence-of-characteristic-nature from existence-in-general.[25]

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different shades in different systems of Indian philosophy"; see Bhartiya, *Causation in Indian Philosophy*, 27. See also Padmanabh S. Jaini, "Amṛtacandra Sūri's Exposition on Reality," in *Collected Papers on Jaina Studies*, ed. Padmanabh S. Jaini (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000, reissued 2010), 48–49.

23 *PS* II.4: sabbhāvo hi sahāvo guṇehiṃ saha pajjaehiṃ cittehiṃ / davvassa savva-kālaṃ uppāda-vvaya-dhuvattehiṃ //

24 *PS* II.5: [. . .] viviha-lakkhaṇāṇaṃ lakkhaṇam egaṃ sad iti savva-gayaṃ /

25 *The Pravacana-sāra of Kunda-kunda Ācārya, Together with the Commentary, Tattva-dīpikā, by Amṛtacandra Sūri*, trans. Barend Faddegon, ed. with an introduction by F. W. Thomas, 67, fn. 1.

This is a very important observation. It seems to me, however, that Amṛtacandra Sūri, rather than equating existence of a common nature with existence in general as opposed to existence of a characteristic nature, as indicated by Faddegon, draws a distinction between existence of a characteristic nature (existence of individual substances with their specific structure and dynamics) and existence of a common nature (what he calls the *asti*, "it is," of every substance), which he understands as two kinds of existence in general. Following this, it would then be the twofold existence in general that, according to Amṛtacandra Sūri, a substance – by never undergoing a change in its own-being – maintains a connection with. According to this interpretation, the first type of existence, namely, the existence of a characteristic or peculiar nature, is the one connected with the own-nature (*svarūpa*) of a substance. A substance never loses its peculiar structure and dynamics, and, further, it employs the capacity of its very nature to propel and configure the causal process. A substance, likewise, never loses its connection with the second type of existence, that is, with existence of a common nature or the basic "it is," and this eternality holds despite and throughout its structure and dynamics.

The example of the upper garment further underscores the *eternality* of a substance with the description of the relationship between a substance on the one hand and origination, loss, and continuity as well as attributes and modes on the other. Amṛtacandra Sūri explains that this relationship is like that between the *characterized* (*lakṣya*) and the *characterizing* (*lakṣaṇa*). The idea that a substance is characterized by origination, loss, and continuity, as well as attributes and modes, first indicates that a substance, qualities, and modes as well as origination, loss, and continuity do not exist separately, but rather in a relationship of mutual dependence, since the characterized needs something that characterizes it and the characterizing needs something to characterize. They thus exist as an entity of one (the characterized) and many (the characterizing).[26] It also indicates that a substance, as that which is characterized,

26 In *Tattva-pradīpikā*, his commentary on the *Paṃcatthiya-saṃgaha*, Amṛtacandra Sūri explains the relationship between a substance and its attributes and modes: "A substance (*dravya*) is not separated from [its] modes (*paryāya*) like cow's milk (*go-rasa*) is [not] separated from the milk [which has been milked out] (*dudgha*), curd (*dadhi*), butter (*navanīta*), ghee (*ghṛta*), etc. The modes are not separated from the substance like the milk [which has been milked out], curd, butter, ghee, etc. are [not] separated from cow's milk. [. . .] Attributes (*guṇa*) do not exist without a substance (*dravya*) like touch (*sparśa*), taste (*rasa*), smell (*gandha*), and colour (*varṇa*) are [not] separated (*pṛthagbhūta*) from [the substance of] matter (*pudgala*). The substance does not exist without attributes like [the substance of] matter is [not] separated from touch, taste, smell, and color." (*TP* 12–13: atra dravya-paryāyāṇām abhedo nirdiṣṭaḥ. dugdha-dadhi-navanīta-ghṛtādi-viyuta-gorasavat paryāya-viyutaṃ dravyaṃ nāsti.

cannot be something that characterizes at the same time. The characterizing function is reserved for the qualifiers of a substance and the three features of its dynamics. In the same way, the factors that characterize a substance cannot perform the function of a substance as that which is characterized. The specific functions of the characterizing and the characterized are thus fixed and noninterchangeable.

The notion that a substance is characterized by origination, loss, and continuity, as well as attributes and modes, further indicates that despite undergoing its particular dynamics and having a specific structure, a substance never radically commits to any of its individual features. Amṛtacandra Sūri says that a substance does not undergo a change in its own-nature (according to the above interpretation, its particular structure and dynamics), because the manner of the operation of its own-nature is being *suchlike* (*tatthā-vidhatva*). This term expresses that a substance is never only origination, only loss, only continuity, only an attribute, or only a mode, but is rather characterized by these individual features without losing any other aspects of its own-nature. The above example focuses on the feature of origination. In the rest of *TD* II.3, Amṛtacandra Sūri applies the same logic to loss and continuity, as well as attributes and modes. In the specific case of the upper garment, he says that the upper garment is simultaneously (*eka-kāla*) originating with reference to being clean (*amala*), undergoing loss with reference to being dirty (*malina*), and being continuous with reference to the constant state of being a garment, that is, its garmentness (*uttarīyatva*). It is also characterized by attributes and modes. It does not, however, experience a change in its own-nature as the upper garment, be it due to a certain feature of its dynamics or to an aspect of its structure. Likewise, says Amṛtacandra Sūri, a substance, simultaneously originating with reference to the subsequent mode, undergoing loss with reference to the previous mode, and being continuous with reference to the constant state of being a substance, that is, its substantiality (*dravyatva*), as well as being qualified by attributes and modes, does not experience a change in its own-nature because of any of these individual features. A substance continues to exist eternally despite being characterized by various qualifiers as well as the dynamics of origination, loss, and continuity. It, further, never loses its specific structure and dynamics.

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gorasa-viyukta-dugdha-dadhi-navanīta-ghṛtādivad dravya-viyuktāḥ paryāyā na santi. [. . .] pudgala-pṛthagbhūta-sparśa-rasa-gandha-varṇavad dravyeṇa vinā na guṇāḥ saṃbhavanti. sparśa-rasa-gaṃdha-varṇa-pṛthagbhūta-pudgalavad guṇair vinā dravyaṃ na saṃbhavati.)

3 Novelty and Continuity in the Jaina Causal Model

The notion of the nonradical commitment of a substance to any of the features that characterize it, as discussed above, emphasizes that with regard to both novelty (origination and loss) and continuity, a substance can only be suchlike – that is, *like them* or characterized by them, but never wholly any one of them. In regard to the arising of an effect, this means that an effect can never be a wholly novel product, as the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika would have it. Amṛtacandra Sūri further elaborates on this issue with reference to *collections* of substances as well as with reference to substances as *individual entities*. With reference to collections of substances, he emphasizes that substances cannot produce another substance:

> Substances (*dravya*) do not produce (*ārambha*) other substances (*dravyāntara*), because all substances (*sarva-dravya*) are established through their own-being (*svabhāva-siddhatva*). Their being established through their own-being is due to their having neither beginning nor end (*anādi-nidhanatva*). Something with no beginning or end (*anādi-nidhana*) does not require another cause (*sādhanāntara*). It is an existent with its establishment established (*siddha-siddhimad-bhūta*) by itself (*svayam*), by means (*upādāya*) of the basic cause (*mūla-sādhana*), the own-being of the self (*ātman*), which is the self of the attributes and modes. That, however, which is produced by substances, is not another substance but a mode (*paryāya*), because of its state of occurring occasionally (*kādācitkatva*), like a double atom (*dvyaṇuka*), etc., and a human (*manuṣya*), etc. A substance, however, being interminable (*anavadhi*) and constant in the three times (*trisamayāvasthāyin*), could not be such.[27]

Amṛtacandra Sūri here points out that a substance is always *established by itself* (*svayam*) through the basic cause (*mūla-sādhana*) that is its own-being (*svabhāva*), which was defined above as the substance's connection with twofold existence in general. A substance, then, is established through itself as an existent and, as such, can never be established by another cause (*sādhanāntara*), such as, for example, by other substances. Amṛtacandra Sūri explains that this is due to the fact that a substance is without a beginning and without an end. Since it is eternal, nothing could have produced it and nothing could ever make it cease to be. Hcontinues by saying that while substances do not produce other substances, they do produce modes (*paryāya*). He gives two examples of collections of substances to illustrate this: first, a double atom, which represents a collection of two substances

27 *TD* II.6: na khalu dravyair dravyāntarāṇām ārambhaḥ, sarva-dravyāṇāṃ svabhāva-siddha tvāt. svabhāva-siddhatvaṃ tu teṣām anādi-nidhanatvāt. anādi-nidhanaṃ hi na sādhanāntaram apekṣate. guṇa-paryāyātmānam ātmanaḥ svabhāvam eva mūla-sādhanam upādāya svayam eva siddha-siddhimad-bhūtaṃ vartate. yat tu dravyair ārabhyate na tad dravyāntaraṃ kādācitkatvāt sa paryāyaḥ. dvyaṇukādivan-manuṣyādivac ca. dravyaṃ punar anavadhi trisamayāvasthāyi na tathā syāt.

of the same kind (material), and then a human, which represents a collection of two substances of a different kind (material and nonmaterial). Amṛtacandra Sūri says that such collections of substances ought not to be considered as new substances, but rather as modes, because they occur only occasionally, and thus exist temporarily. In contrast to this, a substance as such, he emphasizes, never ceases to be, its constancy pervading the three times of past, present, and future.

Amṛtacandra Sūri also expands on the claim that an effect can never be a wholly novel product with reference to substances as individual entities either. The notion that origination, loss, and continuity should never be thought of as occurring with reference to substances as such was already indicated in the characterizing-characterized distinction mentioned above. In the case of origination, it is never the whole substance that originates; in the case of loss, it is never the whole substance that undergoes loss; and in the case of continuity, it is never the whole substance that is continuous. Following Kundakunda, Amṛtacandra Sūri develops this idea further by saying that origination, loss, and continuity are all in modes (*paryāya*). It should be pointed out that these are modes of a single substance, rather than modes as collections of substances discussed above. In reply to Kundakunda's assertation – "Origination, stability, and decay (*utpāda-sthiti-bhaṅga*) are in modes (*paryāya*). Modes are always a substance (*dravya*). Therefore, all is a substance"[28]– Amṛtacandra Sūri comments, "Origination, loss, and continuity (*utpāda-vyaya-dhrauvya*) rest on modes (*paryāya*), and these modes rest on a substance. Therefore all (*samasta*) this is one substance (*dravya*), and there is no other substance."[29] The idea that the triple dynamics of origination, loss, and continuity rest on modes, and that these modes, in turn, rest on a substance, recalls the passage from *TD* II.4 in which Amṛtacandra Sūri describes a substance as a substratum of the dynamics of origination, loss, and continuity. Because a substance is a substratum of modes, it is also a substratum of the dynamics of these modes. A substance cannot, as a whole, be affected by these dynamics, since the dynamics occur only in the modal aspect of a substance. Amṛtacandra Sūri further argues in support of this idea by systematically listing the unacceptable consequences of origination, loss, and continuity occurring with respect to substances rather than their modes. He says:

> But if decay, origination, and continuity (*bhaṅga-utpāda-dhrauvya*) were maintained as being of substance (*dravya*), then all (*samgrama*) would fall into confusion.

28 *PS* II.9: uppāda-ṭṭhidi-bhaṃgā vijjaṃte pajjaesu pajjāyā / davvaṃ hi saṃti ṇiyadaṃ tamhā davvaṃ havadi savvam //

29 *TD* II.9: utpāda-vyaya-dhrauvyāṇi hi paryāyān ālambante, te punaḥ paryāyā dravyam ālambante. tataḥ samastam apy etad ekam eva dravyaṃ na punar dravyāntaram.

> In the case of decay, there would be the occurrence of the emptiness of all substances (*dravya-śūnyatāvatāra*), because of the dissolution (*saṃharaṇa*) of all substances (*sarva-dravya*), leered at by momentary decay (*kṣaṇa-bhaṅga-kaṭākṣita*), in a single moment (*eka-kṣaṇa*), and [so] there would be utter destruction (*samuccheda*).
>
> In the case of origination, there would be, for every single one (*pratyeka*), an infinity (*anantya*) of substances, marked with origination in every moment (*prati-samayotpāda-mudrita*), and [so] there would be the origination of a nonexistent (*asad-utpāda*).
>
> In the case of continuity, there would be the nonexistence (*abhāva*) of substance because of the nonexistence of successively existing (*krama-bhū*) existences (*bhāva*), and [so] there would be momentariness (*kṣaṇikatva*).[30]

First, Amṛtacandra Sūri states that if decay occurred with regard to substances as such rather than their modes, all substances would be destroyed in a single moment. Since Jaina metaphysics considers modal decay to happen momentarily, as was noted in the first part of this paper, these momentary dynamics would, when applied to substances as wholes, result in an immediate decay of all substances. This means that there would be, as Amṛtacandra Sūri concludes in the section on decay, "utter destruction (*samuccheda*)," namely, a destruction of all there is, because all existence is, according to the Jainas, expressed through substances. Since the Jainas deem every substance to be eternal rather than momentary and liable to complete destruction, this is an unacceptable consequence for them, and so they cannot subscribe to the idea of decay occurring with regard to substances as such rather than their modes.

Second, if origination happened with regard to substances as such rather than their modes – that is, if origination were a completely novel event – every single substance would be followed by another substance every single moment, according to Amṛtacandra Sūri, since origination, in the Jaina metaphysical system, is a momentary occurrence, like decay. The result would be an infinite number of substances being produced with reference to every single substance. This is again an unacceptable consequence for the Jainas, not only because some substances in the Jaina metaphysical system (such as space and the media of motion and rest) are singular in number, but primarily because, as Amṛtacandra Sūri emphasizes in his conclusion to the section on origination, "there would be an origination of a nonexistent (*asad-utpāda*)." As noted

30 *TD* II.9: yadi punar bhaṅgotpāda-dhrauvyāṇi dravyasyaiveṣyante tadā samagram eva viplavate. tathāhi bhaṅge tāvat kṣaṇa-bhaṅga-kaṭākṣitānām eka-kṣaṇa eva sarva-dravyāṇāṃ saṃharaṇād dravya-śūnyatāvatāraḥ samucchedo vā. utpāde tu pratisamayotpāda-mudritānāṃ pratyekaṃ dravyāṇām anantyam asad-utpādo vā. dhrauvye tu krama-bhuvāṃ bhāvānām abhāvād dravyasyābhāvaḥ kṣaṇikatvaṃ vā.

above, all substances are understood to be eternal and self-established, which means that a new substance cannot be produced. A nonexistent substance cannot become existent. For that reason, the Jainas cannot subscribe to the idea of origination occurring with regard to substances as such rather than their modes.

Third, if continuity existed with regard to substances as such rather than their modes, substances would not even exist, says Amṛtacandra Sūri. For him, the concepts of continuity and eternality are clearly not the same, a notion that was already implicit in his differentiation between substantiality and substance, clayness and clay, yelowness and gold, and garmentness and garment in the examples above.[31] A substance that is solely eternal could be considered to be unchanging, whereas a substance that is both eternal and continuous could not be so. Amṛtacandra Sūri points out that for something to exist as being characterized by continuity, it also needs to be characterized by variance, through which *only* continuity can manifest itself. As noted in the example of the clay pot discussed at the beginning of the second part of this paper, this is true in the case of the continuously arising and decaying modal modifications that qualify an eternal substance. Through the arising and ceasing modes, the continuity of a substance (that is, its substantiality) as persisting through the change is manifested. The case of substances that are as such characterized by continuity is different, though, because they cannot as such simultaneously be characterized by decay and origination, the possibilities that Amṛtacandra Sūri just refuted. Their continuity can therefore not be established. The result, says Amṛtacandra Sūri, is momentariness (*kṣaṇikatva*), indicating a (Buddhist) notion of reality where momentary events exist without a substantial substratum. A substance characterized as a substance by continuity only would thus not exist, which is, as already noted, an unacceptable consequence for the Jainas. This means that the Jainas cannot subscribe to the idea of continuity occurring with regard to substances as such rather than their modes.

In the example of the clay pot, Amṛtacandra Sūri highlighted that continuity supports both origination and annihilation. In the last excerpt, he pointed out that not only do origination and annihilation depend on continuity, but continuity too depends on origination and annihilation. In glossing Kundakunda's dictum, "There is no arising (*bhava*) deprived of decay (*bhaṅga-vihīna*), nor is there

31 Cf. Bimal Krishna Matilal, "Ontological Problems in Nyāya, Buddhism and Jainism: A Comparative Analysis," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 5 (1977): 100–101.

decay deprived of origination. Moreover, origination (*utpāda*) and decay are not without a continuous object (*dhrauvyārtha*),"[32] he further emphasizes the total *interconditionality* of the triple dynamics of origination, loss, and continuity with the following elaboration:

> There is no creation (*sarga*) without dissolution (*saṃhāra*) and no dissolution without creation, no creation nor dissolution (*sṛṣṭi-saṃhāra*) without stability (*sthiti*), and no stability without creation and dissolution. Creation is dissolution, dissolution is creation, creation and dissolution are stability, and stability is creation and dissolution. For instance, the creation of the pot (*kumbha*) is the dissolution of the clod of clay (*mṛtpiṇḍa*), because being (*bhāva*) becomes manifest (*avabhāsana*) through the own-being of the nonbeing of another being (*bhāvāntarābhāva-svabhāva*). And the dissolution of the clod of clay is the origination of the pot, because nonbeing (*abhāva*) becomes manifest through the own-being of the being of another being (*bhāvāntara-bhāva-svabhāva*). And the creation and dissolution of the pot and the clod are the stability of the clay (*mṛttikā*), because the constant (*anvaya*) manifests (*prakāsana*) through the divergences (*vyatireka-mukha*). And the stability of the clay is the creation and dissolution of the pot and clod, because the divergences do not surpass (*anatikramaṇa*) the constant.[33]

In several ways, this excerpt recalls the example of the clay pot. As in the clay pot example, here too Amṛtacandra Sūri emphasizes that the arising of the effect that is the clay pot is also the annihilation of the clod of clay, and that the stability of the clay, that is, its clayness, pervades both. He expands on the previous example by making the additional statements that the annihilation of the clod of clay is the origination of the clay pot, and that the origination of the clay pot and the annihilation of the clod of clay are both the stability of the clay. This highlights a relationship of complete interconditionality between the three aspects of the causal process. It is not only that origination, annihilation, and stability coincide by occurring in the same moment, as was demonstrated in the example of the clay pot. No one of them could ever even occur without the others. This

32 *PS* II.8: ṇa bhavo bhaṃga-vihīṇo bhaṃgo vā ṇatthi saṃbhava-vihīṇo / uppādo vi ya bhaṃgo ṇa viṇā dhovveṇa attheṇa //

33 *TD* II.8: na khalu sargaḥ saṃhāram antareṇa, na saṃhāro vā sargam antareṇa, na sṛṣṭi-saṃhārau sthitim antareṇa, na sthitiḥ sarga-saṃhāram antareṇa. ya eva hi sargaḥ sa eva saṃhāraḥ, ya eva saṃhāraḥ sa eva sargaḥ, yāv eva sarga-saṃhārau saiva sthitiḥ, yaiva sthitis tāv eva sarga-saṃhārāv iti. tathāhi ya eva kumbhasya sargaḥ sa eva mṛtpiṇḍasya samhāraḥ bhāvasya bhāvāntarābhāva-svabhāvenāvabhāsanāt. ya eva ca mṛtpiṇḍasya saṃhāraḥ, sa eva kumbhasya sargaḥ, abhāvasya bhāvāntara-bhāva-svabhāvenāvabhāsanāt. yau ca kumbha-piṇḍayoḥ sarga-saṃhārau saiva mṛttikāyāḥ sthitiḥ, vyatireka-mukhenaivānvayasya prakāśanāt. yaiva ca mṛttikāyāḥ sthitis tāv eva kumbha-piṇḍayoḥ sarga-saṃhārau, vyatirekāṇām anvayānatikramaṇāt.

means that all the aspects of the causal process essentially support one another. Without annihilation, there would be no origination; without origination, no annihilation; without stability, no origination or annihilation; and without origination and annihilation, no stability. This is so, explains Amṛtacandra Sūri, because being (*bhāva*) can become manifest only through the own-being of the nonbeing of another being (*bhāvāntarābhāva-svabhāva*). It is only in the passing away of an old mode that a new mode can arise. Similarly, nonbeing (*abhāva*) can become manifest only through the own-being of the being of another being (*bhāvāntara-bhāva-svabhāva*). An old mode can cease only in the arising of a new mode. This exchange, says Amṛtacandra Sūri, supports stability, because, as noted, something can become manifest as stable or continuous only through divergences. While necessitating divergences, stability at the same time supports these divergences, says Amṛtacandra Sūri, since they do not surpass it; namely, they never go beyond it, but rather occur within the limits of and in coordination with it.

Similarly to the excerpt above that discussed the notion of origination, annihilation, and continuity occurring with regard to substances as such, here too Amṛtacandra Sūri lists a series of unacceptable consequences of origination, annihilation, and continuity being independent from one another rather than being in a relationship of interconditionality. He says,

> However, should this not be accepted in this way, it follows that creation is reduced to being something different, dissolution to being something different, and stability to being something different.
>
> If it be so, since there is no cause for the originating (*utpādana-kāraṇābhāva*) of the pot (*kumbha*), aiming at creation (*sarga*) only, there would be either no coming into being (*abhavani*) or the origination of a nonexistent (*asad-utpāda*).
>
> In the case of a pot not coming into being, there would be no coming into being of anything.
>
> In the case of the origination of a nonexistent, there would be the origination of sky flowers (*vyoma-prasava*), etc.[34]

Focusing first on origination as an independent occurrence, Amṛtacandra Sūri points out two unacceptable consequences. First, he says, there would be no coming into being (*abhavani*) of anything at all, indicating that nothing can originate

34 *TD* II.8: yadi punar nedam evam iṣyeta tadānyaḥ sargo 'nyaḥ saṃhāraḥ anyā sthitir ity āyāti. tathā sati hi kevalaṃ sargaṃ mṛgayamāṇasya kumbhasyotpādana-kāraṇābhāvād abhavanir eva bhavet asad-utpāda eva vā. tatra kumbhasyābhavanau sarveṣām eva bhāvānām abhavanir eva bhavet. asad-utpādo vā vyoma-prasavādīnām apy utpādaḥ syāt.

by itself. This follows his premise that it is only in being conditioned by the passing away of an old mode, on the one hand, and being conditioned by continuity on the other that a new mode can originate. If this holds for one particular existent, like a pot, argues Amṛtacandra Sūri, it also holds for every other existent, since the metaphysical structure of existence is universal according to the Jainas. So if the pot does not come into being, then nothing comes into being. The other unacceptable consequence is the origination of a nonexistent (*asad-utpāda*), which is the same unacceptable consequence that was listed in the abovementioned scenario of origination occurring with regard to substances as such, i.e., as substances. If one were to think of origination as something independent not in terms of modes (which seems to be the aim of the first part of the argument here), but in terms of substances, one would arrive at a paradoxical situation, because, as noted, something that cannot be produced (i.e., a nonexistent) would be produced. Amṛtacandra Sūri says that this would be like the origination of sky flowers, a common example Indian philosophers use to depict a nonexistent.

He continues his argument by focusing on annihilation as an independent occurrence:

> Likewise, since there is no cause for the dissolution (*saṃhāra-kāraṇābhāva*) of the clod of clay (*mṛtpiṇḍa*), which is undergoing dissolution only, there would be either no dissolution (*asaṃharaṇi*) or a destruction of an existent (*sad-uccheda*).
>
> In the case of the clod of clay not undergoing dissolution, there would be no dissolution of anything.
>
> In the case of the destruction of an existent, there would be a destruction of consciousness (*saṃvid*), etc.[35]

If annihilation were an independent occurrence, the first unacceptable consequence, says Amṛtacandra Sūri, would be that there would be no dissolution (*asaṃharaṇi*) of anything at all, by which he indicates, similarly as in the previous case of origination, that annihilation cannot happen by itself. This again follows his premise that it is only being conditioned by the origination of a new mode on the one hand, and by continuity on the other, that an old mode can be annihilated. Again, if this holds for one particular existent, like a clod of clay, argues Amṛtacandra Sūri, it also holds for every other existent, since according to the Jainas – as noted above – all existents have the same metaphysical structure. So, if the clod of clay does not undergo annihilation,

35 *TD* II.8: tathā kevalaṃ saṃharamāṇasya mṛtpiṇḍasya saṃhāra-kāraṇābhāvād asaṃharaṇir eva bhavet sad-uccheda eva vā. tatra mṛtpiṇḍasyāsaṃharanau sarveṣām eva bhāvānām asaṃharaṇir eva bhavet. sad ucchede vā saṃvid-ādīnām apy ucchedaḥ syāt.

then nothing undergoes annihilation. The second unacceptable consequence that Amṛtacandra Sūri cautions against is the destruction of an existent (*sad-uccheda*), which matches the unacceptable consequence that he posits in the case of the abovementioned idea of annihilation occurring with regard to substances as such, i.e., as substances. Similarly to the case of origination, if one were to think of annihilation as something independent not in terms of modes, but in terms of substances, one would arrive at a paradoxical situation, because, as noted, a substance as eternal cannot be annihilated. In fact, as Amṛtacandra Sūri claims, the annihilation of a substance would be like the annihilation of awareness (*saṃvid*), something that is utterly unacceptable to the Jainas, as according to the Jaina metaphysics, no living being can ever completely lose their essential attribute of awareness or consciousness. Despite fluctuating in its degrees of manifestation, awareness as such is indestructible.

Amṛtacandra Sūri continues his list of unacceptable consequences by focusing on stability as an independent occurrence. He says,

> Likewise, since there is no constant of stability, overspread with divergences (*vyatirekākrānta-sthity-anvayābhāva*), of the clay, [in the case of] admitting stability only, there would be either no stability (*asthāni*) or an eternity of the momentary (*kṣaṇika-nityatva*).
>
> In the case of no stability of the clay, there would be no stability of anything.
>
> In the case of the eternity of the momentary, there would be eternity (*nityatva*) of the moments of *citta* (*citta-kṣaṇa*).[36]

According to Amṛtacandra Sūri, if stability were an independent occurrence, the first unacceptable consequence would be that there would be no stability (*asthāni*) of anything at all. As in the previous two cases, he indicates that stability cannot occur by itself. This accords with his premise that it is only through the variation of the passing away of an old mode and the arising of a new mode that stability can be manifested. Again, if this holds for one particular existent, like clay, as Amṛtacandra Sūri argues, it also holds for every other existent, since, as noted in the previous two cases, the metaphysical structure of existence is universal according to the Jainas. So if the clay is not stable, then nothing is stable.

The second unacceptable consequence that Amṛtacandra Sūri lists is the eternity of the momentary (*kṣaṇika-nityatva*). This formulation is similar to the

36 *TD* II.8: tathā kevalāṃ sthitim upagacchantyā mṛttikāyā vyatirekākrānta-sthity-anva yābhāvād asthānir eva bhavet, kṣaṇika-nityatvam eva vā. tatra mṛttikāyā asthānau sarveṣām eva bhāvānām asthānir eva bhavet. kṣaṇika-nityatve vā citta-kṣaṇānām api nityatvaṃ syāt.

one that he used to express the unacceptable consequence of stability occurring with regard to substances as such, i.e., as substances. There, he said that if stability were to occur with regard to substances as such, the result would be the nonexistence of a substance and, therefore, momentariness. Here, he mentions the second part of the previous formulation only, namely, existence as momentary. He illustrates this consequence with an example of the eternality of the moments of *citta* (*citta-kṣaṇa*), something that, as noted above, is completely unacceptable to the Jainas, as according to the Jaina metaphysics, a cognitive faculty is an essential attribute, and thus a stable aspect of every living being. This means that it cannot as such be fragmented into moments, even though, as an attribute, it continually undergoes momentary modal change.

Having shown that the idea of origination, annihilation, and loss occurring independently of each other leads to unacceptable consequences and is therefore insupportable, Amṛtacandra Sūri concludes that the three are in an eternal relationship of absolute interconditionality:

> Consequently, it is necessarily to acknowledge that a substance (*dravya*) is marked by three characteristics shining forth without interruption (*uddyotamāna-nirvighna-trai-lakṣaṇya-lāñchana*), unseparated (*avinābhūta*) from a creation of posterior divergences (*uttarottara-vyatireka*), from a dissolution of prior divergences (*pūrva-pūrva-vyatireka*), and a stability (*avasthāna*) of the constant (*anvaya*).[37]

4 Credibility of the Jaina Causal Model: Improvisation or Deliberation?

Having carefully studied the Jaina doctrine of the nature of causal relations in Amṛtacandra Sūri's *Tattva-dīpikā*, it is now possible to return to Potter's question of whether the conciliation offered by the Jaina causal model is a superficial and ad hoc or a methodical and cogent position. Following Kundakunda, Amṛtacandra Sūri emphasizes that origination, loss, and continuity all belong to the *same ontological plane*, that is, to the modal aspect of substances. This is one way in which the idea that novelty is not subordinate to continuity nor continuity to novelty was underlined. Another approach to coordinating the two was through the notion that the modal plane is an inalienable aspect of

37 *TD* II.8: tata uttarottara-vyatirekāṇām sargeṇa pūrva-pūrva-vyatirekāṇām saṃhāreṇānvaya-syāvasthānenāvinābhūtam uddyotamāna-nirvighna-trai-lakṣaṇya-lāñchanaṃ dravyam avaśyam anumantavyam.

substances. Substances need modes as much as modes need substances. This gives a solid grounding to modal dynamics, meaning that origination, loss, and continuity, as belonging to modes, are all *necessary* aspects of every substance. That they are equally so was indicated by the idea of the *momentary occurrence* of origination and decay. Their momentariness ensures that novelty is not secondary to continuity, but that every single moment of every existent is a moment of the arising of an effect as a convergence of origination, loss, and continuity. This results in a causal model that not only brings together novelty and continuity, but brings them together every single moment. Furthermore, origination, loss, and continuity were emphasized as eternally being in a relationship of total interconditionality, each one of them presenting the essential condition for the arising of the other. Thus, according to the Jaina causal model, novelty and continuity condition each other, without interruption, momentarily, eternally, on the same ontological plane, which is the modal aspect of every substance. These features clearly delineate the Jaina view on causality from the rival approaches to the issue. Unlike the case of an effect of *prakṛti* in Sāṃkhya, the novelty of an effect in the Jaina causal model is not secondary but essential to the continuity itself; moreover, unlike the case of an effect in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the novelty of an effect in the Jaina causal model necessitates continuity in order to take place, with novelty at the same time never overriding continuity. Reading Amṛtacandra Sūri's detailed exposition of the nature of causal relations and his systematic attempts to draw a balanced model that coordinates the novelty and continuity of effects with regard to their substantial causes, it is clear that it is clear that the explanations of the Jaina model of causality can certainly be deliberate, carefully articulated, and coherent.

Abbreviations

PS – Pavayaṇa-sāra (Pravacana-sāra)
TD – Tattva-dīpikā

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Gregory Forgues

8 Charting the Geographies of 'Ju Mi pham rnam rgyal rgya mtsho's Perspectivist Approach to the Two Truths

'Ju Mi pham rNam rgyal rGya mtsho[1] is considered one of the greatest scholars of the rNying ma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. He is well known for his original and somewhat innovative presentation of Madhyamaka, which integrates both Candrakīrti's tradition and Śāntarakṣita's philosophical legacy.[2] Two-thirds of Mipham's (1846–1912) works concern subjects related to philosophical topics such as epistemology, ontology, and metaphysics.[3] Although he did not shy away from intellectual confrontation and debate on more than a few occasions,[4] he is first and foremost known for his inclusivist[5] interpretation of Buddhist doctrines.[6] In this paper, I will focus on his interpretation of the two truths (*bden*

1 Hereafter Mipham, unless his name is transliterated in Wylie (i.e. 'Ju Mi pham rNam rgyal rGya mtsho) or quoted from an author following a different transliteration of Mipham's name (e.g. Mi-pham, Mipam, etc.).

2 For biographical details on Mipham's life, see Dieter Schuh, *Tibetische Handschriften und Blockdrucke sowie Tonbandaufnahmen tibetischer Erzählungen*, vol. 11.5 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973); Steven D. Goodman, "Mi-pham rGya-mtsho: An Account of his Life, the Printing of his Works, and the Structure of his Treatise Entitled mkhas-pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo," in *Wind Horse*, ed. Ronald M. Davidson (Fremont: Jain Publishing Company, 1981), 59–78; John W. Pettit, *Mi pham's Beacon of Certainty: Illuminating the View of Dzogchen, the Great Perfection* (Boston: Wisdom, 1999), 1ff.; Gene E. Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts, History & Literature of the Himalayan Plateau* (Boston: Wisdom, 2001), 230–231; Douglas S. Duckworth, *Jamgön Mipam: His Life and Teachings* (Boston: Shambhala, 2011).

3 See Karma Phuntsho, "Ju Mi pham rNam rgyal rGya mTsho. His Position in the Tibetan Religious Hierarchy and a Synoptic Survey of his Contributions," in *The Pandita and the Siddha, Tibetan Studies in Honour of E. Gene Smith*, ed. Ramon N. Prats (Dharamsala: Amnye Machen Institute, 2007), 191–209 for a presentation of Mipham's main works.

4 See Markus Viehbeck, *Polemics in Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism: A Late 19th-Century Debate between 'Ju Mi pham and Dpa' ris Rab gsal* (Vienna: Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, 2014).

5 This term refers to the work of Indologist Paul Hacker on the notion of "inclusivism"; see Paul Hacker, "Inklusivismus," in *Inklusivismus: Eine indische Denkform*, ed. Gerhardt Oberhammer (Vienna: Institut für Indologie der Universität Wien, 1983), 11–28. Inclusivism denotes the tendency to integrate central concepts and ideas from another religious tradition into one's own approach.

6 See for example Pettit, *Mi pham's Beacon of Certainty*, 6; Karma Phuntsho, *Mi pham's Dialectics and the Debate of Emptiness* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 8, 15, 207, 211.

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gnyis, *satyadvaya*),[7] namely, the "concealing" (*kun rdzob*, *saṃvṛti*)[8] and the "ultimate" (*don dam pa*, *paramārtha*).[9]

In his monograph investigating the Tibetan hermeneutical debate on the two truths, Sonam Thakchoe notes that Mipham's treatment of the subject appears contradictory. He considers Mipham's discourse as ambiguous, since Mipham seems to both endorse and criticize Tsong kha pa's (1357–1419) position.[10] More importantly, Thakchoe remarks that Mipham propounds contradictory doctrines on the nature of the relationship between the two truths.[11] Reading Thakchoe, one is left with the impression that Mipham's position on the matter is rather inconsistent. The fact that Mipham also describes the relationship between the two truths in terms of "unity" (*zung 'jug*, *yuganaddha*) could only, from Thakchoe's point of view, aggravate the charge of philosophical inconsistency. Thakchoe's reading of Mipham therefore raises an important question: does Mipham's position entail contradictions? And if not, how are we to make sense of his discourse on the two truths?

Phuntsho was the first to identify Mipham's various doctrinal positions in his treatment of the relationship between the two truths.[12] Duckworth has also noted the presence and importance of various perspectives in Mipham's writings.[13] Finally, Wangchuk has stressed the centrality of the term *zung 'jug* ("unity")

7 Technical terms are given in Tibetan and Sanskrit (when available).

8 I translate *kun rdzob* as "concealing" in accordance with the Sanskrit etymology of the word *saṃvṛti*. For a detailed analysis of this term in Mipham's presentation of the two truths, see point 2 below.

9 The two truths represent a didactic model commonly found in Buddhist literature. This model distinguishes two levels of truth in order to present the nature of our reality.

10 Sonam Thakchoe, *The Two Truths Debate* (Boston: Wisdom, 2007), 176, n. 58. Tsong kha pa is the founder of the dGe lugs school of Tibetan Buddhism, one of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The numerous theoretical complexities induced by Mipham's perspectivist interpretation of the two truths has been the subject of fierce debate between Mipham and dGe lugs scholars. On this occasion, dGe lugs scholars disputed several points, among which the inseparability (*zun 'jug*) of the two truths as expounded by Mipham. For an analysis of the polemical literature produced by these debates, see Viehbeck, *Polemics in Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism*.

11 See Thakchoe, *The Two Truths Debate*, 180. Thakchoe sees Mipham as accepting both that the two truths are incompatible (i.e., *gcig pa dkag pa'i tha dad*, "different in the sense that their identity is negated"), and that they have a single ontological identity but different conceptual identities (*ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad*, "different conceptual distinguishers with regard to a single entity").

12 See Phuntsho, *Mi pham's Dialectics and the Debate of Emptiness*, 123.

13 See for example Duckworth, *Mipam on Buddha Nature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 138.

in Mipham's discourse on the two truths.[14] These excellent publications on Mipham's interpretation of Madhyamaka have not, however, systematically addressed the issues raised by Thakchoe in 2007. Phuntsho's contribution was published before Thakchoe even identified the issue, while Duckworth's *Mipam on Buddha Nature* was written at roughly the same time.

In this paper, I show that Mipham sees any informed knowledge on the nature of reality as perspectival and expressed to address a specific soteriological concern. According to his view, discourses on the relationship between the two truths are soteriologically situated. Mipham's presentation of Madhyamaka can therefore be seen as perspectivist insofar as Mipham considers the validity of doctrines on the two truths as dependent on the soteriological context within which these doctrines are formulated. This inclusivist approach results in a complex presentation of Madhyamaka in which several seemingly contradictory positions are ranked according to an ascending scale of views. To answer Thakchoe's questions, it is therefore essential to examine in detail the cognitive and epistemic standpoints from which Mipham expounds the two truths in his writings on the subject.[15]

1 A Perspectivist Approach to the Two Truths

As noted by Tibetan and Western scholars alike, Mipham uses two distinct definitions of the two truths to ascertain the view (*lta ba*, *dṛṣṭi*).[16] The first definition is based on the distinction between appearance (*snang ba*) and emptiness (*stong pa*), whereas the second hinges on the concordance, or

14 See Dorji Wangchuk, "Was Mi-pham a Dialectical Monist? On a Recent Study of Mi-pham's Interpretation of the Buddha-Nature Theory," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 55 (2012): 15–38.

15 Mipham's view on the two truths, as found in his *Collected Works* (*Mi pham gsung 'bum*), did not evolve through time. His doctrinal positions are remarkably stable from the moment he started composing commentaries and original works. In addition to primary sources, I also consulted the monographs and articles mentioned in the bibliography below. Key statements drawn from Mipham's works found in some of these publications were retranslated from the Tibetan for the present article.

16 See for example Duckworth, *Mipam on Buddha Nature*, 6ff.; Duckworth, *Jamgön Mipam: His Life and Teachings*, 13; Phuntsho, *Mi pham's Dialectics and the Debate of Emptiness*, 114ff.; Markus Viehbeck, "Fighting for the Truth – Satyadvaya and the Debates Provoked by Mi pham's Nor bu ke ta ka," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 34, no. 1–2 (2011): 291–320; Wangchuk, "Was Mi-pham a Dialectical Monist?" 24; Viehbeck, *Polemics in Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism*, 151, n. 207.

lack thereof, between the way things are (*gnas lugs*) and the way they appear (*snang lugs*). In the *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*, his commentary on Śāntarakṣita's *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*, one of his most personal philosophical works, Mipham declares[17]:

> Moreover, in [all the Buddha's] words (*bka'*) and treatises (*bstan bcos*, *śāstra*), there are two ways to posit the two truths: (1) From the perspective of a valid cognition investigating the ultimate, namely, the way [things] are (*gnas lugs*), the "ultimate" refers to emptiness (*stong pa*) and the "concealing" to appearances (*snang ba*); (2) From the perspective of a conventional (*kun tu tha snyad*) valid cognition investigating the mode of appearance [of things] (*snang tshul*), the "ultimate" refers to the subject and object for which nature and appearance (*gnas snang*) are in irrefutable accordance. The "concealing" refers to the opposite.[18]

According to Mipham, the first definition – termed *snang stong* – is usually encountered in Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka or in the *sūtra*s of the Second Turning of the Wheel that explicate the absence of "own-nature" (*ngo bo nyid*, *svabhāva*) of phenomena. The second definition is prevalent in the Maitreya tradition and the *sūtra*s of the Third Turning of the Wheel. The latter is also referred to as the *mthun mi mthun* ("accordance/discordance") model, since the distinction between the two truths depends upon whether the way things appear is concordant with the way things are. As a consequence, the first definition (*snang stong*) could be considered to be apophatic, being based on the ultimate analysis of appearances showing their absence of "own-nature." The second definition (*mthun mi mthun*) implies a more cataphatic approach to the ultimate through the distinction it establishes between the sphere of mind (*sems*) that constitutes the concealing truth and gnosis (*ye shes*), the ultimate. In Mipham's system, this second definition is used to explain that the nature of a buddha (*tathāgatagarbha*) is empty of adventitious afflictions (*nyon mongs, kleśa*), but not empty of buddha qualities; in other words, to teach the difference between the conditioned mind and gnosis, which cannot be reduced to a blank nothingness. One should add that these two definitions of the truths are not mutually

17 For a summary of this point, see *gZhan stong khas len seng ge'i nga ro* in Pettit, *Mi pham's Beacon of Certainty*, 416, and Duckworth, *Mipam on Buddha Nature*, 6–20, about the use of the second definition of the two truths in the context of Mipham's interpretation of the *tathāgatagarbha* theory; cf. Phuntsho, *Mi pham's Dialectics*, 114–16.

18 *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*, 30, 3: *de'ang bka' dang bstan bcos rnams na bden gnyis 'jog tshul gnyis su gnas te/ gnas lugs don dam la dpyod pa'i tshad ma'i dbang du byas te/ stong pa la don dam dang/ snang ba la kun rdzob ces bzhag pa dang/ snang tshul la dpyod pa kun tu tha snyad pa'i tshad ma'i dbang du byas te/ gnas snang mthun pa mi bslu ba'i yul dang yul can la don dam dang/ ldog phyogs la kun rdzob tu 'jog pa'i tshul gnyis las/*

exclusive, since gnosis is considered to be without an "own-nature," although it does possess qualities.

From the viewpoint of rDzogs chen, the highest teaching in Mipham's tradition, the first definition of the two truths appears to be formulated from an ontological perspective, stressing the primordially pure (*ka dag*) aspect of reality, whereas the second definition seems to be expressed from a cognitive perspective conducive to the realization of the spontaneously present (*lhun grub*) aspect of reality. The propaedeutic function of this perspectival approach plays a central role in the way Mipham teaches Madhyamaka as a doctrine that facilitates the realization of rDzogs chen. In his introduction to the *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*, he thus clearly differentiates the context in which statements about the ultimate are made and explains at length that there are no contradictions between different views insofar as one understands that the multiplicity of apparently divergent opinions on a given topic reflects the various contexts in which these views are formulated.

This hermeneutic strategy based on the notion of standpoint and perspective is often used by Mipham to avoid contradictions, but it is also profoundly reflective of his understanding that doctrines, as expressions of a truth, are related to a specific epistemic context. To illustrate this point, I would like to turn to Mipham's first definition of the two truths, in which the standard opposition between appearance and emptiness is resolved in a way that is similar to Go rams pa's approach:[19]

> With regard to those [two truths], the concealing truth represents all phenomena (*chos*, *dharma*) in whatever way they appear: the ground comprised of the conditioned and the unconditioned, [such as] the aggregates (*phung po*, *skandha*), the basic constituents (*khams*, *dhātu*), and the sources of cognition (*skye mched*, *āyatana*); the path, [for example,] the perfections, the factors conducive to awakening (*byang chub kyi phyogs*, *bodhipakṣa*), etc.; and the fruit, [such as] the ten powers and so forth. In brief, [the concealing truth includes] the innumerable phenomena, as many as they are (*ji snyed pa*), all that is posited from the perspective of the incontrovertible (*bslus med*) mode of appearance of cognitive objects.
>
> With regard to the ultimate truth, the phenomena of the ground, path, and fruit abide within the emptiness that is not established as anything at all. This [mode of abiding], being posited from the perspective of the way things are (*gnas lugs*), is the profound phenomenon (*chos*, *dharma*) as it is (*ji lta ba*).

19 See José Ignacio Cabezón and Geshe Lobsang Dargyay, trans., *Freedom from Extremes, Gorampa's "Distinguishing the View" and the Polemics of Emptiness* (Boston: Wisdom, 2007), 207–11.

> Realizing that these two [truths] are in the real sense in a state of unity (*zung 'jug*) or fundamental sameness (*mnyam pa nyid*) is the supreme object of realization, the ultimate purpose.[20]

In this apparently basic definition of the two truths, a central point is made. Each truth corresponds to an object that is dependent on an epistemic perspective. The dividing line between those truths is, by way of consequence, not so much the concealing and ultimate objects in themselves, but the way things are perceived. In his *Nor bu ke ta ka*, while commenting on Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*BCA* IX.2), Mipham thus quotes Candrakīrti's *Mādhyamakāvatāra* (*Mav* VI, 23):

> By perceiving correctly or incorrectly all things,
> The two natures of all things will be apprehended [. . .][21]

2 The Concealing Truth as an Epistemic Perspective

As explained by Mipham in the quote above, the concealing truth is "what is posited from the perspective of the incontrovertible mode of appearance of all cognitive objects." Objects are mere experiences, appearances, manifestations (*snang ba*). The concept of "truth" is clearly conceived here in epistemic terms rather than as a purely ontological issue. In Mipham's explanation, the concealing truth consists merely of mistaken experience. Mipham thus declares in his *Nor bu ke ta ka*,

> [. . .] although the concealing truth is devoid of arising and so on, in its nature, it is that which appears as that (*der snang*), a mode of appearance similar to an illusion, a dream, or a hair [appearing to someone suffering from myodesopsia].[22]

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20 *Mkhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo, Vol.II*, 174: *de la kun rdzob kyi bden pa ni ji ltar snang ba'i chos gzhi 'dus byas dang 'dus ma byas kyis bsdus pa phung khams skye mched dang / lam phar phyin dang byang phyogs sogs dang/ 'bras bu stobs bcu la sogs pa mdor na shes bya rnams kyi snang tshul bslus med kyi ngos nas bzhag pa ji snyed pa rgya che ba'i chos so/ don dam bden pa ni gzhi lam 'bras bu'i chos de dag rang bzhin cir yang ma grub pa'i stong pa nyid du gnas pa ni gnas lugs kyi ngos nas bzhag pa ste ji lta ba zab mo'i chos so/ de gnyis yang dag pa'i don du zung 'jug mnyam pa nyid du rtogs pa ni rtogs bya rnams kyi nang na mchog tu gyur pa mthar thug gi don no/*

21 For the Sanskrit, see Xuezhu Li, "Madhyamakāvatāra-kārikā," *China Tibetology* 1 (2012): 5: *samyagmṛṣādarśanalabdhabhāvaṃ rūpadvayaṃ bibhrati sarvabhāvāḥ*.

22 *Nor bu ke ta ka*, 4: *de la kun rdzob ni skye sogs kyi rang bzhin du med bzhin der snang sgyu ma dang rmi lam skra shad lta bu'i snang tshul 'di yin la/*

A correct understanding of the compound lexeme *der snang ba* is required to grasp Mipham's understanding of concealing truth. As is characteristic of Buddhist polysemic technical terms, *snang ba* is translated in various ways: it is generally assumed to mean "appearance," "perception," "manifestation," or "experience." I have chosen to translate it as "appearance" in the sense of the manifestation as an experience. The notion of experience here conveys the idea of subjectivity, while the idea of manifestation expresses the dynamic aspect of *snang ba*. Unfortunately, these two aspects are somewhat missing when one translates *snang ba* with "appearance." An appearance is usually understood as belonging to an external object and a perception as something purely subjective. The notion of appearance in the sense of a cognitive event supports a gradual shift from the perspective of the concealing truth experienced by ordinary beings up to the perspective of sublime beings (*'phags pa rnams*), a method that is the whole point of Mipham's propaedeutic approach to the two truths. The term does not aim here at reinforcing any dualistic ontological identification of the concealing in terms of subject/object, which is the mark of lower substantialist systems. We can therefore safely understand *der snang ba* as meaning "that which appears there" in the sense of "an appearance as this or that in [one's] mind." With this expression, Mipham refers to a cognitive process without implying that appearances exist ultimately as mind itself, that is to say, without substantially (*rdzas su*, *dravyatas*) positing any existence, on the side of the subject or the object. In his commentary to the *dBu ma rgyan*, he explains,[23]

> One fully knows how things are conventionally by accepting that the various appearances are magical manifestations (*rnam par 'phrul pa*, *vikurvāṇa*), and [one thus] acquires confidence in the way [one] enters in or turns away from *saṃsāra*. Further, from the perspective of the way things are, which is free from all objective supports (*dmigs pa*, *ālambana*), marks, and mental proliferations, it is not even observed that "appearance is mind." However, this is the ultimate that is beyond conventional designations. [53] Within the

23 My preference would be to translate *snang ba* with "manifestation of an experience," which has the advantage of not committing oneself to either of the two alternatives of the subject/object dichotomy while maintaining the dynamic notion *snang ba* carries. However, I have settled for "appearance," which, being much shorter, leads to a more concise translation of this term. In the context of rDzogs chen, this term facilitates the right understanding of the expressive power (*rtsal*) of awareness (*rig pa*) or even of *nyams*, the temporary shifting experiences during practice that belong to mind and not to *rig pa*. As Mipham has based his exposition of Madhyamaka on a gradual progression towards the view of rDzogs chen, I believe that it is important to remain in the spirit of this tradition when translating these technical terms in order to allow for a smooth transition between the different levels of Mipham's ascending scale of philosophical views.

> context of the appearance of conventional designations, the existence of external objects is refuted by reasoning, while it is established through reasoning that this [appearance] is nothing but mind.[24] As a consequence, insofar as a conventional designation is accepted without contradicting confined perception (*tshur mthong*), there is no better [account of the concealing] than this. If one examines the phenomena that are merely posited through the power of conceptuality, [one finds that] they are not established as anything at all. However, these unceasing and incontrovertible appearances, which are experienced from one's point of view, are established by the power of the things themselves as mental appearances or one's own appearances.[25]

For Mipham, the concealing truth is thus nothing but this multiplicity of experiences manifesting in the mind. He justifies this view by stressing that since such a presentation is in accord with empirical perceptions, there is no better way to define the concealing truth. However, these experiences are not mind, a significant point made by Klong chen pa that Mipham undeniably accepts.[26]

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24 Mipham does not mean hereby that things are mind, but only that they appear "there" (i.e., in the mind). They are information in the forms of ideas, notions, and various types of cognitions. Their substance, however, is neither matter nor mind. His remark is purely epistemic. This way of positing the concealing truth is reminiscent of the Maitreya chapter of the *SNS* (*SNS* 6). Klong chen pa also understands *snang ba* in the same way: "Notons de plus que Klong chen pa feint aussi souvent de tenir l'esprit pour le spectateur des apparences, celui qui en juge, tandis qu'en même temps il est clair que les apparences ne sont rien de plus que ce fait pour lui de les percevoir. On demandera pourquoi il prétend ainsi distinguer l'esprit des apparences; c'est qu'il décrit une structure 'apparaître-à-l'esprit', dont les moments sont indissociables, mais en même temps ne sont possibles que pour autant qu'ils paraissent autonomes. Qu'est-ce-à dire? Le mot '*snang ba*' doit, comme on l'a dit, s'interpréter comme le 'paraître' (comme processus) et en même temps comme le contenu qualifié de cette apparition"; see Stéphane Arguillère, "Le Repos de l'esprit, la question de voie graduée dans le rDzogs pa Chen po selon quelques oeuvres de Klong chen Rab 'byams" (MA thesis, Paris: 1991), 40. As rightly remarked by Arguillère, *snang ba* denotes both the process and its content.

25 *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*, 52.5ff.: *gsum pa snang ba sna tshogs pa sems kyi rnam 'phrul du khas blangs pas tha snyad kyi yin lugs mthar thug pa shes shing 'khor bar 'jug ldog gi tshul la yid ches thob ste/ de la dmigs mtshan spros pa thams cad dang bral ba'i gnas lugs kyi dbang du na/ snang ba sems yin no zhes kyang mi dmigs mod/ de ni tha snyad las 'das pa'i don dam pa yin la/* [53] *tha snyad snang ba'i ngang tshul 'di la gnas ni/ phyi don yod pa la rigs pas gnod cing/ sems tsam yin pa la rigs pa'i sgrub byed yod pas tshur mthong gis las ma brgal bar tha snyad zhig khas len na 'di las gong du gyur pa med de/ rtog pa'i dbang gis bzhag pa tsam gyi chos rnams dpyad na gang du'ang ma grub kyang/ rang ngor myong tshul gyis bslu med du snang ba 'gog tu med pa 'di sems kyi snang ba'am rang snang tsam du dngos po'i stobs kyis grub pa yin no/*

26 In his presentation of Mañjuśrīmitra's *rDo la gser*, Lipman shows that, in the *Yid bzhin mdzod*, Klong chen pa insists that *snang ba* has no substratum: "Nowadays, ignoramuses say that rDzogs chen claims that how things appear is merely our own mind. This is totally unacceptable, for it leads to the absurd conclusion that mind can be divided into parts, colours, and qualities you can get a hold on, since the way things appear seems to be so. [. . .] However, we

As a consequence, these appearances are not declared to be mind in any ontological sense. In a word, when Mipham defines the concealing truth as experiences manifesting in the mind, he does not imply that the essence of appearances is nothing but mind (*cittamātra*) in the way of an idealist reductionism. His view is not that mind has a higher ontological status than other phenomena on the level of the concealing truth. In fact, Mipham's presentation of the concealing simply describes an epistemic process that does not entail any assertion of existence as such. Ascribing an ultimate substance to illusion is not the point. Rather, the point is that delusion as a cognitive event takes place from a purely epistemic perspective. These manifestations of various experiences, these appearances, are seen as "the play of mind," even at the level of the *sūtra*s, which, in the perspective of higher teachings such as rDzogs chen, can subsequently facilitate a gradual transition from a lower (i.e., provisional) understanding of the concealing to a more profound one, as found in the context of the unity (*zung 'jug*) of the two truths:

> Thus, when one knows that appearances are the play of mind, [one has] a way to find certainty as to how one engages in or turns away from *saṃsāra*.[27]

Conditioned (*'dus byas, saṃskṛta*) phenomena are seen by Mipham as nothing but experiences manifesting in the mind, and represent a dualistic cognitive process.[28] Mind is identified as delusion, not as the ultimate, from the perspective of ordinary beings, which echoes rDzogs chen's distinction between dualistic mind (*sems*) and nondual awareness (*rig pa*). Mipham's approach allows

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maintain that how things appear is without root or basis, occasioned by the intoxicant of the deluding habituating tendencies making themselves felt in experience. Therefore, we are those who say that there is no actuality to how things appear." See Kennard Lipman and Namkhai Norbu, *Primordial Experience* (Boston: Shambhala,1986), 21; further, "Since all the configurations of events/meanings that present themselves to us as the five sense objects of visible form, and so forth, as well as the whole outer world and the beings it contains, are present in mind, they are not something apart from mind. Although they seem to be something other than mind, since they are actually nonexistent, like a dream or conjurer's illusion, they can't be found as something apart from mind. Also, for this reason, they can't be identified with mind itself, as illustrated by the eight similes of conjurer's illusion, and so forth. Examining the ultimate components, whether individual or composite, of material objects that, although they are nothing at all, are clearly experienced, shows that either way they are just the same in that there is nothing that makes them what they are" (Lipman, *Primordial Experience*, 22–23; I use "mind" instead of Lipman's "experience" for *sems*).

27 *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*, 53.4ff.: *de ltar snang ba sems nyid kyi rol par shes na 'khor bar 'jug ldog gi tshul la nges pa rnyed tshul yang/*

28 See Pettit, *Mi pham's Beacon of Certainty*, 155.

him to refer to this distinction through his second definition of the two truths, corresponding to the concordance/discordance (*mthun mi mthun*) model.[29]

Putative objects are consequently reduced merely to the vast field of experiences and appearances occurring in the mind as being real, although they are not. As stated in Mipham's commentary on the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*:

> That which is designated as "phenomenon" in the immediately preceding explanation, the character (*mtshan nyid*, *lakṣaṇa*) of *saṃsāra* itself, appears dualistically as an apprehending subject or an apprehended object. Then, inasmuch as this appearance is grasped as this or that and designated by various expressions, this dualistic appearance of an apprehended object and an apprehending subject, being an appearance, is not truly established, just like the perspective of a drawing that appears to exist.[30] Therefore, like the appearance of strands of hair and so forth [for someone suffering of myodesopsia], it is nothing but one's own incorrect projection (*kun tu rtog pa*, *parikalpa*), since it appears in [one's] mind in the manner of a nonexistent object.[31]

According to Mipham, the concealing truth is a perspective that takes as an existing object that which does not exist. If this object is analyzed, nothing is found. But since ordinary beings experience something, this level of ordinary reality is etymologically termed "concealing" (*kun rdzob*, *saṃvṛti*). Mipham's explanations in the *Nor bu ke ta ka* and in the *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad* follow those of Prajñākāramati's *ad BCA* 2a–b here[32]:

> Because the so-called "concealing [truth]" appears as arising and so forth, emptiness is hidden from the perspective of spiritually immature persons and must be exclusively understood as that which has become veiled (*bsgribs pa*).[33]

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29 On the distinction between *sems* and *ye shes* in rDzogs chen, see David Higgins, *The Philosophical Foundations of Classical rDzogs chen in Tibet: Investigating the Distinction between Dualistic Mind (sems) and Primordial Knowing (ye shes)* (Vienna: Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, 2013).

30 Cf. *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkara*, XIII, 17ab, where the same simile is found: *yathaiva citre vidhivad vicitrite natonnataṃ nāsti ca dṛśyate 'tha ca/*

31 *Ye shes snang ba*, 615.3: *bshad ma thag pa de la chos zhes brjod pa 'khor ba de nyid kyi mtshan nyid ni/ gzung 'dzin gnyis su snang ba dang/ ji ltar snang ba de 'di dang de ltar zhen cing ming sna tshogs kyis mngon par brjod par snang ba can 'di nyid de/ 'di ltar tshul bzhin bris ba'i ri mo la ma thod man med kyang yod par snang ba ltar gzung 'dzin gnyis su snang ba de ni/ snang ba ltar don lam grub bas na dper na skra shad la sogs par snang ba bzhin du yang dag pa ma yin pa'i rang gi kun tu rtog pa tsam/ yul med bzhin tu sems la snang ba'i phyir ro/*

32 See P. L. Vaidya, *Bodhicaryāvatāra of Śāntideva with the Commentary Pañjikā of Prajñākaramati* (Dharbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1960), 176, lines 4–11.

33 *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*, 30.6ff.: *kun rdzob ces skye ba sogs su snang ba'i tshul gyis byis pa rnams kyi ngor stong pa nyid spas shing bsgribs par gyur pa lta bu zhig kho na la go dgos kyi/*

In this statement, Mipham does not present the concealing truth as intrinsically different from the ultimate, but as that which has become concealed, obstructed, covered, veiled (*saṃvṛti*) "from the perspective of spiritually immature beings." This latter remark might seem innocuous, but it is an essential point in Mipham's discernment of various perspectives in accordance with Śāntarakṣita's approach, particularly in the context of a discourse on the ultimate.

3 The Ultimate Truth . . . from the Perspectives of the Concealing and the Ultimate Truths

In his commentary on *BCA* 2a–b, Mipham mentions two ultimates: the nominal (*rnam grangs pa'i don dam*, **paryāyaparamārtha*) or concordant ultimate (*mthun pa'i don dam*) and the actual ultimate (*rnam grangs min pa'i don dam*, **aparyāyaparamārtha*). The nominal ultimate is defined as "the mere ultimate nonexistence of all substantial things." The actual ultimate is on its part defined as "freedom from the four extremes." According to Mipham (cf. *Nor bu ke ta ka ad BCA* 2a–b), pretending that things exist conventionally but are ultimately nonexistent is acceptable from the perspective of beginners, but is definitely limited from the perspective of sublime beings. Here again, the ultimate is explained from the perspective of the essence, since, as explained by Kapstein, this division prevents one from conflating the discourse about the absolute with its realization.[34] According to Mipham, the nominal ultimate is therefore nothing more than a pedagogical device that is simply in accordance with the actual ultimate:[35]

> Likewise, at the beginning, conventional arising and ultimate nonarising [of phenomena], as objects of language and conceptuality at the time of hearing and reflecting are established together within a twofold system [i.e., the two truths]. As one member of this pair, the nominal ultimate is [called] nominal because it is a conceptualization of the ultimate, and it is derived from the opposite pair member with which it is associated (i.e., concealing [truth]). The nominal, the opposite of the concealing within the so-called two truths, is the cause [of the understanding of the actual ultimate]. It is merely an entrance gate leading to the consummate ultimate (*don dam mthar thug*).[36]

34 See Kapstein, *Reason's Traces* (Boston: Wisdom, 2001), 329.

35 See Viehbeck, "Fighting for the Truth."

36 *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*, 34.5ff.: *de ltar dang por thos bsam gyi sgra rtog gi yul du gyur pa'i tha snyad du skye ba dang/ don dam par mi skye ba lta bu tshul gnyis zung du bzhag pa'i ya gyal rnams grangs pa'i don dam ni/ kun rdzob yod pa'i zlas drangs pa'i phyir ram/ don dam*

If the ultimate beyond all mental proliferations is stated in the form of a non-affirming negation, then some unfortunate consequences ensue. Mipham uses a typical *reductio ad absurdum* here:

> Without the two investigations of the ultimate,
> The unity (*zung 'jug*) of the two truths would not be known.[37]
> As the ultimate would fall into the extreme of mental proliferations,
> It would namely, itself, destroy its own nature.[38]

Already in his *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*, Mipham seems to be honestly concerned that such a way of stating the ultimate might lead to the wrong understanding:

> If this alone, [namely that the ultimate truth means nonexistence], is taught as the ultimate, some people of weak understanding would think, "Nonexistence only, which is the negation of the *negandum*, is the [ultimate] nature [of phenomena]." Clinging to emptiness, they would become incurably attached to this view [of emptiness]. This clinging is of two kinds: the clinging to emptiness as something substantial and the clinging [to emptiness] as something insubstantial.[39]

In the following statement, Mipham shows that sheer nonexistence alone is indeed nothing but conceptuality in disguise.[40] It is not to be confused with the freedom from extremes that corresponds to what could prosaically be termed a mystical experience beyond the range of our ordinary cognitive processes:

> Thus, owing to the clinging to substantial things (*dngos po*, *bhāva*) as being existent, which has been a habit since beginningless time, [phenomena] are established as nonexistent and one is made familiar with [this]. If one does not understand that the nature of [any seemingly] substantial thing is nonexistent, the certainty regarding the nature of phenomena, which is beyond extremes, cannot arise. However, this pure nonexistence alone (*med pa nyid tsam kho na*) is not the consummate nature of phenomena. At the time when this substantial thing that is investigated and about which it is said "No substantial thing such as form and so forth exists" is conventionally not perceived as arising

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pa'i grangs su gtogs pas na rnam grangs te/ bden pa gnyis zhes pa'i kun rdzob kyi zlar bgrang rgyud de yin la/ de ni don dam mthar thug dang mthun pa'i sgo tsam mam/

37 The first verse refers to the nominal and the actual ultimates.

38 *Shes rab ral gri*, 804.3ff.: */don dam dpyod byed gnyis med na//bden gnyis zung 'jug mi shes shing//don dam spros pa'i mthar lhung la//de yang rang gis rang nyid 'jig/*

39 *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*, 55.5ff.: *de tsam zhig don dam du bstan na ni blo chung ba gcig dgag bya bkag pa'i med pa tsam gnas lugs so snyam du stong pa nyid la zhen nas dsor mi rung ba'i lta bar 'gyur la/ zhen tshul la'ang stong nyid la dngos por zhen pa dang dngos med du zhen pa gnyis yod/*

40 On the three types of conceptuality (*sgra don 'dzes 'dzin gyi rtog pa*, *ngo bo nyid kyi rtog pa*, *rtsing zhib kyi rtog pa*), see Phuntsho, *Mi pham's Dialectics*, 190ff.

and so forth on the basis of its own essence, how could [this nonexistence of a substantial thing] then be the intellect's object of reference, since the very nonexistence of [any] substantial thing that depends on this [substantial thing] (*de la brten*) has no substantial thing it can relate to? It is impossible, just like the death of the unborn son of a barren woman is not perceived. Thus, nonexistence does not exist, as it is only posited in dependence upon existence, namely, that which is established by its own essence as independent.

Some say, "Well, by negating existence, nonexistence is established. If in turn you negate nonexistence as well, since it will go on and on with these two, then what will you do?"[41] It is certainly true that such conceptualizations (*kun rtog*), [made] in the way an elephant bathes [in the mud], arise in those who, in reliance upon consciousness (*rnam shes*, *vijñāna*), take a point of view [based on] the confined perception of dogmatic logicians (*tshur mthong rtog ge'i dbang du byas pa*).[42] As the inconceivable nature of phenomena (*chos nyid*, *dharmatā*) is supreme among [all kinds of] greatness that frighten the unfortunates, they do not understand its nature. When something is taught as the insubstantiality [of phenomena], they apprehend [it] as a nihilistic emptiness. When something is taught as that which is endowed with appearance, they apprehend it as really established. When something is termed "the unity [of appearance and emptiness]," they apprehend it as an object such as a rope [made of] of black and white braided strands. When something is termed "inconceivable," nothing dawns on them, aside from something like the Hwa shang's view of [mental] blankness. If everyone could easily understand this supreme and profound nature of phenomena (*chos nyid*, *dharmatā*), why is it said,[43] "Being completely beyond the world, the sphere of the sublime ones is difficult to perceive and difficult to understand, inconceivable"?[44]

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41 This represents the position of those for whom the principle of the excluded middle is valid (namely the dGe lugs pa), also on the level of the ultimate. The very negation of nonexistence establishes existence and vice versa. Hence the vicious circle mentioned here by the opponent's objection.

42 Cf. Arguillère, *L'Opalescent Joyau Nor-bu ke-ta-ka. Mi pham* (Paris: Fayard, 2004), 88, n. 2: "L'éléphant en se vautrant dans la boue se souille tout en se lavant. De même la notion de vacuité, en tant que telle, n'est-elle pas une idée fictive au même titre que les conceptions implicites du substantialisme naïf ou les constructions savantes du substantialisme philosophique?"

43 I could not identify the source of this quote: *de dag 'jig rten mtha' dag las 'das shing 'phags pa'i spyod yul blta dka' zhing shes par dka' bsam gyis mi khyab*.

44 *Nor bu ke ta ka*, 27, 1ff.: *re zhig thog med nas goms pa'i dngos po yod pa nyid du zhen pa de'i ngor byas nas med pa nyid du sgrub cing goms par byed de/ dngos po rang bzhin med par ma shes na gnas lugs mtha' bral la nges pa skye ba'i skabs gtan med pas so/ /'on kyang med pa nyid de tsam kho na gnas lugs mthar thug ni ma yin te/ gang tshe gzugs sogs dngos po gang zhig med do zhes brtag bya'i dngos po de tha snyad du rang gi ngo bos skye ba sogs su mi dmigs na/ de tshe de la rten pa'i dngos med kyang rten dngos po dang bral bas na/ blo yi mdun na dmigs gtad kyi yul du ji ltar gnas te gnas mi srid de mog sham gyi bu skye ba med na de shi ba'ang mi dmigs pa bzhin no/ des na med pa ni yod pa la brten nas bzhag pa tsam ltos med du ngo bos grub pa ni med do/'on yod pa bkag nas med pa sgrub/ slar yang med pa'ang bkag nas yod pa sgrub/ de gnyis res mos spel bas ci zhig bya zer na/ rnam shes la rton cing tshur mthong rtog ge'i dbang du byas pa dag la glang chen gyi khrus dang 'dra ba'i kun rtog 'di lta bu 'byung ba ni shin*

Equipped with this approach of the twofold ultimate corresponding to two different perspectives, Mipham aims at conciliating views ranging from those of the rDzogs chen to the dGe lugs pa tradition, as well as the classical Indian Svātantrika and Mādhyamika interpretations. With this uniquely inclusivist attitude within Tibetan Buddhism, Mipham attempts to make thirteen centuries of Buddhist Indo-Tibetan philosophical developments compatible with the highest teaching of his tradition, rDzogs chen. By stressing that the actual ultimate beyond all views is truly the nonconceptual ultimate, he echoes the rDzogs chen essential teaching distinguishing between *sems* and *rig pa* in a move confirming rDzogs chen as the epitome of Buddhist views to protect it from sectarian attacks. Yet, as far as the nominal ultimate is concerned, Mipham accepts a position similar to that of the Svātantrikas and the dGe lugs pas for the sake of teaching beings on the path. In this respect, he goes as far as to provisionally accept Phya pa chos kyi seng ge's (1109–1169) position: The two truths can be said to be a single entity with different conceptual aspects (*ldog pa tha dad pa'i ngo bo gcig*), a position also held by Tsong kha pa and that Klong chen pa had expressly rejected in his *Grub mtha' mdzod*.[45] In spite of this concession, Mipham unquestionably follows Go rams pa in his exposition of the two ultimates[46]: on the level of the actual ultimate, the two truths are accepted to be in a state of unity (*zung 'jug*), being indivisible (*dbyer med*). In Mipham's systematic integration of ascending perspectives on reality into a coherent vision, the propaedeutic function of the view is therefore a soteriological necessity as his approach clearly aims at providing beginners on the spiritual path with a ladder linking both

tu bden te bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i chos nyid ni skal dman rnams skrag pa'i gnas che ba'i rab yin pas de'i tshul ni mi shes shing/ dngos med du bstan na chad stong du bzung/ snang bcas su bstan na bden grub tu bzung/ zung 'jug ces brjod na tha gu dkar nag bsgrel ba lta bu'i don du bzung/ bsam gyis mi khyab ces brjod na cang med ci med hwa shang gi lta ba lta bu zhig las mi 'char yin te/ zab mo'i mthar thug pa'i chos 'di kun gyis bde blag tu shes nus na/ de dag 'jig rten mtha' dag las 'das shing 'phags pa'i spyod yul blta dka' zhing shes par dka' bsam gyis mi khyab zhes ji ste gsung/

45 See Helmut Tauscher, "Phya pa Chos kyi Sen ge as a Svātantrika," in *The Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika Distinction*, ed. Georges B. J. Dreyfus and Sara L. McClintock (Boston: Wisdom, 2003), 235: "Phya pa lays great emphasis on determining the two truths as 'identical in nature and different with regard to the characteristic distinction' (*ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad pa*). Equally, in Tsoṅ kha pa's Madhyamaka exegesis the same determination is of utmost importance, as it provides a basis for his interpretation of 'neither existent nor nonexistent' as meaning 'neither existent in an absolute sense nor nonexistent conventionally,' which is understood as referring to both truths and thus represents the essence of his ontology." On Klong chen pa's view, see Butters, "The Doxographical Genius of Klong chen rab 'byams pa," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2006), 398, 411.

46 See Cabezón and Dargyay, *Freedom from Extremes*, 211–17.

the view and the practice of emptiness of lower approaches with that of higher ones:[47]

> The single entity corresponding to the single entity possessing different conceptual distinguishers (*ldog pa tha dad pa'i ngo bo*) of the two truths is the single entity of the indivisibility of appearance and emptiness (*snang stong dbyer med*). This is established through the valid modality of cognition that analyzes the two truths. Whatever appears is empty. If this emptiness existed as something different from appearance, since the essence of this phenomenon would become nonempty, these two would not be different. This entity, established as an indivisible entity, is the actual ultimate. This cannot be described as anything at all and is the sphere of direct knowledge or experience (*so sor rang rig*). This is *dharmadhātu*, the lineage (*rigs*, *gotra*) [of the buddhas], and so forth. Although it is the highest mode of being of all phenomena, it is not conceptualized. If it were not so, it would be a phenomenal appearance (*mtshan ma*, *nimitta*). From the perspective of the emptiness of the nominal ultimate, when the four extremes are refuted, the extreme of existence must be refuted by the nonexistence of [something] real, while the extreme of nonexistence [must be refuted] by conventional existence. Thus, from the perspective of the nature of things itself, the four extremes cannot be eliminated. The mode of being that is a mere negation (*med dgag*, *prasajyapratiṣedha*) has the potency to eliminate the extreme of affirming real existence.[48] However, since the elimination of nonexistence depends on the concealing [truth], the mode of being itself, from its own perspective, would fall into the extreme [of nonexistence]. Therefore, this emptiness that represents a fall into the extreme [of nonexistence] is not the nature of phenomena (*chos nyid*, *dharmatā*).[49]

47 This is also confirmed by Mipham in his *'Od gsal snying po*; see Dharmachakra Translation Committee (trans.), *Luminous Essence, A Guide to the Guhyagarbha Tantra, Jamgön Mipham* (Boston: SLp, 2009), 65.

48 I would like to thank Professor Matthew Kapstein for his suggestions regarding the translation of this sentence.

49 *'Jug 'grel*, 576, 5ff.: *bden gnyis ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad pa'i ngo bo gcig pa de/ snang stong dbyer med ngo bo gcig yin la/ de ni bden gnyis dpyod pa'i tshad mas grub ste/ gang snang 'di stong/ stong pa de snang ba las tha dad du yod na/ chos de'i ngo bo mi stong bar 'gyur bas de gnyis tha dad du med do/ ngo bo dbyer med med par grub pa'i ngo bo de ni rnam grangs min pa'i don dam ste/ de la gang du'ang brjod mi shes te so sor rang gi yul lo/ de ni dbyings dang rigs sogs yin te/ chos kun gyi gnas lugs mthar thug yin gyi/ rnam grangs pa ni min no/ de min rtags/ rnam grangs pa'i stong pa'i dbang du byas na/ mtha' bzhi 'gog tshe/ bden med kyi yod mtha' sel/ tha snyad du yod pas chad mtha' sel dgos la/ de ltar na gnas lugs rang gi ngos nas mtha' bzhi sel mi nus te/ gnas lugs med dgag la yod mtha' sel ba'i nus pa yod kyi/ med mtha' sel ba kun rdzob la ltos pa'i phyir/ gnas lugs kho rang gi ngos nas mthar lhung ba can du 'gyur bas/ de 'dra'i mthar lhung gi stong nyid de chos nyid ma yin no/*

4 Mipham's Perspectivist Discourse on the Inexpressible Ultimate

Perspectives play a central role in Mipham's discourse on the ineffable. On the one hand, some of his statements seem to indicate that the actual ultimate is a cognitive object for sublime beings:

> Realizing that these two [truths] are in the real sense in a state of unity (*zung 'jug*) or fundamental sameness (*mnyam pa nyid*) is the supreme object of realization, the ultimate purpose.[50]

These statements, made *from the perspective of ordinary beings*, present the ultimate as an object that is to be realized by sublime beings and, in this respect, is compatible with the dGe lugs pa position:

> With regard to this, insofar as all cognitive objects are distinguished on account of being correct or incorrect, they are completely included within the two truths.[51]

However, according to Mipham the ultimate, *from the perspective of sublime beings*, abides clearly beyond all designations:

> In the absolute sense, the ground of emptiness
> And that which is empty do not exist as being different.
> The indivisibility of appearance and emptiness is inexpressible,
> You must realize it directly for yourself![52]

In his *Nor bu ke ta ka*, Mipham comments on Śāntideva's famous *pāda*s (*BCA* 2c–d) on the impossibility of conceiving the ultimate.[53] Various conflicting interpretations of these verses have triggered fierce debates and polemics in Tibet.[54] About this fine point, Mipham declares in his *Nor bu ke ta ka*:

> Moreover, it is also stated in the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*:
>
> > In the real sense, [the ultimate] is free from all accumulations of mental proliferations. [*MA* 70cd]
> > [Nonexistence,] being also based on conceptuality, is concealing [and] not genuine. [*MA* 72cd]

50 *Mkhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo*, 2:174: *de gnyis yang dag pa'i don du zung 'jug mnyam pa nyid du rtogs pa ni rtogs bya rnams kyi nang na mchog tu gyur pa mthar thug gi don no/*

51 *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*, 18.2: *de la shes bya 'di dag yang dag pa yin min gnyis kyis phye bas na bden pa gnyis su zad par 'du zhing/*

52 *Shes rab ral gri*, 799, 2ff.: */gnas lugs don la stong gzhi dang//stong pa tha dad du med pas// snang stong dbyer med brjod dang bral//so so rang gis rig bya'o/*

53 See Vaidya, *Bodhicaryāvatāra of Śāntideva*, 170, line 27: *buddher agocaras tattvaṃ buddhiḥ saṃvṛtir ucyate//*

54 See Viehbeck, *Polemics in Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism*.

> Hence it is explained here that the nature of phenomena (*chos nyid*, *dharmatā*) is not an object of cognition: inasmuch as the nature of phenomena is beyond all mental proliferations, it does not exist as an objective support for the intellect. As a consequence, how could we correctly call "cognitive object" that which is neither subject/object, nor established as any phenomenal appearance (*mtshan ma*, *nimitta*) at all?[55]

In his commentary on Candrakīrti'*Mādhyamakāvatāra* XI, 12–13, Mipham explains, in agreement with the root text, that distinctions between objects and subjects are simply made for the sake of communication, namely, from the perspective of ordinary beings. Ultimately, subject and object are of a single essence. The core of the problem here is that since the ultimate is beyond the dichotomy of subject/object, it cannot be an object, or else it amounts to nothing but a thought:

> The entity possessing an objective support (*dmigs pa*, *ālambana*),
> Is a thought, which is the nature (*rang bzhin*) of the grasped object and the grasping subject.[56]
> Whatever is taken by this [thought] as a pseudo-objective support is falsehood
> [Because this thought] does not actually come into contact with the nature of phenomena (*chos nyid*, *dharmatā*).
> It is said in the *sūtra*s that
> Taking the objective support to be something substantial or insubstantial,
> Taking the objective support to be something dual or nondual,
> No matter how one takes [something] as an objective support,
> Whatever is grasped through this approach belongs to the domain of the demon (*bdud*, *māra*).[57]
> No refutation or proof at all
> Can destroy what is taken as an objective support.
> When one understands without eliminating or adding [anything], [this is] freedom.[58]

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55 *Nor bu ke ta ka*, 8, 3ff.: *rgyan las kyang/ yang dag tu spros pa yi/ tshogs rnams kun las de grol yin/ /rnam par rtog la brten na yang/ /kun rdzob tu 'gyur yang dag min/ /zhes so/ /de la 'dir chos nyid shes bya min par brjod pa ni/ chos nyid spros pa thams cad las 'das pas na/ de ni blos dmigs par byar med pas yin te/ gang yul dang yul can du ma gyur cing mtshan gang du'ang ma grub pa de la yang dag par na ji ltar shes bya zhes brjod de/*

56 The subject/object division refers to duality.

57 Cf. Nāgārjuna, *YṢ* 36ab in Cristina A. Scherrer-Schaub, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti. Mélanges Chinois et Boudhiques*, vol. 25 (Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1991), 264: "Aussi grande est l'agitation de l'esprit, aussi étendu est le domaine de Māra."

58 *Shes rab ral gri*, 811, 3ff.: */dmigs pa can gyi bdag nyid ni//bzung dang 'dzin pa'i rang bzhin sems//de des gang dmigs de ltar rdzun//chos nyid don la dngos mi reg//dngos por dmigs dang dngos med dmigs//gnyis su dmigs dang gnyis min dmigs//ji ltar dmigs dang kyang dmigs pa ste//dmigs pas gang bzung bdud kyi ni//spyod yul yin zhes mdo las gsungs//dgag dang sgrub pa gang gis kyang//dmigs pa 'jig par mi nus la//bsal bzhag med par mthong na grol/*

5 The Two Truths from the Perspective of the Actual Ultimate

Although Dreyfus seems to think that according to Mipham the actual ultimate is accessible to thought, there is a rather long explanation in his *mKhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo* presenting the ultimate as being beyond all extremes as the indivisibility of the two truths – that is, as the unique truth.[59] This passage shows Mipham's willingness to facilitate the understanding of the ultimate based on conceptuality, but it also shows his reluctance to conflate the nominal ultimate with the actual, which remains beyond the sphere of thought:

> Depending on the individual's intellectual capacity or acumen, emptiness exists as these two kinds of ultimate or emptiness: the nominal and the actual. The first, being the mere negation (*med dgag*, *prasajyapratiṣedha*) that all phenomena (*chos*, *dharma*) are established as truly [existent], is the object of a mode of perception (*'dzin stangs*), which has partially eliminated mental proliferations (*spros pa*, *prapañca*). It is not the realization of that which is completely free from mental proliferations. Inasmuch as this is merely an imputation with regard to the ultimate and emptiness, since it depends also on the nonexistence of substantial things, one must [still] understand the authentic ultimate, emptiness. Therefore, this [nominal ultimate] is called the concordant ultimate (*mthun pa'i don dam*). Further, the knowable phenomena that are the objects of an intellect endowed with conceptuality (*rnam par rtog pa*, *vikalpa*) are only posited as existent by means of dependent arising and dependent imputation. [265] The conditioned [phenomena] produced from causes and conditions exist on account of dependent arising. Although unconditioned [phenomena] do not arise out of causes, they exist by means of dependent

59 See Georges B. J. Dreyfus, "Would the True Prāsaṅgika Please Stand? The Case and View of 'Ju Mi pham," in *The Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika Distinction*, ed. Georges B. J. Dreyfus and Sara L. McClintock (Boston: Wisdom, 2003), 335: "Go rams pa holds that this is the case, that the actual ultimate is not accessible to thought and is thus utterly ineffable. Mi pham disagrees, arguing that if this were so, ordinary beings would never understand such an ultimate since they could never develop the causes that lead to the generation of primordial wisdom. Thus, for Mi pham, the actual ultimate is accessible to thought, even though its access is different from that of wisdom. Whereas the latter realizes the ultimate by refuting all four extremes simultaneously, thought proceeds in succession." It seems to me that Dreyfus does not consider the fact that, according to Mipham as well, as long as extremes and dualistic thoughts are involved, the actual ultimate is not attained. Mipham's quotes above make it clear that the actual ultimate is beyond all extremes. Therefore, a mere intellectual gradual process of negation of the four extremes cannot, according to Mipham, involve the actual ultimate. Arguillèr, *L'Opalescent Joyau Nor-bu ke-ta-ka*, 57, n. 1 concurs: "Dans la doctrine de Mi pham, quand on dit que l'absolu n'est pas perçu par la connaissance principielle elle-même, ce n'est pas au sens où elle l'ignorerait, mais au sens où il ne saurait être un objet dont elle serait le sujet cognitif. Il s'agit d'une connaissance immédiate, tellement étrangère aux formes de connaissance qui nous sont familières que l'on peut aussi bien parler d'inconnaissance."

imputation. They and their conventional designations (*tha snyad*) are established insofar as each of them eliminates its own antithesis (*dgag bya*), like space with regard to obstructive physical contact (*thogs re*), like the cessation [acquired by] discernment (*brtags 'gog*, *pratisaṃkhyānirodha*) in the case of the exhaustion of what is to be abandoned, like the cessation [acquired by] nondiscernment (*brtags min 'gog*, *apratisaṃkhyānirodha*) in the case of what is nonarisen anywhere, or like the definition of nonexistence [which is established] in relation to the elimination of real existence.

On account of this, since unconditioned [phenomena] also are not beyond the dependent arising of dependent imputation, it is said [*MMK* 24.19ab]:[60]

> No phenomenon is existent
> That does not arise in dependence.

Since such unconditioned [phenomena] are unconditioned and without any substantiality, being only imputations projected by the intellect (*blos phar brtags*) and objects knowable only by conceptuality, they are not the inconceivable nature of phenomena (*chos nyid*, *dharmatā*). For this reason, when they are examined by the intellect, as not a single one of them is not empty of an own-nature, they are ultimately nonexistent as [anything] observable. It is said [*MMK* 24.19cd]:[61]

> Therefore, no phenomenon exists
> That is not emptiness.

Likewise, there is not a single phenomenon, substantial or insubstantial, that is not empty of own-nature. However, the incontrovertible appearances of conventional designations manifest although they have been empty from the beginning. As a consequence, the realization that appearance and emptiness free from contradiction are equivalent is thus expressed by the following statement [*Vigrahavyāvartanīvṛtti* on *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 70][62]:

> Being empty of anything and being dependently originated
> Are equivalent according to the Way of the Middle.
> Such is the supreme teaching.

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60 *apratītya samutpanno dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate* |; see L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās (Mādhyamikasūtras) de Nāgārjuna avec la Prasannapadā Commentaire de Candrakīrti* (St. Petersburg: Imprimerie de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1913). D3824, f.15a: */de phyir stong pa ma yin pa'i/ /chos 'ga' yod pa ma yin no/*

61 *yasmāt tasmād aśūnyo hi dharmaḥ kaścin na vidyate* ||; see La Vallée Poussin, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*. D3824, f.15a: */de phyir stong pa ma yin pa'i/ /chos 'ga' yod pa ma yin no/*

62 *bhavati cātra yaḥ śūnyatāṃ pratītyasamutpādaṃ madhyamāṃ pratipadaṃ ca | ekārthāṃ nijagāda*; see E. H. Johnston and A. Kunst, "Vigrahavyāvartanī," in *The Dialectical Method of Nāgārjuna*, ed. Bhaṭṭacharya (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978). D3828, f.29a: */de la ci yang mi srid do/ /gang zhig stong dang rten 'byung dag /dbu ma'i lam du don gcig par/ /gsung mchog mtshungs pa med pa*.

In their real condition, all imputations in terms of substantial (*dngos*) and insubstantial things (*dngos med*) are bereft of [any] fixation grasping [them] as being distinctly different. That which abides in the nature free from all mental proliferations, the nature of phenomena (*chos nyid*, *dharmatā*), which is the undifferentiation of dependent arising and emptiness or appearance and emptiness, must be realized by gnosis, intuitive knowing, without conceptualizing what is free from subject and object. This realization is the actual ultimate.

This [actual ultimate] is designated by means of various synonyms, such as the ultimate truth, the limit of reality (*yang dag pa'i mtha'*), or true reality. It is not merely mentally imputed. The utterly natural (*rang bzhin bab*) mode of being of all phenomena is primordially present, unchanging throughout the three times, and beyond the sphere of conceptuality (*rnam par rtog pa*) or mental imputations. Since all phenomena are fundamental sameness in their [original] condition, there is no other phenomenon at all apart from *dharmadhātu*. This emptiness endowed with the supreme excellence of all aspects (*rnam pa kun gyi mchog*) is the unexcelled ultimate among all kinds of realization of the Great Vehicle.

This unconditioned unity [of appearance and emptiness] is unlike an unconditioned insubstantial thing (*dngos med*). It is the great unconditioned that does not abide in the extremes of that which is a substantial or an insubstantial thing. Not only is this [unconditioned unity] not merely arisen owing to causes, but it is [in fact] the real unconditioned since it is moreover beyond the conventions corresponding to the perceptions of what is merely established by imputations made in dependence (*ltos nas btags pa*). Considering this [real unconditioned], the learned (*ācārya*) Nāgārjuna thus declared [in *MMK* 25.13cd]:[63]

> Substantial things and insubstantial things are conditioned,
> *Nirvāṇa* is unconditioned. [267]

and [in *MMK* 18.7]:[64]

> Objects of designation have ceased (*ldog pa*),
> Since the sphere of mind's objects has ceased.
> Unborn and unceasing,
> The nature of phenomena (*chos nyid*, *dharmatā*) is equal to *nirvāṇa*.

The Dharmarāja Kulika Mañjuśrīkīrti said[65]:

> The aggregates, [when] examined, are emptiness,
> Devoid of an essence like the plantain tree.
> This is not like the emptiness
> That is endowed with the supreme excellence of all aspects.

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63 *asaṃskṛtaṃ hi nirvāṇaṃ bhāvābhāvau ca saṃskṛtau* || D3824, f.16b: */mya ngan 'das pa 'dus ma byas/ / dngos dang dngos med 'dus byas yin/*. *Pāda*s c and d are inverted in Mipham's quotation.

64 *nivṛttam abhidhātavyaṃ nivṛttaś cittagocaraḥ | anutpannāniruddhā hi nirvāṇam iva dharmatā* || D3824, f.11a: */brjod par bya ba ldog pa ste/ /sems kyi spyod yul ldog pas so/ /ma skyes pa dang ma 'gags pa/ /chos nyid mya ngan 'das dang mtshungs/*

65 *Pradarśanānumatoddeśaparīkṣā* (T2609); see Rolf Scheuermann, "Das gZhan stong dbu ma'i rgyan des rJe btsun Tāranātha Kun dga' snying po Tibetischer Text und Übersetzung" (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 2010), 43, 78.

Thus, there is no differentiation into two distinct truths from the perspective of those who have realized [this]. It is realized that all phenomena are equivalent to *dharmadhātu*, fundamental sameness, the single sphere (*thig le nyag gcig*), or the center of the *vajra* space. Therefore, it is said [in *RGV* I.154, *AA* V, 21, and elsewhere][66]:

> There is nothing to eliminate from this,
> Not even the slightest thing to add.
> The truth should be perceived as it is.
> The one who perceives the truth is liberated.[67]

As stated here, you will have reached the heart of the subject of all that is explained in Mahāyāna as fundamental sameness free from mental proliferations. Now, one may think, "[In this case,] the distinction in terms of the two truths makes no sense! There is only one truth." The distinction into two truths makes sense because it is the method introducing this single truth, the ultimate truth, the final limit (*mthar thug pa*), *dharmadhātu*, or fundamental sameness. [268] The Conqueror declared that the single absolute truth is the unborn *nirvāṇa*, all phenomena being primordially pacified, namely fundamentally the same (*mnyam pa*). The great charioteers have established [this] accordingly in [their] treatises (*bstan bcos*, *śāstra*).[68]

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66 See Jikidō Takasaki, *A Study on the* Ratnagotravibhāga (Uttaratantra)*: Being a Treatise on the Tathāgatagarbha Theory of Mahāyāna Buddhism* (Rome: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966), 300.

67 *nāpaneyam ataḥ kiṃcid upaneyaṃ na kiṃcana | draṣṭavyaṃ bhūtato bhūtaṃ bhūtadarśī vimucyate*. (See Johnston, *Ratnagotravibhāga*). D4024, f.61b: */'di la bsal bya ci yang med/ /gzhag par bya ba cung zad med/ /yang dag nyid la yang dag lta/ /yang dag mthong na rnam par grol/*

68 *Mkhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo,* 3:264ff.: *stong nyid de la gang zag gi blo 'jug pa'i rim pa'am/ rtogs tshul gyi dbang du byas na/ rnam grangs dang/ rnam grangs min pa'i don dam mam stong nyid gnyis su yod de/ dang po chos kun la bden grub tsam khegs pa'i med dgag ste/ spros pa phyogs re bcad pa'i 'dzin stangs kyi yul spros bral mtha' dag ma rtogs pa'o// 'di ni don dam pa dang stong pa nyid btags pa tsam las/ dngos min yang 'di la bten nas don dam stong pa nyid mtshan nyid pa rtogs dgos pas mthun pa'i don dam zhes bya'o// de la rnam par rtog pa dang bcas pa'i blo'i yul du gyur pa'i shes bya'i chos 'di rnams brten nas skye ba dang/ brten nas btags pa gnyis kyi sgo nas yod par bzhag pa kho na yin te/ rgyu rkyen las skyes pa 'dus byas rnams ni/ brten nas skye ba'i sgo nas yod pa'o/ 'du ma byas rnams rgyu las skyes pa min yang/ brten nas btags pa tsam gyi sgo nas yod pa ste/ de dag rang rang gis dgag bya rnam par bcad pa las de dang de'i tha snyad 'grub pa/ thogs reg med pa la nam mkha' dang/ spang bya zad pa la brtags 'gog dang/ gang na gang ma skyes pa la brtags min 'gog pa dang/ bden grub bsal ba'i cha nas bden med du 'jog pa bzhin no// de'i phyir 'dus ma byas rnams kyang brten nas btags pa'i rten 'byung las ma 'das pas na/ rten cing 'brel 'byung ma yin pa'i/ /chos 'ga' yod pa ma yin no// zhes gzungs la/ 'di 'dra'i 'dus ma byas 'di dag ni dngos med 'dus ma byas yin pas rnam rtog kho nas shes par bya ba'i yul dang/ blos phar btags pa tsam ste chos nyid bsam gyis mi khyab pa ma yin no// de'i phyir 'di dag la blos gzhig na rang gi ngo bos mi stong pa gang yang med pas don dam par dmigs su med pa yin pas/ de phyir stong nyid ma yin pa'i/ chos 'ga' yod pa ma yin no/ zhes gsungs so// de ltar dngos dngos med kyi chos mtha' dag rang gi ngo bos mi stong pa med kyang/ tha snyad kyi snang ba bslu ba med pa rnams ye nas stong bzhin du snang ba yin*

6 Conclusion

Mipham's inclusivist exposition of the relationship between the two truths is thus clearly based on a set of ascending perspectives as explained in the following passage of the *Nges shes sgron me*:

> Whatever appears is pervaded by emptiness,
> And whatever is empty is pervaded by appearance,
> Since if something appears, it cannot be nonempty
> And this emptiness is not established as something that does not appear.
> Moreover, since both a substantial thing and an insubstantial thing,
> Taken as the bases of emptiness, must be empty,
> All appearances are nothing but something imputed

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pas snang stong 'gal med don gcig tu rtogs pa ni/ gang gis stong dang rten 'byung dag// dbu ma'i lam du don gcig par/ /gsung mchog zhes gzungs pa ltar/ gang dngos dngos med du btags pa rnams kyang yang dag pa'i don du so sor rang sa na ma 'dres par tha dad pa'i tshul du 'dzin pa'i zhen pa dang bral te/ snang dang stong pa'am stong dang rten 'byung tha mi dad pa'i chos nyid spros pa mtha' dag dang bral ba'i rang bzhin du gnas pa gang zhig gzung 'dzin med pa rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes so rang rig pas rtogs par bya ba ni rnam grangs min pa'i don dam yin te/ 'di la ni chos kyi dbyings dang/ don dam pa'i bden pa dang/ yang dag pa'i mtha' dang/ de bzhin nyid la sogs pa'i rnam grangs sna tshogs su gdags par mdzad do// 'di ni blos btags pa tsam ma yin te/ chos thams cad kyi rang bzhin bab kyi gnas lugs ye nas gnas shing dus gsum gyi 'gyur ba med pa/ blos btags dang rnam par rtog pa'i yul las 'das pa/ de'i ngang du chos thams cad mnyam pa nyid du gyur pas chos kyi dbyings las ma gtogs pa'i chos gzhan ci yang med pa rnam pa kun gyi mchog dang ldan pa'i stong pa nyid 'di ni theg pa chen po'i rtogs rigs thams cad kyi nang na bla med pa'i mthar thug pa'o// zung 'jug 'dus ma byas pa 'di ni dngos med 'dus ma byas dang mi 'dra zhing dngos dngos med gang gi mtha' la'ang mi gnas pa'i 'dus ma byas chen po yin te/ 'di rgyas ma bskyed pa tsam du ma zad/ ltos nas btags pas grub pa tsam kyis dmigs pa'i tha snyad las kyang 'das pa'i phyir 'dus ma byas yang dag yin pa de la dgongs nas mgon po klu sgrub kyi zhal snga nas/ dngos dang dngos med 'dus byas yin/ mya ngan 'das pa 'dus ma byas/ /zhes dang/ brjod par bya ba ldog pa ste/ sems kyi spyod yul ldog pas so/ ma skyes pa dang ma 'gags pa/ /chos nyid mya ngan 'das dang mtshungs/ /zhes sogs gsungs shing/ chos kyi rgyal po rigs ldan 'jam dpal grags pa'i zhal snga nas/ phung po rnam dpyad stong pa nyid/ chu shing bzhin du snying po med/ rnam pa kun gyi mchog ldan pa'i/ stong nyid de dang 'dra ma yin/ zhes gsungs pa'i don no// de ltar rtogs pa'i ngor bden pa gnyis su tha dad du phye ba med de chos thams cad chos kyi dbyings mnam pa nyid thig le nyag gcig rdo rje nam mkha'i dkyil lta bur rtogs pas na/ 'di la bsal bya ci yang med/ bzhag par bya ba cung zad med/ yang dag nyid la yang dag lta/ yang dag mthong nas rnam par grol/ zhes gsungs pa ltar/ theg pa chen po na spros bral mnyam pa nyid du gsungs pa thams cad kyi don gting sleb par 'gyur ro // 'o na bden pa gnyis su phye ba don med cing bden pa gcig tu 'gyur ro snyam na/ bden pa gnyis su phye ba ni bden pa gcig pu don dam bden pa mthar thug pa chos dbyings mnyam pa nyid 'di la 'jug pa'i thabs yin pas don yod la/ mthar thug pa bden pa gcig pu chos thams cad gdod nas zhi zhing ma skyes la mya ngan las 'das pa mnyam pa nyid yin par rgyal ba nyid kyis gsungs shing/ shing rta chen po rnams kyis bstan bcos dag las kyang de ltar bsgrubs zin to//

And even emptiness is merely imputed by the intellect.
With respect to the knowledge that is ascertained through rational analysis,
These two are the method and the result of the method.
Inasmuch as, if there is one, not having the other
Is impossible, they abide inseparably.
Therefore, also when appearance and emptiness
Are known individually,
In fact, they are never divisible.
Therefore, since the certainty that perceives the nature of things
Does not fall into any extreme,
They are said to be in unity (*zung 'jug*).
From the perspective of the insight which correctly analyzes, [97]
These two, appearance and emptiness,
Are considered to be a single entity with different conceptual aspects (*ngo bo gcig ldog pa tha dad*),
As they exist or do not exist jointly.
Moreover, for beginners,
They appear as *negandum* and negation.
At that time, they are not mingled as a single [entity].
One day, one attains the certainty
That the nature of emptiness arises as appearance.
Inasmuch as that which is primordially empty and appearances are both empty,
This is the birth of the certainty that perceives
Appearances, although they are empty,
And emptiness, although it manifests as appearances.
This is the root of all profound paths
Of *sūtra*, tantra, and pith instructions.
This point, which cuts off superimpositions
With regard to study and reflection,
Is the correct, undeluded view.[69]

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69 Pettit understands this sentence differently:

"This is the meaning of cutting off misconceptions
Through study and reflection;
It is the unmistaken, authentic view" (Pettit, *Mi pham's Beacon of Certainty*, 216).

Since a direct criticism of a merely intellectual understanding of emptiness follows, I understand *sgro 'dog chod pa'i don* as the elimination of superimpositions related to study and reflection; this is based on the different contexts in which this term is used, such as:

Shes rab ral gri, 800.3ff.:

"[The other one,] the vast cognition
Arising from the contemplation of the nature of phenomena, as it is,
Eliminating the superimpositions (*sgro 'dogs*) with regard to the inconceivable object,
Is endowed with the fruit of the knowledge of all there is."

Nor bu ke ta ka, 6, 2: "Therefore, as long as this *dharmadhātu* that is the union of experience and emptiness, free from the thirty-two superimpositions, is not made manifest, the perfection of insight is not authentic."

By realizing this key point more and more profoundly,
The clinging to the characters
Of the appearances of the concealing truth as well
Will be abandoned.
Therefore, according to the progression of the tantric vehicles,
The appearances that are nothing but intellectual wishful thinking
And the appearances of the world and its beings as deities
That are the confidence in the view [arising] from certainty
Cannot possibly be the same.[70]
Determining through Madhyamaka
That phenomena (*chos*, *dharma*) are devoid of truth is a view.
When a Brahmin recites mantras for a sick person,
His wishful thinking that there is [in fact] no disease is not the view.
By realizing the ultimate nature of things,
The certainty that the concealing truth is the deity [will be attained].
Otherwise, grounded in the level of deceptive appearances,
How can one accomplish the deity?
Apart from the deceptive appearance of an apprehending subject and an apprehended object,
That which is called *saṃsāra* does not exist.
The divisions of the path that bring an end to it,
Are not [made] from the perspective of the ultimate truth,
Since the ultimate, as it is, is oneness.[71]

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70 Pettit understands this in a slightly different way:
"Intellectual wishful thinking and
The view of certainty that finds confidence in the
Divine experience of animate and inanimate phenomena
Cannot possibly be the same" (Pettit, *Mi pham's Beacon of Certainty*, 217).

71 *Nges shes sgron me*, 96, 3ff.: *gang snang stong pas khyab pa dang/ /gang stong snang bas khyab pa ste/ /snang na mi stong mi srid cing/ /stong de'ang ma snang mi grub phyir/ /dngos dang dngos med gnyis po yang/ /stong gzhir byas nas stong dgos phyir/ /snang kun btags pa tsam zhig la/ /stong pa'ang blo yis btags pa tsam/ /rig pas dpyad pas nges shes la/ /'di gnyis thabs dang thabs byung ste/ /gcig yod na ni gcig med pa/ /mi srid pa du 'bral med par gnas/ /de phyir snang dang stong pa dag/ /so so'i char ni shes na yang/ /don du nam yang dbye ba med/ / de phyir zung 'jug ces brjod do/ /gnas lugs mthong ba'i nges shes ni/ /gang mthar lhung ba med phyir ro/ /yang dag dpyod pa'i shes* [97] *rab ngor/ /snang dang stong pa 'di gnyis po/ /yod mnyam med mnyam ngo bo gcig/ /ldog pa tha dad dbye bar 'dod/ /de yang dang po'i las can la/ /dgag bya 'gog byed lta bur snang/ /de tshe gcig tu 'dres pa med/ /nam zhig stong pa'i rang bzhin/ /snang bar 'char la yid ches thob/ /de yang gdod nas stong pa dang/ /snang ba 'di dag stong pa yis/ /stong bzhin snang la snang bzhin du/ /stong mthong nges shes skye ba nyid/ /'di ni mdo rgyud man ngag gi/ /lam zab kun gyi rtsa ba ste/ /thos bsam sgro 'dogs chod pa'i don/ / yang dag lta ba 'khrul med yin/ /gnad de je bas je zab tu/ /rtogs pas kun rdzob snang ba yang/ / rang mtshan zhen pa rim spong bas/ /rgyud sde'i theg rim de ltar snang/ /yid kyis mos bskom tsam zhig dang/ /snod bcud ltar snang nges shes kyis/ /lta ba gdengs su gyur pa gnyis/ / mtshungs pa'i go skabs mi srid da/ /dbu mas chos rnams bden stong du/ / nges ba gang de lta*

In the abovementioned quote from the *Nges shes sgron me* as well as in Mipham's other Madhyamaka works, we frequently find the interesting formulaic phrase *ngos nas* or *ngor*. To illustrate this point, the last sentence in the preceding quote thus reads: */don dam kho na'i* ***ngos nas*** *min/*, with the view to making explicit the standpoint from which a statement is made. This expression *ngos nas*/*ngor* is of considerable significance to understanding Mipham's presentation of the two truths. Mipham redefines the framework of valid cognitions based on the perspective of ordinary beings on the one hand, and sublime beings on the other. The expressions *ngos nas* and *ngor* are consistently used to determine from which perspective Mipham speaks. According to Mipham, some statements that are final from a deluded point of view are merely provisional from the perspective of sublime beings. For instance, views pertaining to the ultimate that are expressed in dualistic terms on the basis of affirmations and negations still miss the mark from a higher point of view. Mipham's presentation of the two truths thus hinges on the notion of perspectives, outlooks, and cognitive modes of apprehension of our so-called reality since, according to him, any discourse on this reality is *in fine* formulated from a specific epistemic viewpoint. From this perspective (pun intended!), charges of inconsistency become meaningless if Mipham's statements are adequately contextualized. With his perspectivist interpretation of Buddhist doctrines, Mipham teaches Madhyamaka through a series of ascending views, the aim of which is to provide beings with a gradual path in their spiritual journey toward the realization of the actual ultimate.

In Mipham's view, any discourse on the two truths necessarily takes place within the concealing truth and therefore only makes sense on account of its propaedeutic function in a given context. Mipham accordingly uses various models of the relationship between the two truths. These models correspond to various stages of the path or circumstances: (1) *from the perspective of a beginner*, the two truths can be seen as "different in the sense that their identity is negated" (*gcig pa dkag pa'i tha dad* or *ngo bo gnyis*);[72] (2) *from the perspective*

yin la/ /bram ze'i nad la sngags 'debs cho/ /nad med mos pa lta min bzhin/ / don dam gnas lugs rtogs pa yis/ /kun rdzob lha ru yid ches kyi/ /gzhan du 'khrul pa'i snang tshul la/ /gnas nas lha ru ji ltar 'grub/ /gzung 'dzin 'khrul snang 'di min pa'i/ /'khor ba zhes bya gzhan du med/ /de spong lam gyi dbye ba rnams/ /don dam kho na'i ngos nas min/ /don dam [98] *tshul gcig nyid yin phyir/*

72 In the aforementioned quote from *Nges shes sgron me*, all of the various interpretations of the relationship between the two truths are listed. For an example of Mipham's use of *gcig pa dkag pa'i tha dad*, see his *gZhan stong khas len seng ge'i nga ro* in Pettit, *Mi pham's Beacon of Certainty*, 417, in which Mipham notes that the two truths are mutually exclusive in the *gzhan stong* approach. On *ngo bo gnyis*, see Phuntsho, *Mi pham's Dialectics and the Debate of Emptiness*, 151.

of postmeditation, they are "different conceptual distinguishers with regard to a single entity" (*ngo bo gcig la ldog pa tha dad*); (3) *from the perspective of meditative absorption*, they are beyond extremes in an ineffable state of "unity" (*zung 'jug*), as explained by Mipham in his *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*:[73]

> In short, the ultimate condition as the focus object of the meditative absorption that is beyond the sphere of conceptuality and language is indivisible within [two] truths. From this perspective, one need not distinguish the two truths. Therefore, as there is no assertion at all establishing or refuting that all phenomena appearing in this way exist or not, are this or not, and so forth, this [ultimate condition] is like answering by not saying anything.[74] Since it is verily beyond conventional designations and since it is the inexpressible fundamental sameness free from mental proliferations, it is established as being without [any] assertion. However, from the perspective of postmeditation that is the sphere of words and conceptuality, namely, the mode of appearance [of phenomena], one reflects by oneself on the presentation of the ground, path, fruit, and so forth and when one then needs to speak for the benefit of others, as one distinguishes the two valid modalities of cognition, it is impossible not to engage in the procedure of refuting and establishing [phenomena].[75]

In Mipham's approach, these three types of perspectives would respectively correspond to the view of: (1) beginners following any approach dichotomizing *nirvāṇa*, the unconditioned, and *saṃsāra*, the conditioned; (2) Svātantrika Madhyamaka; (3) Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka.[76] On account of their propaedeutic value, these three different approaches are used in different contexts: (1) to introduce beginners to the two truths; (2) to explain the nominal ultimate, and (3) to point at the actual ultimate.

To conclude, what appears contradictory on the level of a purely synchronic exposition of the two truths corresponds, in fact, to a diachronic unveiling of the nature of reality. This is why, for Mipham, an ascending scale of views aiming at

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73 See Viehbeck, "Fighting for the Truth" for the contextualization of these perspectives in the polemics between Mipham and dGe lugs pa scholars.

74 This statement refers to the Buddha's silence and to the fact that one has no view from this specific standpoint.

75 *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad*, 29, 2ff.: *mdor na mnyam gzhag sgra dang rtog pa'i yul las 'das pa'i gzhal don ltar mthar thug gi gnas tshul bden pa dbyer med kyi dbang du byas na ni bden gnyis phye mi dgos pas 'di ltar snang ba'i chos thams cad ye nas yod med yin min sogs dgag sgrub kyi khas len gang yang med pas ci'ang mi gsung ba'i tshul gyis lan btab pa dang 'dra bar yang dag par na tha snyad thams cad las 'das shing brjod du med pa dang spros pa dang bral ba dang mnyam pa nyid kyi phyir khas len med par grub kyang/ rjes thob sgra rtog gi yul du gyur pa snang tshul gyi dbang du byas te gzhi lam bras bu sogs kyi rnam gzhag zhig rang gis bsam zhing gzhan la'ang smra dgos na ni tshad ma gnyis phye ste dgag sgrub kyi tshul la 'jug pa las 'da' ba mi srid do/*

76 See Duckworth, *Mipam on Buddha Nature*, 85.

providing guidance to beings who are practicing this path has some merit, if this process of disclosure has to take place in a gradual way. From such a soteriological perspective, any presentation of these philosophical views by way of an exclusivist approach would therefore be absurd. On account of its pragmatic concern, Mipham's integrative approach could therefore be seen as a form of hierarchical soteriological inclusivism in which the validity of any discourse on the inexpressible reality is measured through its propaedeutic value in a given situation. In other words, views on the relationship between the two truths that are antidotes to delusion should not be evaluated independently of their soteriological efficacy with regard to their specific underlying cognitive or epistemic context. Paradoxically as it may sound, this does not, however, imply that these views should be seen as being necessarily equal. Since they are formulated from the perspective of an ascending scale of cognitive or epistemic contexts, they constitute a de facto hierarchy of possible discourses on reality.

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