

**Tradition and Innovation  
in late South Asian Buddhism**

**THE IMPACT OF SPELL PRACTICES ON THE RECASTING OF  
*PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ* SCRIPTURES**

Francesco Bianchini

St John's College

The University of Oxford

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

2020

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the AHRC and St John's College for their generous support during the DPhil. Their funding has enabled me to study and live in a perfect research environment. Thanks to them, it was also possible to start a number of projects and research collaborations both at national and international level.

I express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Stefano Zacchetti, for his tireless guidance and patience. Thanks also to those scholars who were formally involved at various stages in the development of the present study. They readily shared their vast knowledge with me, spending considerable time reading my drafts and offering valuable suggestions. These scholars are Péter-Dániel Szántó (Transfer and Confirmation assessor), Diwakar Acharya (Transfer assessor) and Andrew Skilton (Confirmation assessor).

A number of scholars with research interests either directly or indirectly relevant to the present study have helped me immensely. Among them, I particularly thank Gergely Hidas and Camillo Formigatti. Thanks also to Andrea Acri, Ronald Davidson, Arlo Griffiths, Harunaga Isaacson, Jinah Kim, Christian Luczanits, Ulrike Roesler, Sam van Schaik, Gregory Seton, Toru Tomabechi, and Michael Willis.

A key moment was the research trip to the China Tibetology Research Center (CTRC) in Beijing, which was made possible thanks to Birgit Kellner (Austrian Academy of Sciences), Dr. Dramdul (Director of the CTRC), and my College Advisor, Mohamed-Salah Omri.

My time in Oxford was greatly enriched by attendance of the TORCH Heritage Pathway seminars, the Developing Learning and Teaching (DLT) course, various events related to Digital Humanities, as well as hands-on experiences relating to ancient manuscripts and objects at the Bodleian Library and the Ashmolean Museum.

Finally, I will remember the fellow musicians of Trinity College Orchestra and the experienced sailors of the Oxford University Yacht Club (OUYC).

**Abstract** “Tradition and Innovation in late South Asian Buddhism: the impact of spell practices on the recasting of *Prajñāpāramitā* Scriptures” (DPhil Dissertation)

Francesco Bianchini, St John’s College, TT 2020.

The present study explores the later phase of *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptural production (ca. 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> C), with special emphasis on South Asian sources. These scriptural sources, usually extremely concise, include materials also found in earlier strata of *Prajñāpāramitā* writing, but also add spells (*dhāraṇīs*), as well as occasional references to practices linked with mature esoteric Buddhism.

This study looks at such connections in detail, outlining the ways in which *Prajñāpāramitā* interacted with other Buddhist traditions in this period - being shaped by them, but also shaping them in return. Attention is also given to extant Sanskrit manuscripts, and occasionally to available epigraphical and art-historical materials.

It is argued that the switch to a new scriptural format partly affected textual dissemination. For example, the primary sources often occur in composite manuscripts along with various *dhāraṇī* works.

While spell practices are often associated with mundane benefits, such as e.g. curing diseases, the primary sources show a remarkable emphasis on less immediate results, such as the attainment of after-life states and conditions seen as conducive to spiritual awakening.

As for issues of affiliation, the primary sources maintain important links with earlier *Prajñāpāramitā* writing. However, such links mainly take the form of inserted stock-phrases and lists.

Perhaps the most innovative trait is the occasional appearance of mature esoteric features. However, their presence shows an awareness of current esoteric trends, rather than a full endorsement of them. Complex dynamics of borrowing and cross-reference can be detected, which ultimately might have been beneficial to both traditionalists and innovators within the late Mahāyāna cultural milieu.

In this study, *Prajñāpāramitā* emerges as a dynamic and adaptable tradition which helped shape the character of Mahāyāna Buddhism between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries and beyond.



# Table of Contents

<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	12
<b>1.1 The Present Study</b>	12
1.1.1 Research matter and research questions	12
1.1.2 Organisation and Aims	14
<b>1.2 Prajñāpāramitā in the Early Medieval Period and Beyond</b>	19
1.2.1 Approaching the 7 <sup>th</sup> C: Shorter Prajñāpāramitās and the inclusion of <i>dhāraṇīs</i>	24
1.2.2 After the 7th C: Epitomising Mahāyāna and interacting with Esoteric Buddhism	39
1.2.2.1 Pāla Buddhism	39
1.2.2.2 Exploring Southeast Asian sources	48
1.2.2.3 Stūpas and <i>dhāraṇī</i> -stones	52
1.2.2.4 Surviving traditions in the Himalayas	55
1.2.2.5 A note on Prajñāpāramitā in China, Tibet, and Japan	51
1.2.3 Summary	57
<b>1.3 Introducing the Primary Sources</b>	58
1.3.1 Overview of Secondary Literature	58
1.3.2 The Primary Sources: Selection and Presentation	63
1.3.3 Methodological Considerations	73
1.3.3.1 Interdisciplinarity and Relevance to Buddhist Studies	73
1.3.3.2 Philological Considerations	79
1.3.3.3 Periodisation and Regions	82
1.3.3.4 The Question of Taxonomy	85
1.3.3.5 Terminology, Descriptive Categories and Working Definitions	87

## **2 MANUSCRIPTS, TRANSMISSION, AND THE ROLE OF SCRIPTURAL FORMATS** 94

### **2.1 Introduction** 94

### **2.2 Central-Asian and Dunhuang Sources** 101

#### 2.2.1 A Central-Asian Witness 101

#### 2.2.2 Spell Scriptures in a Tibetan Composite Manuscript 106

### **2.3 Pāla Witnesses and related sources** 108

#### 2.3.1 Shorter Prajñāpāramitās in a Pāla Composite Manuscript 108

#### 2.3.2 Other Pāla and related sources 114

### **2.4 The Nepalese *Dhāraṇīsamgrahas*** 120

#### 2.4.1 Opening Remarks 120

#### 2.4.2 The Indexed *Dhāraṇīsamgrahas* 125

#### 2.4.3 Exploring a Microfiche Collection 133

### **2.5 A Note on other Sources and Relevant Objects** 138

### **2.6 Summary of Observations** 143

## **3 THE LEGACY OF EARLIER PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ SCRIPTURES** 146

### **3.1 Establishing the Link: Paratexts and Self-reference** 147

### **3.2 Internal Labels and Text-Reuse** 159

#### 3.2.1 The term Prajñāpāramitā 159

#### 3.2.2 Common Lists and Verses 162

#### 3.2.3 Phraseology 165

#### 3.2.4 A note on sūtra frame-narratives 168

### **3.3 Practice: Absorptions and Book Worship** 171

#### 3.3.1 The absorptions (*samādhis*) 171

3.3.2 Self-referential Formulas on Practice and Book Worship	179
<b>3.4 Comparing other Shorter Prajñāpāramitās</b>	183
<b>3.5 Summary of Observations</b>	190
<b>4 THE SPELLS AND THEIR PRACTICE</b>	193
<b>4.1 Structural Features of PP spell scriptures</b>	195
4.1.1 Works with Frame Narratives	199
4.1.2 Lack of Frame Narratives	204
<b>4.2 The Spells: Formulation and Intertextuality</b>	210
<b>4.3 The Practice of Spells</b>	220
4.3.1 Statements from the Selected Sources	220
4.3.2 Overlap with Other Sources	230
<b>4.4 Summary of Observations</b>	239
<b>5 TRACING THE INFLUENCE OF MATURE ESOTERIC BUDDHISM</b>	241
<b>5.1 Preliminary Observations</b>	241
<b>5.2 Esoteric Elements in the Selected Sources</b>	246
5.2.1 A Practice-oriented Work	246
5.2.2 References to <i>maṇḍalas</i> and Initiation	248
5.2.3 A Prajñāpāramitā with six arms	258
5.2.4 Evidence from the Manuscripts	266
<b>5.3 A matter of Identity</b>	270
5.3.1 Prajñāpāramitā in Key Esoteric Sources	270

5.3.2 Compromise and Appeal	281
5.4 Summary of Observations	287
<b>6 FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ SPELL SCRIPTURES WITHIN BUDDHIST AND ROYAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	289
6.1 General Remarks	289
6.2 The Philosopher's Silence?	296
6.3 The Role of Personification	303
6.4 Excursus: Tracing Prajñāpāramitā Works in Southeast Asia	314
<b>7 CONCLUSIONS</b>	321
7.1 On the Methodology and Structure of the Study	321
7.2 The Main Features of Prajñāpāramitā Spell Scriptures	330
7.3 Prajñāpāramitā as a Dynamic Force in the Later Phase of South Asian Buddhism	347
<b>Editorial Conventions</b>	
<b>APPENDICES</b>	357
A) An Exercise in Translating the * <i>Buddhamāṭṛ</i> (BM, T259)	
B) <i>Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha</i> MBB I-7: List of Included Works	
C) <i>Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha</i> MBB III 53: List of Included Works	
D) The <i>Saptaśloṅikā</i> (SaŚIP) from MBB III 53 in Comparison with the CTCRC Text	
E) Towards a Critical Edition of the <i>Ardhaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā</i> : a Collation of Sample Materials.	

## **F) Further Primary Sources (Texts and Translations)**

A) *Ekaślokikā prajñāpāramitā*

B) 聖八千頌般若波羅蜜多一百八名真實圓義陀羅尼經 (T230)

C) *'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa lag na rdo rje'i mdo theg pa chen po*

D) *'Phags pa zla ba'i snying po shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa theg pa chen po'i mdo*

E) *Prajñāpāramitānāmadhāraṇī*

## **G) List of Spells in the Selected Sources**

## **H) Selected Variants from the CTCRC Manuscript**

**Bibliography**      428

## SIGLA

(editions are specified each time in the footnotes)

AdhyP - *Adhyardhaśatikā* PP;

ArdhaP - *Ardhaśatikā* PP;

AS - *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* PP;

BM - \**Buddhamāṭṛ* (T259);

CandP - *Candragarbha* PP;

Candragarbha group (CandP; SūrP; VajrakP; SamaP; VajrapP);

DB - *Da banreboluomiduo jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經 (T220);

DS - *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha*;

EI - *Epigraphia Indica*;

IC - *Inscriptions du Cambodge* (see Coedes 1937-1966);

KauP - *Kauśikā* PP;

MMK: *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*;

MS(S) : manuscript(s);

PNA - \**Prajñāpāramitā nāmāṣṭaśatakā*;

PP: *Prajñāpāramitā* (the short form is avoided when the deity is being referred to)

PPH - *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*;

PPL: *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (Conze 1978)

PVPD - *Pañcaviṃśatiprajñāpāramitādhāraṇī*;

SamaP - *Samantabhadra*-PP;

SaŚP - *Saptaśatikā* PP;

SaŚIP - *Saptaśloka* PP;

Selected Sources: ArdhaP; EkaP; KauP; SaŚIP; PNA; SvalP; BM; PP spells; 'Candragarbha group' (CandP; SūrP; VajrakP; SamaP; VajrapP);

SM: *Sādhnamālā*;

SūrP - *Sūryagarbha*-PP;

SvalP - *Svalpākṣarā* PP;

TJ - *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經 (T901);

VajrakP - *Vajraketu*-PP;

VajrapP - *Vajrapāṇi*-PP.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 The Present Study

### 1.1.1 Research matter and research questions

The focus of the present study is the later phase of Prajñāpāramitā (PP) scriptural production, with particular attention to South Asian sources redacted between the 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> C.<sup>1</sup> Broadly speaking, these sources are characterised by extreme conciseness, by the presence of spells (*dhāraṇīs*),<sup>2</sup> as well as by occasional references to notions commonly associated with esoteric Buddhism.<sup>3</sup> While these features will be introduced in detail below, it is important to notice that they are rather innovative in the context of PP scriptural writing. This fact calls for a sustained inquiry into the redaction and transmission of these sources.

---

<sup>1</sup> The tradition of Prajñāpāramitā, in many ways central to Mahāyāna Buddhism (i.e. the ‘Great Vehicle’), will be introduced in detail in Chapter 1.2. The primary sources for the present study are presented individually at 1.3.2 (with texts given in the *Appendices*).

<sup>2</sup> For an introduction to Buddhist spells see Hidas 2015 (‘Dhāraṇī Sūtras’ in: Brill’s *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, Vol.1, pp.129-137). This topic will be introduced below, Chapter 1.2.1 and developed in Chapter 4.

<sup>3</sup> For an approachable introduction to this form of Buddhism, I would recommend the *Introduction to Orzech et al. 2011*. as well as Isaacson 1998. Esoteric Buddhism will be introduced below in Chapter 1.2.2.1 and its relevance for the present study will be discussed in Chapter 5.

One can identify about a dozen later PP scriptures which include spells, as well as some individual spells traditionally associated with PP.<sup>4</sup> These will constitute the main object of inquiry, presented below in section 1.3.2.

To illustrate the general typology of these sources, one could look at the well-known *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya* (PPH).<sup>5</sup> In fact, The PPH presents some features which will become characteristic of the later phase of PP writing. The work is very concise and includes a spell. Moreover, the discursive bulk of the PPH is an extract from an earlier PP source.<sup>6</sup> This exemplifies how the legacy of earlier scriptures can be preserved amidst innovative features.

Most of the works identified here do not appear to have enjoyed the same level of popularity as the PPH, but were nonetheless usually translated into Chinese and Tibetan, and survive in a remarkable number of Nepalese manuscripts. Some scriptures of this group the reader might be familiar with are the *Svalpākṣarā* PP, the *Kauśikā* PP and the *\*Prajñāpāramitānāmāṣṭasāta*, all roughly datable to the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> C.<sup>7</sup> As will be shown, all of these represent very different redactional

---

<sup>4</sup> The most comprehensive bibliographical account remains Conze 1978, second edition of *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (PPL). Particularly relevant here are those labelled by him as ‘Tantric Texts’ (section starts on page 79).

<sup>5</sup> On the textual trajectory of this important scripture, reaching its maturity in the 7<sup>th</sup> C, see Watanabe 2009: 44ff. The relevance of the PPH for the present study will be discussed in Chapter 1.2.1.

<sup>6</sup> This is the *Larger* PP, which will be introduced below. The relevant passage has been recently edited on the basis of a MS from Gilgit (see Zacchetti 2005, *In Praise of the Light*, p.393 (21v1 ff.)).

<sup>7</sup> The *Svalpākṣarā* PP is available in a critical edition by Yuyama (‘Svalpākṣarā Prajñāpāramitā’, in L. Kawamura, ed., *Buddhist Thought and Asian Civilization: Essays in*

strategies and their study can throw light on a number of important aspects of PP scriptural production and its relation to the surrounding Buddhist cultural milieu.

There are a number of questions which arise in relation to this later phase of PP writing. While the present study attempts to offer a comprehensive overview of the aspects involved, particular attention is given to issues of practice and Buddhist 'identity'. As for practice, this includes everything from manuscript transmission (including patronage dynamics and ritual significance of the *codices*), to statements about the ritual significance of spells found within later PP sources. As for identity, this is connected to the status and legacy of PP within Buddhist communities at a time when *dhāraṇī* traditions and esoteric Buddhism had reached maturity and great complexity.

### **1.1.2 Organisation and Aims**

A study of this kind is, in many ways, ambitious. This is due to the fact that the Selected Sources show an interaction and overlap among what are usually perceived to be largely self-standing Buddhist traditions (see previous paragraph).

On top of this, one is trying to find common features within a set of highly diverse written works - i.e. later PPs - and to connect such features with the

---

Honour of H.V. Guenther, 1977, pp. 299–301). The other two correspond to number 19 and 25 respectively in the annotated bibliography of Conze 1978 (see Chapter 1.3.2 for further details).

wider historical and cultural contexts. Both endeavours are made more challenging by the lack of available critical editions, by the general paucity of material evidence, and by the characteristically slow pace of advancement in the fields of Buddhist Studies and Indology.

Nevertheless, this study argues that it is possible, and indeed useful, to attempt such an investigation into the later phase of PP writing. In order to meet these aims, the present study has been structured in the following way.

Given the considerable methodological challenges, the Introduction plays a particularly important role. It is thus treated (and numbered) just like the other main chapters. It is divided into three main sections: 1) a general introduction to the role of Prajñāpāramitā in post-7<sup>th</sup> C Buddhist cultural milieu; 2) a presentation of the selected primary sources (henceforth Selected Sources); and 3) a methodological discussion. The latter is a particularly crucial section, devoted to discussing the terminological choices, working definitions, and methods adopted in the present study.

Chapter 2 will be devoted to exploring extant Sanskrit manuscripts of the Selected Sources to see how the establishment of a new format in PP scriptural writing affected text-dissemination, particularly in the South Asian context. Beside the identification of later PP sources in largely unstudied composite manuscripts from Pāla India (8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> C) and later Nepal (from 18<sup>th</sup> C onwards), particular attention will be given to exploring the ritual dimension of such documents.

In Chapter 3 the analysis will turn to the texts, exploring the issue of the degree of continuity between later PP works and traditional PP writing. This will take the shape of a study of paratexts (such as titles),<sup>8</sup> self-referential statements, phraseology and stock-materials (such as lists and verses known from earlier sources).

In Chapter 4 I will take up the actual spells found in the Selected Sources, discussing their position as structural units, their formulation and occurrence in other sources (such as well-known *dhāraṇīsūtras*), as well as statements about a spell's efficacy and ritual practice.

In Chapter 5 I will attempt an identification and analysis of all those elements which could be associated with more mature forms of esoteric Buddhism, also considering possible agendas underlying the introduction of such elements.

Finally, in Chapter 6 the focus will broaden to include a discussion of the various links between the Selected Sources and the Buddhist institutions of the time. Apart from the role played by monastic institutions and the learned exegetes housed therein, the appeal of PP writing in the context of royal courts will also be touched upon.

All findings will be systematically discussed in the *Conclusions*, with supplementary material being offered in the *Appendices*.

---

<sup>8</sup> On the term paratext in the context of PP writing see Lehnert 1999: 18. More will be said in the relevant Chapter. From here on, bibliographical references will be given in short form, i.e. author, year, page and (occasionally) line number.

Besides the general aim of bringing more clarity and structure to the study of later PP works, the main contributions of the present study are intended to be the following.

Broadly speaking, attempts are made here at identifying a vital - and yet often neglected - scriptural 'genre' and its functions at various levels, thus further clarifying the dynamics of the development of PP literature at large.

It is argued that given the status of PP within the Mahāyāna, this tradition was particularly suitable to act as the link between more traditional forms of the faith, and more innovative ones, as for example esoteric Buddhism. This role is particularly complex and multifaceted.

In terms of the actual ritual implications, such scriptures often seem to enjoy simple practices based on recitation, said to result in the acquisition of merit and help towards reaching awakening. This is an important point, given that magic and apotropaic practices of a more mundane nature are usually over-emphasised with respect to these sources in secondary literature.<sup>9</sup>

On the level of transmission, one notices how the Selected Sources are attested both as part of composite manuscripts collecting PP works, as well as in large repositories of Buddhist spells and spell scriptures.

In particular, this study presents some new insights into a Pāla composite manuscript (ca. 11<sup>th</sup> C CE) made accessible to scholars today by the China

---

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. Conze 1978: 13f.

Tibetology Research Center (CTRC) in Beijing.<sup>10</sup> It improves the overall understanding of said manuscript, which includes ten PP-related works, and discusses some newly available textual variants.

This study also identifies PP works in some large Nepalese composite manuscripts known as *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas*, particularly as preserved in the microfiche collection of the former Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions (IASWR).<sup>11</sup> Use is also made of a number of unpublished *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas* available online (such as from the Tokyo and Cambridge libraries). These are vast repositories of spells and spell scriptures which also include some PP works.

Thus, despite its general philological focus, this study does not neglect codicology entirely, nor is it limited by what are different genres of Buddhist writing. In fact, attempts will also be made at considering connections with relevant epigraphical and art-historical evidence, when available. Finally, a complex picture of interrelated practices and scriptural genres will arise, thus highlighting the richness and complexities of Mahāyāna scriptural writing as reflected in later PP sources.

---

<sup>10</sup> For a description of the MS see Tomabechei 2009: xxiv ff.

<sup>11</sup> This collection was kindly made available to me by Dr. Andrew Skilton, who had purchased it before the closure of the Institute.

## 1.2 Prajñāpāramitā in the Early Medieval Period and Beyond

The term *prajñāpāramitā*, a Sanskrit compound, has a wide and complex range of meanings. In the present context, the term - often rendered as ‘perfection of insight’ or ‘perfection of wisdom’ - can be taken as referring to some cognitive capabilities instrumental to the attainment of certain goals of Buddhist practice.

<sup>12</sup>

Within the Mahāyāna tradition, the term is often found as part of a traditional set of Buddhist virtues, or ‘perfections’ (*pāramitās*),<sup>13</sup> representing the apex of the Bodhisattva practice, i.e. the practice of a being seeking awakening.

There are a series of important contributions that tackle the challenging issue of defining the meaning and scope of the term Mahāyāna, i.e. the ‘Great Vehicle’.<sup>14</sup>

Surely one can think of fascinating and debated issues such as: the arising of Mahāyāna around the beginning of the Common Era as a sort of counter-cultural movement within institutionalised Buddhism;<sup>15</sup> an occasional emphasis on

---

<sup>12</sup> On the term’s meaning(s) and its occurrences in a variety of contexts see Zacchetti 2015: 171.

<sup>13</sup> On the six *pāramitās* see e.g. Nattier 2003: 153f. The sets also include the *dānapāramitā* of ‘perfection of giving’, etc.

<sup>14</sup> A recent volume edited by Paul Harrison (see Harrison 2018) represents an updated and engaging treatment of the genesis of Mahāyāna. For a general characterisation of the Mahāyāna traditions, see also Williams 2009 and Silk 2002. For considerations dealing with epigraphical evidence see Schopen 2005: 223ff.

<sup>15</sup> See Williams 2009: 5ff.

forest-dwelling and asceticism in relation to a more rigorous approach to the Buddhist path;<sup>16</sup> a new focus on the ideal of Buddhahood as the goal of Buddhist practice, perhaps in opposition to achieving a state such as that of *nirvāṇa* (the ‘blowing out’, i.e. liberation from rebirth)<sup>17</sup>; etc. There are surely a number of perspectives that scholars can choose in order to debate this issue. Here, I am going to present once more one of the best-known and felicitous emic definitions of Mahāyāna, by the Chinese pilgrim Yijing (義淨, ca. 7th C): “Those who worship the Bodhisattvas and read the Mahāyāna Sūtras are called the Mahāyānists”.<sup>18</sup> The following treatment will introduce the reader to other key aspects of Mahāyāna practice as related to PP in particular.

In fact, the term *prajñāpāramitā* also indicates a particular group of scriptures belonging to the Mahāyāna tradition.<sup>19</sup> The roots of this large and varied body of literature stretch back to the beginning of the Common Era. Broadly speaking there are two main families of scriptures that define the earlier phase of PP

---

<sup>16</sup> See for example Harrison 1995: 66ff.

<sup>17</sup> See for example Nakamura’s characterisation as quoted in Silk 2002: 358.

<sup>18</sup> The translation adopted is that found in Silk 2002: 360. The passage reads 若禮菩薩、讀大乘經，名之為大 (T54n2125p205c12).

<sup>19</sup> In this study, the key bibliographical source for approaching this vast body of PP literature is the second edition of Conze’s PPL (1978). In terms of ambition and comprehensiveness, this work remains unparalleled. Mistakes and/or outdated statements in the relevant sections will be pointed out when necessary below. A recent and authoritative overview of PP literature (with emphasis on the early period) is Zacchetti 2015.

writing. These are the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* (AS) family and the *Larger* PP family.<sup>20</sup> A text belonging to the former is attested in a remarkably ancient MS written in the Gandhari language (ca. 1st C CE).<sup>21</sup> The latter is usually regarded as the result of complex dynamics of expansion of the core text of the former and its texts enjoyed vast circulation in the early centuries CE.<sup>22</sup> A number of specimens of the *Larger* PP are attested, showing a complex web of relations which scholars have arranged into various recensions and versions.<sup>23</sup>

Scriptures belonging to the two main families are characterised by remarkable length and discursive elaboration (which reaches its apex with the formidably long *Śatasāhasrikā* PP ‘the PP in 100.000 units’). Nonetheless, it appears that a concise work known as the *Vajracchedikā* PP could also claim a place within the early history of PP writing, although there has been some controversy on the date of its redaction.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Zacchetti 2015 offers a brief - although reliable and insightful - treatment of the complex developments that brought to the establishment of these scriptural families. Apart from Conze’s PPL and related works, the *locus classicus* is the introductory essay in Hikata 1958. In this study, the edition of the AS used is that of Mitra 1888. As for the *Larger* PP, a number of sources will be referred to (one such is Kimura 1986-2007).

<sup>21</sup> On this important source see Falk and Karashima 2012.

<sup>22</sup> That the *Larger* PP was popular in the early period is testified i.a. by evidence from Central Asia in the form of extant manuscripts (particularly from the 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> C). To quickly gain insight into the kinds of PP work circulating in the region one can consult Harrison and Hartmann 2014.

<sup>23</sup> On the important distinction between recensions and versions in the context of PP literature see Zacchetti 2005: 37ff.

<sup>24</sup> On this issue see for example Schopen 2005: 55 (notes 16 and 17). For an overview of the scholarly work on the *Vajracchedikā* see Zacchetti 2015: 192ff.

From the point of view of content, early PP literature teaches the way to manipulate traditional Buddhist practices - such as the meditational absorptions known as the *vimokṣamukhas* (i.e. 'gateways to liberation'), etc. - various mental states, and karma so as to achieve one goal: the attainment of Buddhahood.<sup>25</sup> On a doctrinal level, PP literature challenges some of the notions associated with the early Buddhist teachings of the Abhidharma.<sup>26</sup> The basic constituents of reality, which in the Abhidharma were treated as having some form of ontological status, are defined as 'empty' (*śūnya*) in parts of PP literature.<sup>27</sup> However, as Zacchetti remarks, this is not merely a doctrinal exercise, but reflects the importance in the PP soteriology of avoiding as far as possible conceptual 'hypostatisation'.<sup>28</sup> The reason for this is that attaching too much importance to views of any sort is considered a hindrance on the path towards becoming a Buddha.

The present study does not deal directly with these matters, and yet a central question is whether at least some of these aspects can be encountered in the later phase of PP writing as well (a partially positive answer to this question is given in Chapter 3). One should also bear in mind that the AS continued to be in many ways relevant in South Asia even in the later period (i.e. post 8th C), as will be shown below (1.2.2).

---

<sup>25</sup> Apart from the general treatments of PP already mentioned, Deleanu 2000 offers some insightful remarks on this topic.

<sup>26</sup> For an introductory treatment of the complex relations between PP and the Abhidharma see Williams 2008: 49ff.

<sup>27</sup> There is a tendency in secondary literature to sometimes virtually equate the teaching of emptiness with PP *tout court*. While the notion is in fact central it is only a part of the complex soteriological program of PP teaching.

<sup>28</sup> This point was recently stressed in Zacchetti 2015: 173.

One of the key aspects of PP writing is the presence of self-referential statements exhorting the worship of the PP manuscript book.<sup>29</sup> It appears that such statements are attested from the earlier phases and are thus to be considered one of the basic messages of PP.<sup>30</sup> The phenomenon of book worship allows for a number of important considerations about Mahāyāna book practices in relation to traditional Buddhist relic/stūpa worship.<sup>31</sup> While in general one can see PP presenting itself as an alternative to such practices, the matter is indeed very complex, as some of the evidence presented below will exemplify (see e.g. Chapter 2.5).

Finally, there is at least one more key referent to the term *prajñāpāramitā* outside the realm of Buddhist notions and scriptural families, i.e. that of a female Bodhisattva/deity. Rather crucially, at a certain point PP scriptures and their message underwent a process of personification.<sup>32</sup> The deity is represented in a number of extant statues and miniatures, and her iconography is described in a number of primary works.<sup>33</sup> There appear to be major links between the personification of *Prajñāpāramitā* and the cultural developments that underline the redaction of the Selected Sources. One key notion that is linked - albeit in

---

<sup>29</sup> Mention should at least be made here of Schopen's pivotal study (2005: 25ff.). For a more recent and partly dissonant treatment see Drewes 2015.

<sup>30</sup> See Schopen's study quoted above.

<sup>31</sup> On this see for example Boucher 1991.

<sup>32</sup> As will be pointed out in the next section, it is not easy to identify the earliest evidence for this. However, it seems that by the 7<sup>th</sup> C *Prajñāpāramitā* was already established as a Bodhisattva/deity (see von Hinüber 2007).

<sup>33</sup> Some key examples will be discussed in this thesis. See Conze 1949 and 1967. Also consult the plates and relevant comments in Kinnard 1999.

complex ways - to the personified form is that of PP representing the 'mother of the Buddhas/Jinas'. This notion is already attested in the AS itself,<sup>34</sup> although it continued to be central even in later periods. These will be discussed below (see in particular 5.2.2; 5.3.1; and 6.3).

It might suffice at present to ponder on the fact that the very term *prajñāpāramitā* can refer to different - and yet interconnected - entities. These could range from particular sets of teachings, to certain scriptures and their material carriers, to the depictions of a Bodhisattva/deity, etc. This plurality of referents will have profound impacts on the dissemination and longevity of the PP tradition, as this study will illustrate with reference to the primary sources (see 1.3.2).

### **1.2.1 Approaching the 7<sup>th</sup> C: Shorter Prajñāpāramitās and the inclusion of *dhāraṇīs***

Before introducing the primary sources on which this study will focus, it is necessary to offer an overview of the cultural landscape in which these scriptures were redacted and transmitted. This will also provide the basic coordinates and settings for the more specific discussions of the following chapters. Precedence will be given to those aspects which will be relevant to the

---

<sup>34</sup> See Mitra 1888: 253ff.

study of PP in South Asia. Regarding specific methodological and terminological choices, the reader should refer to section 1.3.3 of the *Introduction*.

The present section is meant to elaborate further on PP's 'plurality of referents' mentioned above and their position within Buddhism. We will see that far from being a merely doctrinal matter, discourse around PP involved issues such as power, status, patronage, and the practices adopted by certain communities. Thus, in order to understand the agendas underlying the composition of later PP scriptures, one needs to dive - at least briefly - into their cultural milieu.

The period between 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> C has a particular meaning within South Asian cultural history, for it coincides with what many scholars characterise as a moment of political and cultural transition. On the political level, the vast Gupta empire - which had dominated the scene for centuries - had fallen, and regional configurations of power - and with it of culture - started to emerge with particular strength.<sup>35</sup> One witnesses a proliferation of smaller royal houses and a system of Indian political networks which will remain characteristic of the subcontinent until the 13<sup>th</sup> C, when the final Afghan-Turks invasions will lead to a

---

<sup>35</sup> I would recommend the broad characterisation of this historical period as found in Sanderson 2009: 253. There, the proliferation of royal houses at various levels is found as the very first feature. In terms of primary sources, the best way to get a glimpse into the intricate network of royal centres is to become acquainted with epigraphical sources, such as the copper plate charters issued in huge numbers by most royal courts (see Francis 2018). Some such documents will be referred to and used in this thesis.

large-scale reconfiguration of power.<sup>36</sup> A convention is followed here, referring to these centuries as the 'early medieval period'.<sup>37</sup>

On the religious side, during the Gupta hegemony Vaiṣṇavism had enjoyed great royal support, becoming in a way the very language of power in South Asia.<sup>38</sup> Yet towards the end of the Gupta period, traditions centring on the worship of lord Śiva - such as the Pāśupatas - began to emerge as a particularly dynamic, if not in fact militant, force.<sup>39</sup> Once Vaiṣṇavism was no longer fashionable following the fall of the Guptas, it appears that it was Śaivism that found a particularly successful way of interacting with the royal courts and claiming royal support.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> I would like to follow Sanderson (*ibid.*) in recognising the work of some Indian historians who have long since engaged with epigraphical evidence (see e.g. Champakalaksmi 1986). Apart from these contributions, a good and approachable introduction to the 'early medieval period' can be found in Kulke 2002: 103ff. See also Thapar 2002: 326ff.

<sup>37</sup> For a use of this term, see Sanderson 2009: 41. From the perspective of historical and textual religious studies (and for the debated issue of the relations between Śaivism and Buddhism in this period) Sanderson 2009 continues to set the terms of academic discussion. It is useful to read this along with Davidson 2002, for the two authors often choose different approaches and are not always in agreement.

<sup>38</sup> A rather remarkable study dealing with this subject is Willis 2009. Methodologically, Willis' approach is very ambitious and varied, moving from archaeological field-work to epigraphy and even scriptural sources.

<sup>39</sup> On these developments see Bakker 2014: 137ff.

<sup>40</sup> See Sanderson 2009: 58 ff. It is important to remember that Vaiṣṇavism did continue to be influential in a number of regions in the post-Gupta period, such as Kaśmīr, South India, etc. The uninitiated will find access to evidence testifying to Vaiṣṇava influence in Kaśmīr in Stein's translation of the *Rājatarāṅginī* (see in particular the 'fourth book' at Stein 1900: 120ff.).

While Brahmanical traditions were thriving, Buddhism too managed to flourish in some regions. Mahāyāna became increasingly more defined at institutional level and started interacting with the state.<sup>41</sup> Northeastern India was the place where Buddhism first arose and where the major pilgrimage sites were located,<sup>42</sup> but it was not the only place where Buddhism had a strong presence. For example, Āndhradeśa was a major centre of Mahāyāna, particularly under the Viṣṇukuṇḍin dynasty (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> C).<sup>43</sup> The inscriptions of these rulers mention a number of notions which appear to be particularly associated with the Great Vehicle.<sup>44</sup> Another key region was Gujarāt, where the Maitrakas (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> C), although predominantly Śaiva by family tradition, inherited and expanded a large network of Buddhist monasteries mostly based within the Saurāṣṭra peninsula.<sup>45</sup> Despite the rather clear presence of Mahāyāna in these regions, it is difficult to trace the use of particular scriptures, not lastly because manuscript copies are no longer extant, as palm-leaf or birch-bark manuscripts do not last very long under those climatic conditions.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> On the early epigraphical evidence connected to Mahāyāna see e.g. Schopen 2005: 223ff.

<sup>42</sup> Apart from sites like Bodhgayā, connected to narratives of the Buddha's life, one should not forget that even monastic centres like Nālandā have roots stretching back at least to the Gupta period (see e.g. Asher 2015: 24ff.).

<sup>43</sup> On this see Tournier 2018.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* More on these dynasties and their ties to Buddhism will be said in Chapter 6.1.

<sup>45</sup> A good overview of these sources is Njammasch 2001, which includes a useful list of the relevant inscriptions as an appendix. The study should be read along with von Hinüber's remarks (2004).

<sup>46</sup> Some considerations on the available evidence will be offered in Chapter 6.1.

The picture changes, however, once one moves towards the Himalayan regions. In the Northwest, between Kaśmīr, Northern Pakistan and Eastern Afghanistan, Buddhism had traditionally enjoyed a very strong presence, particularly due to the strategic position of the region along the Silk road, along which Buddhism had spread into Central and East Asia. Here, the region of Gilgit claims a particular role in the shaping Buddhist fortunes. In the 1930s, a collection of Buddhist manuscripts dating from the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries came to light.<sup>47</sup> Some of these manuscripts were indeed Mahāyāna works, including copies of early PP works.<sup>48</sup> Fascinatingly, Buddhism will continue to receive patronage in the Northeast, for instance under the Kārkoṭa dynasty of Kaśmīr (7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> C).<sup>49</sup>

A momentous event was the travel of a Chinese pilgrim known as Xuanzang (玄奘). His figure is crucial in a number of ways. In the 7<sup>th</sup> C, he travelled on the Silk road into the subcontinent, leaving a rather detailed description of what he saw, particularly in relation to Buddhism as practiced in the various regions.<sup>50</sup> While not always fully reliable, Xuanzang's testimony is invaluable to scholars of this relatively early period. The description of his meeting with Harṣavardhana, who ruled briefly over a very large empire from his capital in Kanauj, is nothing short

---

<sup>47</sup> On this see Schopen 2009.

<sup>48</sup> For a list of the relevant sources see von Hinüber 2014. More on this will be said in Chapter 6, touching upon the issue of the 'institutionalisation' of later PP works.

<sup>49</sup> See Sanderson 2009: 73 and Stein 1900: 120ff.

<sup>50</sup> For English translations of accounts of the pilgrim's journey and his life, see Li 1995 and Li 1996.

of an iconic passage.<sup>51</sup> Xuanzang's translations of Buddhist scriptures include those of some iconic PP works, as will be shown below.

Why are these developments of importance for the study of PP writings? There are a number of reasons. Crucially, they highlight the role played by royal courts in supporting religious traditions, which had to compete fiercely for patronage. Scriptural production appearing after this period - including within PP - will inevitably include signs of this fierce struggle, adopting some of the innovations that had proven particularly successful in this phase (see Chapter 5.3.2). This also appears to have happened across religious boundaries, as will be illustrated in the next section. Next, we are reminded that it is important to keep in mind the specificity of each region, for certain developments within Buddhism might be particularly bound to places in which Buddhism had traditionally been influential, and where rulers were more likely to support the faith. Finally, and most crucially, the rise of Mahāyāna institutions was also conducive to the establishment of more codified ways of dealing with scripture and their exegesis (see Chapter 6.1 and 6.2). All of these aspects are intimately connected to the fortunes of later PP writing. Attempts at exploring this historical dimension more closely will be made in Chapter 6, once the reader will be more acquainted with the primary sources.

Buddhist scriptural production during the Gupta period had been large and varied. For example, some scholars maintain that the composition of Buddhist

---

<sup>51</sup> See Li 1996: 126f.

monastic law codes (or Vinayas), which had become necessary with the enlargement of the institutional basis, is largely a development of this period.<sup>52</sup>

As stated above, the earliest attested scriptures within PP belongs to the AS family<sup>53</sup>, which was then expanded into various large specimens which are labelled collectively as the '*Larger Prajñāpāramitā* (sub-)family'.<sup>54</sup> It appears that up to about the 7<sup>th</sup> century, scriptures of the so-called *Larger* PP family enjoyed a certain degree of popularity, particularly in Central and East Asia.<sup>55</sup> After this period, the AS became widely studied and worshipped in Northeastern India.<sup>56</sup> In fact, this very work is still actively worshipped today in the Kathmandu valley among the Newars.<sup>57</sup>

Despite the earlier specimens not being forgotten, PP scriptural production kept achieving increasingly greater complexity in this phase. A counter-phenomenon to the early structural expansion is attested throughout the Gupta period, when PP's message was recast into a number of shorter scriptures. Many of the new

---

<sup>52</sup> For an introduction to the Vinayas focusing on the available texts, see Clarke 2015.

<sup>53</sup> Again, on this see Falk and Karashima 2012.

<sup>54</sup> On this complex topic see Zacchetti 2005: 36ff.

<sup>55</sup> One can consult the lists of available sources in the various contributions found in Harrison and Hartmann 2014.

<sup>56</sup> See the list of extant AS MSS from Eastern India in Kim 2013: 217ff. Evidence of engagement with the AS in epigraphical sources and exegetical works will be presented below, as well as in Chapter 6.2 and 6.3.

<sup>57</sup> The Newars are the last surviving South Asian community practicing a form of Mahāyāna. While one can certainly expect their practices to have developed over centuries within the Nepalese cultural milieu, one can often see important connections to the Pāla milieu (Gellner 1992 is the *locus classicus* for accessing the Newar cultural world). As for PP in this context, see Gellner 1996 as well as Emmrich 2009.

scriptures are actually only attested in Chinese, which brings up the question of whether they were in fact composed there, rather than translated on the basis of a South Asian exemplar.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, at least one of the Gupta-period PP scriptures, the *Saptaśatikā* (SaŚP), is indeed attested in later Sanskrit MSS from Bengal and Nepāl.<sup>59</sup> Of its three Chinese translations, the oldest one dates to the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. The SaŚP is a great example of how key PP notions could be recast in a shorter format and reformulated in innovative and engaging ways. Nevertheless, on the whole this scripture remains very close to the AS, as a number of passages indicate.<sup>60</sup>

In the 7<sup>th</sup> C, Xuanzang translated a vast collection of PP scriptures, the *Da banreboluomiduo jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經 (DB, T220), into Chinese. It would appear that this collection reflects a South Asian original.<sup>61</sup> The scriptures are integrated with each other in the form of ‘chapters’ or ‘sections’ (分). The DB is one of the main sources of information regarding which PP scriptures were circulating by this time, including the newer, shorter ones.

---

<sup>58</sup> See the dedicated section at Conze 1978: 75ff.

<sup>59</sup> Sato, who is currently working on a critical edition of this scripture, has published preliminary surveys of the available manuscripts (See Sato 2011 and 2014).

<sup>60</sup> A number of textual passages proving this fact are discussed in Chapter 3.4.

<sup>61</sup> Traditional accounts of Xuanzang’s life mention the non-Chinese origin of this scriptures (see Li 1995: 327). Catalogue evidence also points to this conclusion (see Zacchetti 2015: 178).

The DB includes the earliest witness of a work known in Sanskrit as the *Adhyardhaśatikā* PP (AdhyP).<sup>62</sup> One remarkable feature of this witness of the AdhyP is that it includes three spells.<sup>63</sup> This is a relatively new feature in PP writing, although later attestations of the AdhyP will include even more innovative features, eventually making of it the PP work which will depart most markedly from the standards set by traditional PP writing. More on this will be said below (particularly in Chapter 5.1).

A very well-known PP scripture which includes a spell is certainly the PPH.<sup>64</sup> Surprisingly enough, this work is not included in Xuanzang's monumental DB collection, although it is recorded in a translation associated with him.<sup>65</sup> Basically the work consists of an opening section featuring Avalokiteśvara, a short extract from the *Larger* PP, and a closing spell.<sup>66</sup> This format, i.e. the reuse of older PP textual material in conjunction with spells is one of the key features of later PP scriptural production and the PPH can be considered as its earliest specimen.<sup>67</sup> The age and provenience of the PPH are somewhat controversial, although it

---

<sup>62</sup> This corresponds to section 10 of Taishō n.220. On the AdhyP see Conze 1978: 79f., as well as Zacchetti 2015: 201ff. A critical edition of the Skt. text of the AdhyP can be found in Tomabechi 2009.

<sup>63</sup> For a short description of this and other texts of the AdhyP see Tomabechi 2009: xlv.

<sup>64</sup> Conze's edition of 1948 (and its later, modified reprint) are still the commonly used Sanskrit editions. Solid philological work on the Tibetan versions was done by Silk (1994).

<sup>65</sup> This would correspond to Taishō n. 251, *Banreboluomiduo xin jing* (般若波羅蜜多心經).

<sup>66</sup> See Nattier 1992: 189ff.

<sup>67</sup> Further examples of this in relation to the Selected Sources will be considered in Chapter 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

does seem reasonable that the work reached its fully-fledged form around this time.<sup>68</sup> Nattier has famously proposed that the PPH could in fact have been composed in China, only to be subsequently introduced into India.<sup>69</sup> Reception of this suggestion within academia has been varied. Soon after the publication of her article, Nattier herself responded to criticism from Fukui in a still unpublished response.<sup>70</sup> More recently, Williams described Nattier's suggestion as plausible, a position which I think reflects general academic consensus.<sup>71</sup> Research focusing specifically on this topic has been carried out by Attwood, who supports the Chinese origin theory.<sup>72</sup> An informative sources regarding the PPH, Xuanzang's role, and the impact of the work in East Asia is Mair 2002. Here, one also finds a translation of biographical passages indicating how Xuanzang relied on the PPH for its apotropaic power at times of peril. These are important and early sources testifying to a belief in the efficacy of PP works, especially perhaps of the shorter ones introducing spells.

Going back to the relevance of Nattier's theory for the present study, I will argue that the PPH is typologically very close to most of the Selected Sources. But as the Selected Sources postdate the 7<sup>th</sup> C, they do not directly help clarify the origin of the PPH, as much as possibly show the broader impact of this work

---

<sup>68</sup> On the history of the PPH see Watanabe 2009: 44ff.

<sup>69</sup> See Nattier 1992.

<sup>70</sup> I thank Nattier for providing me with a copy of the 1995 unpublished "Response to Fukui Fumimasa, "Hanya shingyō no kenkyūshi - genkon no mondaiten" (published in *Bukkyōgaku* No. 36 [December 1994], pp. 79-99)".

<sup>71</sup> See Williams 2009: 284 (note 8).

<sup>72</sup> See Attwood 2018.

in the later South Asian context. Be that as it may, the issue is also a great opportunity to reflect on how we consider trans-regional influence in Buddhist Studies. It is becoming increasingly clear that India was not only an ‘exporter’ of culture but also a receiver as well. Regions where Buddhism did flourish developed various local expressions, some of which ended up having great impact. This is of course quite obvious in the case of China and Tibet, but is also true for Southeast Asian Buddhism as well (see Chapter 6). Scholars who study this interconnected and multidirectional network of Buddhist influences across Asia, might perhaps want to avoid the term ‘apocrypha’. This expression might carry undertones of ‘forgery’ claims that might not be entirely satisfactory.

A third crucial source from this period is the *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經 (TJ, T901).<sup>73</sup> This is a vast collection of materials centring on the worship of Buddhist deities in the context of a *maṇḍala* ritual.<sup>74</sup> Its PP section does describe PP as a deity and enumerates a number of associated spells.<sup>75</sup> Remarkably, the TJ includes the very spell also found in the PPH.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> On this work see Shinohara 2014 (especially Chapter 3). Prof. Davidson is currently working on a monograph dedicated to such important source.

<sup>74</sup> More on the meaning of the term *maṇḍala* will be said in the next section. In this context, a *maṇḍala* requires the drawing of certain complex diagrams onto which various deities are invited and worshipped. For a description based on T901 see Shinohara 2014: 32f.

<sup>75</sup> The relevant section is T18n901p804c16 - p809b8, partly translated in Shinohara 2014: 54ff.

<sup>76</sup> See T18n901p807b21.

These three important 7<sup>th</sup> C works - Xuanzang's AdhyP and PPH, as well as the PP-section of the TJ - mark what in my opinion is a pivotal moment in the development of PP and related writing. It is here that we see the early signs of those trends which will become key in the later period, namely conciseness of composition along with the inclusion of spells, as well as a shift in focus towards the personified form of Prajñāpāramitā (which is also associated with spells).<sup>77</sup>

The term 'spell' is used here as an umbrella term covering a variety of emic expressions which can be very difficult to differentiate (on terminology see Chapter 1.3.3.5). Particularly crucial in this context is the Sanskrit term *dhāraṇī*, which has a wide semantic range in the Buddhist context: not only are these ritual incantations, but they are also associated with mnemonic powers and meditation, objects, as well as other aspects.<sup>78</sup> Buddhist *dhāraṇīs* are but one component of the rich Indic spell heritage, which of course includes Vedic and other Brahmanical mantra traditions. Spells are attested from as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> C CE in Buddhist scriptures, particularly within the *rakṣā* genre (*paritta* in Pāli),

---

<sup>77</sup> This is not to say that these are the very earliest mentions of PP-related spells in absolute terms. Examples of the earliest references and occurrences will be given in the introduction to Chapter 4. Be that as it may, these three sources represent a first fairly developed stage of such phenomena.

<sup>78</sup> One of the most stimulating and engaging books on *dhāraṇīs* to have appeared to far is Copp 2014, which focuses on medieval Chinese Buddhism. See, however, the critique by Radich (2015). For a general introduction to Buddhist spells see Hidas 2015: 129. A rather remarkable series of articles on *dhāraṇīs* by Prof. Davidson has raised the bar in terms of framing cogent and ambitious academic discussions around these sources (see Davidson 2009, 2014a, and 2014b).

which focused on the apotropaic and protective power of spells.<sup>79</sup> While Chinese translations offer a plethora of sources for the study of *dhāraṇī* literature in the Gupta period,<sup>80</sup> some South Asian sources are extant as well. One in particular, the *Vajratuṅḍasamayakalparāja*, testifies to the use of Buddhist spells in the context of weather control.<sup>81</sup>

Spells were eventually inserted within the main sūtras, mostly as part of separate textual units.<sup>82</sup> It is admittedly very challenging to identify the exact moment when spells were added to these constantly developing compositions.<sup>83</sup> There has also been speculation about the existence of a separate *dhāraṇī-piṭhaka*, i.e. a canonical collection of Buddhist works devoted to spells. This, however, was likely more of an abstract repository rather than an actual collection of texts.<sup>84</sup>

Besides spells, there are two other aspects which deserve consideration in a survey of pre-7<sup>th</sup> C developments: the personification of PP, and the formation of the commentarial tradition. It was mentioned that Prajñāpāramitā was treated as a deity in the TJ. This too is an important development that took place during the late Gupta period. While the statements by the Chinese pilgrim Faxian (法顯)

---

<sup>79</sup> An ancient source of this important genre is discussed in Strauch 2014. See also Skilling 1992.

<sup>80</sup> A good place to start an investigation into these vast materials is Copp 2011 (also see the respective volume Orzech *et al.* 2011).

<sup>81</sup> Dr. Hidas' work for the ERC project Asia Beyond Boundaries also focused on this early work. See Hidas 2019.

<sup>82</sup> One can think for example of the *dhāraṇīparivarta* of the *Saddharmapuṅḍarīka* (section XXI Kern Nanjio 1912: 395ff.).

<sup>83</sup> On this see the remarks in Davidson 2014: 122.

<sup>84</sup> See *ibid.* p.157f.

in the 5<sup>th</sup> C are controversial as to their referring to an image of PP,<sup>85</sup> sources from Gilgit once again prove remarkable. A famous bronze of the Palola Śāhī dynasty dating to the 7<sup>th</sup> C depicts Prajñāpāramitā, which is further identified by the presence of inscribed invocations (here and elsewhere).<sup>86</sup> These could be the earliest attested depictions of the deity.

There is one last development from this formative period which was destined to grow into a large-scale phenomenon. Buddhist scholars became increasingly interested in a verse summary based on the structure of the *Larger* PP called *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*.<sup>87</sup> At least one commentary, that of Ārya Vimuktisena, appears to stem from this period.<sup>88</sup> This is indication that PP was seen by Buddhist thinkers as an authoritative scriptural tradition, and that it was important for some of them to present their theories while stressing a certain relation to it. The topic of scholastic interest in PP is indeed complex, but besides commentarial activity on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, one also witnesses the composition of verse summaries on PP by individual scholars. One such summary attributed to Diñnāga stems from this period.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> A lucid critique of this is offered in Kinnard 1999: 133ff. For a translation of the relevant passage by Faxian see Deeg 2005: 531. Perhaps the object being worshipped in this context could still be a manuscript book, rather than a statue, etc.

<sup>86</sup> See von Hinüber 2007: 39-43 (which includes plates).

<sup>87</sup> For an introduction and overview of the vast commentarial activity on this work see i.a. Komine et al. 2015: 180ff. Further remarks will be offered in Chapter 6.2.

<sup>88</sup> On the date of this author see Ruegg 1968: 305ff. See also the formidable studies by Sparham (especially Sparham 2006-2012, which include a translation of Vimuktisena's commentary) as well as Pensa 1967.

<sup>89</sup> See Tucci 1947.

Both the issues of personification and scholastic engagement will be treated in more detail in Chapter 6 (6.3 and 6.2 respectively).

To sum up, by the 7<sup>th</sup> C Mahāyāna was a mature and institutionally self-aware tradition which could count on royal patronage in some regions. Prajñāpāramitā scriptural production had started shifting towards more concise formats, despite the enduring popularity of older scriptures. By now, PP was also associated with a deity. Some PP scriptures started incorporating spells.

The process of Mahāyāna institutionalisation had profound impacts on the systematisation of knowledge and the overall circulation of PP scriptures. Some of these aspects will be dealt with in Chapter 2, dedicated to a study of manuscript transmission, and more thoroughly in Chapter 6.

Given the relatively early date and the fact that some of these developments are attested for the very first time, many details remain obscure and sometimes controversial. Evidence for this 'formative' period - whether in the form of manuscripts, inscriptional references or archaeological remains - is unfortunately not abundant. However, the situation changes slightly from the 8<sup>th</sup> C onwards, when the history of PP finally enters what might be styled its period of maturity. PP was destined to remain a key player within Mahāyāna, and, it might be argued, even reached new levels of circulation and institutional importance in some regions.

## 1.2.2 After the 7th C: Epitomising Mahāyāna and interacting with Esoteric Buddhism

### 1.2.2.1 Pāla Buddhism

Northeastern India had been the cradle of early Buddhism and, subsequently, became home to its key pilgrimage sites, of which the most famous is perhaps Bodhgayā, the place where the Buddha is said to have reached awakening.<sup>90</sup> A number of Northeastern dynasties supported Buddhism, but one among them deserves special attention here: the Pāla dynasty (8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> C).

Pāla rulers portrayed themselves as Buddhists, as is indicated i.a. in their copper-plate grants, where one finds: the epithet *paramasaugata* ‘completely devoted to the Buddha’; the adoption of Buddhist symbols as the royal crest (such as the *cakra* ‘wheel’ flanked by deer); the mention of Buddhist notions in their eulogies, etc.<sup>91</sup> Tibetan sources also stress this affiliation by portraying these rulers as generous supporters of the faith.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> I would like to point out that a forthcoming publication will present hitherto unpublished Bodhgayā archaeological materials from the British Museum collections (see Willis *forthcoming*).

<sup>91</sup> See Sanderson 2009: 87ff. For a recent edition of a Pāla copper-plate charter see Furui 2008 (with photographic reproduction, including of the royal seal).

<sup>92</sup> See Sanderson 2009: 90f. For an iconic passage from Tāranātha’s account in English translation see Chimpa 1990: 274ff.

A large number of Buddhist artefacts survive from this period - such as statues and votive tablets - as do a number of palm-leaf manuscripts of Buddhist scriptures, some of which were commissioned as lavishly decorated pious gifts and worshipped.<sup>93</sup>

Perhaps the most striking feature of Buddhism in this area is the presence of large monasterial universities such as Nālandā and Vikramaśīla, which were well-known centres of learning with large networks at both national and international levels. It is known for instance, that Tibetan monks were actively investing in these institutions.<sup>94</sup> Of course, the history of these institutions stretches further back than the period in question,<sup>95</sup> although it is in the Pāla period that one can perhaps speak of a 'golden age' for Buddhist institutions.

These centres were house to some of the great Buddhist scholars of the time, who produced, along with their students, a plethora of commentaries and independent treatises, most of which were translated into Tibetan.<sup>96</sup> In China too translation activities went on under the roughly contemporary Song dynasty (宋

---

<sup>93</sup> These were the subject of the recent study by Jinah Kim (2013). See the overview table at page 217ff.

<sup>94</sup> On this fascinating aspect see Seton 2015:46f., which also includes a translation of relevant passages from Atisha's hagiography *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 137:5ff).

<sup>95</sup> See the previous section regarding the ancient roots of an institution like that of Nālandā.

<sup>96</sup> Scholastic activity related to PP did flourish in this period, particularly around the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*. A good place to start an exploration into the key scholastic sources and authors would be Ruegg 1981: 101ff. See also Chapter 6.2 below.

朝 960–1279). In fact, virtually all Chinese translations of the Selected Sources stem from this period.<sup>97</sup>

Under the Pālas, various forms of Buddhism were represented, including traditional ones. There is evidence for the worship of stūpas and for the production of statues of the Buddha depicted in traditional postures, or the worship of Buddhist scriptures with flowers, etc. - in a way that seems quite close to that described in some early Mahāyāna works.<sup>98</sup> One can easily get a glimpse of this richness and diversity of Buddhist traditions in this area by studying the archaeological and epigraphical remains of a site like Bodhgayā.<sup>99</sup>

However, evidence suggests that Buddhism was not the only influential tradition. It is well-known that Śaivism too had a prominent presence inside the royal court as well as outside of it. Some rulers - despite being described as *paramasaugatas* on copper-plates - are known to have taken Śaiva initiation, and land grants in favour of Śaiva institutions are strikingly numerous.<sup>100</sup>

The ritual system of the Śaivas, by this time fully developed and codified in scriptures (called *āgamas* and *tantras*) and ritual manuals, was allegedly capable not only of protecting the kingdom, but to in fact even bestow liberation upon

---

<sup>97</sup> Some Chinese catalogues of this period do describe the geographical origin as well as the size of Sanskrit manuscripts brought from India. See Takeuchi 1975. For a more general characterisation of Buddhism in this period see Sen 2003: 102ff.

<sup>98</sup> On the more traditional aspects of Pāla Buddhism see Kinnard 2013.

<sup>99</sup> See Willis *forthcoming*.

<sup>100</sup> See Sanderson 2009: 108ff. A document indicating the extent of Pāla support of traditions other than the Buddhist one is the Siyān inscription (EI 39: 7), see Sanderson 2009: 111.

the initiate.<sup>101</sup> The ritual procedures required to meet such an extraordinary result are in fact remarkably similar to those of the by now mature and self-aware esoteric Buddhist tradition, which had largely developed within the Pāla cultural milieu. That interactions took place between esoteric Buddhism and Śaivism is undeniable. However, the extent of direct influence of Śaivism on esoteric Buddhism is a rather controversial issue.<sup>102</sup>

The ritual system of esoteric Buddhism<sup>103</sup> made large use of spells, *maṇḍalas*,<sup>104</sup> ritualised hand gestures (*mudrās*), diagram-like representation of the deity (*yantras*), advanced visualisation of fierce deities, antinomian practices, etc.<sup>105</sup> Over time, this system was developed and codified in countless scriptures and ritual manuals. There are various emic models that group these scriptures in many ways, typically as various ‘levels’ representing increasing degrees of esotericism: e.g. from the *kriyātantras* - which vastly overlap with the

---

<sup>101</sup> See for example Goodall and Isaacson 2011: 124.

<sup>102</sup> Some scholars are keen on seeing the ritual system shared by Śaivism and esoteric Buddhism as a consequence of a shared cultural substratum, rather than a consequence of influence from the Śaiva side. However, gaining specific information on such ‘substratum’ is extremely challenging. See Davidson 2002: 171ff.

<sup>103</sup> Note that not all scholars have adopted the expression ‘esoteric Buddhism’ (see the remarks at Orzech et al. 2011: 4ff.). One should be aware that some prefer to use the term ‘esoteric’ as an equivalent of *guhya*, a notion which occupies a more prominent role within certain specific scriptural strata of the tradition.

<sup>104</sup> These stylised depictions of palaces populated by various deities in hierarchical disposition have sometimes be brought in connection with the social hierarchies defining the period (see the treatment Davidson 2002: 131ff.).

<sup>105</sup> On the developments of esoteric ritual with particular reference to the TJ see Shinohara 2014.

phenomenon of *dhāraṇī*-scriptures mentioned above - to the 'mysteries' of the antinomian *yoginītantras*.<sup>106</sup>

As was pointed out above, spells and simple *maṇḍalas* had been part of the Buddhist tradition for centuries. None of the elements listed just now are either unique to esoteric Buddhism or indeed necessary for one to identify a certain phenomenon as belonging to this tradition. This is why some scholars refer to such elements by clarifying that they are in fact used polythetically.<sup>107</sup> For one to speak of *mature* esoteric Buddhism, in addition to the elements above, as well as the presence of dedicated scriptures, one would also expect some degree of belief in the soteriological significance of the initiation ritual (*abhiṣeka*).<sup>108</sup> Once a ritual involving spells is no longer performed for apotropaic purposes but is linked to liberation (albeit more loosely than in the Śaiva context) and made accessible to initiates by an organised community (including masters and ritual specialists), one is likely entering the realm of mature esoteric Buddhism. Such a community existed under the Pālas and appears to have reached its apex in the first two centuries after the turn of the millennium.<sup>109</sup>

For the present purposes, it is sufficient to indicate that mature esoteric Buddhism came under some pressure from various sides to justify its practices, some of which were remarkably similar to those of the Śaivas, and despite being

---

<sup>106</sup> On these textual strata see for example Isaacson 1998.

<sup>107</sup> An approachable and yet solid introduction to esoteric Buddhism which explains this concept is Szántó *Unpublished Draft*.

<sup>108</sup> This is another of the key points raised in Szántó *Unpublished Draft*. It appears that such shift is already observable in the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*.

<sup>109</sup> See the seminal treatment in Sanderson 2009: 124ff.

expounded in esoteric scriptures did not appear to find much support in early Mahāyāna literature.<sup>110</sup> Esoteric scholars took great care in ensuring the ritual apparatus was encoded to reflect traditional Mahāyāna notions, so as to infuse it with 'Buddhist meaning'.<sup>111</sup> The reader might already expect that Prajñāpāramitā would come to play a significant role within these dynamics, being so intimately connected with - and perhaps even epitomising - traditional Mahāyāna.

One useful framework for viewing the relation between PP and esoteric Buddhism is that of the common distinction between a *pāramitānaya* and a *mantranaya*, i.e. two paths placing emphasis on the 'perfections' (*pāramitās*, of which PP represents the apex) or on mantras (and an associated ritual apparatus) respectively. However, as explored in Chapter 5 and illustrated by some specimens within the Selected Sources, these two paths can overlap significantly. It might be useful to mention at this point the fascinating *Ādikarma* literature, i.e. works and practices intended for beginner bodhisattvas on the esoteric path. As exemplified by passages in the writing of Advayavajra and Anupamavajra, PP sūtra recitation and mantra practice did occupy a role in a beginner's training (see Chapter 5 for more detail).<sup>112</sup>

But how was PP generally faring under the Pālas? Various sources suggest that Prajñāpāramitā scriptures were quite central to Pāla Buddhism. First of all, there is epigraphical evidence recording donations made in support of the recitation of

---

<sup>110</sup> This is a complex point which will be taken up in some detail in the closing section of Chapter 5.

<sup>111</sup> On aspects relevant to this topic see for example Sferra 1999.

<sup>112</sup> See Von Rospatt 2015: 821f.

PP scriptures.<sup>113</sup> Apart from this, there is also epigraphical evidence for the worship of PP as a deity in Northeastern India. For example, a copper-plate grant of the Varmans mentions the worship of the deity Prajñāpāmitā along with other deities at Vajrayoginī.<sup>114</sup> Historiographical sources in Tibetan also stress the centrality of PP in the Pāla cultural milieu.<sup>115</sup>

As for material evidence, the most striking resources are a number of lavishly decorated manuscripts of the AS.<sup>116</sup> As already mentioned, this work appears to have been, along with the *Pañcarakṣā* - which includes some key *dhāraṇī* scriptures - one of the most commonly commissioned.

Inside monasteries, it appears that studying PP scriptures had become part of what might be styled a 'Buddhist curriculum'. Composing commentaries of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* - a verse commentary based on the *Larger* PP - had become

---

<sup>113</sup> For references to the key inscriptional sources see Schopen 2005: 18-19 (notes 7,8).

This and the following aspects will be taken up again in Chapter 6.1.

<sup>114</sup> See EI 30: 263 (Prajñāpāramitā is mentioned on line 8). The charter is unfortunately damaged.

<sup>115</sup> This is a vast and slightly controversial topic. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between historically accurate accounts and Tibetan historiographical agendas. A key and often-quoted passage by Tāranātha mentioning how a Pāla ruler accepted the PP-expert Haribhadra as preceptor can be found at Chimpa 1990: 274. Sanderson has translated a number of passages from Tāranātha which also mention PP (see Sanderson 2009 at the relevant section on the Pālas).

<sup>116</sup> Apart from Kim's study (2013), one should also mention Weissenborn 2012, which focuses on one MS of the AS.

common, and it appears that even official diplomas (*pattras*) were conferred for writing on PP.<sup>117</sup>

Besides large scale commentarial writing, Song Chinese translations testify to a number of new PP scriptures appearing around this period, although a direct relation to the Pālas is not always traceable.<sup>118</sup> Luckily, some Pāla manuscript sources including these later PP scriptures are indeed extant. The most remarkable one is a unique Pāla composite MS including ten PP-related works, which not only includes the PPH and the AdhyP, but also three other spell-related PP scriptures, the most well-known of which is the *Svalpākṣarā* PP (SvalP).<sup>119</sup> The MS was at some point brought to Tibet, where it is still preserved. Today, access to copies of the MS is made possible by the China Tibetology Research Center (CTRC) in Beijing.

PP continued to be mostly associated with traditional Mahāyāna. In fact, it was the AS which received most of the attention, and the available information on manuscript worship indicates procedures still remarkably close to those

---

<sup>117</sup> This is a crucial aspect when it comes to understanding the role of PP in later, institutionalised South Asian Buddhism. See the references in Seton 2015: 57 (note 123). Also see Chimpa 1990: 304.

<sup>118</sup> See the useful tables - which systematically report dates (sometimes approximate) - in Lehnert 1999: 35ff. Notice how many of these sources were translated towards the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> C.

<sup>119</sup> A study of the ms is offered in the introduction to Tomabechi 2009. The presence of the SvalP has only recently been confirmed (see Komine *et al.* 2015: 97).

advocated by this ancient scripture itself (such as worship with flowers, powders, etc.) and even some connection to traditional reliquary (*stūpa*) worship.<sup>120</sup>

Nevertheless, one also witnesses a complex and still largely unexplored interaction of PP with esoteric Buddhism. For example, esoteric practitioners are known to have commissioned AS MSS, particularly from the 11<sup>th</sup> C.<sup>121</sup> At some point, the iconographic program of AS MSS started including esoteric deities and not just the more traditional scenes from the Buddha's life story.<sup>122</sup> At the level of scholasticism, some scholars, among which Ratnākaraśānti was perhaps foremost, started composing commentaries and ritual manuals explaining, *inter alia*, how the paths of PP and the path of esoteric Buddhism were indeed not mutually excluding.<sup>123</sup>

At scriptural level, while the presence of spells was by now quite common in PP works, one also finds evidence of some scriptures reaching further into mature esoteric territory, such as for example the just mentioned SvalP.<sup>124</sup> But the opposite phenomenon, i.e. references to PP in esoteric writing, is also attested.

---

<sup>120</sup> The *stūpa*-connection has been recently stressed in Kim 2013 (see e.g. p.52 or what is defined as Group A within the manuscript exemplars).

<sup>121</sup> See the table on patronage at Kim 2013: 217ff. Kim *forthcoming* will deal more closely with PP worship in the esoteric context.

<sup>122</sup> This is also the case with the Pāla manuscript of shorter PP works kept at the China Tibetology Research Center in Beijing. More on this will be said in Chapter 2.3.1 and Chapter 5.2.4.

<sup>123</sup> This important thinker is apparently also the author of short manuals on esoteric worship, see e.g. Isaacson 2002. For a broader introduction to Ratnākaraśānti and his important commentaries see Seton 2015 (Dphil Thesis).

<sup>124</sup> For details on the relevant passages see Chapter 5.2.3.

There are descriptions of *maṇḍalas* of Prajñāpāramitā, complex visualisations of the deity, as well as mention of the worship of PP manuscripts in an esoteric context. Some of these sources will be dealt with in Chapter 5.<sup>125</sup>

The rise and fortunes of this later phase of PP scriptural writing will be the subject of the present study. There should be little doubt by now that a basic understanding of the Pāla cultural milieu is, directly or indirectly, central to any study of later PP scriptures and the interaction between PP and esoteric Buddhism at large.<sup>126</sup>

### **1.2.2.2 Exploring Southeast Asian Sources**

As is well-known, Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions spread throughout Southeast Asia and were well represented between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> C. In most regions, Mahāyāna co-existed with Brahmanical traditions like Śaivism, the latter being often dominant both in terms of royal patronage as well as penetration among the agrarian population.<sup>127</sup> Clearly, while the topic cannot be explored here, there are various views on the roles played by Indian religions and knowledge in the formation and maintenance of Southeast Asian polities.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> For a list of the available sources see Conze 1978: 88ff.

<sup>126</sup> However, one should not overemphasise the importance of PP in this context. See the cautious remarks on this made by Schopen (2005: 12).

<sup>127</sup> See Sanderson 2003: 403ff.

<sup>128</sup> Apart from the traditional and now largely outdated work of early French scholars like Coedès, one should be aware of Michael Vickery's extensive work on the history of

One should be aware that there are complex discussions about cultural trans-regionalism and the development of 'localised' traditions.<sup>129</sup> This includes the role of Sanskrit with respect to local languages. Some of the latter, like Old Javanese, were not simply subordinate to Sanskrit but were used as literary languages in their own right, as inscriptional and manuscript evidence suggests.<sup>130</sup> Local Southeast Asian centres appear to have been both selective and transformative in their appropriation of Indic culture, eventually becoming themselves culturally influential hubs, sometimes even on a pan-Asian scale.<sup>131</sup>

As far as PP and related practices are concerned, two regions are particularly rich in evidence, partially overlapping with modern-day Cambodia and Indonesia.<sup>132</sup>

When tracing the Southeast Asian journey of PP, one needs to distinguish between three interrelated aspects: scriptural sources, images of the deity and her inscriptional eulogies, and actual ritual practice.

This evidence is indeed of the utmost importance for the study of the significance of PP in the early medieval period and should be duly recognised.

---

Southeast Asian kingdoms (see e.g. Vickery 1998). See also Hall 1985. Zakharov 2019 offers an overview of established views, while also proposing innovative perspectives on the matter.

<sup>129</sup> See for example Mabbett 1986 on Buddhism's transmission to Campā, an important medieval polity in what is today Southern coastal Vietnam.

<sup>130</sup> A seminal discussion of the topic can be found at Pollock 2006: 125ff.

<sup>131</sup> See Acri 2016.

<sup>132</sup> For an introduction to Mahāyāna in the Khmer context see Harris 2005 (chapter 1).

Unfortunately however, references to specific PP scriptures are rather rare in Southeast Asian sources. The striking paucity of surviving manuscripts adds to the challenge (on this see Chapter 6.4). Only one Cambodian inscription appears to mention a PP work.<sup>133</sup> But one should also note that the SaŚP's translator \*Mandra (Mantuoluo, 曼陀羅) was apparently born in Funan - a region overlapping with modern-day Cambodia - in the pre-Angkorian period (6<sup>th</sup> C), at least according to one Chinese catalogue.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, some materials that could be related to the AdhyP are attested in a Javanese esoteric work, the *Sanghyang Kamahāyānan Mantranaya*, potentially making of the AdhyP the main representative of later PP writing in the area.<sup>135</sup> Also significant is the presence of verses associated with the *Vajracchedikā* within Javanese *dhāraṇī* sources.<sup>136</sup> More evidence, although still fragmentary, will be presented in Chapter 6.3 and 6.4.

This paucity of scriptural evidence is partly counter-balanced by surviving statues/bronzes and some inscriptional sources recording elaborate invocations of the deity Prajñāpāramitā, sometimes referred to as the 'mother of the Buddhas' (an epithet already found in the AS<sup>137</sup>), or her installation within temples and shrines. Particularly well known is the instance of Jayavarman the

---

<sup>133</sup> See Sanderson 2003: 427 (note 284) and Chapter 6.4 below.

<sup>134</sup> This is also mentioned in Harris 2005: 6. Also see the catalogue *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* (開元釋教錄) (T2154 p537b10– 15).

<sup>135</sup> This is briefly treated in Woodward 2004: 339f.

<sup>136</sup> One such spell inscription is mentioned in Griffiths 2014: 146f.

<sup>137</sup> See Mitra 1888: 253ff.

VII installing a PP in the name of his late mother.<sup>138</sup> By comparison, the number of post 8<sup>th</sup> C South Asian inscriptions mentioning PP, even as a deity, is surprisingly low, and largely confined to Northeastern India (see 6.1).

Perhaps the best-known attestation of Prajñāpāramitā in Java is an impressive statue kept at the National Museum of Indonesia in Jakarta, widely considered to be a true masterpiece.<sup>139</sup> Prajñāpāramitā is also referred to in Old Javanese sources where the deity appears to have been incorporated within certain royal rituals related to funerary practices (much like in Cambodia).<sup>140</sup>

While Prajñāpāramitā was predominantly associated with traditional Mahāyāna, in Southeast Asia iconography and ritual contexts often betray interaction with esoteric Buddhism. If one can take the number of arms as indication of this, one cannot but notice one 12<sup>th</sup> C Prajñāpāramitā with twenty-two arms, apparently unattested in South Asian sources.<sup>141</sup> In this way, PP might have undergone a gradual process of ‘esotericisation’. This could be in some ways parallel to what can be observed in the case of Avalokiteśvara cults.<sup>142</sup>

---

<sup>138</sup> See e.g. Harris 2005: 19.

<sup>139</sup> See Reichle 2007: 51ff. (with illustration on p.52).

<sup>140</sup> See Sanderson 2003: 377. Specific text passages will be pointed out in Chapter 6.3.

<sup>141</sup> See *ibid.* p.51.

<sup>142</sup> The deity and related cults are the object of a detailed article by Green (2014).

### 1.2.2.3 Stūpas and *dhāraṇī* stones

While Sri Lanka is usually associated with the Theravāda tradition, Mahāyāna Buddhism too left remarkable traces there.<sup>143</sup> One can think for example of the *dhāraṇī* stones, which are quite numerous.<sup>144</sup> These stones, inscribed with spells or extracts of spell scriptures, must have been invested with major ritual significance: as pious donations they were probably thought to confer immense merit upon the donor, while likely serving an apotropaic function as well.<sup>145</sup>

In Sri Lanka, fragments from the *Larger* PP were found engraved on golden leaves.<sup>146</sup> Also, tablets inscribed with a PP text were recovered from the vicinity of a stūpa structure.<sup>147</sup> The practice of depositing Buddhist texts within stūpas is well attested, but most commonly it is the *Pratītyasamutpādagāthā* that is inserted in the form of a stamped clay sealing, or alternatively certain *dhāraṇīs*.<sup>148</sup>

---

<sup>143</sup> On this see Veidlinger 2006 and Mori 1999. See also Mudiyanse 1967. A recent MA thesis by Powell (2018) deals with evidence relating to Vajrayāna. See also the references in Acri 2016: 9 (note 29).

<sup>144</sup> See the classic treatment in Schopen 2005: 306ff.

<sup>145</sup> For a recent contribution on *dhāraṇī* stones - albeit in the Orissan context - see Mishra 2016.

<sup>146</sup> See von Hinüber 1983: 189ff.

<sup>147</sup> See Paranavitana 1933: 199ff. See Drewes 2007: 132 for considerations about the specific location of the tablets in relation to the stūpa and about the implications for the history of the Buddhist book cult.

<sup>148</sup> On this practice see Bentor 1995 as well as Skilling 2008 (which is to be reprinted in Willis *forthcoming*).

Miniature stūpas, clay sealings and *dhāraṇī* stones are commonly recovered from Buddhist sites of this period. Notably, archaeological sites in Orissa have proven impressively rich in this regard.<sup>149</sup> These sites also preserve a large number of esoteric Buddhist deities, in a sign of the impact the tradition had on the area.<sup>150</sup>

#### 1.2.2.4 Surviving Traditions in the Himalayas

While Buddhism had been present in Nepal throughout the early medieval period, the historian of PP will find it fascinating that much more recent evidence is available from this area.<sup>151</sup> With the virtual disappearance of Buddhism from the subcontinent after the 12<sup>th</sup> C, the Kathmandu valley became home to what was left of South Asian Buddhism. There, a living Mahāyāna tradition survives to this day among the Newar community.<sup>152</sup> This tradition is very rich and encompasses aspects related to mainstream Mahāyāna and its key sūtras, as well as of esoteric Buddhism and popular *dhāraṇī* practices.

A key aspect to consider is the richness of the Nepalese Buddhist manuscript tradition. This was largely made accessible through preservation and cataloguing

---

<sup>149</sup> Again see Mishra 2016.

<sup>150</sup> A very useful tool to gain insight into the art-historical heritage of Orissa is Donaldson 2001 (volume two offers photographic reproductions).

<sup>151</sup> As a general introduction to Buddhist literature in Nepal - including extant MS sources - see Von Rospatt 2015.

<sup>152</sup> See the seminal study Gellner 1992.

projects like the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP). Were it not for Nepal, many Buddhist texts would not have survived in Sanskrit at all. This is also and especially true for PP. Most of the later PP works considered in this study are extant in Nepalese manuscripts. Nepalese *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas* are large composite MSS covering hundreds of spell scriptures or individual spells, which also usually include various later PP works.<sup>153</sup> However, not all of these manuscripts are very ancient.<sup>154</sup> Thus, one should be prepared to consider that certain collections of texts might reflect Nepalese traditions more than Pāla ones, and that a work as recorded in them might differ considerably from its Chinese translation of five centuries earlier.

Another remarkable feature is that Nepal has preserved a living tradition of PP worship. One particular manuscript is preserved in the Kwā Bahā temple, but it is sometimes possible to observe other forms of worship of PP manuscripts, even in more domestic environments.<sup>155</sup> PP also features prominently in the Navagrantha tradition, which involves the worship of a set of nine Mahāyāna sūtra, of which the AS is one.<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>153</sup> One of Dr. Hidas' forthcoming monograph studies will be dedicated to these sources, particularly those preserved in the Cambridge Library (see Hidas *forthcoming*).

<sup>154</sup> See Chapter 2.4 for details on available dates and typologies.

<sup>155</sup> For the temple-based cult of PP manuscripts see Gellner 1996. A worship procedure has been recently described in Kim 2013.

<sup>156</sup> For the list see von Rospatt 2015: 820.

Needless to say, observing the living tradition can help formulate a number of questions relevant to the study of earlier periods as well.<sup>157</sup>

#### **1.2.2.5 A note on Prajñāpāramitā in China, Tibet and Japan**

In the present study, Chinese and Tibetan evidence in the form of translations of Buddhist works will play a major role. As already stated, Chinese translations are usually the earliest dated attestations of Buddhist texts.

Buddhist culture in these regions is extremely rich and well documented, particularly when it comes to the PP tradition. The present study focuses on South Asia and Sanskrit sources, yet there are a few particular instances from these non-indic Buddhist cultures which have direct relevance to the study of later PP scriptures. The following is a preliminary list of such instances. They will be referred to in later chapters as supporting evidence.

The Gupta-period SaŚP mentioned above was translated three times into Chinese. While this is not surprising, some extracts from its text figure prominently in the epigraphical program of Shandong.<sup>158</sup> I think it is fascinating to see a shorter PP work in an epigraphical context and will attempt to keep track of such evidence. Mahāyāna works engraved on stone are rare in South Asia, with the prominent exception of *dhāraṇī-sūtras*.

---

<sup>157</sup> I would like to thank Alexander O'Neill (Toronto) for starting a discussion with me on this topic following his fieldwork in Nepal.

<sup>158</sup> For details see Wang and Ledderose 2014: 43ff.

For example, the PPH - which includes a spell - is found engraved in China on so-called *dhāraṇī*-pillars, along with another spell scripture, the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā*.<sup>159</sup> The ritual significance of such pillars would have been complex, including i.a. aspects related to apotropaic power.

The PPH was indeed very popular in East Asia.<sup>160</sup> It is found among the manuscripts discovered at Dunhuang, and sometimes its text is shaped in the peculiar shape of a *stūpa*. This is another development which does not seem to find parallels in South Asia, and it might be connected to notions of power and efficacy associated with the work and its spell.<sup>161</sup>

As for the Tibetan cultural milieu, a particularly relevant site is the Alchi monumental complex of Laddakh. Here one finds paintings of a certain form of Prajñāpāramitā with six arms, which is also attested in one later PP work.<sup>162</sup> In the Alchi paintings, PP is also found at the centre of a *maṇḍala*, which is also something relatively rare and thus worth noticing.<sup>163</sup>

Another aspect concerns the already mentioned clay sealings (*tsha tsha* in Tibetan). It has not proven possible to locate a clay sealing clearly depicting PP from Northeastern India. However, there are a number of Tibetan examples. On

---

<sup>159</sup> On this see Kuo 2014.

<sup>160</sup> See Mair 2002 as well as McRae 1988, the latter exploring Chan commentarial activity on the PPH.

<sup>161</sup> On these fascinating manuscripts of the PPH see Drège 2014. Prof. Harrison has been working on such issues. Unfortunately, it was not possible to consult him in the course of this study.

<sup>162</sup> See Chapter 5.2.2.

<sup>163</sup> On Alchi and the related Prajñāpāramitā iconography see Luczanits 2016.

some of them, spells are also inscribed, a fact that makes them even more relevant to the present context.<sup>164</sup>

Some references to such evidence will be discussed below in the context of the cult of PP in relation to physical objects (Chapter 2.5).

Lastly, I should at least mention that Japan preserves an important living tradition of esoteric Buddhism, some features of which are quite archaic. In Shingon temples, the AdhyP is still recited today.<sup>165</sup> This is one of the key example of the endurance and adaptability of later PP writing in an esoteric context.

### **1.2.3 Summary**

The overview presented above might appear particularly broad in the context of a study focusing on selected PP scriptures. However, some of the issues highlighted are essential to the understanding of the dynamics and agendas underlying the composition and circulation of these scriptures. By highlighting the role of royal power and patronage in general, as well as the contrast and overlap among various Buddhist traditions, one can see PP not only as a set of scriptures or teachings, but as a symbol or perhaps even a ‘brand’, occupying a prominent place within Mahāyāna at large. It is this aspect of PP that was

---

<sup>164</sup> See Namgyal Lama 2014: 14.

<sup>165</sup> This is briefly mentioned in Tomabechei 2009: xii. See also Payne 2011: 1026.

particularly central in the early medieval period and will be a decisive factor in shaping the fortunes of an entire new phase of scriptural production.

With these introductory notes in mind, it is now possible to approach the primary sources.

## **1.3 Introducing the Primary Sources**

### **1.3.1 Overview of Secondary Literature**

Throughout this thesis, I will refer to the primary sources as ‘Prajñāpāramitā spell scriptures’, using an expression meant to capture the fact that spells are perhaps the key feature of these scriptural works.<sup>166</sup> There are a number of key technical considerations that need to be made regarding how to properly label such group. These will be addressed in detail below (in section 1.3.3), once the reader will be more familiar with the choices previously made by scholars of PP.

First of all, it is necessary to point out the key scholarly studies dealing - at least partially- with later PP writing. Perhaps surprisingly, the oldest comprehensive scholarly account of PP spell scriptures is in many ways still the most useful: this

---

<sup>166</sup> For a use of the expression ‘spell scriptures’ which has inspired this choice see Hidas 2015.

is found in Conze's *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (PPL).<sup>167</sup> The value of this account lies in the comprehensiveness of its list of scriptures, which covers most of PP spell scriptures extant in at least a Sanskrit, Chinese or Tibetan source. Of course, some of the records are incomplete or need to be updated, and some of Conze's own elaborations and theories should not be expected to reflect current academic consensus. However, in all fairness, Conze's work remains formidable under many respects and the present study has only occasionally been able to substantially move forward.

Apart from listing and describing briefly later PP works, scholars have made various attempts at developing a taxonomy. The degree of success varies but this has proven a particularly challenging task. Most of the sources relevant to the present study are listed under Conze's "Tantric Texts" section, which includes over twenty works divided into "sūtras" (e.g. the *Svalpākṣarā*), "litanies" (e.g. the PNA), "dhāraṇīs" (e.g. the self standing PP spells), and "rituals" (e.g. works concerned with PP within *maṇḍalas*).<sup>168</sup> This appears to be a working taxonomy rather than a definitive classification attempt, at least judging from the fact that it is not found in Conze's other publications. PP spell scriptures figure prominently in Conze's collected translations of shorter PP works.<sup>169</sup> There, the classification is slightly different. Some works which were classified as "Tantric

---

<sup>167</sup> However, one should refer to the second, improved edition of 1978, rather than the 1960 one.

<sup>168</sup> See Conze 1978: 79ff.

<sup>169</sup> See Conze 1993 (first published in 1973).

Texts > Sūtras” in the PPL, are now called “summaries” (e.g. the *Kauśikā* PP).<sup>170</sup> Works previously classified as “Tantric Texts > Litanies” are now separately labelled “Tantric texts” (e.g. the PNA).<sup>171</sup> The translations should be seen as pioneering work, but sometimes include rather useful notes, in which Conze explains the philological challenges he was facing. Particularly instructive is a note in which he discusses how he edited a particular spell, which was attested in slightly different formulations across the extant sources.<sup>172</sup>

Another classification is that by Saigusa, which in many ways reflects traditional East Asian canonical conventions.<sup>173</sup> One aspect which is worth noticing is that under the section devoted to the PPH, Saigusa listed other PP spell works as well.<sup>174</sup> I wonder whether this choice was partly taken as a recognition of the fact that the PPH should be seen as a sort of influential ‘matrix’ when it comes to the format of these sources.<sup>175</sup>

---

<sup>170</sup> See the introduction *ibid.* p. ii ff.

<sup>171</sup> The ‘tantric texts’ section start on p. 184.

<sup>172</sup> See Conze 1993: 198 (note 2). These two works (1978, 1993) are not the only writing by Conze which is directly relevant to the present study. In the following chapters, I will refer to Conze 1956, which includes editions of the SvalP and the KauP, along with a short introductory note on ‘tantric’ PP works. While I will refer to other scholars when dealing with iconographic aspects, mention should be made of Conze’s work on this topic (see Conze 1968).

<sup>173</sup> See Saigusa 1983 (in Japanese).

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* p. 118f.

<sup>175</sup> Some remarks on what is labelled the ‘architextual’ approach adopted by Saigusa can be found at Lehnert 1999: 63 (and relevant note). Surely, these works are sometimes structurally similar.

A more developed classification is found in one of Lehnert's studies.<sup>176</sup> Here, PP spell scriptures are found across three different sections: short texts ("Kurzfassungen"), tantric works ("tantrische PP-sūtren"), and 'summaries and compilations' ("Zusammenfassungen und Kompilationen").<sup>177</sup> The PPH is found under short texts, which implies that for the author the mere presence of a spell is not sufficient reason to classify a work as tantric. Interestingly, the *Kausikā* PP is found under 'summaries and compilations', and according to the author this is by virtue of the fact that the KauP's spells are already attested in older works.<sup>178</sup> One should notice that Lehnert's overview is written largely from a sinological perspective, and is based on Chinese translations. Nonetheless, it is still very useful to the scholar of South Asian Buddhism.

Moving on, Komine *et al.* 2015 is a recent volume on PP, written in Japanese. It is quite comprehensive and includes a section on later scriptures.<sup>179</sup> While it is not particularly ambitious taxonomically, the overall treatment is rather solid and, most importantly, up-to-date. The highlight of the relevant section is the inclusion of information on the Pāla MS kept at the CTRC, with the (partial)

---

<sup>176</sup> See Lehnert 1999: 32ff. This section is part of a methodological and well-thought introduction to the study of *Vajracchedikā* commentaries from a Buddhological and Sinological perspective. The introduction does not shy away from attempting to look at modern theories on literature and languages (such as Genette's thoughts on 'paratexts').

<sup>177</sup> See *ibid.* p.33.

<sup>178</sup> See *ibid.* p.66. This is a considerable step forward in terms of the attention paid to the actual details. Usually scholars count the KauP under the esoteric specimens, following Conze 1956 and 1978.

<sup>179</sup> See Komine et al. 2015: 82ff.

publication of one previously unpublished work, the *Saptaśloṅikā* (SaśIP), on the basis of that manuscript.<sup>180</sup>

A recent overview article by Zacchetti focuses on early PP writing but does mention a selected number of later scriptures as well.<sup>181</sup> The author points out that apart from recent classifications developed by modern scholar, one should also be aware of long-standing ones which developed within the Tibetan tradition.<sup>182</sup> This is certainly true, and modern scholars might have little choice but to follow this tradition in the absence of a solid etic taxonomy. However, one should keep in mind that sometimes Tibetans do not seem to have unequivocally agreed on the classification of a given PP spell work.<sup>183</sup>

Thus, as far as bibliographical comprehensiveness with regard to later PP sources, Conze's overview is still the *locus classicus*. As for the classification - and indeed selection - of these sources, there is no single model, but a number of them, reflecting either emic traditions or the considerations of individual scholars. This will have to be considered carefully when laying out the list of Selected Sources (section 1.3.2).

---

<sup>180</sup> See *ibid.* p. 108f. I suspect the edition was based on the folios published in Danzeng 2011, which do not include the last line of the SaśIP. See the *Appendices* for more material on this minor and yet fascinating work.

<sup>181</sup> This is the article found in Brill's *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (vol.1), referred here as Zacchetti 2015.

<sup>182</sup> See *ibid.* p.202 (second column).

<sup>183</sup> For the complex case of the PPH see Silk 1994: 27ff. This also discusses comments on classifying the PPH as a 'tantra' by Tibetan thinkers, such as Bu ston and others.

In terms of available critical editions, some work has been done on the best-known scriptures, i.e. the PPH and the AdhyP.<sup>184</sup> Apart from these, the SvalP was critically edited by Yuyama, which, although partially outdated, still represents valuable and solid editorial work.<sup>185</sup> As already mentioned, Conze's translations sometimes include philologically relevant notes. Conze also edited the KauP on the basis of a single Skt. manuscript from central Asia.<sup>186</sup> Moreover, some of the self-standing PP spells were edited by Filliozat and Meisezahl, although mostly on the basis of individual manuscripts.<sup>187</sup> The Skt. text of the ArdhaP was edited by M.B. Shakya on the basis of a single late Nepalese MS.<sup>188</sup>

Apart from these few examples, one has to approach these works through individual Sanskrit manuscripts (many of which are now available online) or the main printed editions of the Chinese and Tibetan canons.<sup>189</sup> This situation will raise significant philological issues, described below in section 1.3.3.2.

---

<sup>184</sup> See Silk 1994 (for the Tibetan texts; Conze's edition is still used to access the Skt. texts). For the AdhyP see Tomabechei 2009.

<sup>185</sup> This edition by Yuyama (1977) will be constantly referred to in the following chapters.

<sup>186</sup> This is the already mentioned Conze 1956. More on this fascinating MS will be said in Chapter 2.2.1.

<sup>187</sup> See for example Filliozat 1941, which edits a PP-spell as found in a Nepalese *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* (p.41). Also see the various PP works listed in Meisezahl 1957.

<sup>188</sup> See Shakya 1998 (edited on the basis of a *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha*). As there is much work to be done before a critical edition of the ArdhaP can appear, some relevant materials will be offered in the *Appendices*.

<sup>189</sup> The online collection of the libraries of Cambridge and Tokyo have proven immensely beneficial to the present study. On the latter see also Matsunami's catalogue (1965). More on this will be said in Chapter 2. As for the use of translation sources see the remarks made below in the present Chapter.

### 1.3.2 The Primary Sources: Selection and Presentation

Selecting the primary sources for the present study is not the same as developing a taxonomy. Here, one has to consider the current status of research so as to be able to pay attention to the less explored and yet potentially meaningful aspects. Thus, the well-known PPH and the AdhyP will not be the focus of the present study, although they will be considered throughout for reference purposes.

For the benefit of the reader, the following will be a brief account of each individual work falling under the Selected Sources. The reader should be prepared to refer back to this section on occasion. Text witnesses of a number of these works are made available in the *Appendices* (see the Table of Contents). These can be consulted to gain a general idea of the various formats of PP spell works. Key passages will be presented and discussed in the main body of the thesis.

Each entry will include a concordance of the scholarly overviews in which a work is discussed (including Conze, Saigusa, Lehnert, Komine et al., and Zacchetti).

Reference texts in Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan will also be indicated, along with Conze's translations, if available. Since there is a whole section dedicated to discussing paratexts (titles in particular), the whole Tibetan and Chinese titles will not be reported here (see instead Chapter 3.1).

Note that most works will be mentioned throughout the following chapters, as different issues are taken up.

1) ***Ardhaśatikā PP*** (ArdhaP)

[Reference - PPL: 66; Lehnert 1999:66; Texts - Skt:Shakya 1998 (ed.); Chin:T248; Tib:

Q121 rgyud, ta 277b1-284b3 (vol. 5, p.173); Translations - Conze 1993:154]

Terminus Ante Quem: Shihu 施護 (\*Dānapāla) translation (T248), after 980CE<sup>190</sup>

Scholars agree with Conze's observation that this is a compilation of passages from older scriptures.<sup>191</sup> Most of these are lists, such as a list of kinds of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), perfections (*pāramitās*), etc. Its phraseology is also in line with earlier writing (see Chapter 3.2.2 and 3.2.3).<sup>192</sup>

The ArdhaP presents the typical sūtra opening and structure in both Chinese (T248) and Skt. texts, but the Chinese text is slightly less developed. A section in the Skt. text is a series of repetitive sentences in an exchange between Subhūti and the Buddha, with Subhūti repeating the sentence *aho! aho!duravagāhā vateyaṃ prajñāpāramitā* 'alas, alas, this PP is indeed difficult to fathom!' (see 4.1.2). I have not been able to trace a corresponding section in the Chinese text.

---

<sup>190</sup> Chinese dates here and below are taken from Lehnert 1999.

<sup>191</sup> See Conze 1978: 66.

<sup>192</sup> See *ibid.* for a list of overlapping passages.

The ArdhaP is preserved in a vast number of Nepalese manuscripts and a critical edition is still a desideratum.<sup>193</sup> For a preliminary collation of key exemplars see the *Appendices*.

## 2) *Ekaślokikā* PP (EkaP)

[Reference - Komine et al. 2015:109; Texts: Skt. CTRC 8 MS (unedited)]

Terminus Ante Quem: 1077 CE (?), see Tomabechi 2009: xxx.

This is an extremely concise work only found at the incipit of one Pāla manuscript (CTRC 8).<sup>194</sup> Still unpublished, it consists just of an invocation to PP, the spell *oṃ dhīḥ hrīḥ śrīḥ śrutismṛtivijaye svāhā*, a well-known verse also found in other PP sources (see 3.2.2), and a statement defining the universe and its constituents as impermanent, as opposed to the ‘peaceful’ (*śānta*) *nirvāṇa*. There is no sūtra framework and no discursive elaboration.

## 3) *Kauśikā* PP (KauP)

[Reference - PPL:82; Lehnert 1999:66; Zacchetti 2015:203; Komine et al. 2015:103; Texts: Skt:Conze 1956; Chin:T249; Tib:Q173 rgyud, pa 18b4-20a6 (vol. 6, p.279); Translation - Conze 1993:157]

Terminus Ante Quem: Shihu 施護 (\*Dānapāla) translation (T249), after 980CE; MS IOL Khot S3, 10<sup>th</sup> C (?)

---

<sup>193</sup> For one such specimens see the entry at Matsunami 1965: 187.

<sup>194</sup> The folio containing the work is reproduced in Danzeng 2011.

The Skt. text of the KauP is transmitted in the Central Asian MS IOL Khot S3 and in fragmentary form in other Khotanese MSS.<sup>195</sup> Despite the Central Asian origin of the MS, it does not seem that this witness is particularly ancient. The reasons for this will be explained in the next chapter (see 2.2.1). The KauP too is largely a compilation of older passages.<sup>196</sup> It includes lists of perfections, kinds of emptiness, etc. Its spell section is found in closing position, preceded by a few verses. The spells listed are for the most part known from other, earlier sources (see 4.2).<sup>197</sup> The whole work is embedded within the traditional sūtra opening and coda.

#### 4) *Saptaśloṅikā* PP (SaśIP)

[Reference - PPL:87; Komine et al. 2015:108f.; Texts: Skt. Komine 2015: 108f.; Tib:

Q5907 ngo mtshar bstan bcos, po 348a8-349a3 (vol.149, p.159)]

Terminus Ante Quem: MS CTCRC8, 1077 CE (?), see Tomabechi 2009: xxx.

Lacking a sūtra frame-structure, this extremely concise work consists of a series of epithets of PP, a short spell, and a closing section describing the fruits of the

---

<sup>195</sup> This fascinating MS can be consulted online on the IDP (International Dunhuang Project)'s website:

[http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo\\_scroll\\_h.a4d?uid=5440284659;recnum=12708;index=1](http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_scroll_h.a4d?uid=5440284659;recnum=12708;index=1) (accessed April 2019).

<sup>196</sup> See the reference passages listed under the title.

<sup>197</sup> An attempt at tracing some overlap of these *dhāraṇīs* with those of other spell-scriptures can be found in Chapter 4.2.

spell's recitation (such as seeing the Buddhas at the time of death, and being reborn in pure Buddha fields (*kṣetras*)).<sup>198</sup>

5) **\*Prajñāpāramitā Nāmāṣṭasatakā** (PNA)

[Reference - PPL:84; Lehnert 1999:61; Komine et al. 2015:110; Texts: Chin: T230; Tib:

Q172 rgyud, pa 16b7-18b4 (vol. 6, p.278); Translation - Conze 1993: 196]

Terminus Ante Quem: Shihu 施護 (\*Dānapāla) translation (T230), after 980CE

Lacking the sūtra frame-structure, this work, much like the SaŚIP, starts with an invocation-section, although much longer in this case (108 invocations).<sup>199</sup> This is followed by a statement regarding the efficacy of the recitation of such invocations. Then a spell is introduced and given in full. The work closes with a description of the results of spell recitation (such as being free from the karmic fetters (*karmāvāraṇas*), being reborn under circumstances conducive to awakening, etc.).

This work is also attested in a Tibetan composite MS from Dunhuang (Pelliot Tibétain 45, see 2.2.2).<sup>200</sup>

---

<sup>198</sup> Apart from Komine et al. 2015 as mentioned in the reference-box, see the *Appendices* for a comparison with the SaŚIP as found in a later Nepalese MS.

<sup>199</sup> A large section from this work will be presented in Chapter 4.3.1, with some suggestions regarding how to improve Conze's translation at critical places.

<sup>200</sup> Colour scans of this fascinating MS can be found online:

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8307260z/f2.image> (accessed April 2019).

## 6) *Candragarbha* group:

Candragarbha-PP (CandP), Sūryagarbha-PP (SūrP), Vajraketu-PP (VajrakP),  
Samantabhadra-PP (SamaP), Vajrapāṇi-PP (VajrapP)

[Reference - PPL:83f.; Komine et al. 2015:104f.;

Texts (Tib. only):

CandP: Q743 sher phyin, tsi 180a8-181b3 (vol. 21, p.258);

SūrP: Q742 sher phyin, tsi 179a1-180a7 (vol. 21, p.257);

VajrakP: Q746 sher phyin, tsi 182b8-183b3 (vol. 21, p.259);

SamaP: Q744 sher phyin, tsi 181b4-182a5 (vol. 21, p.258);

VajrapP: Q745 sher phyin, tsi 182a6-182b7 (vol. 21, p.259);

Translations - Conze 1993: 148ff.]

This group of closely related works is attested only in Tibetan. The five Bodhisattvas after which the works are titled are: Candragarbha, Sūryagarbha, Samantabhadra, Vajrapāṇī, and Vajraketu.

These short sūtra scriptures are expositions built around questions typical of PP writing such as ‘how should a bodhisattva train in the perfection of wisdom?’.<sup>201</sup> They touch upon different kinds of absorptions (*samādhis*), and some of them employ similes and incorporate verses. In general, the phraseology is largely in line with that of traditional PP writing (see 3.2.3). The CandP and the VajrapP incorporate one spell each.

## 7) *Svalpākṣarā* PP (SvalP)

[Refereres - PPL:81; Lehnert 1999:62; Zacchetti 2015:202; Komine et al. 2015:102; Texts: Yuyama 1977 (Skt., Tib. critically edited, notes on Chin.); Chin: T258; Translation - Conze 1993: 144]

Terminus Ante Quem: Tianxizai 天息災 (\*Deva[śānti?]) translation (T258), after 982CE.

---

<sup>201</sup> See for example the translations of relevant passages at Conze 1993: 149, 152, 153, etc.

Of the scriptures listed here, the SvalP is probably the best-known, not lastly because it is available in a rather solid critical edition by Yuyama. Avalokiteśvara and the Buddha are the main interlocutors, as in the PPH.<sup>202</sup> This is a fully-fledged sūtra, with two embedded spell sections. The work mentions *mantrasiddhi* ‘accomplishment of mantra (practice)’ and *maṇḍalābhiṣeka* ‘(ritual) initiation in a *maṇḍala*’, in what seem to be, given the context, references to esoteric Buddhist practices.<sup>203</sup> There is also a remarkable reference to worshipping a manuscript of the text in a private environment (*svagrhe*).<sup>204</sup> The recently re-discovered CTRC 8 MS includes this work and its text differs in some places from Yuyama’s edition. Some such differences will be referred to below.

#### 8) \**Buddhamāṭṛ* (BM)

[Reference - PPL:90 (no.39); Lehnert 1999:63; Texts - Chin: T259]

Terminus Ante Quem: Tianxizai 天息災 (\*Deva[śānti?]) translation (T259), after 982CE.

This concise work is attested only in Chinese. It is decidedly ritual-oriented. It lacks the sūtra frame-structure and starts directly with a spell. Next comes the description of a visualisation of Prajñāpāramitā with six arms.<sup>205</sup> After a second

---

<sup>202</sup> Conze is inclined to see a link between the two works, partly on account of the similar choice of characters (see Conze 1978: 81).

<sup>203</sup> The relevant passages will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.2.3.

<sup>204</sup> See Yuyama 1977: 287 (Vf).

<sup>205</sup> Conze deals briefly with the iconographic description (see PPL reference). See the dedicated chapter-section in Chapter 5.2.2.

spell-section, a long list of Bodhisattvas connected to the visualisation is given. A translation of the whole work is offered in the *Appendices*.

### 9) Individual PP spells

[Reference - PPL:86; Texts: Filliozat 1941; Meisezahl 1957]

Nepalese and Tibetan collections of spells and spell scriptures record a number of PP-related spells. These are mostly named after well-known PP scriptures such as the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, the *AS* and the *Vajracchedikā*.<sup>206</sup> Some of these spells are followed by brief statements describing the amount of merit the reciter will accrue while uttering the *dhāraṇī*.

As explained above, the basis for such source selection had to be Conze's comprehensive bibliographical account of "tantric texts", albeit with some caveats. In general, ritual manuals have not been selected, although they will be referred to at the relevant places (particularly in Chapter 5.3.1).

While Conze did not list the *ArdhaP* under this category, it nonetheless seems that this work should be considered. The reasons for this are the following: the overall structure of the work (which is in fact a concise collection of extracts from earlier PP sources) (see Chapter 3.2.2); the presence of formulaic passages which could be taken as typologically related to spells (see Chapter 4.1.2); the date of its Chinese translation (10<sup>th</sup> C); and the fact that some later Skt. titles of

---

<sup>206</sup> Apart from Conze's list in the PPL, see for example Filliozat 1941: 41 (with edition).

the ArdhaP as found in Nepalese MSS include the word *dhāraṇī* (see Chapter 3.1).<sup>207</sup>

Also, Conze did not know of the very short spell work EkaP, which survives in the Pāla manuscript of PP works kept at the CTRC in Beijing. This work should certainly be included in the Selected Sources (see the entry above).

The BM is a remarkable work only extant in Chinese. It was listed by Conze under the subclass “Ritual” within the class of “Tantric Texts”, but I will follow Saigusa and Lehnert in considering it along with the main sūtras (see Chapter 5.2.2).<sup>208</sup>

The reader familiar with Conze’s PPL will have noticed that there are at least three more works which might be deemed relevant. One is a *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayadhāraṇī* (extant in Skt.- Cambridge MS 1554; PPL: 87). I have recently obtained a digital copy from Cambridge Library and will offer some preliminary remark on what seems to be another short ritual manual (Chapter 4.1.3). The second is the series of invocations known as the ‘25 doors’ (PPL: 85, n.26). The invocations are also found in the AdhyP, which is thus kept as the main reference work. The third is the *\*Ekākṣarā* PP, a minimalist sūtra which equates the PP with the single letter (*akṣara*) ‘A’ (see Zacchetti 2015: 203; PPL: 87, n.32). While this work - extant only in Tibetan - should be kept in mind, I believe that too often the relation between PP and spells has been exemplified on the basis of this work. I will attempt to show that the matter is indeed much more complex and fascinating.

---

<sup>207</sup> See the relevant section above and at Lehnert 1999: 66.

<sup>208</sup> See Saigusa 1983: 119 (X.12.[d]). See also Lehnert 1999: 63.

By way of a summary, the Selected Sources still extant in Sanskrit are the KauP, the SvalP, the SaśIP and the EkaP. Only extant in Tibetan is a group of five connected texts named after various Bodhisattvas, which one can provisionally label the '*Candragarbha* group'.<sup>209</sup>

This, in short, is the list of primary sources of the present study. While these are concise and limited in number, significant complexity is added by the need to consider Chinese or Tibetan translations side by side with the Sanskrit, depending on the availability of sources (see 1.3.3.2).

The reader will have noticed that there is need for further clarifications on multiple fronts. First of all, at terminological level one needs to clarify how the term Selected Sources relates to those of 'PP spell scriptures' and 'shorter PP works'. All three expressions carry slightly different meanings in this study (see the clarification at 1.3.3.5). Also, the use of the term 'scripture' requires some explanation, for not all Selected Sources are fully-fledged sūtras with opening and closing narratives (see the same section 1.3.3.5).

However, before dealing with terminological issues, one needs to address the key questions around method.

### **1.3.3 Methodological Considerations**

---

<sup>209</sup> This group of texts is not mentioned in most general treatments of PP works mentioned above. One exception is of course the PPL, see Conze 1978: 83.

### 1.3.3.1 Interdisciplinarity and Relevance to Buddhist Studies

It is currently fashionable to characterise one's study as 'interdisciplinary' while also claiming to explore aspects related to material culture. The present study is for the most part based on the analysis of written sources and therefore makes no claim to explore the said dimensions. Nevertheless, attempts are made at connecting texts with objects whenever possible.

Mostly, this will take the shape of a study of the relevant manuscript sources. The field of codicology is currently undergoing a phase of heightened appreciation among scholars. In South Asian studies, large scale preservation and/or digitisation projects have opened new frontiers to the study of Buddhism. These include the Cambridge Manuscript Preservation Project and the Nepalese German Manuscript Cataloguing Project, while many sources in Sanskrit have also been made available by the International Dunhuang Project.<sup>210</sup>

This has helped the formation of a number of scholars specialising in codicology, but the field remains severely underrepresented in Buddhist Studies.

---

<sup>210</sup> Thanks to the first, most Skt. palm-leaf MSS at the Cambridge Library can be accessed online, along with very detailed descriptions (<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/sanskrit/1>; July 2019); the second has left a vast microfilm collection which I believe is now managed by the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. The online descriptive catalogue can be found here: [http://ngmcp.fdm.uni-hamburg.de/mediawiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://ngmcp.fdm.uni-hamburg.de/mediawiki/index.php/Main_Page); July 2019). Lastly, some relevant PP MSS can be consulted on the IDP's website. Details will be given as necessary (<http://idp.bl.uk/>; July 2019).

The same phenomenon is also occurring with respect to Chinese and Tibetan sources. The huge Dunhuang manuscript corpus has been a key catalyst for the development of Chinese Buddhist manuscriptology.<sup>211</sup> As part of the Buddhist Studies 'curriculum', it is becoming increasingly important to understand the scribal practices of Dunhuang copyists,<sup>212</sup> not least because this helps understand later printed editions of the Canon as well.

Tibetologists too have been focusing on manuscript exemplars of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, which are often independent from the main printed canons and allow for new insights into the transmissions of texts.<sup>213</sup>

But it is not only scribal practices that matter here. Studying manuscripts allows one to explore the social value of these objects. In the Buddhist context and beyond, the gifting of a manuscript and its worship are highly significant practices which can also involve large scale financial transactions.<sup>214</sup> Most modern editions of Buddhist texts do not include manuscript colophons, which are sections added by copyists including vital information regarding who commissioned the manuscript, when, and - although often by means of

---

<sup>211</sup> See for example Moretti 2012. One should perhaps note that not all the MSS found at Dunhuang were copied there.

<sup>212</sup> One should note, however, that not all the MSS found at Dunhuang were copied there. See Fujieda 1961, as well as Fujieda 1966, and 1969.

<sup>213</sup> One can think here of a series of recent studies on Tibetan canonical and para-canonical collections by scholars based at the University of Vienna (see the TMPV, Tibetan Manuscripts Project Vienna).

<sup>214</sup> Apart from Kim's study (2013), another recent contribution to the understanding of these dynamics - particularly from the perspective of Śaivism - is a monograph by De Simini (2016).

established formulas - for what purpose. Also, some of the high-end objects involved the work of specialist artists, who produced exquisite miniature paintings. The issue of the relations between such paintings, or 'illuminations', and the text they are supposedly illustrating is complex and of potential far reaching consequences.<sup>215</sup>

In the case of PP spell scriptures, one can look at some of the older witnesses from the Pāla period, read their colophons and explore the significance of their iconographic program. This will be taken up in chapter 2.3.1. Another key objective will be identifying individual works within large composite manuscripts from Nepal (2.4). Here too, one can look at colophons and object features, hoping to understand better how such sources were used as well as other aspects related to their commission (e.g. their economic value).

However, since the objective is to throw light on the transmission of PP spell scriptures at large, Skt. MSS will not be the only kind of evidence explored. Other MSS and objects will be dealt with if they are deemed to represent important typological examples. For example, clay sealings depicting Prajñāpāramitā are surely a key area of interest, particularly if a spell is also included. Equally relevant are statues that match the iconographic descriptions found in the Selected Sources. One could also say that epigraphy at large is also significant, particularly when linked with monumentalisation or landscape manipulation.

---

<sup>215</sup> This has been subject of debate at least since Foucher 1900's study of the relation between image and text.

These issues could not be explored properly in the present study, although Chapter 6 will offer a few examples in this regard.

It is hoped that paying attention to manuscripts, inscribed objects and statues will complement and increase the value of an otherwise text-oriented study.

Another methodological aim is to attempt to bridge the gap between different sub-fields within Buddhist Studies. This can be done by developing or reinforcing key narratives.

Scholars in the field of Buddhist Studies are probably familiar with the risks of creating 'silos of Buddhological knowledge'. This can take the shape of a tendency - particularly in students and young researchers - to focus on certain Buddhist (scriptural) traditions in isolation from each other.

The study of later PP scriptures presents a most valuable opportunity from this point of view. First of all, their 'hybrid' nature makes it difficult to classify them under any category. They bear some resemblance to PP scriptures, as well as to *dhāraṇīsūtras*, and sometimes even to the language encountered in esoteric sources (for these features see Chapters 3, 4 and 5 respectively).

Furthermore, PP spell scriptures testify to the significance of traditional Mahāyāna notions well beyond the 7th C. It is crucial to understand that traditional forms of Buddhism continued to exist under the Pālas. In fact scholars like Jacob Kinnard have been very vocal on the conservative character of Pāla Buddhism, and not without some justification.<sup>216</sup> Studying the later period gives

---

<sup>216</sup> This is broadly the argument of Kinnard's 1996 article.

the advantage of being able to deal with a cultural milieu in which virtually all forms of Buddhism were represented.

In recent years, the study of *dhāraṇīs* has found new impetus and acknowledgment among scholars of Buddhism. One of the main achievements has been the recognition of the antiquity and centrality of Buddhist spells and spell scriptures (*dhāraṇīsūtras*). A series of articles on the *raṅṅā* and *paritta* genres on the South Asian side, and a number of studies on *dhāraṇīs* in China from about the 3rd C CE, have practically redefined our understanding of spells and their role within Buddhist culture.<sup>217</sup> One of the most significant aspects of spells is their tight connection to ritual and popular practices, which can potentially throw light on key aspects of Buddhism as a lived tradition, e.g. apotropaic practices; funeral practices; domestic worship and recitation; the role of pilgrimage and sacred sites; calendrical worship; etc.

It is hoped that by stressing once more the important and independent status of spell practices within Buddhism, these will gain even more recognition within the field.

Lastly, a certain emphasis will be placed on esoteric Buddhist sources, even though their study has largely dominated the engagement with post-7th C South Asian Buddhism over the last few decades. Here, a narrative that I would like to put forward is that of the complex dynamics of interaction between PP and the

---

<sup>217</sup> Strauch's already-mentioned contribution (2014) is part of a whole issue of the SOAS journal devoted to the study of spells. Information on early spell practices in China is available in Orzech *et al.* 2011 (see pp.155-270).

esoteric traditions. Chapter 5 will explore further key phenomena already mentioned above, such as the commissioning of PP MSS on part of esoteric practitioners, the progressive appearing of esoteric deities in MS iconography, as well as the development of advanced rituals involving PP-related materials and notions.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the approach outlined above will improve the value of the present study by linking it to methodologies and narratives that are currently relevant to the field of Buddhist Studies at large.

### **1.3.3.2 Philological Considerations**

The primary sources of this study are textual. Here, the word ‘text’ will be used to refer to any actual textual instantiation of the primary sources. For example, one can speak of a Chinese text, a Sanskrit text, or a Tibetan text of the PPH, depending on the manuscript or the edition referred to. The term ‘work’ will be used to refer to the given source in a general way. For example, the SvalP will be a PP ‘work’ and what is found under number T258 of the Taishō Buddhist Canon will be one of its Chinese ‘texts’.<sup>218</sup>

For practical reasons, sometimes expressions such as ‘*the* Tibetan text of’ a given work will be used. The use of the determinative article does not imply that all Tibetan texts of the SvalP are identical, for there can indeed be considerable

---

<sup>218</sup> This of course is just meant to be a pragmatic approach to very complex philological issues. For more advanced considerations about such terminology see Milikowsky 2006.

variations between different canonical editions or MSS. The expression simply refers to what is being chosen in this study as the text of reference. If a critical edition is available, that will become the text of reference. As a general rule, the expression ‘the Chinese text of X’, will refer to the text as found in the Taishō edition.<sup>219</sup> The expression ‘the Tibetan text of X’, will refer to the text as found in the Peking edition.<sup>220</sup>

One might wonder if it might not be appropriate to use the term ‘version’ as in ‘the Chinese version of X’. This expression will sometimes be used, yet one should keep in mind that this term has a particular significance for philologists of early PP literature. It was mentioned above that there are a number of early PP scriptures, such as the AS, or the various instantiations of the *Larger PP*.<sup>221</sup> The textual interrelations among these texts are immensely complex. Some PP philologists use the term ‘versions’ to indicate the difference in terms of size, while they use the term ‘recension’ to refer to underlying similarities among different versions and to identify further sub-families.<sup>222</sup>

While in the present study no attempt to produce a critical edition of the sources is made, there will be attempts at identifying and discussing divergences among the various texts.<sup>223</sup> For example, a major difference between the Skt. text of the

---

<sup>219</sup> These were accessed mostly through the electronic version CBETA 2016.

<sup>220</sup> This would be the Otani reprint (Daisetz Suzuki ed., *The Tibetan Tripitaka. Peking Edition*. 1955-1961). See Silk 1994: 64.

<sup>221</sup> See Zacchetti 2015: 176ff.

<sup>222</sup> See Zacchetti 2005: 37ff.

<sup>223</sup> For learned considerations on the issue of editing authorless Buddhist literature see von Hinüber 1980.

SvalP as critically edited by Yuyama and the Chinese text of the same work (i.e. T259) will be duly noted and discussed (see the example at Chapter 3.1 regarding self-referential passages).

Thus, identifying major divergences on the basis of a ‘triangulation’ between Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan sources can be said to be an objective of this study.<sup>224</sup> This in many ways is an extension of what Conze had already started in the PPL.

Here, there is no aim at ‘reconstructing’ unattested exemplars on the basis of stemmatic considerations. This is partially due to the scope of this study, and partially due to the intricacies of the textual transmission of authorless scriptures, which sometimes hardly allows to trace a common source for the many stemmatic branches.<sup>225</sup>

However, the stemma of Tibetan canons as discussed by Lainé is kept in mind.<sup>226</sup> It has been fascinating to occasionally consult the Phugbrag and the ‘London MS’ which seem quite likely to bring new variants to the table.

As for the Chinese texts, I would like to at least mention a common practice among students and scholars. Some variants are recorded in the Taishō apparatus. Since this collation covers only some editions of the canon, it is common practice in Buddhist Studies to supplement these variants with those

---

<sup>224</sup> On the concept of ‘triangulation’ see Silk 2016: 297 and Silk 2010: 897f.

<sup>225</sup> This is a complex issue, which is discussed at many places; in the Tibetan context see e.g. Lainé 2009: 19ff.

<sup>226</sup> See Lainé 2009: 4 (with table of the *stemma*). Of course, this contribution builds upon the seminal studies by Helmut Eimer.

recorded in the Zhonghua canon, which collates a largely different set of early sources.<sup>227</sup> One of these is the stone-carved Fangshan canon, a source which might deserve to be consulted, due to its position in the stemma.<sup>228</sup>

As a general principle, precedence will be given to Sanskrit texts and their attestation in South Asia and Nepalese manuscripts. I have attempted to at least collate some of the key witnesses (see the *Appendices*).

### 1.3.3.3 Periodisation and Regions

It will be clear from section 1.3.2 that aspects relating to periodisation and location present some complexity. This fact should be addressed, and taken as an opportunity to better understand the materials.

In particular, one should clarify why the Pāla period (8th -12th C) and Northeastern India are given such emphasis here.

One should note that the earliest attestations of the phenomena under scrutiny slightly predate the Pāla period, and are not clearly relatable to any South Asian region in particular.<sup>229</sup> Also, it is equally true that most of the available MSS of

---

<sup>227</sup> For an introduction to dealing with the various editions of the Chinese Buddhist Canon see the particularly lucid treatment in Deleanu 2006: 131ff. The editions are: *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, Tokyo 1924-1932; and *Zhonghua Dazangjing - Hanwen bufen* 中華大藏經-漢文部份, Beijing 1984-1988.

<sup>228</sup> For the position of this Canon within the stemma see e.g. Deleanu 2006:130.

<sup>229</sup> For an introductory account see Section 1.2.1 above.

the primary sources come from Nepal and date considerably later than the Pāla period (e.g. from after the 17th C).

Nevertheless, there are reasons to see Pāla Buddhism as the main catalyst for the development of this literature. First of all, virtually all Chinese translations of the primary sources are (Northern) Song translations (see the table above), that chronologically overlap with the Pāla period. A few crucial Pāla manuscript sources are also available.<sup>230</sup>

In some cases, it is not possible to identify the date of composition of a given scripture, but only a *terminus ante quem*. Even in these cases, it seems unlikely that many of the Selected Sources would have been fully formed much earlier than the Pāla period, although this is a possibility that remains open.

Furthermore, it is under the Pālas that esoteric Buddhism reached its mature form, and some elements in later PP sources seem to betray the influence of this tradition (Chapter 5). This is also the time when PP received some consistent attention at institutional level. Both facts point to the Pāla period as at least a catalyst - if not the origin - of the phenomena under consideration.

Furthermore, Nepalese Buddhism is closely connected to Pāla Buddhism. While it is not possible to speak of linear continuation, for many developments are unique to Nepal, major links are certainly there and one can meaningfully speak

---

<sup>230</sup> Apart from the CTRC ms mentioned above, there seems to be at least one relevant specimen preserved at the Asiatic Society of Kolkata (see the next Chapter for details, 2.3.2).

of the Nepalese legacy of Pāla Buddhism.<sup>231</sup> Thus, while a certain kind of Nepalese *dhāraṇī*-collection might not be attested in Pāla sources, one can sometimes formulate hypotheses about how Pāla prototypes might have developed into these later collections.

The transmission of later PPs to Tibet and their translation into Tibetan is also largely a product of interaction with the Pāla cultural sphere.<sup>232</sup> And while it might be surprising that Pāla Buddhism had such a vast network of exchange with East Asia, one should also consider that Cambodian, Vietnamese and Javanese form of Buddhism were influenced by it.<sup>233</sup> Thus, as remarkable as this fact is, the attestation of a PP *dhāraṇī* in Javanese sources might help unveil some South Asian practices. As explained above, properly tackling the trans-regional and the 'localised' dimensions of Buddhism is a complex enterprise, which requires sound theoretical approaches and great awareness of cultural specificities. In the context of the present thesis, the focus will remain on Indian models and their influence. But in order to become more aware of the unique connotations of PP cults in a given regional/cultural context -e.g. in Cambodia,

---

<sup>231</sup> I do agree with some of the comments made by Gellner (2004) that a study of esoteric Buddhism in the early medieval period would benefit from the inclusion of later evidence from Nepal.

<sup>232</sup> It is actually not always easy (or sometimes even possible) to date the Tibetan translations of the Selected Sources, particularly if colophons do not mention any names. There are examples of what seem to be later translations, such as that of the SaśīP, which seems to stem from the 14<sup>th</sup> C. See Conze 1978: 87.

<sup>233</sup> Of course one should not forget that South Indian influence was also very strong in Southeast Asia. Some of the materials collected so far on the question of PP reaching this area - probably on the basis of Pāla influence - are presented in Chapter 6.3/6.4.

Java, or even Nepal - one can refer to the specialised literature given in the footnotes.

With this in mind, and given the fact that actual Pāla sources on later PPs are very limited, this study makes the case for the need to be flexible and embrace whatever evidence is available as potentially relatable to the earlier period when these scriptures were redacted. This applies particularly strongly to Nepal, given the survival of some later Skt. manuscripts of the primary sources. As already mentioned, local traditions from elsewhere in Asia are not studied specifically, unless there is a clear link to the Selected Sources. This is made somewhat easier by the fact that this study does not focus on the PPH or the AdhyP, which were by far the most influential and wide-spread works of these later family of PP scriptures.

#### **1.3.3.4 The Question of Taxonomy**

The study of PP writing has been characterised by attempts at classifying its sources (see above 1.3.1). This despite the fact that *dhāraṇī* related literature in general is notoriously difficult to classify.<sup>234</sup> Conze, Saigusa, Lehnert - but also Hikata and others - all developed their own taxonomies.<sup>235</sup>

---

<sup>234</sup> See Davidson 2014b: 126, referring to the comments on this issue made by Dalton and van Schaik (2006: xxi-xxiii).

<sup>235</sup> See section 1.3.1 above.

It was explained above that such classifications can appear arbitrary and artificial, and in some cases one might truly question their usefulness. If one decides to rely on such classifications, one should bear in mind that Skt., Chinese and Tibetan texts can differ considerably, and it is not guaranteed that a given feature will be attested in all three.<sup>236</sup> This might also overshadow the dynamic development of these sources over centuries of transmission. Once accepted that the AdhyP is an 'esoteric PP sūtra', it might be less obvious that its earliest attested texts have in fact very little esoteric content at all.<sup>237</sup> This is why a choice was made to focus on broader topics divided into chapters, rather than on specific scriptures divided by types. While this might require slightly more effort on part of the reader, the result should in the end justify this approach.

In the present study, the selection of sources involved some reflection on classificatory issues. This was dealt with above, explaining the need for a flexible approach based primarily on the current needs of the field.

It is not the aim of this study to suggest a new taxonomy, and engaging critically with what has been already suggested will be deemed sufficient. However, there are two points regarding this issue that should be made here. The chapter on *dhāraṇīs* (4) will focus on the importance of text structure, an issue which has

---

<sup>236</sup> Some of the main differences among the various sources were already detected in the PPL. These preliminary comments by Conze - while needing to be complemented by more precise observations - were instrumental in allowing for the design and scope of this study.

<sup>237</sup> See Tomabechi's comments on Xuanzang's early translation of the AdhyP (2009: xlv).

not been given much emphasis by taxonomists of later PPs.<sup>238</sup> Thus, the presence or absence of the sūtra frame-story will be given importance, as will the position of the spell-unit, which can be found as a closing appendix or embedded within. There is a remarkable structural difference between a PP work which lacks the sūtra frame-story and has an embedded spell-unit, and a fully-fledged sūtra which adds a spell in closing position. This does not always amount to predictable changes in the overall message of the work, although ritual performance is likely to be emphasised in the first case, while discursive teaching built around a set of key Buddhist notions could be expected in the second case.

The chapter on the influence of esoteric Buddhism (5) will require a further selection, for this study will argue for a need to focus on specific sources in that context, i.e. the SvalP and the BM. This is not meant as a classificatory attempt such as that of Lehnert, who defined a group of “tantrische Prajñāpāramitāsūtren” consisting of the AdhyP, the SvalP, the BM and the PNA.<sup>239</sup> In this case, the focus on the SvalP and BM will be based on the presence of certain remarkable statements or textual passages, rather than on structural features, which are deemed to require further explanation and to be valuable from the perspective of the dialogue between PP and esoteric Buddhism. Some of these statements are *not* found across all attested texts in the same way. This makes the need for a classification attempt even more problematic and perhaps less pressing.

---

<sup>238</sup> Scholars of *dhāraṇī* literature seem more keen on recognising the importance of such structural features (see Hidas 2015: 129).

<sup>239</sup> The relevant section starts at Lehnert 1999: 57.

Another issue is that of potential non-Indian compositions. Some of the works attested only in Chinese or Tibetan could in fact not reflect a South Asian original. At present it is not possible to clarify their origin, and these scriptures will be considered as equally relevant to the present discussion.

### 1.3.3.5 Terminology, Descriptive Categories and Working

#### Definitions

Given the heterogeneous character of the Selected Sources, finding a suitable term to refer to them as a group is indeed a challenge. As pointed out, Conze was keen on using the expression “tantric works”.<sup>240</sup> In this study a convention is followed which prefers the use of the expression ‘esoteric Buddhism’ over ‘tantric Buddhism’ (for a working description of this tradition see 1.2.2.1). Thus, adapting Conze’s label, one could refer to these sources as ‘esoteric PP scriptures’. However, this label is quite problematic. First of all, the elements pointed out above as characteristic of esoteric Buddhism are hardly encountered at all in these works. Secondly, there is no clear endorsement of initiation in soteriological terms (and yet see the statements discussed at 5.2.3).

A careful scholar might thus want to opt for the label ‘proto-esoteric PP scriptures’. However, the expression ‘proto-esoteric’ is sometimes used to refer to the early phase of *dhāraṇī* writing (outlined briefly in section 1.2.1). In the present case, it would be better to not be constrained chronologically, for many

---

<sup>240</sup> The label ‘tantric texts’ is used both in the PPL as well as in the 1956 article.

of these ‘proto-esoteric PP scriptures’ are actually relatively late productions. There is also a deeper issue relating to the use of terms like proto-esoteric or proto-tantric with reference to *dhāraṇī* related sources. Buddhist spell literature and practices simply cannot be reduced to a formative stage in the history of esoteric Buddhism.<sup>241</sup> A fascinating expression is the rarely encountered ‘*dhāraṇī* Buddhism’, which could be used to indicate the phenomenon of spells (including both writing and practices) as a whole within Buddhism, while avoiding reference to esoteric Buddhism *per se*.<sup>242</sup> The expression does have its merits, for it highlights the importance, and the independent status, of this ancient yet all too often neglected phenomenon. It cannot be excluded that, as *dhāraṇī* studies evolve, this category will become as widely used as those of ‘Mahāyāna Buddhism’ and ‘esoteric Buddhism’. However, as this thesis is being written, it is not common among scholars.

Here, there is a need for choosing a neutral label, not constrained chronologically, nor necessarily associated with mature esoteric Buddhism. To do so, it is necessary to focus on the one feature which most of them share, i.e. the presence of spells. Adapting an expression already suggested by Hidas in the field of *dhāraṇī* studies, i.e. ‘spell scriptures’, one might indeed opt for ‘Prajñāpāramitā spell scriptures’.<sup>243</sup> This could prove a rather felicitous choice of words. However, the works listed above also include individual spells, as well as a

---

<sup>241</sup> That is not to say that there are not connections between the two forms of Buddhism. Shinohara 2014 and Dalton 2016 offer compelling treatments of such links. Dalton 2016 also offers a brief overview of critiques of the label ‘proto-tantric’.

<sup>242</sup> See the early comments on this in Waley 1931: xiii (quoted in Davidson 2008: 102).

<sup>243</sup> See Hidas 2015: 131.

works which lack the sūtra frame-narrative. For this reason, one should prefer the more comprehensive expression ‘PP spell works’ or, *in extenso*, ‘PP spell scriptures, individual spells, and related works’. In the following pages, ‘Prajñāpāramitā spell scriptures’ will be preferred for practical purposes, but the reader should be aware of the nuances that can be missed by employing such expression.

Some thought has been given to the question whether the term ‘corpus’ should be employed here. Since the primary sources are never attested or referred to as a specific group, the term would be artificial. This is why ‘Selected Sources’ is preferred. This will be used to refer to the works listed above, representing a sub-group within PP spell scriptures. For example, the PPH certainly is a PP spell scripture, and yet it is not included in the Selected Sources.

Another expression one is likely to find in secondary literature is that of ‘short(er) PP scriptures’.<sup>244</sup> This can prove a helpful expression, as it captures the other defining feature of these sources, i.e. conciseness. However, it is too broad for the present context, for it also includes earlier works like the SaŚP, the *Suvikrantavikrāmaparipṛcchā* PP, etc.<sup>245</sup>

In conclusion, the Selected Sources are a sub-group of PP spell scriptures, which in turn belong to the wider class of ‘short PP scriptures’. These labels are merely conventional here, and are intended to help the reader identify the extent to which a certain statement is meant to apply.

---

<sup>244</sup> This is used both in Conze 1993 as well as Zacchetti 2015.

<sup>245</sup> See e.g. the group of ‘shorter PP’ works identified in Zacchetti 2015: 191.

In general, the term scripture will be applied loosely in this study, it will not only refer to those fully-fledged sūtras where the Buddha or a Bodhisattva is the authoritative source of the exposition. Nor will considerations on canonicity play a crucial role. Works like the SaŚIP, which consist of invocations, spells and brief descriptions of ritual benefits, will also be counted under ‘scriptures’. This again is a convention, and the reader should at least be aware of the underlying complexities.

Moving on, a choice had to be made regarding how to refer to complex textual and vocal units such as *oṃ śrī hrī śrutismṛtivijaye svāhā*. The Selected Sources usually adopt the term *dhāraṇī* (which is also typical of their colophon titles in Nepalese MSS), but sometimes *mantra* is also found. Note, however, that some early PP sources in Chinese tend to use other terms, especially some that might reflect the Indic *vidyā*.<sup>246</sup> A choice is made here to use *dhāraṇī* as a collective term, with ‘spell’ being adopted as an English equivalent.<sup>247</sup> Since such strings can be quite complex, the terms *dhāraṇī*-unit and *dhāraṇī*-section will be used to include related elements (e.g. if an invocation is also present), as illustrated in Chapter 4.2.

This brings up the next issue, which is that of the particular nature of the rituals advocated by the various texts. Here we cannot propose an overview of the relevant ritual theories, although we will need to preliminarily characterise practices advocated by the Selected Sources. There are a number of

---

<sup>246</sup> See e.g. the PPH, where some of the spell is termed 明呪 (on this see Attwood 2017).

On general Chinese terminology for spell see McBride 2005.

<sup>247</sup> See Davidson 2009 for a study of the semantics of such terms.

ethnographical theories which are relevant in the present context, not least Spiro's famous tripartite framework of 'nibbanic', 'kammatic' and 'apotropaic' Buddhism developed in the Burmese context.<sup>248</sup> For more specific discussion of ritual theories relating to pragmatics of the spoken word one can turn to Davidson 2014 (p.7ff.) as well as Copp 2014 (e.g. the introductory discussion at p.7ff.).

As for general characterisation of spells in the context of later PP works, a number of scholars have used expressions such as 'magic' and 'apotropaic efficacy'.<sup>249</sup> However, as will be illustrated in detail, the Selected Sources show a remarkable emphasis on earning religious merit or benefits such as enhanced insight and religious inspiration (see 4.3.1), which may not be properly covered by such terms. Some useful expressions have been used recently by Castro-Sanchez for describing *dhāraṇī* rituals: e.g. contrasting 'mundane' and 'supramundane'.<sup>250</sup> These terms will be adopted here in an intuitive manner. Thus, a goal of spell practice such as becoming rich in this life will be labelled 'mundane'. Physical protection against weather, diseases, etc., would also count as mundane. However, benefits such as being reborn in heaven in the presence of a Buddha will be called 'supramundane'. That being said, one should not get the impression that mundane and supramundane benefits represent two incompatible sides of spell practices, for a vast range of goals are typically mentioned together within spell scriptures.

---

<sup>248</sup> See Newell 2010: 397.

<sup>249</sup> See for example Zacchetti 2015: 195. Similar expressions had been used by Conze in the relevant contributions already mentioned.

<sup>250</sup> See Castro-Sanchez 2011: 56ff.

While this concerns ritual goals, one should also be able to broadly characterise ritual procedures. There obviously is a difference between a simple recitation practice that could be carried out at home by the devotee and an elaborate procedure set out by dedicated manuals, which might require the intermediary agency of a specialist priest. In the present study, the following will be adopted with respect to written sources: ‘implicit or recitation-based ritual’ will refer to those cases in which a spell is either left without ritual specification, or is accompanied by a simple exhortation to recite it; ‘elaborate rituals’ will be anything else, from a complex visualisation practice, to the drawing of diagrams or the performance of a certain set of hand gestures.

Finally, one should notice that things get more complex once we shift from the statements found within a text to the use of a certain object which contains such a text. For example, the PPH might limited statements about the practice of its spell or its power - stating e.g. that it is *sarvaduḥkhaśamana* ‘pacifying all suffering’<sup>251</sup> - but once the work is engraved on a *dhāraṇī*-pillar along with *dhāraṇī* works, it becomes part of an object with its own specific ritual dimension.<sup>252</sup> To better appreciate this multi-dimensional aspect of spell rituals and associated objects, one can turn to Paul Copp’s monograph on spells in medieval Chinese Buddhism (2014).

## Summary

---

<sup>251</sup> See Conze 1948: 37, 3.

<sup>252</sup> On this see Kuo 2014.

Having read the above *Introduction*, the reader should now be equipped with the basic coordinates, both historical and methodological. It should be clear that PP spell scriptures represent a complex phenomenon. More important than proposing any classification is to develop an understanding of the specific ritual character and agendas underlying the various sources, as well as of their legacy within South Asian Buddhism and beyond.

It is with these questions in mind that the following chapters were composed.

## 2. MANUSCRIPTS, TRANSMISSION, AND THE ROLE OF SCRIPTURAL FORMATS

### 2.1 Introduction

The long history of Prajñāpāramitā is marked by the centrality of the book and its ritual significance. As explained above, this theme takes many forms: whether it is a statement on the PP book's protective power in an early Chinese translation;<sup>253</sup> a manuscript book held open in the hands of a Prajñāpāramitā statue from Gilgit;<sup>254</sup> a lavishly illuminated Pāla manuscript;<sup>255</sup> or the PP still worshipped today at the Kwā Bahā temple in Kathmandu.<sup>256</sup>

While much remains to be explored with regard to the transmission of the main PP works, PP spell scriptures should not be neglected either. The present chapter represents an attempt at tracing the transmission of such scriptures, by focusing in particular on extant Sanskrit manuscripts. Rather than offering a detailed codicological study, the aim of this chapter is to reflect on the possible ritual significance, status, and appeal of the concise format that characterises such

---

<sup>253</sup> Apple 2014: 28. The passage from the *Daoxing banre jing* 道行般若經 is rendered as “Furthermore, Kausika, once the *prajñāpāramitā* has already been copied, even though one cannot study or recite it, if one [just] holds the scriptural roll [of the *prajñāpāramitā*], then either people or ghosts will not be able to harm [him]”.

<sup>254</sup> These are described in von Hinüber 2007 (with plates).

<sup>255</sup> See for example the colour reproductions in Allinger 2008.

<sup>256</sup> See the now ‘classic’ contribution by Gellner (1996).

sources. In particular, efforts have been made at exploring some lesser known - and sometimes hardly accessible - composite manuscripts from Northeastern India and Nepal.

Aspects that will be treated include: the selection and order of PP spell scriptures in various manuscripts; information that can be gathered from colophons; aspects such as the presence of illuminations or the choice of a certain script (which could both inform about the cost of the manuscript and the status ascribed to a certain work); and finally any aspects which betray how the manuscript might have been used.

Before turning to a presentation of the relevant sources, it might be useful to reflect on the early stages of the transmission of PP spells and related scriptures. As already pointed out, in the 7th C there are at least three works which opened the way for the development of PP spell literature: Xuanzang's (玄奘) translations of the AdhyP and the PPH, as well as the PP-section of the TJ (T901).

The first work - the AdhyP - is found embedded within the *Da Banreboluomiduo jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經 (T220, henceforth DB), a vast collection of PP scriptures translated by Xuanzang, which alone occupies three volumes of the popular Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon.<sup>257</sup>

From the perspective of this chapter it is interesting to note that there are indications that the DB goes back to an Indic original. Passages that seem to

---

<sup>257</sup> These would be volumes 5-7 of the Taishō.

corroborate this come from the early catalogue *Fayuan zhulin* (法苑珠林, T2122), as well as from Huili's (慧立) biography of Xuanzang.<sup>258</sup>

According to Li's interpretation, Huili's account states that this work was object of veneration in China (東國) and speaks of a previous incomplete translation.<sup>259</sup>

However, perhaps *banre* (般若) in the passage might simply refer to PP literature at large. Li's interpretation also includes Xuanzang stating that the DB was particularly dear to Chinese people.<sup>260</sup> However, once again one is not sure whether it was in fact PP *tout court* to occupy a 'prominent place',<sup>261</sup> including by extension the DB, as the *summa* - or ultimate repository - of the PP teachings.

Be that as it may, the figure for its length given by Huili is 200.000 units, which matches that given in the *Fayuan zhulin* catalogue.<sup>262</sup> We learn that Xuanzang

---

<sup>258</sup> The overview article Zacchetti 2015 includes a section devoted to this issues. The biography corresponds to Taishō's T2052, which is translated in Li 1995.

<sup>259</sup> See 東國重於般若，前代雖翻，不能周備 (T50n2053p0275c18) "In the Eastern Country the Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra was highly esteemed. Although it had been translated into Chinese during a previous dynasty, the translation was incomplete" (Li 1995: 327).

<sup>260</sup> See 此經於漢地有緣 (T50n2053p0276b11) "This sutra has a special relationship with the land of the Han people" (Li 1995: 329).

<sup>261</sup> Zacchetti informed me that the expression 有緣 actually has a more nuanced meaning akin to that of 'predestined affinity'. It also appears that the expression is a quotation from works ascribed to Jizang 吉藏, 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> C (T 1696, p. 68, b2-3). In that context, the author is narrating the struggle on part of a Chinese master in obtaining a certain PP work. This struggle thus appears to be subtly compared to that of Xuanzang by his biographers (Zacchetti, personal communication July 2019).

<sup>262</sup> See 經梵本總有二十萬頌 (T50n2053p0275c25) "[...] the original Sanskrit text of which consisted of two hundred thousand verses" (Li 1995: 327). The length estimate of the reliable catalogue is found at T53n2122p1024b19.

was encouraged to produce a reduced version and that he eventually resolved to translate the whole thing after a premonitory dream.<sup>263</sup>

The links between the figure of Xuanzang and the DB are striking and they are partially enhanced by Huili's narration. It is certainly not a coincidence that this *summa* of PP happens to be Xuanzang's last work and thus a sort of testament. But it is unclear if any active role was actually played by Xuanzang's team in shaping the DB. As is well known, the biography itself states that three copies of the DB had been procured from the 'West'.<sup>264</sup>

Further information about the Sanskrit originals can be gathered from the *Fayuan zhulin*, which systematically gives the length of the Indic exemplars on which the translation is allegedly based. Due to its early date, the testimony of this catalogue is usually taken seriously, despite the fact that some length estimates can be problematic. As for the AdhyP, its length is given as 300 units. This is surprising, given that the work is usually associated with 150 units. Nonetheless, the length given by the catalogue is consistent with that of Xuanzang's translation.<sup>265</sup>

---

<sup>263</sup> See 學徒每請刪略 (T50n2053p0275c25) "his disciples often requested that he produce an abridged version of it" (Li 1995: 327) as well as 於夜夢中即有極怖畏事以相警誡... (T50n2053p0276a02) this is a longer passage, translated at Li 1995: 327f.

<sup>264</sup> See 然法師於西域得三本 (T50n2053p0276a12) "the Master had obtained three different versions of this text in the Western Region" (ibid. p.328).

<sup>265</sup> On this see Zacchetti 2015: 202.

Despite the possible Indic origin of the DB, no Sanskrit version survives, at least in recognisable form. Certainly, a large number of fragments of works contained in the DB have come to light in Central Asia.<sup>266</sup>

Thus, the DB exemplifies shorter PP works embedded within vast collections, in this case along with other PP works.

As noted above, the PPH is not included within the DB. Leaving aside the complex literary trajectory of the PPH,<sup>267</sup> in principle this raises the question whether PP spell scriptures could also be transmitted along with other typologies of Buddhist sources. The case of *dhāraṇī* pillars is intriguing, for there the PPH can sometimes appear along with the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā*. Both the concise format and the emphasis on spell open the door for associations within PP spell scriptures and *dhāraṇī* sources. As shown in this chapter, such associations are indeed traceable within Sanskrit MS transmission from early times until modern Nepalese practice.

One should also spend a few words on the other early compilation which includes PP spells, the TJ (T901, 7<sup>th</sup> C).<sup>268</sup> In this case, it would seem that the

---

<sup>266</sup> The recent volume Harrison and Hartmann (ed.) 2014 is a very useful tool for identifying the relevant fragments. Of course, one should refer to the volumes of the series *Sanskrit Handschriften aus den Turfanfunden* (see Wille et al. 1965-2017). More on the relevant fragments will be said in the dedicated section of this chapter.

<sup>267</sup> See *ibid.* as well as Watanabe 2009: 44ff. For a useful list of available Chinese witnesses of the PPH see Lehnert 1999: 50f.

<sup>268</sup> This work was mentioned in the *Introduction*, in the section describing the three important 7<sup>th</sup> C sources for the study of PP spells.

compilation as such is a Chinese product, although many sections might go back to Indic materials.<sup>269</sup>

The Prajñāpāramitā section starts with a short, opening sūtra-narrative which does not include spell transcriptions.<sup>270</sup> The inclusion of opening narrative sections in sūtra-style is common in the TJ.<sup>271</sup> Next comes a description of a *maṇḍala* preparation along with an iconographic description of PP.<sup>272</sup> The following sections give various *mudrās* (ritualised hand gestures) and spells, one of which is none other than the one found in the PPH.<sup>273</sup>

Clearly, this way of selecting and structuring PP spells and related materials constitutes a very different strategy than the sūtra-based one of the DB. Yet this is to be expected of a work or a section thereof actually resembling a ritual manual.

---

<sup>269</sup> On this issue see Shinohara 2014: 31.

<sup>270</sup> The section starts at T18n0901p0804c16. I am not aware of any study dealing specifically with this narrative and its PP-related themes.

Note that the narrative does mention the uttering of PP spells (e.g. T18n0901p0805b2-3). Some importance is given to traditional notions such as that of *śamatha* (奢摩他) (T18n0901p0805a13-19). PP is also compared to mount Sumeru, in what does not appear to be an extremely common theme (T18n0901p804c27-28).

<sup>271</sup> See Shinohara 2014: 38.

<sup>272</sup> This has been translated in Shinohara 2014: 54ff.

<sup>273</sup> References to this will be given in Chapter 4, which deals with key aspects related to PP spells, including intertextuality (4.2).

Thus, I think these three early examples already help identify some of the key possible scenarios. On the one hand, one wonders whether collections of PP works - even if not as extensive as the DB - did continue to attract attention. PP spell scriptures being particularly concise, their insertion within various PP repositories can be expected, particularly as a means of validating such innovative sources.

On the other hand, one should pay attention to the fascinating possibility of PP spell scriptures being found side-by-side with *dhāraṇī* sources.

Furthermore, one should not forget that they could also occur independently, e.g. in a dedicated MS on palm-leaf or even on a different kind of support, such as clay, stone, etc.

Finally, the TJ example reminds one that the circulation of PP spells was not limited to sūtras. It is clear that these spells circulated widely and independently and were also often inserted within dedicated ritual manuals.

## **2.2 Central-Asian and Dunhuang Sources**

### **2.2.1 A Central-Asian Witness**

As Chinese translations up to the 7<sup>th</sup> C do not seem to include specimens of the Selected Sources, it becomes necessary to look elsewhere for some *potentially* early attestations.

Central Asia has yielded a large number of MS fragments recording PP works. Most of these belong to the *Larger* PP, which appears to have been quite well attested in the early period.<sup>274</sup> Most shorter PP specimens are works also attested in Xuanzang's DB, e.g. the *Suvikrāntavikāmapariṣcchā* or the *Pañcapāramitānirdeśa*. The three best known shorter PP scriptures are present as well: the *Vajracchedikā*, the PPH and the AdhyP. The latter is also attested in some remarkable bilingual manuscripts (Sanskrit-Khotanese) which have attracted some attention.<sup>275</sup>

One phenomenon of particular interest here is the presence of some composite MSS in which a PP scripture is included along with *dhāraṇī* works. For example, MS Or.15009/46 does include both the *Vajracchedikā* and the *Anantamukhanirhāradhāraṇīsūtra*.<sup>276</sup> This witness consists of only one folio and it is difficult to understand what kind of collection might have underlain it. Fascinatingly, this association within PP works and *dhāraṇīsūtras* will become a major feature of the later MS transmission, as will be shown below.

In general, it has proved particularly difficult to trace the Selected Sources in Central Asian materials. This could be taken as further indication of their relatively late composition date, or of the pre-eminence of the *Larger* PP and the *Vajracchedikā* in the region. The main available catalogues do not seem to record them, and preliminary readings of the large number of unidentified PP fragments

---

<sup>274</sup> See Wille 2014: 206f, Wille 2014b: 227, Hartmann and Wille 2014: 249 and 252.

<sup>275</sup> See Maggi 2009: 374.

<sup>276</sup> Wille and Karashima 2009: 122.

do not show trace of this phase of PP scriptural writing.<sup>277</sup> Even the Gilgit manuscript 'library', otherwise so useful for the study of PP, does not preserve specimens of the Selected Sources.<sup>278</sup>

The only exceptions are witnesses related to the KauP. The entire text of the KauP is found in one witnessed classified as IOL Khot S3 or Ch.0044.<sup>279</sup> This MS is not in the common *pothī* format but in the Chinese-style scroll format.<sup>280</sup> According to the online catalogue, one side of the scroll bears the Chinese text of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*. The other, partially damaged, preserves the Sanskrit text of the KauP. No special reasons have come to light during the present study as to why these two works should be grouped together and this could simply be a case of manuscript reuse.<sup>281</sup>

The script is not very polished and lines are followed only in an approximate way. There appear to be faint interlinear *akṣaras* on a few occasions, although their purpose cannot be determined. In modern times, line numbers were added to the left every ten lines in roman numerals.<sup>282</sup>

---

<sup>277</sup> See Wille 2014b: 227.

<sup>278</sup> For a list of relevant MSS see von Hinüber 2014: 97 (n. 10a); 102-103 (n.24,25,26,27,28,50); 107 (50); 108 (52d.2, 52d.3, 52d.4). This issue is also mentioned in Chapter 6.1.

<sup>279</sup> See Wille 2014b: 227 and Bailey 1963: 356 (Khotanese Texts V).

<sup>280</sup> On these and other formats see Formigatti 2016: 86f.

<sup>281</sup> On the reuse of Chinese scrolls see van Schaik and Galambos 2012: 140.

<sup>282</sup> Please refer to the website and catalogue details given above to quickly gain access to a digital reproduction of this MS.

The minimalist colophon was reported correctly by Conze as *kauśaka nāma prajñāpāramitā samāptā*, which is followed by what appears to be a special punctuation mark indicating the end of the work.<sup>283</sup>

However, this is not the only Skt. witness of the KauP from Central Asia. Two short passages from the KauP are found on Central Asian scrolls in conjunction with other works, thus strengthening the assumption that the KauP of IOL Khot S3 did not bear any particular connection to the Chinese text on the recto. These fragments are P2925.58-59 and P5537.1-6.<sup>284</sup> The first fragment corresponds to the sūtra's opening section, ending with a mention of the work's main character, i.e. Śakra/Indra. The second is also a fragment, but linked with a much longer passage in Khotanese. The opening is clearly recognizable as that of the Skt. KauP, including the sūtra frame narrative and what seems to imprecisely correspond to the sentence *ayaṃ prajñāpāramitāyāḥ arthaḥ* 'this is the meaning of PP', as found in IOL Khot S3/Ch.0044. Up to this point, the writing is relatively regular. From here, the writing becomes very irregular, betraying the intervention of at least one more hand, which alternates with the more careful one.<sup>285</sup> Be that as it may, the text is no longer that of the Skt. KauP, with the exception of a few short passages in the opening portion, which could be identified as corresponding to

---

<sup>283</sup> For the colophon see Conze 1956: 118. The punctuation mark consists of two vertical dots and a slightly elongated triangular dash. Again, the images are available on the website of the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) under both sigla IOL Khot S 3 and Ch.0044 (accessed April 2019).

<sup>284</sup> See Bailey 1956: 102 and 118 (Khotanese Texts III).

<sup>285</sup> The editor suggests a writing exercise involving a teacher and a student (p.118 note 2).

parts of paragraph 2 of Conze's edition.<sup>286</sup> While a detailed study of these fragments is best left to experts of Khotanese codicology, there are some general remarks that could help place these witnesses in the wider picture.

At first, there were hopes that these witnesses could be proof of a relatively early circulation of PP spell scriptures. However, it soon became clear that an early date is not warranted on paleographical grounds. In terms of scholarly assessments of the script, Conze had called that of IOL Khot S3/Ch.0044 "cursive Gupta script".<sup>287</sup> Maggi and Martini have recently used the label "late Khotanese orthography" for the same manuscript.<sup>288</sup> Despite what might look to the uninitiated as some archaic features, it would appear that there is no ground to assume a date of creation prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> C.<sup>289</sup> Also important is that there is no Chinese translation of the KauP that predates the Song period.<sup>290</sup> Thus, the Central Asian fragments are in line with the general view that the Selected Sources post-date the early phase of PP spell writing (7<sup>th</sup> C), and perhaps by a good margin.

---

<sup>286</sup> See Conze 1956: 116. A full analysis of these Khotanese passages could not be undertaken here.

<sup>287</sup> Conze 1956: 112.

<sup>288</sup> See the communication Maggi and Martini 2012: 4 (Newsletter Dharma Drum Buddhist College).

<sup>289</sup> While the paleographical technicalities escape me entirely, I would like to thank scholars of the calibre of Mauro Maggi and Camillo Formigatti for discussing some of the related issues with me. The only actual reference to the paleographical features of the KauP I was able to trace is one by Hoernle (on some features of the vowel signs). See Hoernle 1916: xxiv (Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature). On the paleography of Central Asian MSS see Sander 1968.

<sup>290</sup> See Lehnert 1999: 67.

Moreover, given the fragmentary transmission and the lack of colophon information, it is difficult to elaborate on the cultural/ritual implications of the presence of the KauP in Central Asia. It appears that these examples should not be seen from the perspective of the development of particular collections which include PP spell scriptures, inasmuch as they represent individual fragments scattered over more, possibly reused scrolls. This at least is the preliminary impression.

Despite these limited findings, the presence of Central Asian fragments of the KauP remain remarkable, for this work appears to have had a different trajectory than most of the other Selected Sources, both in terms of genesis and transmission. No other Sanskrit witnesses of the KauP have come to light during the present study, including in Nepalese sources. The KauP will resurface in Tibetan *dhāraṇī* repositories (see below 2.4.1).

### **2.2.2 Spell Scriptures in a Tibetan Composite Manuscript**

Given the paucity of PP spell scriptures in Central Asian sources it becomes necessary to consider at least some of the more remarkable specimens in languages other than Sanskrit. Pelliot Tibétain 45 is a collection of *dhāraṇī* works in Tibetan from Dunhuang.<sup>291</sup> It includes 79 folios which measure ca 7x16 and are

---

<sup>291</sup> The digital reproduction of the MS is available here:

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8307260z.image> (accessed May 2019). See also the catalogue Lalou 1939: 18 (which gives a provisional table of contents and information about physical structure).

bound by a string on the upper long margin.<sup>292</sup> On the basis of palaeographical considerations, it appears that this MS could belong to the period between the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century and the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup>.<sup>293</sup> It contains the text of the PNA, which is found as the third of otherwise 15 works. While not all of the works have been identified, most of them belong to the *dhāraṇīsūtra* genre (e.g. the *Tathāgatoṣṇīṣasitātapatrāparājītānāmadhāraṇī* or the *Avalokiteśvara-ekadaśamukhanāmadhāraṇī*).<sup>294</sup>

One should notice the simple drawing on the verso of the first folio, which depicts a *vajra*, with flames, on a lotus flower.<sup>295</sup> There are occasional minor drawings on other folios, but overall this appears to be an object which would have been relatively cheap to commission, in contrast to some other specimens which will be mentioned below.

The final colophon is very brief and parts are illegible to me. After a preliminary reading, it would seem that the colophon mentions *upāsakas* (lay devotees), as well as the attainment of Buddhahood and of religious merit.<sup>296</sup>

---

<sup>292</sup> See Lalou 1939: 18.

<sup>293</sup> This estimate was kindly offered to me by Sam van Schaik (personal communication October 2018). For relevant paleographical information see van Schaik 2014: 299–337.

<sup>294</sup> Again, see Lalou 1939: 18.

<sup>295</sup> See Pelliot Tibétain 45, folio 1v. For all visual features, please refer to the website provided above.

<sup>296</sup> I can read (PT 45 folio 82r, 3f.): *dge bsnyan dge [-] 'o | sangs rgyas sa (xxxx) grub par gyurd cig || bsod nams gyi tshogs*. I would like to thank Ulrike Roesler for looking at the MS with me on one occasion.

As for the internal colophon, the PNA simply ends with the word *zhu* - indicating that the text had been proof-read - which is repeated twice in diverging sizes and colours, alternated by two double vertical strokes.<sup>297</sup> On the whole, the script is rather regular, with exception of the spell-section. The PNA's spell is written in a slightly smaller size and thinner line. The characters are also slightly bended towards the upper-left.<sup>298</sup> Thus, the spell is visually separated from the rest of the work, which makes it easily identifiable. Note, however, that the Sanskrit title given at the beginning of the work is also found in a similar hand. This visual feature could then simply be related to the way Sanskrit words are transcribed in the MS. If this is the case, the feature should not be interpreted as highlighting the importance of the spell or its position within the MS. Before the title line, the previous work ends with the words *zhus lags*, again written with two different writing tools.<sup>299</sup> There are also two decorations, the larger of which is a circular decoration which seems to depict flowers. Again, this decorative feature does not seem to have implied considerable additional costs for the commissioner.

This relatively early collection is remarkable in the present context because it shows a PP spell scripture integrated within a group of *dhāraṇīsūtras*, thus representing a different scenario from PP-centred repositories like the DB. No Sanskrit version of the PNA appears to have survived, which makes this witness

---

<sup>297</sup> See PT 45, folio 30v. (folios are not numbered in the original, so navigate to MS page 31 on the Gallica website).

<sup>298</sup> Please refer to the digital copy available online, details given above. See PT 45, folio 29v,4 - 30r,3.

<sup>299</sup> See PT 45, folio 23v. I am unable to determine whether two people were involved, although this seems possible.

particularly valuable. Some of its reading will be referred to in the following chapters.

Also of interest is the fact that this witness too seems to post-date the 9<sup>th</sup> C.

## 2.3 Pāla Witnesses and related sources

### 2.3.1 Shorter Prajñāpāramitās in a Pāla Composite Manuscript

The single most remarkable witness for shorter PPs in general and PP spell scriptures in particular is certainly the *Norgulingka MS*, or CTRC 8, a copy of which was inspected in Beijing in July 2018 as part of the present study.<sup>300</sup> An edition of the EkaP and SaŚIP texts included in this MS, as well as a list of variants from three works (incl. the SvalP) are presented in the *Appendices*.

This is a collection of ten shorter PP works arranged in ascending order of length: from the extremely concise EkaP, to the elaborate SaŚP.<sup>301</sup> In terms of PP scriptures which include spells, CTRC 8 preserves: the just mentioned EkaP,

---

<sup>300</sup> Thanks to Dr. Birgit Kellner (director of the IKGA) and Dr. Dramdul (director CTRC) for making this possible. The copy available for inspection in Beijing is a black-and-white photostat copy, probably made from a previous reproduction of the original MS, which is located in Tibet. The quality of the copy is not very good, but the inferable good state of the original and the regularity of the script allow a relatively unimpeded reading. See Tomabechei's description (2009, Introduction).

<sup>301</sup> Tomabechei 2009: xxx/xxxi.

which is otherwise not known from other sources (even in Chinese or Tibetan translation); the SaŚIP, another elusive PP spell scripture which is only attested in one Nepalese *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas* and in a late Tibetan translation;<sup>302</sup> a version of the PPH; and one version of the SvalP. Regarding the latter, it should be noted that the internal colophon gives the title of *āryabhagavatī prajñāpāramitārdhaśatikā*.<sup>303</sup> Following a request to me on part of Dr. Tomabechei, who inspected the manuscript in 2009, it was possible to confirm that the text in question is indeed that of the *Svalpākṣarā* PP and not that of the ArdhaP.<sup>304</sup>

CTRC 8 also includes a work called *avikalpapraveśā nāma dhāraṇī āryabhagavatī prajñāpāramitā sapādaśatikā*. This is of course not a mantra or *dhāraṇī*-related work but a sūtra focusing on the notion of entering the *avikalpadhātu*.<sup>305</sup> Of course, the MS also includes the AdhyP, which was edited by Tomabechei during a stay in Beijing.

The MS is dated to the reign of Śūrapāla, whom Tomabechei identifies with Śūrapāla II on paleographical grounds.<sup>306</sup> The colophon of CTCR 8 reflects a typical formulation, particularly common in Pāla MSS:<sup>307</sup>

---

<sup>302</sup> See below for details on the Nepalese exemplar.

<sup>303</sup> This corresponds to work no. 5 of the list in Tomabechei 2009: xxxi.

<sup>304</sup> This is also mentioned in Komine et al. 2015: 97 (no.5).

<sup>305</sup> For a recent treatment involving this work see Meinert 2003: 177.

<sup>306</sup> See *ibid.*: xxx (note 29). This would point at the early second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> C as the date of production.

<sup>307</sup> See the example in Kim 2013: 249. Most of the same terms are also found in inscriptions (see Schopen 2005: 223ff.).

[*ye dharma* formula]

*deyadharmo [+']yam pravaramahāyānāyāinaḥ  
paramopāsakarāṇakaśrī(u)dayarājasya yad atra puṇyaṃ tad  
bhavativ ācāryopādhyāyamātāpitṛpūrvaṅgamaṃ kṛtvā  
sakalāsatvarāśer anuttarajñānaphalāvāptaya iti | | [...]  
śrīnsūrapāladevapravarddhamānakalyāṇavijayarājye samvat 3  
kārttikadine 10 pustakam [+ likhitam?] iti.<sup>308</sup>*

‘This is the religious gift of the foremost follower of Mahāyāna and ‘distinguished layperson’<sup>309</sup> the *rāṇaka*<sup>310</sup> Śrī Udayarāja. Whatever merit [is to arise from such gift], may that be - with precedence to my mother and father, preceptor and teacher - for the attainment of the fruit of ultimate knowledge of the entire mass of beings. [...] This book was [written] in the third year of the reign of increasing welfare and victory of Śrī Śūrapāladeva, in the 10<sup>th</sup> (lunar) day of (the month of) Kārttika’.

According to the formula, the religious context surrounding the production of this MS is that of religious gifts, which are said to generate great merit, which in turn is dedicated to all beings. In particular, mundane purposes are not

---

<sup>308</sup> The word *vijaya* - usually found in this kind of formula - had been left out of the 2009 edition (p. xxix).

<sup>309</sup> These expressions are actually very common in epigraphical sources. However, their precise interpretation is a matter of some controversy. Apart from the seminal discussion at Schopen 2005: 223ff. see also McCombs 2014: 315ff.

<sup>310</sup> For possible meanings of this term see Sircar 1966: 276. Here it may suffice to note that this could be a person as a relatively high status.

mentioned, with a reference to the attainment of ultimate knowledge instead. As for the donor, one notices his possible wealthy/influential status (*rāṇaka*) as well as the fact that the donor is simply described as a follower of the Mahāyāna. Thus, there is a lack of indications regarding affiliation to esoteric Buddhist circles. The terms *ācārya* and *upādhyāya* are actually part of the staple formula of Pāla colophons.<sup>311</sup> While such terms are not sufficient to establish an esoteric affiliation, a table on MS commission published by Kim argues that such affiliations can sometimes be detected. Apparently the number of relevant cases increases from the 12<sup>th</sup> C, a period slightly later than the production of CTRC 8.<sup>312</sup>

For the present purposes, it is important to note how shorter PP are fully embedded within a religious culture - and its market - of high-end gifts which usually privileged either the AS or the *Pañcarakṣā*. This is a signal of the recognition of acceptance of PP spell scriptures within such culture. However, despite such recognition, one is puzzled by the fact that this particular series of PP and related works does not seem to be attested elsewhere.

The PP connection is also emphasised by the invocations and stanzas opening the MS. After invocations to the three jewels and all Buddhas/Bodhisattvas, one finds an invocation to PP and some verses which describe her, ending with:

---

<sup>311</sup> Again, see the example in Kim 2013: 249.

<sup>312</sup> See Kim 2013: 217ff.

“those who seek awakening should listen to this Prajñāpāramitā, mother of the Jina”.<sup>313</sup>

As is well known, on occasion independent *dhāraṇī* works are found at the end of Pāla MSS of PP, in what is a further indication of how the two genres came into close contact in this period. Curiously, one Pāla MS in the Los Angeles County Museum is described in catalogues as a *Dhāraṇīsamgraha*. However, research by Allinger has shown that this is nothing but a MS of the AS, with the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī* found before its colophon.<sup>314</sup> Be that as it may, in the case of CTRC 8, only the ubiquitous *ye dharma* formula is found before the colophon.

It is curious to note that the same cardboard box no.8 which contains the PP MS also includes folios from a different MS which records other spell scriptures.<sup>315</sup> After a brief inspection of randomly selected passages, the pattern that emerged was consistent with that of the works of the *Pañcarakṣā*. Unfortunately, I was unable to trace the few missing folios of CTRC 8 within this second manuscript. The copy was at places hardly legible and the script - although still of the Pāla variety - was much less polished and regular than that used for the PP MS.

Moving on to the visual features, CTRC 8 immediately reminds one of the well known Pāla MSS of the AS and *Pañcarakṣā*. It is written with great care in what is

---

<sup>313</sup> See Tomabechi 2009: xxix (*prajñāpāramitām jinasya janānīm śṛṇvantu bodhyarthinah*).

<sup>314</sup> See Kim 2013: 81.

<sup>315</sup> This had already been pointed out by Tomabechi (see *ibid.*).

usually termed ‘Pāla script’,<sup>316</sup> with a number of illuminations. Notably, there are illuminations around the string holes as well, rather than just in the usual ‘panels’. This however, is a feature also found in a number of other Pāla witnesses.<sup>317</sup> Due to the bad quality of the copy preserved in Beijing, the internal miniatures could not be identified. However, thanks to the recent publication of colour pictures of the opening and closing folios of the MS, it is now possible to identify the miniatures on such folios.<sup>318</sup> The opening ones show some of the typical depictions of scenes from the Buddha’s life, including the monkey’s giving of honey and the *parinirvāṇa*.<sup>319</sup> More remarkable are the closing folios, which show depictions of esoteric deities. The deities of the two main panels have been identified as Hevajra and Cakrasaṃvara in their more common forms. Unfortunately, the flanking deities could not be identified.<sup>320</sup>

In the following chapters, some of the more fascinating variant readings detected during the study of CTRC 8 will be presented at the relevant places.

---

<sup>316</sup> On the reasons for preferring the expression ‘Pāla script’ over the many others which have been proposed see Formigatti 2016: 84.

<sup>317</sup> See for example Allinger 2008: 115.

<sup>318</sup> See Danzeng 2011: 145f.

<sup>319</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>320</sup> I would like to thank Cristian Luczanits for his help with the identification (personal communication, October 2018).

### 2.3.2 Other Pāla and related sources

Apart from CTRC 8, Pāla witnesses of the Selected Sources are extremely rare. This is despite the fact that the Pāla period appears to have been the main catalyst for the composition of PP spell scriptures in the first place. PP did occupy a relatively central place in Pāla Buddhism, particularly within the social and intellectual elites. Perhaps more relevant to the study of PP spell scriptures would be the question of the impact of PP at popular level. Here, however, the evidence is not as rich as one might hope.<sup>321</sup> Kinnard has made some useful remarks about the notion of *prajñā* permeating a number of cultural expressions, particularly in relation to visual arts.<sup>322</sup> Nevertheless, the impression a student gains from a brief look at the major archaeological sites and art-historical remains is that other deities, *dhāraṇī* scriptures, and forms of worship seem to have been more wide-spread than the PP-related ones.<sup>323</sup> Regions like Sri Lanka

---

<sup>321</sup> Here one could also consider the possibility that relevant materials might simply have been lost. After all, ‘popularity’ does not automatically translate into higher chances of long-term preservation. A typical example often used by sinologists is that of medieval Chinese vernacular narrative/performative literature (e.g. *bianwen* 變文), which in its time must have been extremely widespread in Chinese urban centres, and yet only survived by chance in a marginal area such as Dunhuang (Zacchetti, personal communication July 2019).

<sup>322</sup> This in fact is the main subject and thesis of Kinnard 1999.

<sup>323</sup> The methodological challenges encountered when attempting assessments of this kind are considerable. Therefore, this is proposed here as a preliminary observation. Two helpful sources are Donaldson 2001, on the archaeology of certain key sites in Orissa (with a second volume dedicated to plates), as well as Willis *forthcoming*, which is a presentation of various kinds of previously unpublished archaeological finds from the site of Bodhgayā. Orissa does seem to have preserved some statues of PP, although the

or Cambodia are far more generous in this regard.<sup>324</sup> This of course is not the place to take up such a large-scale assessment, which would deserve a study of its own. The thorny question of the possible links between PP spells and PP's 'popularity' on the ground will be taken up again in later chapters.

Coming back to the primary sources, there is another MS allegedly from the 11<sup>th</sup> C which had been studied by Conze: it is an incomplete, three pages MS of the SvalP, kept at the Asiatic Society of Kolkata.<sup>325</sup> Despite repeated attempts, requests for a copy have not been successful. It could, however, be possible to inspect the MS *in situ* at a later date. According to Conze, the MS originally consisted of four folios. It is unclear whether he means that the SvalP text would have originally occupied four folios, or that the codex itself would have consisted

---

number seems limited (see for example plate C-22 in Donaldson 2001). I would like to thank Umakanta Mishra for providing me with pictures of PP statues from the Orissa State Museum, as well as from some Orissan archaeological sites. It would appear that some of these statues are still unreported. Hopefully there will be a future occasion to approach the subject of PP in the later period with more emphasis on archaeological and epigraphical evidence.

<sup>324</sup> Something about Sri Lankan evidence will be said at 2.5. Regarding the many statues of PP from Cambodia, which are found even outside the common triad with Lokeśvara and the Buddha, one can turn to Miltzer o'Naghten 2016 (which includes images). Iconographically, these statues are not what someone familiar with Northeastern India and the *Sādhnamālā* would expect to see. This raises some important question regarding the transmission of PP along the maritime 'silk roads', such as the role of local centres and their relation to Pāla models. The subject is briefly treated in Chapter 6.3 and 6.4.

<sup>325</sup> This is the text edited - with help from the Tibetan version - in Conze 1956 (see the description on p.112). See Shastri 1917 (vol.1) p.15: "10757B *Svalpākṣarā Prajñāpāramitā*".

of only four folios. In the latter case, one would be witnessing a rather different specimen from the CTRC collection of shorter PP works. A MS originally consisting only of the SvalP would be typologically fascinating, for it might have connections with particular ritual or apotropaic purposes. However, this remains a mere speculation at this stage.

Apart from the scant information available from extant Pāla witnesses, one notices a relatively high number of Chinese translations of PP spell scriptures carried out towards the end of the 10th C, during the Song (宋) period. Translations of the AdhyP, the PNA, the SvalP, the ArdhaP, and the KauP, belong to this period.<sup>326</sup>

As with the post-Gupta phase of Indian Buddhism, post-Tang Chinese Buddhism too has been subject to a number of demeaning assessments, being sometimes considered a period of decline. Gradually however, scholars are being increasingly successful in showing that the later period - marked by extraordinary cultural richness as well as pan-Asian Buddhist networks unprecedented in their scale - deserves a thorough reassessment. As suggested by Tansen Sen, the perceived lack of attention in China towards newly translated Buddhist materials (mostly esoteric in nature) reflects complex dynamics, one of which has to do with the actual interest of the Chinese shifting towards the developments of their own Buddhist schools.<sup>327</sup> In fact, esoteric Buddhism was never to enjoy there the same success as in Tibet.

---

<sup>326</sup> See the relevant sections in Lehnert 1999: 35ff.

<sup>327</sup> See Sen 2003: 132ff.

Song translations are often criticised on stylistic grounds. Especially in the case of the highly codified esoteric works, imprecise translations can seriously undermine the value of the entire endeavour. The matter is more complex than sometimes assumed, with the quality of translation outputs being very diverse and depending on various factors, including the fortunes of the institute charged with translating Indic works into Chinese.<sup>328</sup> Perhaps this is less problematic in the case of PP spell scriptures, due to the minimalist nature of their narrative sections, the lack of highly codified esoteric language, and their referring for the most part to well-known sets of Buddhist terms.

It is important to note that extensive resources are available for the study of the transmission of later PP works in this period. Song catalogues in particular can give very valuable information. Not only do they record the translator's name, the length of the work and alternative titles. Sometimes they also provide information regarding the provenience of the Indic exemplar or its script. Thus, for the SvalP, a Song catalogue mentions 中天 'central India' as the place of origin.<sup>329</sup> The same is given for the KauP, the ArdhaP, the BM, the PNA.

It is interesting to note that most of the relevant works were translated by \*Dānapāla (施護, mostly active in the late 10<sup>th</sup> C). Nevertheless, \*Dānapāla was a very prolific translator and PP spell scriptures appear to have represented only a

---

<sup>328</sup> For an overview on the dynamics relating to translations of Buddhist texts under the Song see Sen 2003: 104f. and 112ff. as well as Sen 2002 (article). For a balanced assessment of this complex issue see also Bowring 1992: 79ff.

<sup>329</sup> See Takeuchi 1975: 41. For more general considerations on this see Sen 2003: 127 and 129f.

minor interest to him.<sup>330</sup> However, one should not forget that the state played a key role in directing the activities of translators in this period, including determining which Skt. sources were to be translated.

Unfortunately, it has proved impossible so far to understand whether any such scriptures arrived in China as part of composite MSS including *dhāraṇīs* or PP works. The catalogue entries appear to mostly deal with each scripture separately.

Another central issue is that of foreign agency in commissioning copies of PP spell scriptures. Given the paucity of Pāla sources, including commentaries by the learned elite of Buddhist scholars, one has to wonder whether an external influence had prompted the redaction of more sources which were for the most part typologically similar to the PPH. While some smaller Chinese Buddhist circles might have had an interest, it seems more plausible at present to look at Tibet. As the hagiographical passages studied by Seton illustrate, large quantities of Tibetan gold were flowing into Pāla monastic universities.<sup>331</sup> This might have had an influence on the production of commentaries reflecting certain agendas congenial to Tibetan interests.<sup>332</sup>

Certainly, most PP spell scriptures were also translated into Tibetan. In the available printed canons, often internal colophons simply give the title of the

---

<sup>330</sup> See Lehnert 1999: 35ff. at the relevant sections; on Dānapāla see Sen 2003: 122 and 128.

<sup>331</sup> See Seton 2015: 47.

<sup>332</sup> Seton is planning to present a paper on this issue at the forthcoming AAR (American Academy of Religion) conference in November 2019.

translated work. When further information is given, this is usually limited to the names and titles of the translators. While this helps with dating the translation, it does not provide much information regarding the transmission of PP spell scriptures into Tibet or their possible commission. Historiographical works in Tibetan are rich in mentions of the copying of PP works or their study by various masters or disciples. However, the vast majority of passages identified in the course of this study refer to the most common PP works, which fall outside of the Selected Sources.<sup>333</sup>

It would seem that para-canonical repositories of *dhāraṇīs* in Tibetan are particularly relevant to the topic of this chapter. Apart from Pelliot 45 (see the PNA MS described above), there are other *dhāraṇī* collections which include later PP works, such as the *Gzungs 'dus*, linked to Tāranātha (16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> C). The main question here is that of the antiquity of such sources, for it appears that both Tibetan and Nepalese evidence points at a period much later than the Pāla one. Such *dhāraṇī* collections will be the subject of the following section.

For the present purposes, it will suffice to bear in mind the possibility of foreign influence on the redaction of PP spell scriptures. At the same time, one should also attempt to embrace the pan-Asian dimension of Buddhism in this period. Certainly Pāla Buddhism was a major centre, but by this time other centres had established themselves not only as passive takers as well as of influencers. This is

---

<sup>333</sup> For one such reference from the *Blue Annals* regarding the figure of Rva Lo tsā ba, see Sanderson 2009: 103.

not only true of China and Tibet, but of Southeast Asia as well.<sup>334</sup> In terms of PP spell scriptures, one should attempt to find out whether their redaction was a consequence of the success of works like the PPH, in whose shadow they were destined to remain, or whether more specific needs were served. Some partial insights into these issues will be presented in the Conclusions.

## 2.4 The Nepalese *Dhāraṇīsamgrahas*

### 2.4.1 Opening Remarks

It was pointed out above that Sanskrit witnesses of the Selected Sources are rare in Central Asia as well as Pāla Bengal. Most of the surviving witnesses come, perhaps unsurprisingly, from Nepal. It was there that South Asian Buddhism continued to thrive even after the 13th C, a time which virtually marks the end of Buddhist activity in India itself. Embedded within the Kathmandu valley, a living tradition of Mahāyāna survives to this day among the Newars. Clearly, centuries of Nepalese history have created local expressions of Buddhist culture, which cannot be treated as simply an extension of Indic models. Yet most scholars appreciate that no treatment of later Indic Buddhism is complete, without reference to Nepal. Thanks to the Nepalese German Manuscript Cataloguing Project (NGMCP), a plethora of Nepalese manuscript sources are now available to scholars. One might expect PP spell scriptures to figure prominently as

---

<sup>334</sup> This is the main theme of a recent volume on esoteric Buddhism in Southeast Asia edited by Aciri (2016).

individual works in dedicated MSS. However, at least on the basis of the entries of the online catalogue, this does not appear to be the case. Certainly, one should consider that what is now directly available through the catalogue does not reflect the entirety of what was once in circulation.

Thanks to the catalogue, it is easy to see how a work like the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* PP overshadowed - as it had already done in Pāla Bengal - the *Larger* PP, the latter having already reached the peak of its dissemination prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> C.<sup>335</sup>

A number of shorter PPs are attested, such as the SaŚP, which survives not only on paper but palm-leaf as well, or of course the *Vajracchedikā* PP and the PPH.<sup>336</sup> On the other hand, the sources selected for this study appear to be rather rare as individual MSS.

It is crucial to note that such works are mostly preserved within large repository of *dhāraṇī* materials commonly known as *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas* (DS).<sup>337</sup> Surprisingly, scholarly treatments of PP spell scriptures so far have not stressed the importance of these MSS.

The typical *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas* in question often contain hundreds of *dhāraṇīs* and occasionally sūtras as well. It would appear that the sūtras embedded within

---

<sup>335</sup> A fact that is often left unstated is that even these MSS of the AS are, in some way at least, *composite*. Usually, a witness of the AS would also include the *Prajñāpāramitāstotra* at the beginning, as well as the ubiquitous *ye dharma* formula before its colophon. On the important role of *stotras* see Skilling 2016.

<sup>336</sup> Regarding the SaŚP witnesses, see Sato 2013. While most of these witnesses are on paper, manuscript B23/15, catalogued by the NGMCP, is on palm-leaf.

<sup>337</sup> For comprehensive editions of two such exempars see Hidas *forthcoming*.

such MSS are usually - if not exclusively - PP works. Remarkably, a number of PP works included in the DSs are not PP spell scriptures at all.<sup>338</sup> A very common work is the rather long SaŚP itself, a rather elaborate work with roots stretching back to the 5<sup>th</sup> C.<sup>339</sup> The *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* and the *Ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā* are also attested within such MSS.<sup>340</sup> While details about the Selected Sources will be given below, it can be said that in general the SvalP, the ArdhaP and the self-standing PP-*dhāraṇīs* are perhaps the most commonly encountered.

A key methodological question regarding these DSs concerns their antiquity. As for the NGMCP's catalogue, as well as other available sources consulted during this study, most relevant DSs are attested on paper - not palm-leaf - and stem from 18<sup>th</sup> C Nepal, if not indeed later.<sup>341</sup> This poses some questions, as one

---

<sup>338</sup> This is an important fact with potentially vast implications which lay beyond the scope of this study. One can however consider that the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* and the *Ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā* (sometimes included in DSs) are both in some ways connected to the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, the key PP work in the later period. Thus, in a sense both works represent shorter summaries of PP.

<sup>339</sup> Sato is currently working on a comprehensive critical edition of this work. While Masuda's edition of 1930 is far superior to Tucci's one (1923), it only includes the first half of the work. On the early translations of the SaŚP see the relevant section in Zacchetti 20015 (p.197). One of the early translators of the SaŚP was \*Mandra, who will be mentioned again in Chapter 6.4 for his connection to Southeast Asia.

<sup>340</sup> I would like to thank Dr. Hidas for providing me with a list of titles of PP works included in the DSs (February 2017).

<sup>341</sup> Note that a handful of DSs are also listed in the *Bṛhatsūcīpatram*, whose volumes IV and VII are dedicated to Buddhist works (see the Bibliography: *Nepālarājakīya...*). Volume 7.2 pp.5-6 give some basic information on a few exemplars, with the date portion from one colophon also being reported. On the basis of the name of the Malla ruler, one again is looking at the 18<sup>th</sup> C for the date of commission.

cannot expect this tradition to be simply a continuation of Pāla era manuscript practices. There are a few early DSs preserved in palm-leave MSS which are currently being investigated by Dr. Gergely Hidas. Preliminary information on their contents seems to suggest that they represent a typologically different collection when compared to the ones investigated here.<sup>342</sup> It appears safe to consider these DSs as a product of the later Nepalese tradition. This might also help to explain the rather unexpected inclusion of a work such as the SaŚP: the main character of this work is Mañjuśrī, a *bodhisattva* who occupies a prominent position in Nepalese Buddhism and particularly in certain mythological accounts of the origins of the Kathmandu valley.<sup>343</sup>

Overall, DSs represent the ultimate integration of PP within *dhāraṇī* collections, a trend that had more ancient roots, as was pointed out above. By contrast, it has not proven possible so far to trace Nepalese collections of (almost) exclusively PP works, such as the DB or CTRC 8 mentioned above.

The incorporation of PP works within *dhāraṇī* repositories gave these works the opportunity to circulate in a new environment. Some information about such environment can be extracted from the study of colophons and codicological features.

Before moving to a presentation of the key witnesses, it is necessary to spend a few words on the Tibetan repositories of *dhāraṇīs* (*gzung 'dus*), which also

---

<sup>342</sup> See Hidas *forthcoming*.

<sup>343</sup> The key source in this case is the *Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa*. See von Rospatt 2014: 52 (a depiction of Mañjuśrī draining the lake which occupied the valley is found in the closing section).

include PP works. This tradition of DSs appears to go back to Tāranātha (who lived between the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> C). A useful table of contents of a later reprint of a DS apparently belonging to such tradition can be found in Everding 2015.<sup>344</sup> The table makes it clear that PP works were included within the collection. However, the PP works selected are partly different from those typical of Nepalese DSs. In terms of sūtras, one finds the KauP - which had already stood out for its Central-Asian connection -, the *Ekākṣarī* PP, the PPH, and the *Vajracchedikā*. A number of PP-*dhāraṇīs* are attested as well.<sup>345</sup>

Apart from this, PP-*dhāraṇīs* did circulate in Tibet even in other forms. Some information on this is available thanks to the work on various Museum collections by Meisezahl.<sup>346</sup> Mostly, one is dealing with special prints of various spell works. The PP *dhāraṇīs* usually bear titles which link them to one of the main PP scriptures (such as the AS or the *Pañcaviṃśati* PP).<sup>347</sup>

## 2.4.2 The Indexed *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas*

There are a few Nepalese DSs about which some information is already available. One can think of: MS Add. 1326 in the Cambridge library, which is currently being

---

<sup>344</sup> See Everding 2015: 77.

<sup>345</sup> See Everding 2015: 304.

<sup>346</sup> See Meisezahl 1964 (Bern Museum) and Meisezahl 1957 (Linden Museum).

<sup>347</sup> Meisezahl reports some of these in full. See Meisezahl 1957 p.49f.

edited by Dr. Gergely Hidas;<sup>348</sup> MS no. 62 of Filliozat's *Catalogue du Fonds Sanscrit*, in which one finds a detailed table of contents;<sup>349</sup> and the DSs of the Kawaguchi collection in Tokyo, described in Matsunami's catalogue.<sup>350</sup> Apart from the French exemplar, images of all other DSs are available online through the websites of the Cambridge and Tokyo libraries.<sup>351</sup>

Cambridge Add. 1326 is a beautifully preserved exemplar from the reign of the Malla ruler Jayamahendrasimha (1714-1722).<sup>352</sup> It is on paper, as all DSs examined so far, and counts as many as 225 folios, which is an average length for Nepalese DSs. It includes some illuminations, one of which appears to depict the commissioner - a Buddhist affiliated to a particular *vihāra* - and his wife.<sup>353</sup> There is little doubt that commissioning such a MS would have entailed significant expenditure.

The long and detailed colophon gives some information - switching between Sanskrit and Newari - regarding DSs in this cultural context. First of all, it is mentioned that the MS was commissioned in order to help all beings achieve awakening, as per the typical formula.<sup>354</sup> Later on, the colophon mentions that

---

<sup>348</sup> See Hidas *forthcoming*.

<sup>349</sup> See Filliozat 1941: 31ff.

<sup>350</sup> See Matsunami 1965: 77ff. and 148ff.

<sup>351</sup> The Cambridge exemplar can be consulted here: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01326/1> (Accessed April 2019); <http://utlsktms.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/list.php> (Accessed April 2019).

<sup>352</sup> The colophon starts at folio 224r1. An edition can be found on the website.

<sup>353</sup> See C. 1326, folio 223v.

<sup>354</sup> See C. 1326 folio 224r3.

the with the MS a number of deities will be installed (*ṣṭhāpithāh*) at home (*grhe*), which could be taken as indication of such MSS being kept in a domestic environment.<sup>355</sup> Most importantly, there is also mention of concrete benefits, such as the overcoming of various obstacles and diseases. These are benefits of a mundane nature, found in conjunction with a MS which also includes PP works. While one can assume that the object served an apotropaic function simply by means of it being kept on a family altar, it seems that these mundane benefits are actually linked to the act of commissioning the MS in the first place.<sup>356</sup>

In terms of PP works included in the MSS, one notices the SaŚP, which is found towards the end.<sup>357</sup> There is also the ArdhaP, which is one of the Selected Sources.<sup>358</sup> The SvalP is also included, placed after the longer SaŚP.<sup>359</sup> In terms of spells, one notices a few self-standing PP *dhāraṇīs*.<sup>360</sup> Apart from these, the MS includes hundreds of *dhāraṇī*-related materials, which will be made available in a comprehensive edition by Dr. Hidas.

As for Paris MS 62, Filliozat's catalogue provides not only the title of works, but also their incipits and internal colophons. Based on photographs of the opening and closing folios kindly provided by the BNF in Paris,<sup>361</sup> it quickly became clear that this was not an object copied in antiquity. The codex, counting 169 folios, is

---

<sup>355</sup> See C. 1326 folio 224v5.

<sup>356</sup> The list of obstacles can be found at C.1326 folio 224v6.

<sup>357</sup> Its colophon ends at folio 201v1.

<sup>358</sup> This work starts at folio 38v2.

<sup>359</sup> See the colophon at folio 203v.

<sup>360</sup> See e.g. the colophon of a *Pañcaviṃśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-nāma-dhāraṇī* at 139r.

<sup>361</sup> I would like to thank Jerome Petit of the BNF for providing me with such materials.

written in modern *Devanāgarī*, rather than the semi-ornate *Nepālākṣarā* of Cambridge 1326. Another surprising aspect is the lack of a final colophon, for the MS simply ends with the *ye dharma* formula and the words *śubham astu*. The clue for understanding the origin of the codex lies in Filliozat's mention of the names of Hodgson and Burnouf at the end of the MS description. Hodgson had commissioned the copying of Nepalese manuscripts for shipment to the West. Some of these were prepared for the Société Asiatique, a fact for which Burnouf once expressed gratitude.<sup>362</sup> MS 62 is in all likelihood one exemplar from such batch and therefore cannot be used for codicological purposes.

Nevertheless, one can still focus on the contents of the MS. The SaŚP is found here in second position, just after a short work dedicated to Mañjuśrī.<sup>363</sup> In Cambridge 1326, the work was instead found towards the end. The second PP work to be encountered is the SvalP, as number 45, which ends with the typical statement to the fact that it was Nāgārjuna who 'extracted' the scripture from the world of the Nāgas.<sup>364</sup> Then comes the PP-*dhāraṇī* as number 52, which is given in full by Filliozat, as it occupies only two lines. Apart from the actual spell, one should notice the closing statement *anayā dhāraṇyā śatasahasryāprajñāpāramitāvacaṇāt phalaṃ labhate* 'with [the recitation of] this *dhāraṇī*, one attains the [karmic] fruit [generated] from the recitation of the PP

---

<sup>362</sup> I would like to thank Vincent Tournier for pointing this out to me. See Tournier 2012: 87 as well as Feer 1899: 161 (referred to in note 2 of Tournier's article).

<sup>363</sup> Filliozat 1941: 32.

<sup>364</sup> See *ibid.* p.40 *āryyanāgārjunapādaiḥ pātālād uddhrtā iti*.

in one hundred thousand units''.<sup>365</sup> This statement will be elaborated upon in Chapter 4, dedicated to a study of the ritual significance of PP spells.

Another PP *dhāraṇī* is found as number 94, and the PPH appears as number 139, preceded by the *Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī* and followed by the *Mārīcīdhāraṇī*.<sup>366</sup>

Thus, the order and selection of PP works differs quite substantially from that of Cambridge 1326. This alone should be sufficient evidence to prove that there was some variety even among this longer kind of *dhāraṇī* MSS, which could differ both in work selection as well as general length. One could speculate that the extent of such collections, as well as other features, would have been decided on the basis of the commissioner's financial means. However, things are certainly more complex, inasmuch as one should also consider the wider ritual purposes and social dynamics behind the commissioning of given copies - dimensions which still remain largely obscure to me.

Next, one can turn to Matsunami's catalogue for information on other DSs. The *dhāraṇī* collections are found between number 189 and 202 of the catalogue, as well as between 416 and 421 (excluding 417).<sup>367</sup> Works of the latter group are usually recorded as 'Saptaśatikā PP and other works'. This points to the fact that they are *dhāraṇī* collections which actually start with the SaŚP, much like Filliozat 62. Based on differences in work selection, a preliminary observation is that most of these works are not just copy of each other or of a single common ancestor.

---

<sup>365</sup> See *ibid.* p.41.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.* p.55.

<sup>367</sup> See Matsunami 1965: 77ff. and 148ff.

As for other PP works, according to the catalogue the ArdhaP is attested in MS 418.<sup>368</sup> The PPH is well represented, being found in a number of MSS.<sup>369</sup> The SvalP is found in some MSS, usually the same which also include the SaŚP, i.e. 418, 419, and 420.<sup>370</sup>

As for the self-standing PP spells, they are mostly - although not exclusively - preserved in the same group of MSS which start with the SaŚP.<sup>371</sup>

Another PP-related work which figures regularly in this group of DSs is the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, which served as the main instrument for PP interpretation not only in Pāla India but in Tibet as well.<sup>372</sup> Once again, it appears that PP works were included within such MSS not exclusively by virtue of their including actual spells. Perhaps their value as summaries or ‘emblems’ of the PP-teaching did also play a role.

Furthermore, no traditional sūtras outside the PP tradition have been identified so far, despite the fact that a large number of *dhāraṇīs* do claim a connection to some of the main Mahāyāna sūtras by virtue of their titles.<sup>373</sup> If this fact were to be confirmed, this would point to a particular need for the insertion of PP works

---

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.* p.187.

<sup>369</sup> These are Matsunami’s witnesses number 196,199,201,202,418,419,420, and 421.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.* p.212.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.* p.325.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.* p.350. More on this work will be said in Chapter 6.2.

<sup>373</sup> For some examples one can turn to Filliozat’s catalogue. On p.40f. one can find the spells associated with the *Samādhirāja* and the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, reported in full. Yet these are not fully fledged sūtras in the way the PP ones are.

within DSs, perhaps by virtue of a high status ascribed to PP teaching in Nepalese Buddhism.

However, this fluidity in the selection of PP sources does weaken arguments which would seek to establish a special link between PP spell scriptures and the DSs on the ground of spell-related practices. Once more, it is PP as a notion - or perhaps 'brand' - which seems to be the main catalyst.

The colophon of MS Tok 418 describes the collection as not only a *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* but as a *Mahāyānasūtra* as well.<sup>374</sup> After the *ye dharma* formula, information about the commissioning of the MS is given. This is the gift of a Vajrācārya priest who is said to have been a follower of Mahāyāna, as per the usual formula.<sup>375</sup> After information on the copyist, brief mention is made of obstacles such as diseases or the consequences of the five major sins

---

<sup>374</sup> One can consult the digital reproduction here:

[http://picservice.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/03\\_150219~UT-library\\_sanskrit\\_ms/MF13\\_50\\_003~MF13\\_50\\_003/?pageId=001](http://picservice.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/03_150219~UT-library_sanskrit_ms/MF13_50_003~MF13_50_003/?pageId=001) (go to p.280; Accessed July 2019).

The label 'Mahāyānasūtra' can be found in the line giving the general title, just before the start of the *ye dharma* formula (Tok 418 folio 278r, 7).

<sup>375</sup> See Tok 418 folio 278v, 1. The formula includes the terms *pravaramahāyānayāyin paramopāsaka*, albeit with some orthographic variations (such as the palatal śa in place of the dental sa, as usual in these sources). These common expressions were also found in CTRC8 (see the relevant section above). One could describe Vajrācāryas as representatives of the priestly class in Newar Buddhism. To learn about their important roles within the community see Gellner 1992.

(*pañcamahāpāpa*), which I assume the copying of the MS should help counteract.<sup>376</sup>

MS Tok 419 also includes a hand-written table of contents at the end. The colophon is much shorter than MS Tok 418's and is hardly legible at places.<sup>377</sup> Based on the script, it would seem that the table of contents is to be considered integral part of the MS. Does its presence tell us anything about how the MS or perhaps its PP spells were actually used? At present I am unable to offer an answer, although I suspect that there would be multiple aspects to consider. For example, it is clear that these MSS can vary in work-selection as well as number of works included. This would also have impacts on the total cost of the copying to the commissioning person and the table of content might help keep track of such features. Also, there could be a need to recite certain spells of specific occasions, perhaps based on the local calendars. The table of contents would help the reader navigate to the relevant spells. From this perspective, a relevant question in view of a continuation of this research would be whether the PP works were somehow connected to specific festivals or other occasions.<sup>378</sup>

---

<sup>376</sup> See Tok 418 folio 279r, 3.

<sup>377</sup> For the digital reproduction see [http://picservice.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/03\\_150219~UT-library\\_sanskrit\\_ms/MF13\\_50\\_004~MF13\\_50\\_004/?pageId=001](http://picservice.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/03_150219~UT-library_sanskrit_ms/MF13_50_004~MF13_50_004/?pageId=001) (accessed July 2019). For the colophon section navigate to p.314 in the browser and find Tok 419 folio 311v, 2. The table of contents starts right after the colophon.

<sup>378</sup> For more reflections on these, see Chapter 4.3, section on spell practice.

Moving on, Ms Tok 420 is found within a wooden cover with some miniature paintings of what seem to be *bodhisattvas* and esoteric deities.<sup>379</sup> The presence of such features clearly would have made it more expensive to commission. It too includes a hand-written table of contents at the end. Unfortunately, it appears that the colophon pages are missing. Even MS Tok 421 does not present a colophon. Another feature is that, on the first folio, the title *saptas[ic]atikā prajñāpāramitā* is found on the left margin, written vertically and rotated 90° clockwise.<sup>380</sup> This is in fact fairly typical in Nepalese MSS.

Generally speaking, all of these MSS are quite unassuming from the visual point of view, with Cambridge 1326 clearly representing a more high-end product. The fact that these MSS are in many ways 'humble' could imply their wider circulation among less wealthy strata of the population. This would also entail that PP spell scriptures could circulate outside the traditionally elitarian contexts. However, clearly one cannot simply infer the social status of commissioners on the basis of a MS's appearance. Wealthy patrons could commission a less decorated copy for domestic use, and a lavish copy could have been purchased collectively by a number of individuals. Here, colophon information has to be supplemented by ethnographical work. While a detailed study of modern and contemporary Newar practices of text worship could not be undertaken here, new research being currently carried out at the University of Toronto will open

---

<sup>379</sup> Visit [http://picservice.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/03\\_150219~UT-library\\_sanskrit\\_ms/MF14\\_51\\_001~MF14\\_51\\_001/?pageId=001](http://picservice.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/03_150219~UT-library_sanskrit_ms/MF14_51_001~MF14_51_001/?pageId=001) (accessed July 2019)

<sup>380</sup> This is also available online through the Tokyo library website mentioned above.

new perspectives on this front.<sup>381</sup> Furthermore, the forthcoming monograph on DSs by Gergely Hidas will certainly throw more light on these fascinating sources and their ritual backgrounds.

It should be pointed out that another typologically similar Nepalese DS has been made available online by the National Mission for Manuscripts, established by the Government of India in 2003.<sup>382</sup> While the colophon is again minimalistic, the accompanying table of contents list the PP works in opening position: the SaŚP, the PPH, the SvalP, and the ArdhaP occur as works number 2 to 5 respectively.<sup>383</sup>

Some preliminary editorial work on these important documents is offered in the *Appendices*.

### 2.4.3 Exploring a Microfiche Collection

The former Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions (IASWR) had published a collection of Buddhist MSS from Nepal in microfiche form.<sup>384</sup> After a

---

<sup>381</sup> I am referring to research by Alexander O’Neil, being carried out under the supervision of Prof. Emmrich, who himself has written on Prajñāpāramitā in the Nepalese MS context (see Emmrich 2009).

<sup>382</sup> A copy is available for download under the title *Dhāraṇīsamgraha* (Kṛtibodha Series 6). The codex is accompanied by an approximate transposition into modern *devanāgarī*.

<sup>383</sup> This starts on page 525 of the mentioned publication.

<sup>384</sup> I would like to thank Andrew Skilton for allowing me access to his private copy of this valuable collection.

quick glance at the catalogue published by the Institute,<sup>385</sup> it became clear that a number of DSs were also included.

The task of identifying a handful of PP works scattered among hundreds of *dhāraṇīs* is challenging and time consuming, particularly if the MSS are in microfiche format. Moreover, many of the images are legible only with much difficulty, if at all. Once again, the closing tables of contents are very helpful.<sup>386</sup>

The following represent some preliminary results.

The IASWR DSs show considerable variety in length and work selection. Often no PP work could be identified at all, although the PPH appears to be the single most-attested PP work in smaller collections.<sup>387</sup> This is also in line with information gained from the NGMCP catalogue.

Three larger MSS were identified as including other PP scriptures: MBB I 7, MBB II 172-183, and MBB III 53. Just like the DSs mentioned above, these three MSS contain the SaŚP as well. Useful, hand-written tables of contents are found at the end of these MSS.

---

<sup>385</sup> See Bajracharya 1975.

<sup>386</sup> Some of these tables of contents are written in the same script as the rest of MS and thus seem to be integral part the MS book itself. This fact could have some implication for the way these sources were used in actual practice, although at present I cannot offer further considerations on this.

<sup>387</sup> Apart from the specimens mentioned below, the PPH was found in MBB II-102, a smaller collections of spell-related works. The IASWR material illustrates how the *dhāraṇī* collections took a variety of shapes. As work on these collections progresses, it might be possible to identify a number of different typologies.

Manuscript MBB I 7, of ca. 360 folios spreading over 16 fiches, is visually very unassuming and does not appear to contain illuminations. All PP-related works identified are found at the beginning: the SaŚP and the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* open the MS, followed by one PP-*dhāraṇī*.<sup>388</sup> The colophon is short and is preceded by the common *ye dharma* formula. The date is given as a rather puzzling series of five digits: *saṃvat* 100(1)2.<sup>389</sup> This is perhaps a mistake for 1012, which would bring the date of the MS to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> C. The remaining part of the colophon gives the names of the people involved, apparently not touching upon issues of mundane or ‘supramundane’ benefits arising from copying or worshipping the MS.<sup>390</sup>

The next manuscript - MBB II 172-183 - is recorded in the title catalogue as “*Mahāyānasūtrasaṃgraha*”. However, this is in fact a repository of *dhāraṇīs* and a few PP *sūtras*. The MS contains about 270 folios spread over 16 fiches.<sup>391</sup> This time the SaŚP is found in second position,<sup>392</sup> followed not by the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* but by the SvalP. The MS also contains the PPH.<sup>393</sup>

---

<sup>388</sup> In the case of this MS, a table of contents is provided within the first microfiche. In this case however, the table is not integral part of the MS as seems to often be the case. Here, the table (written in contemporary, cursive Latin script) seems to have been prepared by the IASWR team itself.

<sup>389</sup> See MBB I 7 final folio (n.362), 5.

<sup>390</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>391</sup> This information is based on the catalogue produced by the IASWR in connection to the Buddhist MSS collection (Bajracharya 1975).

<sup>392</sup> Note that this MS is among those considered by Sato (2011) in his preliminary survey of SaŚP witnesses. A table of content written in the same hand as the rest of the MS can be found in the closing folios.

<sup>393</sup> This would be n. 73 in the closing table of content.

Unfortunately, the MS does not present a colophon other than a short auspicious formula.<sup>394</sup>

Manuscript MBB III 53 counts 314 folios. From the first glance, it appears different than the other two DSs from the IASWR, or indeed the Tokyo DSs. The reason is the inclusion of a large number of miniatures, which are nonetheless not as refined as those of Cambridge 1326. The selection and arrangement of PP works within this MS are remarkable. The SaŚP is found neither in opening nor closing position, but in the middle.<sup>395</sup> The first two PP works are not found in opening position but as works number 20 and 21. These are the SvalP and the ArdhaP respectively.<sup>396</sup> Unexpectedly, the MS also includes a text of the SaŚIP, which to the best of my knowledge was believed to have survived in Skt. only in MS CTRC 8. The full text of this elusive yet characteristic PP spell work can be found at folio 249. A diplomatic edition of this work can be found in the *Appendices*, supplemented by that of Komine *et al* 2015.

Generally speaking, on the basis of work selection it appears that this MS was somehow linked to an esoteric environment: most of the titles are in fact related to esoteric deities (see the *Appendices* for the list). The partly Newari colophon is fairly developed, mentioning a number of people (again Vajrācāryas), as well as a

---

<sup>394</sup> The folio number given on the right is 281.

<sup>395</sup> Here too one can use the closing table of contents, which is redacted in the same script as the rest of the MS. The folio numbering starts anew in the table, which means that from 314 the count restarts from 1. The SaŚP can be found on folio 2.

<sup>396</sup> There is also a PP-dhāraṇī mentioned on folio 1 of the table of contents. At present, it has not proved possible to determine which dhāraṇī this is. However, the present study does present an edition of one work from this MS, see the rest of this section.

date. The latter is unfortunately not fully legible, yet it seems to point at either the 18<sup>th</sup> or the 19<sup>th</sup> C.<sup>397</sup> Unfortunately, once again no indication regarding the religious significance or actual uses of the MS could be detected.

Surely the exploration of DSs has only begun. Yet one notices how a particular typology is fairly established, with PP works being systematically inserted, despite considerable differences in both work selection and positioning. For the present purposes, it is important to note that these MSS show PP scriptures being found side by side with *dhāraṇī* works. In terms of ritual use, while colophon evidence is not very extensive, some mundane benefits are mentioned on occasion, along with supramundane ones. Finally, some of these MSS show links with an esoteric environment. Such MSS can include a number of PP scriptures, and not necessarily only those incorporating spells.

As the relevant extant DSs are late compositions, at present the links that can be traced to Pāla Buddhism are only indirect.

## 2.5 A note on other Sources and Relevant Objects

In principle, the circulation of PP spells as well as the composition of extremely concise PP spell scriptures would have opened the door for a variety of practical uses and applications. Assuming an environment in which PP was integral part of

---

<sup>397</sup> For the date, which seems to be given in four numerals, see MBB III 53 folio 314v, 7.

The reason why I find the date difficult to read is that it appears to have been highlighted with an extra layer of ink.

Buddhist life and practice, one would expect these works to be attested on a variety of media, such as amulets, clay sealings, statues, steles, stūpas, golden foils with *dhāraṇīs*, depictions of *maṇḍalas* and *mudrās*, etc. Some such examples do exist, although in most cases they are linked to the most common PP works, which fall outside the Selected Sources. Nevertheless, it is crucial to keep such examples in mind, for they testify to specific uses of PP materials which could have serious implications for the present study.

Once again, evidence from the Indian subcontinent itself is not particularly abundant, with the partial exceptions of Sri Lanka. On the other hand, many of the Asian regions in which PP was worshipped preserve some fascinating examples.

As mentioned above, Gilgit sculptures of the 7<sup>th</sup> C mark the affirmation of PP as a deity. These are remarkable not only iconographically, for the book is depicted *open* in PP's hands, but also by virtue of the inscriptions they bear. Aside from the inscription indicating the donor, one finds that the book itself is inscribed with the homage formula *oṃ nama prajñāpāramitāyā . . .*<sup>398</sup> This is of course not a PP spell, although it is striking that one of the earliest representations of the deity also includes such a formulaic invocation.<sup>399</sup> It has not been possible so far to locate a PP spell inscribed on one of her statues. While most statues from

---

<sup>398</sup> See Hinüber 2007:39. What is given here as 'oṃ' is actually a spiral symbol.

<sup>399</sup> More on invocations and their links to spells will be said in Chapter 4 (opening section).

Eastern India are of course inscribed with the *ye dharma* formula, some do bear spells as well.<sup>400</sup>

Another important South-Asian phenomenon is the presence of PP texts inscribed on metal support from Sri Lanka. Some inscribed metal tablets were found near a stūpa.<sup>401</sup> Other texts, such as the *ye dharma* formula or certain *dhāraṇīs*, are commonly found in connection with stūpas.<sup>402</sup> However, it appears that PP was never fully integrated within such practices.

One might speculate that PP spells and spell scriptures could have been typologically suitable for practices of this kind. Yet In the case of Sri Lanka, it is fragments from the *Larger* PP which were found inscribed on tablets.<sup>403</sup> Statues from Japan apparently testify to the *Vajracchedikā* being inserted within stūpas, along with other objects.<sup>404</sup> *Dhāraṇī* inscriptions from Indonesia also include materials associated with the *Vajracchedikā*, rather than with any of the Selected Sources.<sup>405</sup>

---

<sup>400</sup> I am thinking of the Hilsa statue of Tārā mentioned in Sircar 1971: 98, which bears a short mantra embedded within the *oṃ* [...] *svāhā* formula.

<sup>401</sup> See Paranavitana 1933: 200 and Drewes 2007: 132.

<sup>402</sup> See the forthcoming volume on Bodhgayā by the British Museum (Willis *forthcoming*). This will also include a reprint of a previous contribution by Skilling on the *ye dharma* formula.

<sup>403</sup> See Paranavitana 1933: 200.

<sup>404</sup> See Bentor 1995: 255.

<sup>405</sup> See Griffiths 2014: 146.

On the line of the possible stūpa connection, some Chinese MSS from Dunhuang do depict the PPH in the shape of a stūpa.<sup>406</sup> This is a powerful visual elaboration of a concise sūtra, with the spell itself perhaps becoming the equivalent of the relic contained within the sūtra/stūpa. However, the actual symbolism of these MSS is not fully clear to me, and unfortunately no specimen including the Selected Sources has been brought to my attention.<sup>407</sup>

Another notable use of the PPH is its presence on some Chinese *dhāraṇī* pillars. The PPH's concise size allows for the carving of the whole sūtra on an object which appears to bear apotropaic ritual significance.<sup>408</sup> This is another example for the use of a concise PP spell scripture outside the more familiar context of manuscripts. However, the *dhāraṇī* pillars as such does not appear to be attested in South Asia.<sup>409</sup>

Clay sealings are fascinating objects which one might expect to incorporate PP spell materials. These sealings are often found within miniature stūpas. They often carry visual representations of the Buddha, along with the inscribed *ye*

---

<sup>406</sup> See Drége 2014: 287.

<sup>407</sup> Drége seems to stress their apotropaic significance, see *ibid.* Note that Paul Harrison presented on *Vajracchedikā* MSS shaped as pagodas at UKABS Annual Meeting 2018.

<sup>408</sup> Kuo 2014: 356 for an example of the PPH and p. 363 for the mention of some mundane purposes related to the erection of such pillars. The *Vajracchedikā* too seems to be attested on some pillars.

<sup>409</sup> However, *dhāraṇīs* are commonly found inscribed on stone and other hard materials, as explained above. One area of particular interest is that of the Karakorum highway. For an engraved Avalokiteśvara spell from that region see von Hinüber 1989: 94.

*dharmā* formula or a *dhāraṇī*.<sup>410</sup> It would have been perfectly possible to produce sealings depicting PP along with her spells, or even to dedicate an entire sealing to a short work such as the SaśīP or the EkaP, as is sometimes done in the case of other *dhāraṇī* works. At the beginning of this study, great hopes were kindled by Lawson's suggestion that some South Asian sealings did indeed contain a PP *dhāraṇī*.<sup>411</sup> It quickly became clear, however, that the *dhāraṇī* was nothing other than the *Bodhigarbhālaṃkāralakṣā dhāraṇī*.<sup>412</sup> Publications on clay sealings do suggest that PP was sometimes depicted in India, although it has not been possible to identify any specimens from the subcontinent which unmistakably depict this deity. On the other hand, there are a good number of Tibetan and Southeast Asian sealings which appear to in fact depict Prajñāpāramitā. On some Tibetan sealings, along with a depiction of the deity one also finds PP spells.<sup>413</sup> The famous spell of the PPH - *gate gate* etc. - is indeed attested on some of these sealings. Apparently there are even some sources in Tibetan that describe which PP spell is appropriate in this context.<sup>414</sup> However, the relatively numerous Southeast Asian clay sealings depicting PP unfortunately do not appear to bear PP spells.<sup>415</sup> Be that as it may, the Tibetan examples do prove that the stūpa-connection was an area of great potential for PP spell

---

<sup>410</sup> An important study of the sealings kept in British Museums is the 1982 thesis by Lawson. This can be consulted in the Bodleian Library. See also Skilling 2008.

<sup>411</sup> Lawson 1983:713f.

<sup>412</sup> See Schopen 2005 '*Bodhigarbhālaṃkāralakṣā and Vimaloṣṇīṣa Dhāraṇīs*' (p.314ff.).

<sup>413</sup> See the examples (with image reproductions) in Luczanits 2016 as well as those in Namgyal Lama 2014.

<sup>414</sup> See Namgyal Lama 2014: 22.

<sup>415</sup> For an example see Piriya 1980: 170 (Plate 46).

scriptures. For some reason, however, such connection was never fully developed, with preference being usually given to other deities, formulas, or spells.

On the other hand, larger use of PP spells was made in the esoteric context. There are a number of sketches of *maṇḍalas* and *mudrās* related to PP from Japan which do include such spells.<sup>416</sup> In some cases - such as in Lokesh Chandra's illustrations relating to the 12<sup>th</sup> C Japanese iconographic manual *Zuzōshō* (図像抄) - not only the *bīja* mantra, but entire PP spells are given.<sup>417</sup> These are typically given in *siddhamātrkā* script, along with instruction in Chinese, and Japanese transcriptions.

Overall, the mantras used in this context reflect those known from PP spell scriptures or works like the *Sādhanamālā*. However, the mere presence of PP spells does not translate to the actual spell scriptures also being worshipped or read. This refers to the fact that spells were often circulating on their own (see Chapter 4). Of course, some PP sūtras were indeed used within esoteric ritual contexts, although the evidence points at the most common shorter PPs as preferred specimens, rather than the more minimalistic Selected Sources (see chapter 5). The example usually given in this context is that of the AdhyP. In the Japanese Shingon tradition, the AdhyP claims a central position, being still recited today.<sup>418</sup> This is further example of how the shorter specimens of PP writing could indeed serve a variety of practical purposes: not only could they

---

<sup>416</sup> Lokesh Chandra 1999: 2666ff. (vol. 9).

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*: 2675.

<sup>418</sup> See Tomabechi 2009: xi.

potentially be inscribed on a variety of objects, but - like the AdhyP - they can be recited daily in their entirety.

## 2.6 Summary of Observations

In terms of transmission of PP spells and spell scriptures in Sanskrit, composite MSS occupy a prominent position. Two major types of collections are attested. In the first, PP spell scriptures are found along other sources belonging to what might be styled the PP 'genre'. In the other, PP spell scriptures are found along with *dhāraṇīs* and *dhāraṇīsūtras*. Most of the extant Skt. witnesses are in fact large DSs from Nepal, which include not only PP spell scriptures, but other kinds of PP works as well.

In terms of ritual use, the PP repository known as CTRC 8 is typologically similar to the lavish AS MSS from the Pāla period and probably served a similar purpose. This specimens also presents some esoteric depictions, although the MS as such cannot be identified as having being commissioned and worshipped within an esoteric Buddhist context.

As for the large DSs, mundane benefits arising from their commission are sometimes mentioned in the colophons. The less lavish appearance of such MSS might entail a wider circulation beyond elitist contexts. Most of these MSS include common *dhāraṇīs*, usually connected to the key Mahāyāna deities or

scriptures. Some specimens do show an esoteric link. Once again it is source selection and iconographic programs which betray such links.

The Selected Sources did not enjoy the wide transmission of the *Vajracchedikā*, the PPH or the AdhyP. Even potential practical uses made possible by the concise format and the presence of spells were not common in South Asia, at least according to the sources gathered during this study. However, the three major PP works just mentioned - as well as other PP works - do relate to some relevant practices like inscriptions on clay sealings, insertion within statues, inscription on pillars and metal foils, etc. A number of well-known PP spells do sometimes emerge in the esoteric context of descriptions of *maṇḍalas* and *mudrās*. This, however, does not entail use of PP spell scriptures in such contexts, although this cannot be entirely ruled out. Of course, it is also possible that relevant materials have simply been lost, and surely more objects will be identified if this research is carried forward in the future.

Now that the principal traits of the transmission of PP spell scriptures have been traced, it is time to turn to the actual texts, to see what further information about intended use, target demographics, and overall agendas can be found.

### 3. THE LEGACY OF EARLIER PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ SCRIPTURES

In general, the Selected Sources are classified in etic taxonomies as belonging to the diverse group of Prajñāpāramitā scriptures.<sup>419</sup> Of course, the many peculiarities of these sources - both on structural and phraseological levels - call for the use of further qualifications such as 'shorter PPs', 'later PPs', 'esoteric PPs', etc.<sup>420</sup> In this connection, the following question arises: are these works 'prajñāpāramitās' in name only - i.e. by virtue of their titles -, or are there any further detectable links with earlier PP writing? Answering this question would not only help propose better classifications, but could also throw light on the issue of the underlying agendas which motivated redactors to compile later PPs in the first place. What did PP mean to them? Was it akin to a 'prestigious brand' commanding authority and respect within certain circles? Did they aim at emphasising or 'updating' particular PP teachings in the wake of a changed cultural landscape? These are the aspects the present chapter aims to explore.

---

<sup>419</sup> This topic was treated in the *Introduction* (1.3.1).

<sup>420</sup> See the *Introduction* (1.3.3.5) for a reflection on the use of such labels as well as on the various taxonomies proposed by scholars.

### 3.1 Establishing the Link: Paratexts and Self-reference

First of all, it is necessary to have a fresh look at titles and self-referential passages.

From a certain period onwards Prajñāpāramitā scriptures were increasingly titled - and classified - in quantitative terms.<sup>421</sup> Such titles in Skt. usually consist of the term *prajñāpāramitā* and the approximate length of the scripture in units of thirty-two syllables, agreeing with it in the feminine. For example, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* PP stands for 'the PP [scriptural work] in eight thousand (units)'.<sup>422</sup>

Quantitative titles are significant in the present context, for they can potentially be used for legitimation purposes. That is to say, they can reinforce the idea that a given work is nothing but a shorter 'redaction' of an underlying, unitary PP

---

<sup>421</sup> The evidence I am aware of points at the 6th C in term of early attestation of this practice and comes from a certain Chinese text related to the translator Bodhiruci (on this see Zacchetti 2015: 176, who also refers to Funayama 2006: 48ff.). However, this might not be the only early example. While commentarial tradition on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* is usually associated with a later period, one should not forget that Ārya Vimuktisena might have lived as early as the 6th C (on this see the discussion in Ruegg 1968: 305ff.). He seems to actually have referred to the *Larger* PP as *pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* (see Pensa 1967: 15, 4) in his commentary, thus using a quantitative title. Such issues are also treated in some more detail in Zacchetti *forthcoming*.

Be that as it may, it is clear that quantitative titles were introduced in a period significantly earlier than that of the composition of the Selected Sources.

<sup>422</sup> See Zacchetti 2015: 176.

teaching. This could also be used to establish an indirect connection with the longer PP works.<sup>423</sup> In fact, there is a long-standing tradition of seeing PP scriptural development under the categories of 1) uniformity in content and 2) variation in format.<sup>424</sup> This of course removes, rather conveniently, the focus from innovative aspects as well as idiosyncrasies at the level of content that would make each individual work stand out. By contrast, it is a key tenet of the present study that PP should be seen as inherently dynamic on both the level of content as well as format. It is this ability to adapt and respond to various developments in the surrounding Buddhist culture that helped PP maintain an active role over about two millennia.<sup>425</sup>

Going back to the issue of quantitative titles, these are indeed attested in the present corpus, although not as commonly as one might expect. One should keep in mind that on occasion both a quantitative and a descriptive title are known for a single work.<sup>426</sup>

---

<sup>423</sup> One can perceive a similar attitude in Xuanzang's DB. There, various historically independent PP scriptures are conceptualised - and indeed edited - as "sessions" (會) or "sections" (分) of one single "text"/Sūtra.

<sup>424</sup> See Zacchetti 2015: 176.

<sup>425</sup> While the focus here is on scriptural production, one should also keep in mind that it is often specific actors - such as rulers, intellectuals, and ritual specialists - who resort to PP's prestigious name in order to develop their own personalised agendas. However, this is sometimes reflected within scriptural production itself. The following chapters will deal with a few remarkable cases.

<sup>426</sup> One example is the PPH, which is best known by the epithet of *hrdaya* 'heart', although in the MSS presented in the previous chapter it is regularly referred to as *pañcaviṃśatiprajñāpāramitā* 'the PP in 25 units'.

The ArdhaP is referred to in paratexts<sup>427</sup> mainly in quantitative terms. This work is a collection of stock passages from longer PP scriptures, as already pointed out by Conze (see *Introduction*). There is some variation in the ArdhaP's titles, but a quantity of fifty *ślokas* is given on a regular basis e.g. *Ardhaśatikā* PP 'the PP in 50 (units)'

Chinese titles of the Selected Sources are in general quite likely to add the term *dhāraṇī*, but in the case of the ArdhaP this qualification is absent.<sup>428</sup> This seems quite in line with the fact that the sūtra does not actually include *dhāraṇīs*. However, some Nepalese manuscripts do in fact record the term *dhāraṇī* as part of the ArdhaP's title.

The MS edited by Shakya ends with *advayaśatikā prajñāpāramitā dhāraṇīsūtra*[sic] *samāptā*.<sup>429</sup> The internal colophon of MBB III 53 also records

---

<sup>427</sup> I use the term 'paratext' in a slightly intuitive way to indicate what is not part of the narrative/discursive bulk of a sūtra, e.g. a title as given in the colophon section. While its use in this thesis is less technical, the term has received significant attention in textual studies, and I have come across a number of contributions on Buddhism in which serious attempts are made at understanding Genette's thoughts on paratexts and related categories. For example, Genette's ideas were used by Lehnert for framing a discussion on PP textuality (1999: 18).

<sup>428</sup> The title reads *Fo shuo wushi song banre boluomi jing* 佛說五十頌聖般若波羅蜜經 'The Scripture spoken by the Buddha of the Noble Prajñāpāramitā in 50 units' (T248), which roughly corresponds to the Skt. quantitative one.

<sup>429</sup> See Shakya's edition of 1988. There is also a digital version provided by the publishers of *Buddhist Himalaya* on <http://nibs.com.np/vol-1-no-2-1998/> (accessed April 2019, three pages).

*advayaśatī[sic]kā prajñāpāramitādhāraṇī*.<sup>430</sup> The modification of the title from *ardha-* to *advaya-* might perhaps be rooted in the similarity of the relevant conjunct characters in some kinds of Indic script. This, however, is not entirely clear.

Given that the ArdhaP is called *dhāraṇī(sūtra)* only within DSs, this could be an example of a scriptural title being adapted to fit the typology of the collection a work is inserted in.<sup>431</sup> Again, one should point out that the ArdhaP does not actually contain any spells and this also applies to its text as recorded in a later witness such as MBB III 53.

In terms of self-reference, the ArdhaP refers to itself as *imāṃ gambhīrāṃ prajñāpāramitāṃ* ‘this profound PP’ as part of a typical formula exhorting the study of the text.<sup>432</sup> In conclusion, apart from the appearance of the term *dhāraṇī* in later DSs, titles and self-references of the ArdhaP do establish a link with the PP scriptural tradition.

---

<sup>430</sup> See MBB III 53, folio 16, 2. A MS of the Tokyo collection reads *āryabhāgavati[sic] advayaśatikāprajñāpāramitā parisamāptā* (see Matsunami 1965: 187 and Conze 1978: 66). It is unclear how many MS witnesses carry such title, but they appear to be relatively numerous.

<sup>431</sup> On these collections see the previous chapter.

<sup>432</sup> See Cambridge 1326, folio 40r, 4. More on this formula will be said below. See for example Kimura 1986 (II, III): 54 for a similar expression in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* PP and Mitra 1888: 176 (line 3 from the bottom) for the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* PP. The use of formulas so well attested in PP literature in a work like the ArdhaP probably does signal some kind of underlying unity.

Another specimen from the corpus which is titled in quantitative terms is the SaŚIP. The title gives the measure of seven ślokas (*saptaśloḱikā*). This appears to represent an approximate number of syllables rather than an actual prosodic structure.

Manuscript CTRC 8 gives the internal colophon *saptaśloḱikā bhagavatī āryyaprajñāpāramitā*.<sup>433</sup> The Tibetan versions seem to mostly follow the same pattern, although the term *sūtra* is also added (*mdo*).<sup>434</sup> This is despite the fact that the SaŚIP does not include any *sūtra* frame-narrative. As pointed out above, this is an extremely concise work formed by a few opening invocations followed by a *dhāraṇī*-unit giving the spell and dealing briefly with aspects of its practice. In general, it is fascinating to see how a highly innovative work in the PP context, both in terms of format and content, can actually be styled simply ‘the PP *sūtra* in seven ślokas’.

In terms of self-reference, one should note that the term *mahāprajñāpāramitā* is present within the SaŚIP’s only spell. A chain of feminine vocatives also appears to refer to the deity, although she is not directly mentioned.<sup>435</sup>

Another example of quantitative titles is that of the EkaP, attested only in MS CTRC 8. This work is highly innovative in terms of format within the PP genre, being constituted just by a few invocations and a single stanza. The colophon

---

<sup>433</sup> This is folio 1b5. See Tomabechi 2009: xxx.

<sup>434</sup> See for example the title in Q5907 *ngo mtshar bstan bcos*, po 348b1 (vol.149, p.159).

<sup>435</sup> However, a *buddhamāte* ‘i.e. mother of Buddhas’ is indeed mentioned. See Komine et al. 2015: 108, 6.

reads *ity ekaśloḱikā bhagavatī prajñāpāramitā samāptā*.<sup>436</sup> Self-reference is not explicit, although the stanza is the one also found in the *Vajracchedikā*.<sup>437</sup> The EkaP is preceded by a stanza which seems to serve the function of a ‘prologue’ to the entire MS. This is the statement ending with [...] *prajñāpāramitām jinasya janānīm śṛṇvantu bodhyarthinaḥ* ‘Let those who seek awakening listen to the Prajñāpāramitā, mother of the Jina, [...]’.<sup>438</sup> Thus, in this case too, paratexts and self-references do provide a certain link with PP, despite the significant innovations in format.

Titles can also be of a more descriptive kind. In the case of the PNA, the title refers to the content of the work itself, by indicating that it includes the 108 names of PP: *\*prajñāpāramitānāmāṣṭasāṭaka*.<sup>439</sup> The list of names represents only part of the contents of the work, which goes on to include a spell-unit and a closing statement on ritual benefits. The PNA titles appear to be quite stable in the Tibetan tradition, on which the Skt. reconstruction is based.<sup>440</sup> On occasion, Tibetan titles make reference to the fact that the PNA includes a spell.<sup>441</sup> This

---

<sup>436</sup> CTRC 8 folio 1b5. See Tomabeche 2009: xxx.

<sup>437</sup> This is the famous stanza *tāṛakā timiraṃ dīpaḥ* [...], which starts at CTRC 8, folio 1b3. For the stanza in the Gilgit MS of the *Vajracchedikā*, see Schopen’s 1989 edition. Note that the MS was first edited by Chakravarti in Tucci 1956 and by Dutt (1959).

<sup>438</sup> See CTRC 8 folio 1b2.

<sup>439</sup> This is how Komine et al. record the title (2015: 110). Conze instead reconstructed *prajñāpāramitā nāmāṣṭasāṭakā* (Conze 1978: 84).

<sup>440</sup> See for example Q172 rgyud, pa 16b7 (vol. 6, p.278) *’phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i mtshan brgya rtsa brgyad pa zhes bya ba*.

<sup>441</sup> This is found for example in the Phugbrag canon, which adds *gzungs sngags bcas pa* ‘together with *dhāraṇīs* and mantras’ in the colophon (F22 sna tshogs, ka 285b5 (vol. 42)).

brings the descriptive character of the title even further. It is immediately clear to the reader that this is not just another PP work, but something that might not actually belong to the *sūtra* class. Notice that the SaŚIP is an equally unlikely candidate for the classification as ‘*sūtra*’. Nevertheless, some Tibetan titles do refer to it as *mdo*.

More remarkable is the Chinese title of the PNA, which runs *Sheng baqian song banre boluomiduo yibaiba ming zhenshi yuanyi tuoluoni jing* 聖八千頌般若波羅蜜多一百八名真實圓義陀羅尼經 (T230).<sup>442</sup> Apart from labelling the work *dhāraṇīsūtra*, the title establishes a connection with the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* PP, which perhaps indicates that the AS was considered the ‘fundamental’ PP, by the time of the composition of the PNA. This is, however, slightly puzzling since the Chinese version of the PNA does not seem to mention this work within its text. However, the Tibetan version does state at one place that by virtue of the PNA’s spell, one will retain in memory the entire *Śatasāhasrikā* PP.<sup>443</sup> This passage, as well as the one on the benefits of reciting the PNA, will be presented in their entirety in the next chapter.

---

It is not uncommon to find rather significant idiosyncrasies in this canon. On the classification of this canon within the stemma, see Lainé 2009: 15ff.

<sup>442</sup> See the relevant section in the *Introduction* for more background information. One might tentatively render the title as ‘The Dhāraṇī Scripture of True and Complete Meaning and the 108 Names of the Noble Aṣṭasāhasrikā PP’.

<sup>443</sup> See Conze 1993: 198.

In term of self-referential statements, the PNA calls itself *prajñāpāramitā*, as per the passage “if someone learns this perfection of wisdom, etc.”.<sup>444</sup> The reference to the *Śatasāhasrikā* could also be taken as a passage establishing the links with PP, and so does the fact that the 108 names are clearly identified as referring to the deity.<sup>445</sup>

Moving on, the title of the SvalP literally means ‘the PP in a few syllables (*svalpākṣarā*)’. This could be seen as a non-quantitative descriptive title, stressing the conciseness of the composition, instead of providing an approximation of its length. Unfortunately, early MS witnesses do not seem to provide much additional information. The edition of Conze (1956) - based on an early MS from Kolkata which could not be inspected during this study - does not appear to report a colophon.<sup>446</sup> As already mentioned above, in MS CTRC 8 the internal colophon of the SvalP gives the title as *ardhaśatikā*. There is no other indication at this stage that a measure of 50 *ślokas* was ever used to refer to the SvalP in quantitative terms. This is why at this stage I would lean towards considering this title a mistaken reference to the ArdhaP.<sup>447</sup>

Leaving aside these Pāla MS sources, one can look at the information found in Yuyama’s edition. Here, *svalpākṣarā prajñāpāramitā* seems to be the established

---

<sup>444</sup> See *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'di 'dzin na* [...] in Q172 rgyud, pa 18b1 (vol. 6, p.279).

<sup>445</sup> See *ibid.* for the reference to the *Śatasāhasrikā* PP (*'bum*). For a statement indicating that the names listed actually refer to Prajñāpāramitā see *ibid.* 18b4.

<sup>446</sup> A brief description of the incomplete MS is found in Conze 1956: 112.

<sup>447</sup> See Tomabechi 2009: xxxi.

title.<sup>448</sup> Yuyama rightly reports that MSS from the Tokyo collections sometimes add *dhāraṇīsūtra* and even *śatanāmadhāraṇī*.<sup>449</sup> These MSS are all *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas*. Once again, one should stress the fact that the Selected Sources are sometimes labelled *dhāraṇīsūtras* even in the South Asian tradition, and not only in the Chinese one. This is probably due to the typology of composite MS they are inserted in.

Tibetan titles of the SvalP are very regular and in line with the Sanskrit, although they do sometimes add '*mahāyānasūtra*'.<sup>450</sup> The Chinese title is *Fo shuo sheng fomu xiao zi banruoboluomiduo jing* 佛說聖佛母小字般若波羅蜜多經 (T258) 'The Scripture spoken by the Buddha of the noble Buddha Mother Prajñāpāramitā in a Few Words'.<sup>451</sup> One should notice here the expression mother of the Buddha (*fomu* 佛母), which is typical of titles of PP works translated under the Song dynasty and could betray a renewed emphasis on this notion in the context of later Buddhist practices (more about this will be said in Chapter 5). Apart from this, the title seems to be a calk of '*svalpākṣarā prajñāpāramitā*'.

Thus, it would at first seem that the characterisation of the SvalP as a *dhāraṇīsūtra* represents a later development within the Nepalese tradition. However, internal self-referential passages bring this into question. In Skt., such passages report the term *svalpākṣarā*, e.g. in *kena kāraṇena bhagavan iyaṃ*

---

<sup>448</sup> See Yuyama 1977: 292 (note 122).

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>450</sup> See Yuyama 1977: 293,3.

<sup>451</sup> See the relevant section in the *Introduction*.

*svalpākṣarā prajñāpāramitā*?<sup>452</sup> ‘For what reason is this (called) the PP *in a few syllables*?’ But, as noted by Yuyama, the Chinese text here systematically reads the equivalent of \**prajñāpāramitādhāraṇī* in place of *svalpākṣarā*.<sup>453</sup> Thus, in the Chinese version the SvalP refers to itself as a *dhāraṇīsūtra*, which is perhaps more remarkable than mere changes in titles. One wonders whether this is an idiosyncrasy of the Chinese translation or the faithful rendering of a seemingly lost Skt. witness. Whatever the case, this is a practical example for the usefulness of comparing the various versions of these works across multiple languages.

Another kind of descriptive title is that which identifies the main narrative character within a given work. Thus, the KauP bears its title by virtue of Kauśika (i.e. Indra) being the Buddha’s main interlocutor.<sup>454</sup> This seems to be mirrored by both Tibetan and Chinese traditions, with quantitative titles of the KauP apparently not being recorded.

Given the paucity of Skt. sources of the KauP, one cannot say if the term *dhāraṇī* was eventually inserted in the title. It is not found in the colophon of IOL Khot S3.<sup>455</sup> The Tibetan tradition does not seem to provide evidence for this either. However, the Chinese title *Fo shuo Dishi banreboluomiduo xin jing* 佛說帝釋般

---

<sup>452</sup> See Yuyama 1977: 287 (section VIa).

<sup>453</sup> Yuyama 1977: 291 (note 103), e.g. 何故復說此般若波羅蜜多陀羅尼 (T08n0258p0853c14) ‘For what reason one calls this Prajñāpāramitā *dhāraṇī*?’.

<sup>454</sup> See the colophon of the Central Asian ms reported in Conze 1956: 118. Kauśika is also featured in the AS and the *Larger PP*.

<sup>455</sup> See *ibid*.

若波羅蜜多心經 ‘The Scripture Spoken by the Buddha [called] Heart of the Indra Prajñāpāramitā’ does include the expression *xinjing* (心經), which, as some scholars argue, might actually be related to the expression *dhāraṇīsūtra*.<sup>456</sup> Alternatively, one could think of the more common meaning of *xin* 心 as heart or ‘essence’.<sup>457</sup> In this sense, the KauP might be presenting itself as an alternative to the PPH. One should not forget that the KauP does include the same spell as that found in the PPH, among many other structural similarities.<sup>458</sup>

The same kind of title is found in the scriptures of the so-called Candragarbhā group. Again, each of these five works is titled according to one of the main characters of the narration. Only Tibetan witnesses are available here. Sometimes, these works are styled *sūtras* (*mdo*) or *mahāyānasūtras* (*mdo theg pa chen po*).<sup>459</sup> The fact that some of these works centre around spells does not seem to transpire from the titles. There are a few self-referential passages, all of which include the term *prajñāpāramitā*.<sup>460</sup>

---

<sup>456</sup> Nattier 1992: 175 has a few comments on this, quoting Fukui’s work (1987: 201ff.). See also her unpublished response to Fukui’s criticism (1995).

<sup>457</sup> On this one could consult Lopez 1988: 30, as well as McRae 1988: 90. On the meaning of ‘essence’, Zacchetti once suggested me to consider a passage from Kuiji (窺基)’s relatively early commentary on the PPH: 探廣文之祕旨，標貞心以為稱。 (T33n1710p524a29-b1) “[this scripture] explores the secret meaning of the extended text [of the PP] and makes its essence (貞心) known, being named after it” (trans. by Zacchetti). He also mentioned that *zhenxin* 貞心 refers to the unchanging nature of something/someone (personal communication July 2019).

<sup>458</sup> On the circulation of this important spell see Nattier 1992: 211 (notes 52 and 53).

<sup>459</sup> See for example Q743 sher phyin, tsi 180a8 (vol. 21, p.258).

<sup>460</sup> See for example the passage from the SūrP in Conze 1993: 149, 16.

Both the KauP as well as the Candragarbha group are - being fully-fledged sūtras - fairly conservative when compared to minimalist spell works like the SaŚIP or the PNA. One could speculate that for this reason titles based on characters did not appear to undermine the legitimacy of these works in terms of belonging to the PP tradition. In contrast, a work like the SaŚIP might have been made more acceptable once clad in a quantitative title. However, the character of Indra/Śakra did play a role in both the AS and the *Larger* PP, and is thus not entirely foreign to this scriptural genre.<sup>461</sup> In the Candragarbha group, the interlocutors are Bodhisattvas \*Sūryaprabhāsa, \*Candragarbha, \*Samantabhadra, \*Vajrapāṇi, and \*Vajraketu. I have not been able to trace the five bodhisattvas as a group anywhere else during this study and thus the significance of their appearing in a PP context is not fully understood. However, this seems to represent an innovation in character selection when compared to earlier PP writing.

Moving on to the BM, one is witnessing a strategy which is only partially similar. The Bodhisattva Prajñāpāramitā is not the main character of a sūtra-like narration, but she is the main focus of the visualisation practice set out by the work. The title reads *Fo shuo guanxiang fomu banre boluomiduo pusa jing* 佛說觀想佛母般若波羅蜜多菩薩經 (T259) which might be rendered as 'The Scripture spoken by the Buddha on the Visualisation of Bodhisattva Prajñāpāramitā Mother of the Buddhas'.<sup>462</sup> There is no sūtra frame-story in the

---

<sup>461</sup> For one of his appearances in the *Larger* PP see Kimura 1992: 22 (V).

<sup>462</sup> For a German rendering of the title see Lehnert 1999: 63.

BM, which was actually classified by Conze as a ritual work. Notice once again the expression *fomu* (佛母), also encountered in the SvalP's Chinese title.

In conclusion, there is not a single system underlying the titles of the Selected Sources. The typical quantitative system, which would have been advantageous in terms of legitimation, is used only in some cases. Furthermore, it is generally unclear when and where some of these works started being called *dhāraṇīsūtras*. In most cases this seems to reflect either a Chinese or later Nepalese usage.

In general, the link with PP scriptures is made explicit in the title itself. This phenomenon is already attested in Pāla manuscripts. Self-referential passages too, when present at all, seem to systematically refer to PP. Despite some peculiar developments, it was to be expected that these materials would establish such link. It is only by looking for further evidence that one will be able to answer the question of whether these scriptures are in fact '*prajñāpāramitās*' only in name.

## **3.2 Internal Labels and Text-reuse**

### **3.2.1 The term '*prajñāpāramitā*'**

The term *prajñāpāramitā* is commonly found in the Selected Sources and not only in self-referential passages. This is a first indication that the links with the PP scriptural tradition may run deeper than a work's mere internal or external labels. Sections 3.2 and 3.3 will be dedicated to exploring such links in more detail. First,

it might be useful to list the various contexts in which the term *prajñāpāramitā* is found. This will also remind the reader of the rich semantic range of the term.

Some works of the Candragarbha group contain the term as part of short discursive elaborations which touch upon doctrinal aspects of PP.<sup>463</sup> This is perhaps the kind of link with traditional PP writing the average reader would expect. It is important to note that discursive teachings are not fully lost with the rise of PP spell scriptures. One could think of the well-known elaborations on *śūnyatā* of the PPH, although in that case the teaching section is actually an extract from the *Larger PP*, rather than an original reformulation.

Apart from a few discursive sections, one also finds the term *prajñāpāramitā* used to mark the transition between structural units. In the KauP, at least two sections are introduced by the formula *ayaṃ kauśika prajñāpāramitāyāḥ arthaḥ* ‘this, Kauśika, is the meaning of PP’,<sup>464</sup> while a closing statement reads *ayam ucyate samkṣiptena prajñāpāramiteti* ‘this is called the PP in concise form’.<sup>465</sup>

Also, in both the KauP and the CandP one notices a fairly long formulaic section in which the term *prajñāpāramitā* is repeated within the structure ‘ablative term + *prajñāpāramitā* + adj. in the nominative functioning as predicate’ (e.g. *sarvadharmānirodhatvāt prajñāpāramitā anirodhā* ‘because of the non-cessation

---

<sup>463</sup> See for example the translated passage of the SūrP (in Conze 1993: 149,2 and 4), VajrakP (153, 3).

<sup>464</sup> See Conze 1956: 115 (I) and 116 (II).

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.* p.117 (end of IV).

of all *dharmas*, PP is without cessation’).<sup>466</sup> Similar formulaic and repetitive expressions are not foreign to earlier PP literature.<sup>467</sup>

In the spell section of the KauP the term is used with reference to the deity Prajñāpāramitā. It is again used as a structural unit, this time as part of the invocation (*namo prajñāpāramitāyai*) preceding each spell.<sup>468</sup> In works which lack the sūtra frame-narrative, such as the EkaP and the SaśIP, one again finds the term as part of invocations or spells with reference to the deity.<sup>469</sup>

The PNA is of course concerned with enumerating the names of PP, but the term PP also occurs in the opening stanza.<sup>470</sup> The BM, as already mentioned, refers to PP Bodhisattva (佛母般若波羅蜜多菩薩), the ‘mother of Buddhas’ who is the main focus of its visualisation practice.<sup>471</sup>

In the SvalP the term *prajñāpāramitā* seems to be used exclusively in a self-referential way to denote either the work, its teachings, or its spells. For example, as noted above some passages refer to the work as *prajñāpāramitā svalpākṣarā* or simply as *prajñāpāramitā*. Interestingly, one of the spells is

---

<sup>466</sup> See Conze 1956: 116 (II) and Conze 1993: 150 (last paragraph). The latter corresponds to the passage found on folio 181a (Peking p.258).

<sup>467</sup> See for example the relevant section at Kimura 1992 (V): 79.

<sup>468</sup> See Conze 1956: 117f. (IX forward).

<sup>469</sup> See CTCR 8 1b3 and 2a3 respectively.

<sup>470</sup> This opening stanza is also found in the Chinese translation (T08n0230p0684c08) There is also a reference to the *Śatasāhasrikā* PP as mentioned above.

<sup>471</sup> See T08n0259p0854a14.

introduced as *prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*.<sup>472</sup> While one can think of a connection with the PPH - as was the case with the KauP - one should again bear in mind that the term *hṛdaya* is used rather commonly to refer to spells.<sup>473</sup>

Thus, the term *prajñāpāramitā* is integrated within most of the Selected Sources. However, one notices the polysemic character of the term. While it can refer to a 'teaching' in the discursive section of some sūtra works, the deity comes to the foreground in the practice-oriented and spell-centred works. The SvalP is rather peculiar in its use of the term, which is mostly self-referential.

### 3.2.2 Common Lists and Verses

The core text of the best-known PP spell scripture, the PPH, mainly consists of an extract from the *Larger* PP, as pointed out above. One would therefore expect to trace a similar phenomenon in at least some of the Selected Sources.<sup>474</sup>

The Selected Sources certainly do incorporate a large amount of textual materials which are rather typical of earlier Mahāyāna writing at large. While this

---

<sup>472</sup> See Yuyama 1977: 287 (Vb). The Chinese instead simply has the equivalent of the term mantra (T08n0258p0853b05).

<sup>473</sup> Refer to the consideration made above regarding the corresponding Chinese term *xin* 心 (3.1).

<sup>474</sup> The phenomenon of intertextuality is a very important topic in the study of Mahāyāna sūtra literature. However, sometimes such phenomenon is overlooked. For a brief discussion see Harrison 2018: 15f.

can be methodologically rather challenging, it is sometimes possible to argue for a special link with PP sources.

In fact, Conze had already made considerable progress in the identification of potentially extracted units, identifying the ArdhaP and the KauP as being largely compilations of stock materials. He also identified possible sources such as the AS, the *Larger* PP, and even shorter sūtras like the *Suvikrāntavikrāmipariṛcchā* PP.<sup>475</sup> Examples of stock materials would include: 1) the 18 different kinds of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), which are found in both the ArdhaP and the KauP<sup>476</sup>; 2) the list of ‘wholesome dharmas’ of the ArdhaP<sup>477</sup>; and 3) the list of perfections (*pāramitās*).<sup>478</sup> While these are in fact very common in Buddhist writing, perhaps the list of ‘emptiness-kinds’ might signal links with PP writing in particular (see the note above, referring to a passage from the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* PP).

Formulaic sections like those describing the nature of PP found in the KauP and the CandP are, according to Conze, reminiscent of certain parts of the AS, such as the *dharmadeśanā* of Dharmodgata (section XXXI).<sup>479</sup> In terms of stanzas, the KauP includes one also found in the *Vajracchedikā* as well as one from the

---

<sup>475</sup> See Conze 1978: 67 and 83 for the list.

<sup>476</sup> See the passages starting at Cambridge 1326, folio 39v3 and Conze 1956: 116f. (section IV). For the relevant *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* passage see Kimura 2007 (I-1): 33.

<sup>477</sup> See Cambridge 1326, folio 39v5 for the common list starting with *catvāri smṛtyupasthanāni* etc. Also see the *Appendices* for a collation of witnesses on this passage. For one of the many relevant passages from the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* see Kimura 2007 (I-1): 29.

<sup>478</sup> See Cambridge 136, folio 39v2. These are of course the perfection of giving (*dānapāramitā*), etc.

<sup>479</sup> See Conze 1978: 83. This would correspond to the section starting at Mitra 1888: 512.

*Madhyamakakārikā*.<sup>480</sup> Interestingly, the same stanza from the *Vajracchedikā* is also found in the EkaP.<sup>481</sup>

Lists and verses of these kinds are numerous and identifiable with relative ease. Nonetheless, one again should be careful when attempting to point out a particular source. As with spells, such elements are likely to circulate and be memorised individually, and it becomes challenging to reconstruct dynamics of insertion and extraction with respect to larger sūtras. However, in the present context it is often possible to assume a special link with earlier PP scriptures, accepting many of Conze's proposed correspondences.

In the course of this study, it quickly emerged that the presence of stock-materials such as lists and verses is indeed a key feature of later PP writing. In fact, PP spell scriptures are largely defined by a preference towards assembling short, semi-independent text units (lists, verses, epithets, spells, etc.), many of which are also attested elsewhere. This is in contrast with the sustained discussions on issues like the nature of *dharmas* etc, familiar from earlier PP writing. As will be shown below, even a Gupta-period shorter PP like the SaśP still placed emphasis on discursive elaborations,<sup>482</sup> *niruktis*, paradoxical statements, etc. In contrast, it would appear that style of PP writing is no longer characteristic of this later phase, at least as reflected by my Selected Sources.

---

<sup>480</sup> These are found at Conze 1956: 117 (sections V-VII).

<sup>481</sup> See CTCR 8, folio 1b2-1b4.

<sup>482</sup> In terms of discursive elaborations, one could also think of the perhaps contemporary *Pañcaśatikā* PP (Li and Fujita 2016), which in fact also presents an up to date doctrinal focus. More on this work will be said in Chapter 6.2.

One should also note that while spell-centred works like the SaŚIP or the BM might not rely on the insertion of lists and stanzas, their spells and ritual descriptions do point at a vast web of interrelated scriptural writing. However, even there, it is possible to identify a certain group of spells which are typically linked to PP. This topic will be taken up in the next chapter.

### 3.2.3 Phraseology

Apart from virtually self-standing elements like lists, verses and stanzas, indirect reference to early PP works or traditional Mahāyāna sūtra writing can also take the form of certain phraseological choices and discursive styles. Clearly, however, tracing such passages to any particular source is highly problematic.

This phenomenon does not appear to be well attested in spell-centred or visualisation-based works like the SaŚIP, the EkaP, the BM or the PNA, which are even less discourse-oriented. Once again, it is works like those of the Candragarbha group, the ArdhaP, or even the KauP which seem to develop this aspect to some degree. Note, again, that these are all fully-fledged sūtras.

For example, one cannot fail to notice the recurring question ‘how is a Bodhisattva to train in the Perfection of Insight?’ within the Candragarbha group.<sup>483</sup> References to training (*śikṣā*) in PP are of course encountered regularly

---

<sup>483</sup> See Conze 1993: 148, 12; 149,2; 150,2; 152,12, etc. (line numbers not including titles and subtitles).

in early PP literature.<sup>484</sup> The way *dharmas* are treated in this group of texts is quite reminiscent of typical PP discourse aiming at avoiding conceptual hypostatisation.<sup>485</sup> This kind of discourse - which is meant to embrace all aspects of the Bodhisattva practice - is otherwise virtually absent in the Selected Sources. More relevant for the present purposes is the fact that in the ArdhaP, some passages adopt the typical phraseology found in Mahāyāna works (and PP ones in particular). For example, one encounters classic statements like:

*yaḥ kaścit*<sup>486</sup> *subhūte śrāvakabhūmāv api śikṣitukāmena, pratyekabuddhabhūmāv api śikṣitukāmena bodhisattvabhūmāv api śikṣi*<sup>487</sup> *tukāmena buddhabhūmāv api śikṣitukāmena [-] iyam eva prajñāpāramitā śrotavyā,*<sup>488</sup> *udgrahītavyā, dhārayitavyā, vācayitavyā, paryavāptavyā* | (Cambridge MS 1362, folio 38v 4-6)

‘Anyone wishing to train on the stages of a *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, *bodhisattva* or *buddha* should listen to this very Prajñāpāramitā, take it up, memorise it, recite it, and master it’.

---

<sup>484</sup> This notion is already expressed clearly in the very first chapter of the AS. See e.g. the typical expression at Mitra 1888: 14,13.

<sup>485</sup> This typically takes the form of short elaborations on the emptiness of *dharmas* (see the passages translated at Conze 1993: 149 and 153 in particular).

<sup>486</sup> Here one would expect an instrumental agreeing with *śikṣitukāmena*. See Edgerton 1985: 43 for what seem to be some potentially related examples.

<sup>487</sup> The MS actually reads *kṣi-śi*, with the numbers 2 and 1 being added on top of each syllable to indicate the right order of reading.

<sup>488</sup> The MS actually has comma-like punctuation marks here (and *passim*). On these terms see the recent contributions by Drewes (2011, 2015).

Also relevant are expressions such as *duradhimucyā prajñāpāramitā anabhiyuktena*<sup>489</sup> ‘It is hard to be focused<sup>490</sup> on the PP for the one who is not fully dedicated’, *duravagāhā vateyaṃ prajñāpāramitā* ‘Unfathomable, alas, is this PP’<sup>491</sup> or even *ihaiva prajñāpāramitāyām upāyakaśālyasamanvāgatena, bodhisatvena mahāsatvena, sarvadharmā[sic]samudāgamāya, yogaḥ karaṇīya[+ḥ]*<sup>492</sup> ‘A Bodhisattva Mahāsattva, endowed with skill in means, should exert himself in this Perfection of Insight for the attainment of all *dharma*s’.<sup>493</sup> These passages immediately remind one of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* PP, although it might not be possible to speak of actual quotations as much as of phraseological ‘alignment’.<sup>494</sup>

---

<sup>489</sup> See Cambridge MS 1326, folio 40v4.

<sup>490</sup> Perhaps more commonly, one finds the expression *duradhimoca* (see Edgerton 1993: 266). Mine here is a tentative rendering of the term. Such terms have a very rich and nuanced semantic background, which partially escapes me. On this term one could consult: Vetter 1993:72f., where *adhimucyamāna* is rendered as “concentrating”; the Pāli dictionary entry under *adhimuccati* (Cone 2001: 93), which mentions “inclines to”, “believes”, “concentrates on”; as well as Conze 1973 (*Materials for a Dictionary of the Prajñāpāramitā Literature*), where the meaning is i.a. rendered as “resolutely intent on” (p.16).

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.* line 3.

<sup>492</sup> The passage ends on folio 39r 1.

<sup>493</sup> I take *sarvadharmā* in compound with the following term, after emending to a short vowel. This is partially encouraged by the fact that two other MS witnesses consulted have a short ‘a’ here (see the *Appendices* for a collation). However, one could also imagine a perhaps counterintuitive *asamudāgamāya*, i.e. a ‘non-attainment’.

<sup>494</sup> For the passage including *duradhimocā* see Mitra 1888: 185,1. For a passage including *duravagāhā* see Mitra 1888: 212,5. For a parallel passage including *yogaḥ karaṇīyaḥ* see Mitra 1888: 7,5.

Another work which shows some traces of traditional phraseology is the SvalP, particularly in the narrative sections.<sup>495</sup> Instead, in the case of the KauP, this phenomenon is hardly noticeable, for the work is a compilation of stock lists and lacks discursive sections almost entirely.

One should note that the notion of emptiness is not particularly emphasised in the Selected Sources. The list of different kinds of emptiness occurs in two works, i.e. the KauP and the ArdhaP.<sup>496</sup> However, in both cases there is no discursive section that would further emphasise the centrality of this notion.<sup>497</sup>

### **3.2.4 A note on sūtra frame-narratives**

Another key feature of the fully-fledged sūtras within the Selected Sources is the presence of narrative elements. Such narratives can potentially be used to set links with traditional writing or, alternatively, to mark points of departure.

The ArdhaP is presented as a dialogue between the Buddha and Subhūti, the latter being a regular presence in PP sūtras.<sup>498</sup> The initial and closing descriptions of the audience do not present any peculiarity, thus contributing to the overall conservative character of the ArdhaP. In terms of legitimation, having the Buddha reveal the sūtra can potentially help stress the authenticity of the

---

<sup>495</sup> The passage on the prediction of Buddhahood at Yuyama 1977: 287 (Ve) is essentially the same formula found i.a. in the AS (Mitra 1888: 48, 12ff.).

<sup>496</sup> See the passages starting at Cambridge 1326, folio 39v3 and Conze 1956: 116f. (section IV).

<sup>497</sup> See Conze 1993: 149 and 153 for the key examples from the Candragarbha group.

<sup>498</sup> See Zacchetti 2015: 173.

message, including that of the spell itself, if present at all. As for location, the teachings of the sūtra are revealed on the familiar Gṛdhrakūṭa peak.<sup>499</sup>

With the KauP it is Indra who becomes the interlocutor. While Indra might appear a less obvious character in the PP setting, he did figure in dialogues in the AS and *Larger PP*.<sup>500</sup> Once again the enunciation takes place on the Gṛdhrakūṭa peak. Overall, the opening and closing narrations are minimalist in character.<sup>501</sup>

The SvalP is more fascinating from this point of view, for it gives the stage to Avalokiteśvara and includes a number of rather idiosyncratic statements. Contrary to the previous characters, Avalokiteśvara would not be expected in this context. However, one should not forget that the same character also figures in the PPH. This is one of the reasons that prompted Conze to suggest a link between these two scriptures.<sup>502</sup> The opening narrative of the SvalP takes place once again on Gṛdhrakūṭa but is somewhat more developed than the previous specimens outlined above. The Skt. version adds the typical sūtra formula *ādau kalyāṇam madhye kalyāṇam* etc.<sup>503</sup> before moving to Avalokiteśvara's opening question. He is described as offering obeisance to the Buddha, who is sitting on the lion throne, before asking him to reveal the PP 'in a few syllables', which is supposed not only to lead beings towards awakening, but to also grant the

---

<sup>499</sup> See Cambridge 1326, 38v3.

<sup>500</sup> This was pointed out above, see also the section in Kimura 1992 (V): 22.

<sup>501</sup> See Conze 1956: 115.

<sup>502</sup> For a theory on the presence of Avalokiteśvara in the PPH see Nattier 1992: 176.

<sup>503</sup> This is an extremely common, staple formula in Mahāyāna sūtras. At present I do not know of a dedicated scholarly treatment of it, but Yuyama offers some remarks and one parallel reference. See Yuyama 1977: 286 (IIb) and the related footnote.

success of one's mantras.<sup>504</sup> Statements like these do appear innovative in the PP context - by virtue of their emphasis on mantra practice - and will be taken up in detail in chapter 5. By contrast, the closing narrative is quite minimalist, although it is introduced by some remarkable comments on part of Avalokiteśvara on the SvaIP having been expounded for people 'of little religious merit' (on this see 4.3.1).

The remaining instances of frame narratives in the Selected Sources are found in the Candragarbha group. The narratives are generally remarkably minimalist. Places mentioned are Gṛdhrakūṭa, Rājagṛha, or other locations in Magadha.<sup>505</sup> The interlocutors are Bodhisattvas Sūryaprabhāsa, Candragarbha, Samantabhadra, Vajrapāṇi, and Vajraketu. As pointed out above, the origin of this particular group is unclear, although they are not traditional characters in PP scriptures. Note that the SamantaP's narrative mentions is slightly more developed, as it mentions that all Buddha-fields started trembling as a consequence of Samantabhadra entering *samādhi* and the Buddha touching his

---

<sup>504</sup> Ibid. p.286 (IIIa, 6).

<sup>505</sup> See Conze 1993 p.148ff. There is some doubt regarding the location of the SamantaP. Conze translated this as "The Lord dwelt in Magadha, in a remote forest called the 'Pith of Dharma' (p.151). Stok here has *yul ma ga dha dgon par chos kyi snying por bzhugs* (S31 sna tshogs, ka 282a4 (vol. 51)). It is not fully clear to me whether *dgon pa* refers to a forest or a forest-dwelling.

head.<sup>506</sup> The earthquake narrative is found within the Selected Sources in the SvaIP as well, and is fairly typical of Mahāyāna writing.<sup>507</sup>

Thus, there is some experimentation with the individual characters - the choice of whom could be particularly meaningful in some cases - but overall the frame narratives appear to be fairly standard. This provides a number of continuities with the PP genre, along with internal labelling and overall phraseology.

### 3.3 Practice: Absorptions and Book Worship

#### 3.3.1 The Absorptions (*samādhis*)

It is often stated that meditative practices have been integral part of Mahāyāna since its earliest attested beginnings.<sup>508</sup> Williams reminds us that already in the sūtras translated by Lokakṣema one could notice a certain emphasis on such practices.<sup>509</sup> This seems to fit with a common - and yet not unproblematic - picture of early Mahāyāna as associated with forest hermits, i.e. hardline practitioners who had shunned the worldliness of institutionalised Buddhism.<sup>510</sup>

---

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.* p.151.

<sup>507</sup> Yuyama 1977: 186 (IV, 7). In the SaŚP the earthquake narrative links the two halves of the work (see Masuda 1930: 141 [last line]).

<sup>508</sup> Here, one can at least mention Deleanu's article on meditation in early Mahāyāna (2000).

<sup>509</sup> See Williams 2009: 30.

<sup>510</sup> On this see Williams 2009: 36f. Important discussions include recent ones by Harrison and Drewes (see both contributions in Harrison 2018) , as well as Boucher's 2008

Absorptions (*samādhis*) are a key feature of a number of Mahāyāna sūtras and are sometimes portrayed as gateways to certain realisations. One should, however, also consider that most sūtras lack a detailed description of what such absorptions actually entail. The term *samādhi* as such also appears to be highly polysemic, and can be used to simply refer to certain sūtras or to specific sections thereof, in which meditation need not be the main topic at all.<sup>511</sup> Relevant to the present context is the fact that such absorptions are also traditionally linked to the notion of *dhāraṇī*, particularly if one interprets the latter in the sense of ‘retaining’ to memory.<sup>512</sup>

In the early PP context, *samādhis* occupied a central place. The three traditional *vimokṣamukhas* ‘gateways to liberation’ are well integrated within the PP. These exemplify how PP discourse adopted early practices while inserting them in a new soteriological context. The ‘gateways’ of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), signlessness (*animitta*), and lack of aim (*apraṇihīta*) seem to represent a set of meditative absorptions originally thought to ultimately lead towards *nirvāṇa*. In the PP context, however, they are seen as means to develop detachment rather than as ends in themselves.<sup>513</sup> This is part of the larger soteriological program of a work like the AS, which outlines a detailed path for those interested in becoming

---

contribution based on a study of the *Rāṣṭrapālapariṣcchā-sūtra*, and Nattier’s often quoted study of the *Ugraparipṛcchā* (2003, p.93ff.). The reader should be made aware that scholars have taken a variety of positions on this issue, which is not entirely settled.

<sup>511</sup> On this see Skilton 2002.

<sup>512</sup> One can refer here to Braarvig’s study of the relation between spells, memory and eloquence (1985). For some very useful critical remarks on these issues see Davidson 2009: 106ff.

<sup>513</sup> See Zacchetti 2015: 174 (column b).

Buddhas. In fact, there are also specific statements to the effect that certain kinds of absorptions can be instrumental to the attainment of awakening.<sup>514</sup> Scholars of early PP writing remind us that the *samādhis* figure prominently in a commentary to the *Larger PP* which served as the foundation for PP exegesis in China, the \**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*.<sup>515</sup>

A treatment of these issues with respect to early Buddhism is not the aim of these pages, although the above sketch should have conveyed the idea that there is room for PP spell scriptures to establish links with PP soteriology through particular treatments of the absorptions.

The PPH should be considered here, for it is structurally akin to the Selected Sources. In the PPH, the Buddha enters a state of absorption as part of the opening narrative.<sup>516</sup> One should mention here the complexity of the textual transmission of the PPH and the fact that this passage is transmitted in slightly different versions. Taking as reference Silk's critical edition of the two Tibetan recensions, the passage reads: A) "At that time the Blessed One was entered into the concentration of the Preaching of the Dharma called 'Profound Illumination' "<sup>517</sup>; and B) "At that time the Blessed One was entered into the

---

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>515</sup> Better known as the *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論 (T1509). Part of this work was translated by Lamotte (1944-1980), who also proved that the place of origin was the North-west. In the same context, *dhāraṇīs* are also mentioned. See the section in Copp 2014: 20ff.

<sup>516</sup> See Conze 1948: 34, 8.

<sup>517</sup> See Silk 1994: 172 as well as ancient commentators' interpretations at Lopez 1988:41ff.

concentration called ‘Illumination of the Profound Preaching of the Dharma’ ”.<sup>518</sup>  
 Thus, there is some variation - including in the Skt. version<sup>519</sup> - regarding the actual name of the absorption as well as its relation to the act of teaching the Dharma.<sup>520</sup> Śāriputra will then ask a question to Avalokiteśvara while being ‘prompted by the power’ of the Buddha.<sup>521</sup> A conversation then will take place between the two, with the Buddha eventually arising from his *samādhi* to praise Avalokiteśvara for his understanding.

Despite the text-critical issues, absorption in the PPH could be seen as a crucial element within the frame-narrative. No detailed description of the absorption is given, despite the presence of a specific name. As a narrative element, the soteriological implications are perhaps hinted at, but they are not made explicit. It is therefore difficult to bring this in relation to the complex meditational ‘technology’ of the AS. This point might seem trivial, yet it does have some major implications for the assessment of the legacy of the AS’ teachings in PP spell scriptures.

In the Selected Sources, references to absorptions are, surprisingly perhaps, not common. However, the SvalP does contain the following section:

*atha khalu bhagavāṃs tasyāṃ velāyāṃ  
 sarvasattvapramocanāṃ nāma samādhiṃ samāpadyate sma  
 | yayā samāhitayā ūrṇākośād bhrūvivarāntarād anekāni*

---

<sup>518</sup> See Silk 1994: 173.

<sup>519</sup> See Conze 1948: 48, 7 (and relevant note).

<sup>520</sup> See the notes at Conze 1948: 34.

<sup>521</sup> See Silk 1994: 174 (paragraph 2).

*raśmikoṭīniyutaśatasahasrāṇi niśceruḥ | taiś ca raśmibhiḥ  
sarvabuddhakṣetrāṇi sphuṭāny abhūvan | ye ca sattvās tayā  
prabhayā sprṣṭās te sarve niyatā abhūvann anuttarāyaṃ  
samyaksambodhau | <sup>522</sup> yāvan nārakāḥ sattvāḥ sarve  
sukhasamarpitā abhūvan | sarvāṇi ca buddhakṣetrāṇi  
ṣaḍvikāraṃ praviceḷuḥ | divyāni candanacūrṇavarṣāṇi  
tathāgatapādāmūle pravarṣanta | (Yuyama IV p.286)*

‘Then at that time the Venerable One entered the absorption called ‘liberating of all beings’. By virtue of that absorption innumerable<sup>523</sup> rays of light were emitted from the hair tuft between his eyebrows. Those rays manifested all the Buddha fields and all beings that were touched by that light became assured with respect to [the attainment of]<sup>524</sup> supreme perfect awakening. All beings down to hells became filled with happiness. All the Buddha fields shook (as in an earthquake) in the six ways<sup>525</sup>, and a rain of divine sandal powder fell at the Tathāgata’s feet.’

In MSS, the name of the *samādhi* is recorded as either *sarvasattvapramocana* ‘liberating of all beings’ or *sarvaduḥkhapramocana* ‘liberating from all

<sup>522</sup> See e.g. Kimura 1986-2007, I-1: 3 for a similar passage from the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* PP.

<sup>523</sup> This is the typical Buddhist verbose expression for indicating very large numbers.

<sup>524</sup> This renders *niyatā*. On this term consult Gomez 1996: 284, as well as Zacchetti 2005: 259 (note 131).

<sup>525</sup> The shaking of the earth in six way is a feature commonly encountered in Buddhist works, including later PP sources (see e.g. the SaŚP at Masuda 1930: 240). On this topic see Ciurtin 2009.

suffering'.<sup>526</sup> Rays of light arise from the Buddha's hair-tuft, reaching all buddhafi elds, causing an earthquake, and establishing beings in awakening. Interestingly, it seems that this passage was modelled on the prologue to the *Larger PP*.<sup>527</sup> This is despite the fact that the embedded spell-units as well as some esoteric terminology of the *SvalP* make it stand apart as one of the most innovative specimens.

What is remarkable about the above passage is its position. The Buddha enters the absorption not at the beginning, but once the *sūtra* is well on its way, since he has already had an initial exchange with Avalokiteśvara. The absorption takes place just before the revelation of the first *dhāraṇī*-unit. The fact that the Buddha enters the absorption just before revealing the spell could represent a narrative device to highlight a link between meditation and the spell's power.<sup>528</sup> It also serves to justify the miracles that take place, much like in the *Larger PP*.<sup>529</sup> This appears to further strengthen the links with *PP*. However, there is no further mention of the absorption in the *sūtra*, which makes it difficult to speculate further on this issue.

---

<sup>526</sup> Yuyama 1977: 286 (IV, 1). Note that in some MSS *samādhi* is treated as a feminine noun, and not as a masculine as is more common. This seems to be due to non-standard Buddhist grammatical usage.

<sup>527</sup> Again, see e.g. Kimura 1986-2007, I-1: 3 for the corresponding text of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā PP*).

<sup>528</sup> The Skt. states that the Buddha entered the absorption *tasyāṃ velāyāṃ* 'at that time' (see *ibid.*). The Chinese here has 一時, which could be rendered as 'immediately', 'at once' (世尊而於一時入三摩地, T08n0258p0853a21).

<sup>529</sup> See Zacchetti 2005: 150.

The SūrP and the SamantaP also mention absorptions. The SūrP stands out, for the absorption is here not used as a narrative feature but constitutes an integral part of the teaching. When the Bodhisattva asks the Buddha how to train in the PP, the Buddha replies by saying that one should practice the absorption called “skilled in means like the sun”.<sup>530</sup> The following section compares the absorption to the sun in a series of seven puns. For example, both the sun and the absorption are said to dispel darkness.<sup>531</sup> After this, the SūrP moves on to explain how one should train with respect to the *dharma*s, leaving aside the issue of absorption. Perhaps surprisingly, the only work within the Selected Sources which gives some prominence to *samādhi*, i.e. the SūrP, does not contain any spell. Instead, closing verses simply describe the characteristic of the wise person.<sup>532</sup>

The extremely concise SamantaP too mentions an absorption. This time it is called ‘the firm non-discrimination of all dharmas’.<sup>533</sup> This is found in the opening narrative, where it is Samantabhadra to enter the state of *samādhi*. Once again all Buddha-field tremble as a consequence of it, and the Buddha is at some point involved in touching the Bodhisattva’s head.<sup>534</sup> A few verses follow, ending the introductory section. Once again, no spell is found, as the remaining portion of the works includes only a question on training and a short reply by the Buddha.

---

<sup>530</sup> See Q742 sher phyin, tsi 179a, 6 (vol. 21, p.257). See Conze 1993: 148.

<sup>531</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>532</sup> See *ibid.* folio 180a, 4.

<sup>533</sup> See Q744 sher phyin, tsi 181b, 7 (vol. 21, p.258).

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.* line 8.

The ArdhaP includes the term *yoga*, already quoted above: '[While training] in this very PP, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva, endowed with skill in means, should practice the union (*yoga*) for the attainment of all *dharmas* (of the Buddhas)'.<sup>535</sup> As the same expression is found in the AS, this is best understood in the context of phraseological overlap.<sup>536</sup> Moreover, the term *yoga* here has a less technical meaning and does not directly relate to meditative practices.

Finally, one should also mention that the SaŚIP does include a description of an actual practice. The details are scarce, yet it seems that this involves reciting the work's spell a number of times during a series of days and nights. At the end, the practitioner will have a vision of the Buddha sitting on a lotus flower.<sup>537</sup> Given that this practice appears to be centred on *dhāraṇī* recitation, it does not seem to reflect a deliberate connection with traditional PP writing and it will therefore be taken up in the next chapter (see also *Appendix D*).

Looking beyond the Selected Sources, one should note that there are references to *samādhis* in some ritual works concerned with the *maṇḍalas* and spells of PP.<sup>538</sup> These will be taken up briefly in the chapter on the links with mature esoteric Buddhism (5.3.1).

In conclusion, *samādhis* are a feature enjoying considerable continuity in PP literature. However, rather than developing or re-proposing the complex soteriological 'technology' of the AS - much of which was centred on dealing with

---

<sup>535</sup> The passage ends on folio 39v 1 (Cambridge 1326).

<sup>536</sup> See Mitra 1888: 7,5.

<sup>537</sup> See Komine et al. 2015: 109, 5.

<sup>538</sup> One such work is no. 40 in Conze's list (1978: 90).

the results of various states of absorption -, PP spell scriptures mainly refer to *samādhis* within their narratives. These certainly can still play a significant role, for example in terms of legitimation, particularly if they are placed right before a *dhāraṇī* is revealed (e.g. SvaIP). In the case of the SūrP, however, a certain absorption was part of the main teaching of the sūtra. This can be regarded as an exception within the Selected Sources.

### 3.3.2 Self-referential Formulas on Practice and Book

#### Worship

PP works, as well as other Mahāyāna sources, are well known for their self-referential passages inviting studying, copying, and worshipping of the scripture and its manuscript.<sup>539</sup> As with the *samādhis*, only a few works among the Selected Sources contain such passages.

As mentioned above, the ArdhaP includes the typical formula *iyam eva prajñāpāramitā śrotavyā, udgrahītavyā, dhārayitavyā, vācayitavyā, paryavāptavyā*.<sup>540</sup> Equally typical is the second formula *yaḥ kaścit kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā, imāṃ gambhīrām[sic] prajñāpāramitāṃ śroṣyanti*<sup>541</sup>, *dhārayiṣyanti, vācayiṣyanti, paryavāpsyanti* | *so*<sup>542</sup> *tītānāgatapratyutpannānāṃ,*

<sup>539</sup> A seminal treatment of this much-debated issue can be found in Schopen 2005: 25-62.

<sup>540</sup> Cambridge 1362, folio 38v6. See above for a translation of the wider passage.

<sup>541</sup> There appears to be a mismatch between singular and plural forms in this passage.

<sup>542</sup> Again the pronoun is in the singular, while the verb is in the plural.

*buddhānāṃ bhagavatāṃ bodhiṃ dhārayiṣyanti*<sup>543</sup> ‘Any son or daughter of good family who hears, holds (in mind?), utters or masters this profound PP, he or she will take hold of<sup>544</sup> the awakening of the venerable Buddhas of past, future and present’.

The SvalP goes a step further inasmuch as it is more explicit about committing the text to a book. In some MSS, terms meaning ‘worship’ are actually attested. See the following passage and its variants:

*tadīyaṃ ca ye nāmadheyam śroṣyanti dhārayiṣyanti vācayiṣyanti  
likhiṣyanti likhāpayiṣyanti bhāvayiṣyanti paryavāpsyanti parebhyaś ca  
vistareṇa samprakāśayiṣyanti pustakalikhitaṃ ca kṛtvā svagrhe  
dhārayiṣyanti vācayiṣyanti*<sup>545</sup>, *te ‘pi sarve*<sup>546</sup> *tathāgatā bhaviṣyanti  
anāgate ‘dhvani* (Yuyama 1977, section Vf on p.287)

---

<sup>543</sup> See Cambridge 1326, folio 40r, 4.

<sup>544</sup> I am not sure whether the occurrence of forms of *dhṛ-* with respect to *bodhi* ‘awakening’ is actually common. Conze translated this as “obtain” (1993: 156) and yet, as if to express uneasiness with this solution, he added a note indicating that the Tibetan here reads *bzung ba*, i.e. take hold of, possess (*ibid.*). The Chinese clearly has an equivalent of ‘to obtain’ here: 如持過去、未來、現在諸佛，不久速成阿耨多羅三藐三菩提 (T08n0248p0846b11). For more occurrences of *dhṛ-* see the notes to the next passage.

<sup>545</sup> The variant *pūjayiṣyanti* is also recorded. See the relative footnote.

<sup>546</sup> One witness adds *alpoṣyena alpaśravaṇena ca* ‘with little means and learning’ at this point (see the relevant note).

‘Those who will listen to the name relating to him [i.e. the Buddha],<sup>547</sup> hold it (in mind), utter it, write it down, cause someone to write it down, meditate on it, master it, explain it to others in detail, who hold it<sup>548</sup> and utter it in their homes having committed it to a written book - all of them too will become Tathāgatas in the future.’

If this interpretation is correct, this is not technically a self-referential passage. However, the Chinese translation has a slightly different reading which seems to put the scripture at the centre.<sup>549</sup> Be that as it may, one should notice the emphasis on worshipping after committing to a manuscript-book (as for the expression *pustakalikhita*). This practice of course appears to have ancient roots within the PP context, although perhaps most of the extant MS sources date

---

<sup>547</sup> I think this expression refers to the name of the Buddha given in the previous paragraph. A similar passage involving the notion of *nāmadheya* can be found in the prologue to *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* XXIV (see Kern Nanjio 1912: 438, 7).

<sup>548</sup> There is a long-standing and fascinating controversy on how to understand the term *dhārayati* and others occurring in such formulas. See for example the discussion in Drewes 2015: 119ff. I generally assume that a connection to oral transmission and memorisation is potentially present. This is why I translated the first occurrence of *dhṛ-* as hold (in mind). However, in the second part of the sentence the focus is clearly on object-based practices. I wonder whether given the mention of *svagrhe*, here the term is best understood in the sense of ‘keeping’ or ‘preserving’ (perhaps more in line with Schopenian thinking).

<sup>549</sup> See 汝得聽聞如是妙法，應當受持讀誦 [...]令彼書寫是經 [...] (T08n0258p0853b22). Yuyama’s translation of the Chinese passage in which these statements occur runs as follows: “You will be able to hear the true law in this way. You should hold, recite, copy by yourself, or teach to others, consider and understand the book. [...] Let them copy, hold and recite this Sūtra in their houses. (1977: 300; paragraph Vf.)

from the Pāla period.<sup>550</sup> Also from the Pāla period are those fascinating depictions of what appear to be scenes of the worship of manuscript-books in sculptures from Orissa.<sup>551</sup>

In the examples presented above, it is established that the practice of copying, etc. is soteriologically meaningful, for it paves the way to the attainment of awakening. One of the key questions here is the following: was the shift towards a shorter format motivated by the popularisation of such practices? As PP spell scriptures are so concise, it is easy to copy them or sponsor their copies. The same also applies to reciting them, etc. Given that they are linked to soteriological benefits, PP spell scriptures could have been redacted as a way to meet an increasing demand, or perhaps to encourage such demand in the first place.

However, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the paucity of extant copies - not only on palm-leaf/birch-bark but on other materials such as stone, clay, metals, etc. - appears to suggest that mass production of PP spell scriptures for gaining merit or reaching awakening was not undertaken in South Asia. Of course, lack of extant evidence does not rule out that they were once circulating in higher numbers.<sup>552</sup> Also, lack of extant witnesses does not translate in lack of a related agenda on part of the redactors.

---

<sup>550</sup> References to Schopen's work on this issue were given in the *Introduction*. For a more recent treatment see e.g. Apple 2014.

<sup>551</sup> See for example Kim 2013: 34.

<sup>552</sup> There might certainly have been specific factors which affected their preservation.

At the same time, one should notice that the relevant passages are found only on few occasions. Had this been the real interest of the redactors, one would have probably encountered more claims to this effect. My impression is that the mechanisms of merit-making so typical of PP are still very much central, yet the emphasis has moved from copying and worshipping the manuscript-book to uttering the spells. This is a rather bold claim, which will be elaborated upon in the next chapter on spell practice.

### **3.4 Comparing other Shorter Prajñāpāramitās**

Before assessing the data collected and presented to far, it is necessary to briefly engage with other shorter PP works to see if similar strategies and/or degrees of affiliation to earlier scriptures can be traced. To provide a feasible scope, the following presentation will only deal with scriptures extant in Sanskrit.

There are two specimens of short PP works which immediately come to mind: the PPH and the AdhyP. Interestingly, these two later PP scriptures are very different in terms of the ways of establishing affiliation to the PP genre.

The AdhyP in many ways represents an opposite scenario when compared to the PPH. Here, the links to the PP scriptural tradition are particularly faint, although not altogether absent. The AdhyP is quite innovative in the PP context both in terms of teachings (see the esoteric notion of *viśuddhipādas* for example<sup>553</sup>), phraseology and overall structure. Bodhisattvas, many of whom play a

---

<sup>553</sup> This is briefly introduced by Tomabechi in a dedicated section (2009: lviii).

prominent role in esoteric scriptures, briefly explain the *prajñāpāramitānaya* one after the other.<sup>554</sup> Thus, in terms of self-referentiality, an expression containing the term PP is constantly being repeated, although the term *-naya* opens an entirely new dimension of esoteric affiliation.<sup>555</sup>

There are a handful of passages that might be of interest here. For example, the opening narrative contains the traditional formula *ādaḥ kalyāṇam* etc. typical of many sūtras and also found in the SvalP.<sup>556</sup> One formulaic passage describes *prajñāpāramitā* in a chain of terms, such as *samatā*, *dharmatā* etc. in a way similar to that observed in the ArdhaP and the KauP. Here, however, the instrumental is used in the formula rather than the ablative.<sup>557</sup> Furthermore, on a few occasions there are minimalist, yet typical references to the characteristics of *dharmas* and to emptiness.<sup>558</sup>

Thus, the AdhyP in its Sanskrit form of the Pāla period does retain some mainstream traits, although on the whole they are much less prominent than those of sūtras like the KauP or the SvalP. One should note that the presence of traditional phraseology and formulas within esoteric scriptures is actually quite common. More on this will be said in Chapter 5.

---

<sup>554</sup> See Tomabechi 2009: liv ff.

<sup>555</sup> On this see Astley-Kristensen 1991: 8.

<sup>556</sup> See Tomabechi 2009: 5, 7 and Yuyama 1977: 286 (IIb).

<sup>557</sup> I am not sure this passage is actually found in the Pāla MS tradition, for I am not able to trace it in Tomabechi's edition (2009). The passage can, however, be consulted in editions based on the Central Asian witness (see e.g. Leumann 1930: 97, 3-10).

<sup>558</sup> See in particular the passage in Tomabechi 2009: 17, 2-5 which also seems to have been quoted by Buddhist thinkers. On the issue of quotations see Chapter 6.2.

One significant specimen here is the SaŚP, whose textual development can be traced back to the Gupta period. As we have seen, the SaŚP is regularly present in composite MSS which also include PP spell scriptures, both from Pāla India as well as from Nepāl.<sup>559</sup> In terms of its text, the SaŚP is a good example of how to develop a typical PP discursive style, aimed at avoiding conceptual hypostatisation, in refreshing and creative ways. One finds slightly counter-intuitive statements, juxtaposition of opposites in a paradoxical way, and *niruktis*.<sup>560</sup> As stated above, this richness of discourse and overall dialectic dynamism is almost entirely absent from the Selected Sources. Furthermore, a number of passages are very close in wording to the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*. As usual, it is difficult to discern whether they are actual quotations rather than mere phraseological uniformities. One should also remember that the Skt. text of the AS referred to here reflects that of its mature South Asian attestations. One should attempt to trace all the relevant passages to the early Chinese translations of the AS, in order to gain a more precise picture of transmission and intertextuality. Nonetheless, in the present context such passages deserve at least to be pointed out.

Rather strong in terms of intertextuality is a SaŚP's expression such as *bodhisattva iti bhadanta śāradvatīputra nāma dharmam na samanupaśyāmi* 'I do not perceive a dharma [which could be called] *bodhisattva*, o venerable

---

<sup>559</sup> See Chapter 2 above.

<sup>560</sup> See for example the word-play in which the a Buddha's qualities are described as "supreme (agra) on account of their ungraspability" (*agrāhyatvād... agrā buddhadharmāḥ* [Masuda 1930, 204]). This example is quoted in Zacchetti 2015: 198.

Śāradvatīputra'.<sup>561</sup> It would be difficult not to think of the AS: *nāhaṃ bhagavaṃs taṃ dharmaṃ samanupaśyāmi yad uta bodhisattva iti* 'I do not perceive, o Venerable One, that *dharma*, namely the *bodhisattva*'.<sup>562</sup>

At the level of phraseology, standard expressions of the kind *evaṃ paśyann ahaṃ bhagavan na kiṃcit paśyāmi* 'seeing thus, o Venerable One, I do not see anything' in the SaŚP, remind us of the many variations of *tam apy ahaṃ dharmaṃ na samanupaśyāmi* 'that *dharma* too I do not perceive' found in the AS.<sup>563</sup>

Another kind of possible reference is when the SaŚP appears to actively engage with older sources. The AS stated: *acintyadharmasamanvāgatā hi subhūte tathāgatā arhantaḥ samyaksambuddhāḥ*<sup>564</sup> 'O Subhūti, the Tathāgatas - perfectly awakened ones, Arhats - are endowed with the unthinkable *dharmas*'. The SaŚP appears to pick this up by asking: *icchasi tvaṃ mañjuśrīs tathāgatam acintyadharmasamanvāgatam?*<sup>565</sup> 'Do you concede, o Mañjuśrī, that the Tathāgata is endowed with the unthinkable *dharmas*?' It then proceeds to show how such notion cannot stand in the context of non-duality.

Similar is the case with the AS stating: *prajñāpāramitāyāṃ śikṣamāṇaḥ subhūte bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ sarvasattvānām agratāyāṃ śikṣate*<sup>566</sup> 'O Subhūti,

---

<sup>561</sup> See Masuda 1930: 220,5.

<sup>562</sup> See Mitra 1888: 4 (second-last line).

<sup>563</sup> See Mitra 1888: 471,4.

<sup>564</sup> See Mitra 1888: 402, 5 (from the bottom).

<sup>565</sup> See Masuda 1930: 238, 7.

<sup>566</sup> See Mitra 1888: 431, 8 (from the bottom).

training in the PP, a Bodhisattva Mahāsattva trains in being the foremost among all beings'. The SaŚP asks: *icchasi tvaṃ mañjuśrīḥ tathāgataṃ sarvasattvānām agryam?*<sup>567</sup> 'Do you concede, Mañjuśrī, that the Tathāgata is the foremost of all beings?'. In typical PP fashion, the answer will show how the question is in fact meaningless.

The list of possible links is in fact much longer, although the examples given above should suffice to convey the general idea.

Along with the SaŚP, there is a relatively well known, small group of PP scriptures which contain more or less detailed, scholastics-oriented treatments and definitions of some of the key notions relevant to PP. A brief reference to them should be made here.

The *Suvikrāntavikrāṃiparipṛcchā* PP is a relatively early specimen within this group.<sup>568</sup> Much like the SaŚP, it experiments with paradox and word play, developing even more vigorous discussions. Scholars have observed continuity with earlier PP writing not only in terms of topics but at the level of phraseology as well.<sup>569</sup> More importantly, one can observe a relatively close link with certain specific sections of the AS.

The recently published Sanskrit text of the *Pañcaśatikā* PP represents another example of a scholastics-oriented PP composition. Despite the lack of pre-Pāla

---

<sup>567</sup> See Masuda 1930: 238, 2.

<sup>568</sup> This work is already found in Xuanzang's DB (See Lehnert 1999: 64).

<sup>569</sup> On this see the remarks in Zacchetti 2015: 197. See also the introductory essay in Hikata's 1958 edition (particularly pp. lxxvi ff.).

Skt. witnesses as well as of pre-Song Chinese translations, it is not entirely impossible that this work be as ancient as the SaŚP and the *Suvikrāntavimrāmiṣṣchā* PP.<sup>570</sup> The work - which was referred to by Asvabhāva in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāraṭīka* - incorporates some notions usually associated with the Yogācāra school.<sup>571</sup> As far as I am aware, major close relations to the AS or the *Larger* PP are not directly obvious in the case of this text, which presents a rather sustained and technical doctrinal treatment. Be that as it may, this work is one of the best examples of PP scriptures being used to accommodate doctrinal innovations. In fact, the way PP is adjusted to accommodate spells and esoteric practices in the later period might be an extension of the phenomenon observed here in the context of doctrine.

However, links with earlier PP writing can be detected in an important further testimony of PP's doctrinal adaptability: the *\*Nītārthā* PP (not extant in Skt.).<sup>572</sup> This work, which survives in a Song Chinese translation, includes a set of 'ten vikalpas' which is again usually associated with the Yogācāra tradition.<sup>573</sup> But what makes the work relevant in this context is that it is extremely concise when compared to the other PPs just mentioned. Also, in the *\*Nītārthā* one witnesses the presence of 'stock materials'. In this case, large sections forming the bulk of

---

<sup>570</sup> See the discussion on chronology in Li and Fujita 2016: lxxx ff., who seem to take the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> C as a *terminus ante quem*. Before the appearance of this study, Lehnert seemed prepared to ascribe the *Pañcaśatikā* to an early period (1999: 67). For a general introduction and an overview of contents see the opening sections in Li and Fujita 2016.

<sup>571</sup> See Li and Fujita 2016: lxix and lxxi.

<sup>572</sup> For an entry on this often forgotten, yet relevant PP work see Lehnert 1999: 66.

<sup>573</sup> See Conze 1978: 67. The specific passage starts at T08n0247p0845b09.

the work are quite clearly taken from the *Larger PP*.<sup>574</sup> This is typologically more in line with what was observed in the case of the Selected Sources.

There is a further group of PP-related texts that deserves mention here. These works could be said to belong to the genre of *stuti* or *stotra*. Despite being generally neglected, *stotras* can be important in tracing PP's reach, representing as they do a dimension which is more accessible to the average Buddhist, based on devotion and the aspiration for awakening.

There is one set of twenty-one stanzas known as the *Prajñāpāramitāstotra*, ascribed to Rāhulabhadra.<sup>575</sup> Despite the fact that it is hardly ever mentioned in scholarly treatments of PP writing, this *stotra* is widely attested in Sanskrit MSS and is typically found as the opening texts of many AS and *Larger PP* witnesses.<sup>576</sup>

In the *stotra*, PP is addressed in the second person in what is overall very simple and straightforward language. In this context, one finds a series of typical characterisations of PP, e.g. as the mother (of the Jīnas), as the sky, as the chief among the perfections (*pāramitās*), as the key factor in bringing about awakening, etc.<sup>577</sup> These characterisations can help understand how PP was

---

<sup>574</sup> See *Ibid.*

<sup>575</sup> This is also found at the start of Mitra 1888's edition of the AS as well as that of Hikata 1958 (*Suvikrāntavikrāmipariṣcchā*). In particular, see Hahn 1988, which includes a translation and the Tibetan version.

<sup>576</sup> One should be cautious, for expressions such as 'a MS of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*' are sometimes used imprecisely to refer to what is in fact a MS of the AS preceded by the PP-stotra (and followed by the ubiquitous *ye dharma* formula, along with the colophon).

<sup>577</sup> See for instance Hahn 1988: 64 (stanza 6).

conceived of from a devotional point of view. In fact, many of these typical appellations of PP are also found within the Selected Sources. The PNA could be the specimen that comes closest, with its list of names of PP representing a parallel phenomenon. Of course, in the PNA the ritual dimension is more prominent since the context is that of spell practice. One could also think of the invocations found within the SaŚIP's spell as a parallel example.<sup>578</sup>

### 3.5 Summary of Observations

The starting question of this chapter was: are the Selected Sources PP works 'in name only'? The answer partly depends on one's definition of PP, yet it should be clear that in most cases the links with the main PP specimens go further than mere titles and self-referential passages.

The reader expecting PP spell scriptures to take up sustained discussions on the nature of *dharmas*, emptiness, or the meditative and karmic 'technology' required for one to become a Buddha, might in fact be disappointed. These aspects of the PP teaching are indeed rather neglected. Nevertheless, some specimens - like the CandP - do include short discursive sections dealing with some of these aspects.

---

<sup>578</sup> See Komine et al. 2015: 108.

Instead, it appears that the links with PP are best understood in terms of general labelling, text reuse, phraseology, as well as recurring narrative elements and devices.

First of all, self-referential passages certainly tend to establish a connection, at least in terms of label. Rather extensive use of the term *prajñāpāramitā* is attested within the works, including as part of invocations.

As for lists and established expressions, it can be problematic to speak of actual quotations or extractions from the main sūtras. This is mostly due to the fact that such elements and expressions are rather common within the Mahāyāna and PP sūtras and can hardly be linked to any specific source. Nevertheless, in some cases early PP writing is quite undoubtedly being used as a model.

Clearly, works of the sūtra variety show more developed PP affiliations, although even a minimalist spell scripture like the EkaP did establish a link by means of its including a verse also found in the *Vajracchedikā*.

If we were to adopt an expression from the context of classical music, discourse-oriented PP works like the SaŚP could be said to represent creative ‘variations on PP themes’. However, PP spell scriptures show a rather different kind of connections, with much less emphasis on discursive fluidity. Thus, while accepting that the Selected Sources are not PP in name only, one could indeed speak of a rather thorough recasting of PP texts, which now serve as the framework for the inclusion of otherwise rather innovative elements, such as spells and esoteric terminology. The next two chapters will be dedicated to

exploring these two important elements, which could be said to actually define this later phase of PP scriptural writing.

## 4. THE SPELLS AND THEIR PRACTICE

The present chapter is dedicated to a text-based analysis of what is perhaps the defining feature of the Selected Sources: the presence of spells.

This will be done in three steps: 1) analysis of the overall structure of the individual texts and the position of the spells within them; 2) identification and description of the individual spells; 3) study of the statements addressing their practice and efficacy. Each of these sections will include a selection of references to relevant works outside the Selected Sources. The first two sections will be mostly descriptive, while the third will include a critical assessment of the uses and significance of spells in the Selected Sources.

Before embarking on such study, one should point out once again that the relations between PP and spells has ancient roots, which might predate the composition of the Selected Sources by a few centuries. Without exploring terminological intricacies, one should be aware that the term *dhāraṇī* in early PP literature often does not refer to actual spells, which can be indicated by a range of other terms instead.<sup>579</sup> In the later period, the term *dhāraṇī* will become more

---

<sup>579</sup> On the semantic intricacies of the term *dhāraṇī* see Davidson 2009. For examples of the term *dhāraṇī* not referring to a spell, one could look at certain passages of Mokṣala's translation of the *Larger PP* (3rd C) presented in Sørensen 2011: 160 (e.g. on the '*dhāraṇī*-doors'). See also Copp on the *Dazhidulun* (2014: 21ff.). On Chinese terminology for spells see McBride 2005. For a discussion focusing on Chinese terminology in the early PP context, see Attwood 2017 where, among other things, attention is drawn to equivalents of the term *vidyā*. On these sources see also Ujike 1987 (in Japanese), especially the passages presented at page 72ff.

common with reference to PP spells (see Chapter 3.1) and is adopted here as an umbrella term.

Some of the earliest datable sources relating to actual spells in a PP context are in Chinese. The *Xu gaoseng zhuan* (續高僧傳) records how, in the late 6<sup>th</sup> C, disciples of Jingying Huiyuan (淨影慧遠) were required to recite a PP spell, perhaps - as McBride suggests - the one also found in the PPH.<sup>580</sup> There is also the question of referents for spells as found in putatively early translations of the main PP works, some of which are also associated with Kumārajīva (Jiumoluoshi 鳩摩羅什, 344–413). Recently, Attwood has explored in detail the relevant terminological choices, while also pointing out the problems behind such attributions.<sup>581</sup>

Leaving aside these fascinating references, in the following pages three key early works will be considered for comparison, given that they are typologically related to the Selected Sources and also include a number of actual spells: the AdhyP and PPH (mostly through Xuanzang's translations), as well as the TJ's PP section.

---

<sup>580</sup> The passage can be found at T50n2060p0492a18. See McBride 2005: 97.

<sup>581</sup> See Attwood 2017. The article also contains overview tables. See for example the use of 神呪 in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* (T223), presented at p.35. Furthermore, an early translation of the *Vajracchedikā* attributed to Kumārajīva does end with a spell (at least in some editions of the canon). See T08n0235p0752c04 (mentioned in Capitanio 2011: 531). For further information on spells being attached to the *Vajracchedikā* see Schmid 2011: 370. There is also an early translation (again associated with Kumārajīva) of the *Mahāmāyūrī* which mentions PP spells, without however giving their texts. This is mentioned in Conze 1956: 100. A passage, which repeats the expression \**mahāprajñāpāramitāmantra* (摩訶般若波羅蜜神呪) four times, ends at T19n0988p0482b15. The same expression is also found once at T19n0988p0482c14.

## 4.1 Structural Features of PP spell scriptures

When it comes to the structure of the selected sources, there are a number of aspects to consider, including: the fluidity of textual transmission; interplay among different structural units (frame-narratives, spell-sections, verses and lists); and possibly links with other genres of Buddhist writing.

One should keep in mind that there can be considerable variations among different versions of a given work. In the context of PP spell scriptures, critical editions are either unavailable or outdated, which makes detecting such variations a considerable challenge. The best edition produced so far of any of the relevant primary sources is arguably Yuyama's 1977 edition of the SvalP. Yet even in this case, the recent discovery of an early Pāla manuscript which includes the SvalP (CTRC 8), as well as the identification of this work in increasing numbers of Nepalese *Dhāraṇīsamgrahas*, imply that many variants and structural adaptations are still waiting to be recorded and studied.

In the present context, the case of structural fluidity par excellence is perhaps the PPH. While the spell is found in closing position in some early Chinese translations, it eventually becomes embedded within the main structure of the work as the closing statements increase in length and complexity.<sup>582</sup> The

---

<sup>582</sup> Leaving aside the *Mohebanruoboluomi damingzhou jing* (摩訶般若波羅蜜大明呪經, T250), which should probably not be ascribed to Kumārajīva (see Watanabe 2009: 71ff.), one can look at Xuanzang's version (T251), in which the spell is found in closing position.

Selected Sources may not allow the outlining of such a complex textual trajectory. Nevertheless, the main variations will be kept in mind.

While keeping the issue of textual fluidity in mind, one should nonetheless attempt to chart some of the key textual typologies within the Selected Sources. At the present stage of research, it is still useful to focus on basic features, rather than attempting to develop complex taxonomical models (see the *Introduction* for reflections on this issue). With this in mind, it appears that there are two main features that should be kept in mind: 1) the presence or absence of a sūtra-like setting (i.e. the traditional incipit and coda); and 2) the position of the *dhāraṇī*-unit (typically either placed towards the end or embedded within the main body of the text).

As shown in the introductory chapter, these two basic features have been surprisingly neglected by scholars of PP. However, their importance has recently been stressed by scholars working on *dhāraṇī* literature and it seems only obvious to develop this further in the context of PP spell scriptures.<sup>583</sup> As one might expect, there appear to be links between these structural features and the character of a work as a whole, particularly in terms of emphasis on ritual

---

With the development of the longer versions of the PPH, the spell is found more and more embedded within the body of the work. \*Dharmacandra (法月)'s translation (T252) has a single closing statement after the spell (i.e. the typical sūtra coda on the audience reacting to the teaching). For an overview list of Chinese translations see Lehnert 1999: 50f.

<sup>583</sup> See e.g. Hidas 2015: 132. and Davidson 2014: 13ff. The latter offers examples in which narrative passages are linked to the actual teaching of the spell, e.g. through sketching a situation of emergency.

performance. Such links are, however, not always clearly detectable. For the present purposes, it will suffice to see how spells are integrated within the various works in a variety of ways, a fact which implies a considerable degree of experimentation.

Next, one should also consider the possible links between spells and other structural features, especially those which could also be seen as structurally self-standing and particularly linked to recitation and active performance. Here, one could think of verses, invocations or even repetitive and formulaic passages.

For example, it is easy to see how verses, especially when found at the end of a scripture in prose, can come to represent the 'gist' of the scripture itself, a synthesis that can be easily memorised, extracted, recited, inscribed, etc. One particular case which highlights how stanzas and spells can play parallel roles is illustrated by the Candragarbha group. Not all sūtras of this group contain spells. In some, one finds a closing stanza instead.<sup>584</sup> For another example, one may consider the stanzas found in the *Vajracchedikā*.<sup>585</sup> Some of these stanzas also occur within *dhāraṇī* sources, as exemplified for example by the EkaP and the KauP (see previous Chapter).

The distinction between spells and invocations can be equally elusive. Some spells are entirely composed of series of feminine vocatives, in what seem to be appellations of Prajñāpāramitā herself. Invocations are typically found either in

---

<sup>584</sup> See the SūrP, SamaP, and the VajrakP, translated on pp. 148, 151 and 153 of Conze 1993 respectively.

<sup>585</sup> See the stanzas at Conze 1974: 56; 62.

opening or closing position. They can also be used to introduce spells, such as in the KauP as illustrated below. Also fascinating are formulaic statements, which can be akin to spells by virtue of their structure. While some scholars have elaborated on this complex issue elsewhere, here the discussion will be limited to the presentation of a relevant formulaic passage from the ArdhaP.<sup>586</sup>

Thus, although this is sometimes forgotten, studying spells as a structural feature implies considering their interaction with a number of potentially related textual elements.

Finally, one could offer some preliminary remarks on what kind of Buddhist scriptures appear most relevant for the purpose of structural comparison with the Selected Sources. Leaving aside the earlier PPH, it quickly became clear that some close parallels are found within the class of *dhāraṇīsūtras*. Here, one should distinguish between the larger specimens like e.g. the *Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī*<sup>587</sup> and the more concise ones. It is the latter that best resemble the Selected Sources. In particular, the ‘Hṛdaya’ variety of *dhāraṇīsūtra* seems relevant here, for most of these sources tend to be extremely concise. Some of the Hṛdaya scriptures are said to represent the abridged version of lost

---

<sup>586</sup> Hidas 2015 has a short passage on those peculiar ‘*dhāraṇī* scriptures’ which do not actually contain spells. In some cases, it is enumerations and invocations which seem to serve a function parallel to spells (p. 131, second column). The passage from the ArdhaP will be presented below in this Chapter (also see the text as edited in the *Appendices*).

<sup>587</sup> On this work, particularly well known to scholars of Chinese Buddhism, not least because of the presence of some early translations (T986, T987, T988), see Sørensen 2011b: 187f.

(or perhaps never attested) larger versions.<sup>588</sup> The problem here is that the classification of *dhāraṇī* scriptures - particularly in terms of title-based typologies - is notoriously challenging.<sup>589</sup> Thus, one can also find very developed specimens whose title ends in *-hṛdaya*.<sup>590</sup>

Another sub-class of *dhāraṇīsūtras* which should not escape the attention of scholars of later PP is the ‘Kalpa’ class. In this case, one is often dealing with more or less concise works with a strong emphasis on ritual procedures, which is often described in some detail.<sup>591</sup> Some very brief considerations on parallels with Hṛdaya and Kalpa sources will be offered below. However, the reader should be aware that these are fluid and tentative classifications.

#### 4.1.1 Works with Frame Narratives

- Examples: KauP, Candragarbha group., SvalP

It is best to start with those specimens that might look most familiar to scholars of Mahāyāna: the fully-fledged sūtras. Characteristic here is the presence of a sūtra narrative, with an incipit and a coda. The *dhāraṇī*-unit can be found at the end of the composition - as a sort of ‘appendix’ - or embedded within the main

---

<sup>588</sup> This is briefly mentioned in Hidas 2015: 131 (second column).

<sup>589</sup> On the challenges of classification, see Davidson 2014b: 126.

<sup>590</sup> See for example the closing of the *Amoghapāśahṛdaya*, as well as the title variants in Meisezahl 1962:328.

<sup>591</sup> See Castro-Sanchez 2011: 53.

text. Its function has to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Even when the unit is ‘appended’, its presence might be emphasised, e.g. through statements that highlight its importance.

The main bulk of these works can be constituted by extracts from larger PP-sūtras and can offer more or less developed elaborations on various PP teachings.

A key example in this context is certainly the KauP. The Central Asian manuscript of the KauP (see 2.2.1) records a text that is, as Conze aptly pointed out, a compilation of passages and lists of key notions, familiar from traditional PP sūtras (see previous Chapter). Its spells too are rather familiar, being for the most part already attested in earlier sources.<sup>592</sup> The *dhāraṇī*-section is found in closing position, after two stanzas which are also found in the *Vajracchedikā* and the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* respectively.<sup>593</sup> The section is formed of 13 self-standing units, each of which includes an invocation as well as an actual spell. This structure of the *dhāraṇī*-section is unique within the Selected Sources and truly resembles a sort of extended coda. As no statements clarifying the function of the spell section can be found, one is left wondering whether it had a specific significance in terms of ritual or recitation. Perhaps it is more likely that the spells pick up the notion of representing PP in a nutshell, given that elsewhere

---

<sup>592</sup> See Conze 1978: 82. as well as the next section in this Chapter.

<sup>593</sup> See Conze 1956:117. Rather surprisingly, while the *dhāraṇī*-section of the Chinese version is very close to that of the extant Skt. MS, the Tibetan version differs considerably, presenting a much shorter *dhāraṇī* section. Rather surprisingly, while the *dhāraṇī*-section of the Chinese version is very close to that of the extant Skt. MS, the Tibetan version differs considerably, presenting a much shorter *dhāraṇī* section.

the sūtra claims to offer the actual meaning (*artha*) of PP as well as its distilled (*saṃkṣipta*) message.<sup>594</sup>

In fact, other works show a tendency towards preserving spells - or verses - for the end. Most examples come from what was labelled above as the 'Candragarbha group'. One can think for instance of the CandP, whose closing section is constituted by a single *dhāraṇī* and a verse.<sup>595</sup> Here, however, a statement does clarify that one is to consider the spell as representing PP.<sup>596</sup> This makes the *dhāraṇī*-unit stand out as the culmination of the whole sūtra with an emphasis not found in the KauP.

Despite these considerably different degrees of emphasis on the spells, both in the KauP and the CandP the *dhāraṇī*-section is 'attached' to a larger prose unit expounding a certain set of teachings. This is rather fascinating in typological terms. One wonders whether there could be parallels with the *dhāraṇī*-sections of well-known larger sūtras, such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, the *Laṅkāvatāra*, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama*, etc.<sup>597</sup> In these and related cases, the *dhāraṇī*-section is usually a chapter-like unit which, although found within the work, retains a semi-independent status.<sup>598</sup> Furthermore, works like the KauP and the

---

<sup>594</sup> See Conze 1956: 116, 1 and 117, 6.

<sup>595</sup> See Conze 1993: 148ff.

<sup>596</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>597</sup> On this typology see Castro-Sanchez 2011:81f. Relevant passages from these works are also discussed in Davidson 2014.

<sup>598</sup> Given the complex transmission and development of such scriptural works, it is often impossible to determine when such *dhāraṇī* sections were added. However, spells can also be found outside these dedicated chapters. For example, Skt. witnesses of the

CandP are not ritual manuals, lacking descriptions of advanced ritual procedures as well as esoteric terminology. This is another aspect which would associate them - at least *prima facie* - with traditional Mahāyāna sources like the ones quoted above.

However, despite these potential connections, it would appear that *dhāraṇī*-units in the main Mahāyāna sūtra often do mention the specific functions of their spells. One function that is sometimes attested is that of protecting the reciters of the sūtras (*dharmabhāṇakas*).<sup>599</sup> However, such descriptions are not found in the KauP or the CandP, which remain more elusive in this regard.

In order to avoid unwarranted generalisations, it might be best to simply think of these PP sources as scriptural works akin to the traditional sūtra-genre. As pointed out in the previous chapter, these are also the works which also preserve the strongest links with PP literature. One can think for example of the traditional lists of the KauP, or the relatively sustained argumentation on the nature of *dharmas* in the CandP.

This is the place to remind the reader that spells are also found on occasion in some longer PP scriptures only extant in Chinese. In some cases, there seem to

---

*Suvarṇaprabhāsottama* often contain the *dhāraṇī oṃ śrutismṛtigativijaye svāhā* (which is typically found in connection to PP) as part of the invocations at the opening of the sūtra. See for example the very first line of the following Nepalese specimen (Cambridge Add. 875, from the late 18<sup>th</sup> C) <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-00875/4> (accessed Jan 2019).

<sup>599</sup> See for example Davidson 2014: 21ff. which illustrates a relevant passage from the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*.

be *dhāraṇī*-sections which resemble those of the traditional Mahāyāna sūtras.<sup>600</sup>

Given the high probability of some of these sources having been redacted in China, and in view of the earlier date of their translations with respect to the period under consideration, these sources are not treated here.<sup>601</sup>

In the above mentioned sūtra examples spells maintained a semi-independent status (either as appendices, individual/closing sections). A different strategy is to have the spells fully embedded and integrated within the sūtra's structure. The most relevant case here is certainly the SvalP. Its two *dhāraṇī*-sections are found within the main body of the sūtra, along with a number of statements that introduce them, and also address the *dhāraṇī*'s power and its actual use in some detail (see below 4.3). The SvalP was in all probability originally conceived as embedding the two spell-sections, as suggested by the fact that even Pāla-era manuscripts and Song translations reproduce this very structure.<sup>602</sup> There is presently no indication that the SvalP could predate this period by a considerable span of time.

This kind of work structure reminds one of a group of *dhāraṇīsūtras* with rather similar characteristics. Those of the Hṛdaya variety seem particularly close. Key works like the *Gaṇapatihṛdaya* or the *Dhvajāgrakeyūrāhṛdaya* are as concise as the SvalP and also present embedded *dhāraṇī*-units, along with prose sections

---

<sup>600</sup> See for example the fifth *juan* of the the *Devarājapavara*-PP (T231). For a brief description of this work, see Zacchetti 2015: 198.

<sup>601</sup> Some of these works are mentioned in the "Special Texts" section in Conze 1978: 75ff.

<sup>602</sup> Apart from the witnesses considered in Yuyama 1977, even the SvalP as found in the Pāla era CTTC 8 shows this basic structure.

highlighting the spell's significance.<sup>603</sup> This sets them apart from other short works which are entirely devoted to listing spells, despite perhaps having both an incipit and a coda (e.g. the *Āryamāricīnāmadhāraṇī*<sup>604</sup>).

The Selected Sources do not include an equivalent of longer and more complex *dhāraṇīsūtras* such as, e.g. the *Amoghapāśahṛdaya* or the *Ratnaketuparivarta*.<sup>605</sup>

In the present context, conciseness is one of the key aspects to keep in mind.

Both the SvalP and the Hṛdaya examples are concise, yet there could be one more aspect they might be sharing. The SvalP stands out among PP spell scriptures for its occasional adopting of terminology related to esoteric practices.

*Dhāraṇī* literature too, often includes (proto-)esoteric terminology.

### 4.1.3 Lack of Frame Narrative

- Examples: PNA, SaśIP, BM, EkaP

A different type of PP spell work is characterised by the absence of a frame narration, or indeed of virtually any sections devoted to exposing doctrinal teachings. With such works, the ritual aspects related to the spells certainly come to the foreground, although the links with PP writing are also carried forward in a number of ways (see Chapter 3). Of course, this does not mean that the rituals have to be particularly elaborate, or indeed show any links with

---

<sup>603</sup> This is based on the texts as found in Iwamoto 1937 and Giunta 2008.

<sup>604</sup> This observation is based on the text as found in *Dhī* Journal 42: 155ff (2006).

<sup>605</sup> The important work of Meisezahl on the *Amoghapāśahṛdaya* has been referred to above (1962). For the second work, the edition Kurumiya 1978 has been used here.

mature esoteric practice. It is possible that the practice taught is a simple act of recitation, for which no qualification is apparently required.<sup>606</sup>

Within this category too, it is possible to identify one specimen where the *dhāraṇī*-unit is found in closing position: this is the PNA, which as explained above is extant in Chinese and Tibetan translations. In both languages, the basic structure is the same, the only difference being that the section describing the benefits arising from the spell-practice is more developed in Tibetan.<sup>607</sup>

The PNA starts with a versified homage to Prajñāpāramitā. Then follows a list of 108 epithets of the same deity, along with a description of the benefits of reciting such list. After this comes the *dhāraṇī*-unit, along with a series of statements on the relevant benefits. Thus, any sūtra-like framework is actually absent, although the opening verses might function as a sort of incipit.

It is challenging to find parallels for this kind of structure, at least within PP literature. Conze had once described a little-known PP text titled *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayadhāraṇī* preserved in the Cambridge library (add. 1554)<sup>608</sup> as “consist[ing] chiefly of invocations”.<sup>609</sup> Suspecting a typological similarity with the PNA, I requested a digital copy of the MS, which I swiftly received. Upon inspection, it does not appear that this short text actually features many

---

<sup>606</sup> The use made in this thesis of the term ‘esoteric’ was explained in the Introduction (1.2.2.1). The applications of such approach can be found in Chapter 5.

<sup>607</sup> See Peking Q172 rgyud, pa 16b7-18b4 (vol. 6, p.278) and the translation in Conze 1993:196. This is of course a preliminary observation, as a critical edition of this work is yet to appear.

<sup>608</sup> See Conze 1978: 87 (n. 30).

<sup>609</sup> See *ibid.*

invocations at all. It seems to be a *sādhana* work indicating various seed mantras (*bījās*) related to PP, probably in a *maṇḍalic* environment.<sup>610</sup> It is unclear at present whether this is really the work actually described by Conze, although the catalogue number appears to be indeed the same.

Moving on, there are two peculiar examples of extremely concise works which lack the *sūtra* framework while also presenting embedded *dhāraṇī*-units. The first is the SaŚIP, whose spells start right after a short series of invocations and are followed by a description of the benefits of its practice.<sup>611</sup> Looking for possible parallels outside the Selected Sources, one might think of the Kalpa variety of *dhāraṇīsūtras*. The SaŚIP could be structurally compared to the *Āryapratisarākalpadhāraṇī*, though with the addition of a section on benefits.<sup>612</sup>

The second PP work belonging to the same structural class is the BM, which is only extant in Chinese. The BM actually opens with a spell, followed by the description of a visualisation ritual. Then come two more *dhāraṇī*-units and a

---

<sup>610</sup> After a few invocations mentioning *Prajñāpāramitā*, the work moves on to listing various syllables (*oṃ*, *svāṃ*, *hrī*, *tāṃ*, etc.) sometimes associated with individual figures (Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi, Vairocana, Akṣobhya, etc.). The work also mentions the term *prajñāpāramitāyoga* [folio 2b3, 3a2], before the closing list of benefits which include freedom from the suffering of birth and death.

<sup>611</sup> Apart from the bibliographical details given in the *Introduction*, see the *Appendices* for an edition of this text.

<sup>612</sup> The reference edition here is that of Rinpoche and Pandey 1999. Note that while the *Āryapratisarākalpadhāraṇī* lacks a proper description of the spells' benefits, some of its spells do mention some practical purposes. This is apparent in the closing portion, with one spell mentioning the removal of the *karmāvāraṇas* (p.142).

long list of Bodhisattvas to be visualised, along with a short enunciation of benefits.<sup>613</sup>

Here, however, one enters into the realm of advanced visualisation practices, with ritual descriptions of an anointment (*abhiṣeka*) and some rather clear hints of a *maṇḍalic* ritual environment. One is actually reminded of *sādhanas* such as those from the well-known Prajñāpāramitā-section of the *Sādhanamālā*.<sup>614</sup>

On the basis of the SaśIP and the BM, it seems reasonable to conclude that the lack of sūtra narratives along with a prominent position of the spell-unit often occurs when the performative aspect of the text comes to the forefront (either in relation to recitation rituals or more complex practices).

Before closing this section on structure, one should also consider peculiar cases which do not fit the above classifications. One case is that of the ArdhaP. As Conze pointed out, this work is, much like the KauP, a very short compilation of PP passages within a sūtra framework.<sup>615</sup> The work could be rather late, since its Chinese translation dates to the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>616</sup> While the ArdhaP does not contain any actual *dhāraṇīs*, the text as found in the MSS consulted does include the following formulaic section, albeit in slightly different forms (see note):

*bhagavān āha || atyantaviśuddhatvāt subhūte prajñāpāramitā ||*

---

<sup>613</sup> See the bibliographical information given in the *Introduction*.

<sup>614</sup> See the next chapter for more information (5.3.1).

<sup>615</sup> See Conze 1978: 66.

<sup>616</sup> See the details in the *Introduction*.

*suhūtir āha* || *aho aho bhagavan duragāhā vateyaṃ prajñāpāramitā* ||

*bhagavān āha* || *atyantaviśuddhatvāt subhūte prajñāpāramitā* ||

*subhūtir āha* || *aho aho duravagāhā vateyaṃ bhagavan  
prajñāpāramitā* || [...] <sup>617</sup>

Here, the repetitive structure and the pace of dialogic dynamics make the passage formulaic. Furthermore, the extensive use of interjections reminds one of actual vocal performance. However, no statement is found to the effect that one should recite this passage in particular - although the injunction is found with regard to the whole ArdhaP.<sup>618</sup> On the basis of the collation presented in the *Appendices*, one should also consider the possibility of a - probably partial - dittography.

Lastly, one should also keep in mind that there are of course single PP *dhāraṇīs* appearing in various DSs. These, however, can be compounded with further statements and invocations, becoming typologically closer to the SaŚIP. For example, Filliozat's catalogue records one instance of the PVPD formed by the

---

<sup>617</sup> The text reproduced here is a normalised version from Cambridge MS add. 1326 (folio 40a, line 5ff.). The punctuation has been preserved. For a diplomatic edition of this passage see the *Appendices*. Note that in some Skt. version the text does not always repeat *atyantaviśuddhatvāt* but changes the qualification while keeping the ablative (see *Appendices* and the ed. of Shakya 1988). In the Chinese, I am unable to detect any formulaic or repetitive structure (See T08n0248p0846a29). The Tibetan, however, shows similar repetitions (see Conze 1993: 155f.). The two sentences could be rendered as '[it is called] PP, o Subhūti, because of [its] complete purity' and 'Alas, alas, hard to fathom is, o Venerable One, this PP' (compare Conze's translation at Conze 1993: 155f.).

<sup>618</sup> See Cambridge MS add. 1326 (folio 41a, line 1f.).

spell followed by a short statement regarding the karmic benefits of its recitation.<sup>619</sup> Typologically, these are also rather close to the other self-standing *dhāraṇīs* found in most Nepalese *Dhāraṇīsamgrahas*.<sup>620</sup>

In conclusion, the above is merely a preliminary survey of structural features. The degree of variation is certainly too high to allow for precise classifications. However, I would argue that a simple approach based on the presence/absence of the *sūtra* narrative can prove useful. Ultimately, most scholars would not be interested in taxonomy *per se*, as much as in understanding the literary interrelations and the multifaceted connections between format and performance.

What one witnesses a broad spectrum ranging from traditional PP writing to fully-fledged PP *sādhanas*. Among other things, this clearly testifies to the remarkable degree to which PP kept being adapted and updated in this later period.

---

<sup>619</sup> Filliozat 1941: 41 (work n.52 of MS collection no. 62). The important statement on benefits will be dealt with below.

<sup>620</sup> See Chapter 2.4, as well as the *Appendices* for more information on the contents of such Nepalese collections.

## 4.2 The Spells: Formulation and Intertextuality

The Selected Sources include a considerable variety of spells (see Appendix G for an overview list). The present purpose is not to edit these spells critically, as much as of broadly identifying their text and surrounding units (e.g. *tadyathā*, *svāhā*, etc.). However, one should keep in mind that, as with structural features, here too one can expect considerable textual variation.<sup>621</sup>

As explained in the *Introduction*, much has been written on spells in the South Asian context, including from a Buddhist Studies perspective. In particular, a recent article by Ronald Davidson offered a compelling overview of spells, their structure, and function.<sup>622</sup> Much of the following discussion follows the spell typologies identified in this important contribution.

The smallest unit to be considered here is the monosyllabic spell. In the Selected Sources, these spells are actually very rare. One example are the syllables *hrī*, *śrī* and *dhī*, being found at the opening of one of the KauP's spells.<sup>623</sup> Monosyllabic spells appear to be generally more common in the PP-section of the *Sādhnamālā*, or other esoteric sources relevant to PP.<sup>624</sup>

---

<sup>621</sup> On the textual variations potentially encountered when editing a spell see Hidas 2012:178.

<sup>622</sup> See Davidson 2014.

<sup>623</sup> See Conze 1956:118 (no.XVI).

<sup>624</sup> Some examples will be given in the next chapter.

Next comes the word-unit, which often carries a discernible meaning. In the present sources, words of this kind are mostly compounded together. The number of syllables tends to progressively increase within the word-sequence. Sometimes one could actually speak of a ‘waxing syllables’ principle.<sup>625</sup> Alternatively, a sense of climax can be conveyed by semantics as well.

The KauP incorporates the spell also found in the PPH, which belongs to this class: *gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate* [...].<sup>626</sup> Other relevant examples are the CandP’s *prajñe prajñe mahāprajñe candraprajñe* [...]<sup>627</sup>, or the VajrapP’s and SvalP’s *mune mune mahāmunaye* [...].<sup>628</sup> Also notice the KauP’s semantic climax [...] *śruti smṛti mati gati vijaye* [...].<sup>629</sup> A rather common sub-type is having a chain of compounds in which the final member stays the same, while the first one tends to wax in syllables. This is found in the KauP and the PVDP: *munidharme saṃgrahadharme anugrahadharme vimokṣadharme* [...].<sup>630</sup>

There are other instances in which the actual spell is made up of appellatives functioning as invocations in the vocative feminine, such as in the SaŚIP: *jñānapradīpe | akṣayakoṣe | pratibhānavati | sarvabuddhāvalokite | yogapariniṣpanne* [...] ‘O lamp of knowledge, inexhaustible treasure, eloquent

---

<sup>625</sup> This has been often observed in the context of Pāli texts. See for example an encyclopedia entry about waxing syllables by Analayo (2009), as well as Allon 1997: 191.

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid.* (no.XXI).

<sup>627</sup> See Conze 1993: 151 (along with editorial notes).

<sup>628</sup> See *ibid.* p.152 and Yuyama 1977: 287 (section Vd).

<sup>629</sup> See Conze 1956: 118 (no.XVI).

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.* 117(no.XI) and Filliozat 1941: 41 (no.52).

one, blessed by all Buddhas,<sup>631</sup> perfected in yoga'.<sup>632</sup> The core section of the PNA's only spell is also a sequence of epithets addressing the goddess Prajñāpāramitā.<sup>633</sup>

Each spell can be compounded with the common chains of double imperatives.<sup>634</sup> For example, the KauP's spell starting with *prajñe mahāprajñe* [...] ends with such imperatives: *sidhya sidhya, budhya budhya, kampa kampa, cala cala, rāva rāva* [...].<sup>635</sup> A very similar incantation is also found in the PNA, the relevant portion reading: *prajñe prajñe mahāprajñe* [...] *tiṣṭha tiṣṭha, kampa kampa, cala cala, rāva rāva* [...].<sup>636</sup> A peculiar case is that of the SvalP's second *dhāraṇī*-unit, where the imperatives are coupled with syntactically connected terms, thus building a complete sentence: *devatānupālani buddhottāraṇi pūraya pūraya bhagavati sarvāsāṃ mama pūraya saparivārasya*<sup>637</sup> *sarvasattvānāṃ ca sarvakarmāvaraṇāni viśodhaya buddhādhiṣṭhānena*.<sup>638</sup> The last section, which is clearer to one, could be rendered as 'purify the entire karmic impediments of all beings by means of the Buddha's power'.

---

<sup>631</sup> For a discussion on the meaning of *avalokita* see e.g. Von Stael-Holstein 1936.

<sup>632</sup> See Komine et al. 2009: 108.

<sup>633</sup> See Conze 1993: 196f.

<sup>634</sup> On the use of imperatives in *dhāraṇī* literature see Davidson 2014: 17ff.

<sup>635</sup> See Conze 1956: 117 (no.IX).

<sup>636</sup> See Conze 1993: 198 (including the long editorial note).

<sup>637</sup> Yuyama has *saparivāraya*, but *saparivārasya* is recorded as variant (p.287 and note no. 87).

<sup>638</sup> See Yuyama 1977: 287 (section Vg).

The same spell from the SvalP is also compounded with another type of unit. This is constituted by the very common, unintelligible double bisyllables: [...] *dhiri dhiri dhirā dhiri khiri khiri khirā khiri* [...].<sup>639</sup> Some of the KauP's appended spells also include such units.<sup>640</sup>

One isolated example in the Selected Sources is the core spell of the SaŚIP. It is made of such apparently unintelligible units with waxing syllables: *araḍe karaḍe araḍakarāḍe mahāprajñāpāramite* [...].<sup>641</sup>

This, in short, is the basic typology of the spells found in PP spell scriptures. The KauP's appendix of twelve spells offers a few more examples, such as the single word spells: *sarvavit* and *ārolīk*, which are embedded within an *oṃ* [...] *svāhā* framework.<sup>642</sup>

This brings one to the units surrounding the core spells. The typical *oṃ* [...] *svāhā* combination<sup>643</sup> is rather common in the KauP, but it is also found elsewhere. For example, the spell-section of the SaŚIP is embedded within it, and so are both spells of the SvalP.<sup>644</sup> The Peking edition of the PNA does open with *oṃ*, and this is found in Conze's 'patch-work' edition of the spell-section.<sup>645</sup> However, *oṃ* is

---

<sup>639</sup> Ibid. On this feature see Davidson 2014a: 48 ("non-referential or non-lexical phonemes").

<sup>640</sup> See for examples nos. XII and XVII (Conze 1956:117f.).

<sup>641</sup> See Komine et al. 2009: 108.

<sup>642</sup> See nos. XIX and XX.

<sup>643</sup> On this combination see Davidson 2014: 43ff.

<sup>644</sup> See Komine et al. 2009: 108 and Yuyama 1977: 287.

<sup>645</sup> To read about Conze's methodological approach when editing this spell, see Conze 1996: 198 (note no.2). See Q172 rgyud, pa 18a8 (vol. 6, p.279).

attested in the CandP, along with *svāhā* at the end, and the same goes for the VajraP and the BM.<sup>646</sup>

Moving even further to the exterior of the spell-units, one often encounters the common opener *tadyathā*.<sup>647</sup> This is almost ubiquitous, being found in most spells of the KauP, in the single spells of the SaŚIP, CandP and VajraP respectively, in both spells of the SvalP, as well as in the third spell of the BM.<sup>648</sup> It is, however, not found in the PNA.<sup>649</sup>

Invocations are sometimes found before the spell unit and *tadyathā* itself. In the KauP, each spell is preceded by a more or less elaborate invocation, the most common being *namaḥ prajñāpāramitāyai*.<sup>650</sup> The SaŚIP's invocations do not address Prajñāpāramitā: *namo bhagavate āryavairocanāya tathāgatāyārhate samyaksaṃbuddhāya | namo bhagavate āryasamantabhadrāya bodhisatvāya mahāsatvāya mahākāruṇikāya*.<sup>651</sup> The same goes for the SvalP: *namo ratnatrayāya | namaḥ śākyamunaye tathāgatāya arhate samyaksaṃbuddhāya*.<sup>652</sup> The PVPD also starts with *namo ratnatrayāya, tadyathā [...]*.<sup>653</sup>

---

<sup>646</sup> See Peking Q743 sher phyin, tsi 181b1 (vol. 21, p.258); Peking Q745 sher phyin, tsi 182b3 (vol. 21, p.259); and T08n0259p0854a23.

<sup>647</sup> On *tadyathā* see Davidson 2014: 44ff.

<sup>648</sup> The references to these passages are the same just given above.

<sup>649</sup> At least in the Peking text, see previous page for reference.

<sup>650</sup> This is found throughout the spell section (Conze 1956: 117f.).

<sup>651</sup> See Komine et al. 2009: 108.

<sup>652</sup> See Yuyama 1977: 287 (Vc).

<sup>653</sup> See Filliozat 1941: 41.

The PNA has a slightly elaborate invocation addressing Prajñāpāramitā and the knowledge of the Tathāgatas and Bodhisattvas.<sup>654</sup>

Actual sentences introduce the spell-sections in the CandP and VajrapP: *de lta bas shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i sngags so* 'thus, therefore, is the mantra of Perfect Wisdom'<sup>655</sup> and *lag na rdo rje shes rab kyi pha rol du phyin pa 'di ni gsum gyi sangs rgyas thams cad kyi yum ste | rig pa chen po'i sngags kyi tshig ni 'di dag go* "The Perfection of Wisdom, Vajrapāṇi, is the mother of all the Buddhas in the three periods of time. She has been taught as a mantra of great lore".<sup>656</sup>

The BM inserts the central spell-section after a detailed description of a visualisation: 如是觀想已，復念心真言 'Having visualised in this way, one [should] recite the mantra'.<sup>657</sup> The BM also contains the only instance of a mantra being ascribed a certain function. Its first spell is styled 灌頂真言 probably meaning 'consecration mantra' and it is used by the practitioner when performing a self-anointment (see the translation of the BM in the *Appendices*).<sup>658</sup>

---

<sup>654</sup> See the English translation in Conze 1993: 198.

<sup>655</sup> See Q743 sher phyin, tsi 181a8 (vol. 21, p.258).

<sup>656</sup> See Q745 sher phyin, tsi 182b3 (vol. 21, p.259) The translation here is that of Conze 1993: 152.

<sup>657</sup> See T08n0259p0854a22.

<sup>658</sup> This is the very opening of T259. The relevant passage is translated in the next chapter.

As one might have noticed, most of these spells are not unique to a single scriptural source, neither structurally nor at the level of actual wording. One starts witnessing intertextuality already within the corpus itself.<sup>659</sup> For example, the spells of the SvalP overlap almost entirely with those of the BM.<sup>660</sup> It is unclear whether this had already been noticed by scholars of PP. The SvalP's *mune mune* [...] spell is also found in the VajraP.<sup>661</sup> The KauP's *munidharme* [...] is actually found in self-standing form as the PVPD.<sup>662</sup> The KauP's *prajñe prajñe* [...] spell is largely similar to that of the PNA, while its beginning also appear in the CandP.<sup>663</sup>

While some overlap could be expected, this degree of intertextuality is quite remarkable. Perhaps this common spell repertoire could be used to support an argument regarding the appropriateness of treating the Selected Sources as a 'corpus' despite their being otherwise so different. Historically, this could indicate that PP spell cults evolved around a limited set of core spells, at least initially.

---

<sup>659</sup> Conze had already identified a number of overlaps (see PPL at the respective sections).

<sup>660</sup> Given that the BM shows links with mature esoteric Buddhism, a tentative reconstruction of these spells is offered in Chapter 5.2.2.

<sup>661</sup> This was mentioned above, along with reference details.

<sup>662</sup> For references see above in the same section.

<sup>663</sup> See Conze 1956: 117 (IX) and Conze 1993: 198.

Even more fascinating is intertextuality with other sources. There are three classes of works which should be kept in mind: 1) the early sources like Xuanzang's AdhyP, the TJ's PP section (T901), and the PPH; 2) the mature esoteric works either entirely or partially dedicated to PP (e.g. the *Sāadhanamālā*, or *maṇḍala* descriptions such as that of the *Xiuxi banruoboluomipusa guanxing niansong yigui* 修習般若波羅蜜菩薩觀行念誦儀軌 (T1151); 3) other sources such as *Dhāraṇīsūtras* and Tantras.

Regarding number 1), these three older sources already share many PP spells among each other. Not only is the famous spell of the PPH and KauP (*gate gate* etc.) also attested in the TJ,<sup>664</sup> but some of the latter's spells overlap significantly with Xuanzang's AdhyP. This early version of the AdhyP presents three spells which are not attested in its later versions.<sup>665</sup> One is the by now familiar *munidharme saṃgrahadharme* etc. -, while the second starts with *prajñe prajñe mahāprajñe* and overlaps with those also found in the KauP and PNA.<sup>666</sup>

The works of the second group will be presented in the next chapter. Some of these spells do overlap, although mature esoteric sources include many new spells, particularly of the monosyllabic variety.

There are a number of *Dhāraṇīsūtras* and Tantras which also include the spells mentioned above. The KauP's *oṃ ārolik svāhā* is found in the

---

<sup>664</sup> See T18n901p0807b21 and Ji Yun 2017 (english version).

<sup>665</sup> Tomabechi reports that, according to Watanabe 1995:497ff., "these *dhāraṇīs* were originally transmitted as independent spells, and later integrated into the version of the AdhŚ [*Adhyaradhaśatikā* Ed.N.] translated by Xuanzang" (Tomabechi 2009, xlv).

<sup>666</sup> See T18n901p807b06 and T18n901p807a15 respectively. See also Appendix G.

*Amoghapāśahṛdaya*.<sup>667</sup> It also occurs in the *Kṛṣṇayamāritantra*.<sup>668</sup> The KauP's *oṃ sarvavit svāhā* reminds one of a section of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*, in which a series of spells are introduced by *oṃ sarvavit*. Incidentally, one of the spells of the series also reads [...] *prajñāpāramitāpūje* [...].<sup>669</sup> The same spell *oṃ sarvavit* also occurs in the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*.<sup>670</sup> The KauP's 'appendix' includes many spells, and the ones just mentioned do not appear to be specifically linked to PP.

Furthermore, both the *Amoghapāśa* and the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra* incorporate the spell *mune mune mahāmunaye etc.*, rather common in the Selected Sources.<sup>671</sup> The otherwise elusive core spell of the SaŚIP, *araḍe karaḍe araḍakarḍe* [...], seems to find a partial counterpart in the *Mahāmāyūrividyaṛājñi*.<sup>672</sup> It is also found in esoteric sources treated in the next chapter. The sequence *oṃ prajñe mahāprajñe śrutismṛtivilijaye svāhā* is found in the *Vasudhārādhāraṇī*, along with another PP-related spell: *oṃ śrīprajñāpāramite svāhā*.<sup>673</sup> The same spell *oṃ prajñe mahāprajñe* also occurs in the *Samputatantra*.<sup>674</sup>

---

<sup>667</sup> See Meisezahl 1962: 324.

<sup>668</sup> See Rinpoche and Dwivedi 1992: 9. I am grateful to Gergely Hidas for pointing out to me a number of relevant *dhāraṇī* sources referred to here.

<sup>669</sup> See Skorupski 1983: 128.

<sup>670</sup> See Horiuchi 1983: 530 (1273).

<sup>671</sup> See Meisezahl 1962: 320 and Skorupski 1983: 148,23; 149,24; 150,1; etc.

<sup>672</sup> See Tabuko 1972:43.

<sup>673</sup> See Samten 2007:134f.

<sup>674</sup> Skorupski 2001: 264, 7.

These are perhaps the main examples identified so far, yet the actual list might be much longer. Of course, various fragments of the mentioned spells can be found in dozens of other *dhāraṇī*-works. These are not included here.

In conclusion, I think the following point is worth stressing. Given the high degree of overlap already detectable in the earliest available sources, it becomes quite difficult to associate a given spell with any particular work. It would appear that spells circulated widely and even independently from sūtras, although the most common sūtras would have been perhaps the main vectors enabling their circulation. In practical terms, it becomes challenging to identify dynamics of extraction and insertion with respects to particular sūtras. There certainly was a rich underlying - and surely for the most part orally transmitted - network of spell circulation which can only be inferred from the extant written sources. On occasion, a certain spell would 'surface' within a particular sūtra. Yet what we can detect on the basis of extant witnesses is merely the tip of the iceberg.<sup>675</sup> Be that as is may, some spells are particularly linked to a PP context.

---

<sup>675</sup> I would like to thanks Prof. Davidson for starting to discuss some of these issues with me. His remarks have led me to undertand that the relation between sūtras and spells is indeed complex.

## 4.3 The Practice of Spells

### 4.3.1 Statements from the Selected Sources

Now that some of the preliminary observations regarding spells have been addressed, it is time to move to the truly crucial issue, i.e. their practice.

In Chapter 2, it was pointed out how actual objects are often the main source of information about practice. In the case of PP spell scriptures, the Nepalese *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas* were identified as some of the most relevant sources. To fully understand such sources, one would have to look at the way Buddhism was practiced in the Kathmandu valley during the Malla period, when most of these MSS were commissioned. One would also have to study the physical state of the MSS, noting for example the presence of pigments which could betray certain kinds of worship. The overall structure of the MSS, as well as information gathered from colophons, are also key sources of information.

While keeping this in mind, here the focus turns to the specific statements found in the selected texts. Such statements deserve attention, as they can betray the redactors' ideas and agendas, and offer insights into the cultural context in which these works were redacted.

First of all, it is important to note that a statement about practice or the efficacy of spells needs not be present at all. For example, as in the KauP, the ritual

dimension can remain implicit. In other cases, statements about spells could be minimalist in nature, as in the PPH.<sup>676</sup>

The CandP adopts such a minimalist approach, stating simply that Prajñāpāramitā *is* a spell.<sup>677</sup> This could be seen as emphasising how the spell stands for the very PP teaching. Once again, without further information one is not able to identify more specific aspects relating to practice. In works of this kind, the main purpose seems to be that of teaching the spells by inserting them within the framework of a *sūtra* so that they can be considered *buddhavacana*, i.e. authoritative teachings ascribed to the Buddha himself.

However, the vast majority of works from the corpus are in fact richer in detail. Let us proceed in terms of increasing complexity of the statements.

The basic scenario is when a spell is followed by a single statement about its efficacy. The PVPD adds: *anayā dhāraṇyā śatasahasryāprajñāpāramitāvācanāt phalaṃ labhate* ‘with [the recitation of] this *dhāraṇī*, one attains the [karmic] fruit [generated] by the recitation of the PP in one hundred thousand units (*Śatasāhasrikā* PP)’.<sup>678</sup> Thanks to a simple act of recitation, which is apparently open to anyone, a devotee is able to earn vast amounts of religious merit. The key aspect is that, instead of spending weeks or months reciting the longest of PP

---

<sup>676</sup> There the spell is introduced as being *sarvaduḥkhaśamana* ‘pacifying all suffering’. See Conze 1948: 37, 2 and Silk 1994: 137, 3 (*sdug bsngal thams cad rab tu zhi bar byed pa’i sngangs*).

<sup>677</sup> See Conze 1993: 151, 7.

<sup>678</sup> See Filliozat’s catalogue p.41. It is hard to understand why Conze understood this statement in terms of the enhancing of cognitive capabilities: “Its purpose is to help us remember the *Śatasāhasrikā*” (Conze 1956: 105 [C3]).

scriptures, a single *dhāraṇī* will be sufficient. This makes *dhāraṇī*-recitation particularly appealing to those with limited time, erudition or means. If we are allowed to speculate here, this practice would open possibilities to householders or lay people who face a number of family or work-related commitments. Of course, this could also apply to busy monks. Another feature is that the *dhāraṇī* can be memorised very easily, dispensing with the need to read from a book. This could also imply less need for mediation from priests or other specialists. While the family priest could be invited to recite scriptural passages on key calendrical occasions, an illiterate person would be able to engage directly with *dhāraṇī* recitation on a daily basis, regardless of their being at home or away. As is well known, spells were also written on a material support and kept with other auspicious items.<sup>679</sup> Unfortunately, while this is certainly relevant to *dhāraṇī* practice at large, hardly any reference to daily use can be found in the Selected Sources. The texts usually limit themselves to enumerating the benefits of such practices, as will now be further illustrated.

In three works, one finds more developed statements, which also appear to significantly overlap. These works are the VajraP, the PNA, and the SaŚIP.

The VajrapP's spell is followed by this statement:

‘Whoever grasps this perfection of insight will acquire the dharmas of the Buddhas of the three times. They will remember previous births. They will give up all inauspicious births (mi khom

---

<sup>679</sup> For an introduction to these and other common practices related to *dhāraṇīs* see Hidas 2015.

pa). They will obtain measureless fruits of merit. They will always be in the company of the venerable Buddhas. They will be endowed with the thought of awakening'.<sup>680</sup>

Of course, this refers to the work as a whole, of which the short spell *om mune mune mahāmunaye svāhā* is an integral part, once again meant as a representation of Prajñāpāramitā, which in the preceding statement is personified and described as a mother of the Buddhas.<sup>681</sup>

One notices how the description starts by stating the practitioner will acquire some of the qualities and capabilities of a Buddha. Next, the focus shifts to religious merit. Finally, the description ends with a statement about *bodhicitta*, a notion which involves a Bodhisattva's resolve to become a Buddha.

The SaŚIP starts on a similar line. After the opening invocations and the *dhāraṇī*-section, one reads that: 1) the practitioner will get rid of the *karmāvaraṇas* collected over thousands of kalpas; 2) his *kuśalamūlas* (seeds of meritorious action) will be equal to those of a thousand of Buddhas; 3) he will near the end of *saṃsāra*, having a chance to enjoy a positive incarnation, e.g. as a great king;

---

<sup>680</sup> *su zhig shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'di 'dzin par byed na/ dus gsum gyi sangs rgyas rnams kyi chos rnams gsung [Derge reads gzung here!] bar 'gyur ro/ de skye ba dran par 'gyur ro/ mi khom pa thams cad spangs par 'gyur ro/ bsod nams kyi 'bras bu tshad med pa thob par 'gyur ro/ sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams dang dus rtag tu 'groggs par 'gyur ro/byang chub kyi sems dang ldan par 'gyur ro/ (Q745 sher phyin, tsi 182b,4 (vol. 21, p.259). See also Conze 1993: 152.*

<sup>681</sup> See *ibid.*

and 4) at the time of death, he will see thousands of Buddhas appearing before him and be reborn in purified Buddha-fields.<sup>682</sup>

After this list, however, the text appears to describe briefly the results of an actual practice, perhaps stating that having uttered the spell over a number of days and nights, the practitioner will see the Buddha sitting in the lotus posture and attain rebirth in pure Buddha-fields.<sup>683</sup> This seems to be a description of a vision, occurring as a result of spell practice. This is the only example of this kind that could be traced in the Selected Sources. Unfortunately, no details are given regarding the actual form of such practice, apart from the fact that it is supposed to last some days. Another vision of thousands of Buddhas is said to occur at the time of death.<sup>684</sup>

The PNA represents a partially similar case. One finds two relatively detailed descriptions, which touch upon both spell practice and benefits:

---

<sup>682</sup> See Komine et al. 2009:108f. *kalpasahasropacitaṃ karmāvaraṇaṃ ekavelāṃ anusmārya sarvaṃ vrajati saṃkṣayaṃ buddhasahasropacitakuśalamūlo bhavati | kalpasahasraṃ saṃsārāṃtyaṃ cābhimukhīkaroti | jātiparivarte cakravarttirājasahasraṃ pratilabhate | maraṇakāle samaye buddhasahasraṃ paśyati pariśuddhabuddhakṣetreṣūpapadyate |*

<sup>683</sup> Komine et al. 2009:109. [...] *uccārya ekaviṃśatidivase buddhaṃ bhagavantaṃ padmāsananiṣaṇṇaṃ paśyati*. The editor notes that the reading *uccārya* is not entirely clear from the MS. The Skt. as found in a Nepalese MS does not seem to contain this passage (See *Appendices*). On the topic of *dhāraṇīs* and visions see Shinohara 2014.

<sup>684</sup> See the text just quoted, *maraṇakāle* etc.

*su zhig shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'i mtshan brgya rtsa  
brgyad pa 'di 'don pa de ngan song thams cad las rab tu  
thar par 'gyur ro | sangs rgyas thams cad kyis kyang  
dgongs par 'gyur ro | byang chub sems dpa' thams cad kyis  
kyang rtag par rgyun du bsrung ba dang, skyob pa dang,  
sbed par byed par 'gyur ro |*

'Whoever recites these 108 names of the perfection of insight is fully delivered from all lower paths. All buddhas mentor him and all bodhisattvas constantly protect, defend and guard him<sup>685</sup>.'

*[dhāraṇī-unit] shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'di 'dzin na,  
shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'bum bzung par 'gyur ro |  
rtag tu bzlas brjod byas na de 'i las kyi sgrib pa thams  
cad 'byang par 'gyur ro |*

*de nas shi 'phos nas kyang skye ba dran pa dang, yid  
gzhungs shing shes rab mtshungs pa med par 'gyur ro |  
dus gsum gyi de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi chos ma lus  
par bzung bar 'gyur ro | gsang sngags dang rigs sngags  
thams cad kyang bzungs par 'gyur ro | 'di nas shi 'phos  
nas kyang skye ba dran pa dang, yid gzhung shing shes rab  
chen por 'gyur ro |*

(Q172 rgyud, pa 18a,4-[...]-18b,4 (vol. 6, p.279))

'If one takes up this perfection of insight, one will hold in mind (*bzung*) the perfection of insight in 100.000 units.

---

<sup>685</sup> This might reflect an underlying *rakṣāvaraṇaguptiṃ kariṣyanti*, a standard expression.

Reciting it always, one's karmic impediments will be cleansed. Having departed from here, one will become one who has a recollection of past lives, is self-possessed and of unequalled wisdom. One will hold in mind (*bzungs*) all the dharmas without remainder of the *tathāgatas* of the three times, as well as all secret mantras and *\*vidyās*. Having departed from here, one will become one who has a recollection of past lives, is self-possessed and of great wisdom.'

Notice once more the notion of having access to a great reward through a relatively minor effort. This is not explicitly linked to the power of the *dhāraṇī* as much as to the learning (or reciting) of the PNA as a whole. Once again, karmic impediments will be dealt with, and auspicious rebirths will become accessible. A crucial aspect of this description is that the good rebirth will also entail an upgrade in inner qualities, such as being self-possessed and wise. Note that the attainment of great wisdom is, somewhat emphatically, the last benefit mentioned. This practice is apparently open to all (as may be suggested by the expression *su zhig*).

Moving on, one should not forget the important statements found in the SvalP and the BM. Here, typically esoteric rituals and goals occupy a greater space. There will be mentions of advanced visualisation techniques, ritual anointments (*abhiṣeka*), ritual diagram (*maṇḍalas*), specific hand-gestures (*mudrās*), as well as mantra-practice (*mantrasādhana* and *mantrasiddhi*). As this is an entirely new and self-contained topic, the next chapter will be entirely dedicated to its exploration.

Before that, it is necessary to study those passages of the SvalP which do not show links with advanced esoteric practices. These other passages make up the larger part of the SvalP, and should therefore be looked at very carefully. Equating the SvalP with an esoteric agenda *tout court* could be a mistake, as will be explained below.

In one of its key introductory statements, the SvalP makes it clear that who hears its teachings and spells will be free of the *karmāvaraṇas* and be always intent on awakening.<sup>686</sup> This statement is immediately followed by one adding that those who engage in mantra-practice will see all their mantras succeed (*mantrasiddhi*).<sup>687</sup>

---

<sup>686</sup> See Yuyama 1977:286 (IIIa): *deśayatu me bhagavān prajñāpāramitāṃ svalpākṣarāṃ mahāpuṇyāṃ yasyāḥ śravaṇamātreṇa sarvasattvāḥ sarvakarmāvaraṇāni kṣapayīṣyanti, niyataṃ ca bodhiparāyaṇā bhaviṣyanti.*

<sup>687</sup> This is discussed in detail in the next Chapter.

The first *dhāraṇī*-section is followed by a statement which promises that those who read, copy, write down (etc.) the SvalP will eventually become Buddhas.<sup>688</sup> It is noteworthy that in at least one witness, there is an addition specifying that this will happen with little effort on part of the practitioner.<sup>689</sup> Of course, this addition is significant, for it emphasises once more the accessibility of *dhāraṇī*-practices. Note, however, that this statement is left out of Yuyama's critically edited text.

The same passage also includes an important reference to writing the SvalP on a manuscript (*pustaka*) and worshipping it at home (*svagr̥he*).<sup>690</sup> This could perhaps be taken as an attempt to engage with the laity, although the term *gr̥ha* could refer to a variety of settings, not necessarily related to householders. Furthermore, Buddhism as practiced in this period - and even more in the later Nepalese tradition - does not always allow for a clear demarcation between the activity and lifestyle of laity and those of ordained monks. Be that as it may, those who engage with the SvalP are said to ultimately become Buddhas.<sup>691</sup>

Towards the end of the composition, the Buddha is asked about the very purpose of teaching the SvalP. The answer reads *alpopāyatvāt*, which means 'because it requires little means'.<sup>692</sup> This appears to be the reason for having a

---

<sup>688</sup> This is mostly a calk of the standard expression found in other Mahāyāna works. (Yuyama 1977: 187 [Vf]).

<sup>689</sup> See Yuyama 1977: 290 (note 72). The terms in question are *alpopāyena* 'with little means' and *alpaśravaṇena* 'with little learning'.

<sup>690</sup> See Yuyama 1977: 287 (Vf, 3<sup>rd</sup> line) and related footnotes.

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.* (Vf, 3<sup>rd</sup> line) *te 'pi sarve tathāgatā bhaviṣyanty anāgate 'dhvani.*

<sup>692</sup> *Idid.* (VIa, 2<sup>nd</sup> line).

concise work in the first place (*anena kāraṇena [...] saṃkṣiptā prajñāpāramitā*).<sup>693</sup> A key statement clarifies that all beings who are ‘less proactive’ (*mandotsāha*), will become stable in their quest for awakening by merely reciting, writing down, etc., the present work.<sup>694</sup> Finally, the SvalP mentions that this teaching is being revealed for those beings who are *mandapuṇya*, i.e. ‘who have gathered less merit’, or are perhaps simply ‘unfortunate’.<sup>695</sup>

Thus, it looks like the SvalP is attempting to appeal to a wider audience of people who might not be particularly advanced on the *bodhisattva* path or not able to devote a large amount of time or effort to the spiritual quest. This seems to be generally in line with what one reads in the other works of the same corpus, which imply easy access on part of the devotees. However, no other references to the ‘dullness’ of practitioners could be found outside the SvalP and Conze was inclined to see works like the PPH addressing what he called “the spiritual elite”.<sup>696</sup>

Now that the key passages have been laid out, one can attempt to offer some preliminary remarks. The Selected Sources generally lack details of actual

---

<sup>693</sup> *Ibid.* (VIa/b).

<sup>694</sup> Note that Conze read *mandās[sic] mādas* for *mandotsāha*, which he translated as “dull and stupefied”. See Conze 1993: 146.

<sup>695</sup> This is section VIIa of the same edition by Yuyama. Probably *puṇya* is used in a technical sense here (i.e. merit).

<sup>696</sup> For Conze’s ideas on this see Conze 1978: 81f. It is unclear to me to what extent such characterisation can be useful as an analytical tool, but it should nonetheless be referred to here.

practices, which thus remain implicit, despite being probably based on recitation. One important exception is the SaśīP, which seems to mention a certain number of days to be devoted to the practice of its spell, after which a vision will take place. Of course, the BM contains a detailed visualisation exercise and it is best understood in the context of esoteric influences, explored in the next chapter.

The benefits most commonly mentioned in the Selected Sources are: earning good karma (and thus good rebirths), cleansing from sins of this and previous lives, as well as attainment of insight and firm resolve to become a Buddha. These are what one might call 'supramundane' benefits.<sup>697</sup> On occasion, however, one finds references to being protected by the Buddhas, as well as having enhanced cognitive capabilities.<sup>698</sup>

Given the general association of spells with mundane magic and apotropaic benefits, some readers might be puzzled to encounter such emphasis on supramundane ones. However, this dimension of spell practice is not unique to PP spell scriptures, also being covered in a number of other sources, as will be outlined in the next section.

### **4.3.2 Overlap with Other Sources**

One of the benefits most commonly associated with spell practice is protection, although this can take different forms. The association between spells and

---

<sup>697</sup> On this term see the *Introduction* (section on terminology and working definitions).

<sup>698</sup> One can think of the passages from the PNA quoted above.

apotropaic efficacy in Buddhism has ancient roots, going back to the early stages of the *rakṣā/paritta* genre. As pointed out above, some witnesses of this genre go back to the very beginning of the Common Era, if not earlier.<sup>699</sup> But protection, especially of the *dharmabhāṇakas* ‘reciters of Dharma (scriptures)’, is also explicitly mentioned as the aim of spell recitation in a number of Mahāyāna sūtras, such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* and *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama*.<sup>700</sup>

More often one encounters description of spells being used for protection in specific situations. Typically, one finds references to healing diseases or preventing the effects of snake-bite.<sup>701</sup> Some relatively early discussions of this are found in the *Sikṣāsamuccaya* or even in some works ascribed to the philosopher Dharmakīrti.<sup>702</sup> Another practical application is certainly weather control, which is already treated in Buddhist sources from the Gupta period, such as the *Vajratuṅḍasamayakalparāja*.<sup>703</sup>

In some of the more developed *Dhāraṇīsūtras*, one finds very detailed descriptions of protection benefits along with a range of other effects. Some passages add considerable details on actual practices, such as engraving spells on amulets, etc. A good example of this can be found in the *Āryatathāgatoṣṇīṣasītātapatre aparajītamahāpratyamgīraparamasiddhanāma*

---

<sup>699</sup> See Strauch 2014.

<sup>700</sup> See Davidson 2014: 22f. (which includes translations from the key Skt. passages).

<sup>701</sup> On snakebite healing in the South Asian context see Slouber 2017.

<sup>702</sup> See Bendall and Rouse 1922: 136ff. On the fascinating Dharmakīrti passages on mantra efficacy see Eltschinger 2008.

<sup>703</sup> Dr. Hidas has offered several presentations and lectures on this work in the framework of the ERC project ‘Asia Beyond Boundaries’. See Hidas 2019.

*dhāraṇī*, whose final portion was translated from the Tibetan as part of a collaboration between the recently departed Tsering Gongkatsang, and Michael Willis. Here are some sample passages from their translation, mentioning:

1) Protection:

“Whosoever writes this enabling mantra of exorcism of the Victorious One [...] on cloth, birch-bark or (other) wood-bark and whosoever suspends it on the body, the neck, or recites it, that person, so long as they live, will not suffer harm from weapons, or suffer harm from poison, or suffer harm from fire, or suffer harm from water [...]”<sup>704</sup>

2) Remembering past lives, merit and prosperity:

“Those (who copy, wear or recite this mantra) will be able to remember their births for the past 84,000 aeons. [...] They will not become poor. And they will come to be endowed with an accumulation of merit, infinite as the immeasurable sands of the Gaṅgā and incalculable as the Buddhas.”<sup>705</sup>

3) Fulfilment of desires and rebirth in Sukhāvātī:

---

<sup>704</sup> This and the following passages are taken from the translation in Gongkatsang and Willis 2018 (available from Zenodo at <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1470799>) . An edition of the Tibetan text is also included.

<sup>705</sup> See *ibid.*

“Should a devout boy or girl desire a son, if they read or touch this enabling mantra of the Victorious One [...] a son will be found. They will certainly also find long life, merit and power. Even after death and passing beyond this place, they will be born in Sukhāvātī, the world of bliss.”<sup>706</sup>

4) Protecting the country against calamity and use of banners with the spell:

“When there are threats of disease among the people and disease in the livestock and epidemics and mischief and harm and contagion and all kinds of strife and hordes of enemy armies, having attached this queen of enabling mantras [...] to the top of victory banners and performing a major rite to ward off these calamities, (the banners) should be raised at the gate of every city or in villages or in towns or in the country or in the districts or in places where there are hermitages.”<sup>707</sup>

This is only a portion of the closing statements regarding the benefits of spell practice. Yet, one can already see how wide the range of potential applications really is. Mention of benefits now familiar from PP spell scriptures are also found - e.g. attainment of merit or remembering past lives - yet they are juxtaposed with other ones, often of a very practical and mundane nature.

---

<sup>706</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>707</sup> See *ibid.*

Surely, some such benefits are sometimes associated with PP spells scriptures, especially the PPH. Apparently Xuanzang himself had benefitted from the protective power of this work once he had found himself in a perilous situation.<sup>708</sup> It seems that Chinese *dhāraṇī* pillars, on which the PPH is typically inscribed, would also be meant to offer protection at the level of everyday life.<sup>709</sup> Nevertheless, in terms of scriptural passages our sources lack references to this typical mundane dimension. Not only are descriptions of actual practice virtually absent, but even mention of simple details such as the best time for recitation etc. are not found.<sup>710</sup>

Another aspect is that of reference to enhanced cognitive abilities. For example, some PP spell scriptures mention briefly the attainment of extraordinary memory. This could be seen as linked to the theme of *prajñā* 'insight', decoded in mundane terms rather than in terms of ultimate awakening. It seems that this aspect is particularly stressed in esoteric works related to PP. Some examples of this will be given in the next chapter.

In the Selected Sources, the vast majority of passages investigated were stressing long term karmic benefits in relation to rebirth, as well as the attainment of awakening. There was no statement to the effect that one should carry an amulet with a PP-spell for protection, nor that it would be possible to control

---

<sup>708</sup> See Nattier 1992: 180 and relevant note.

<sup>709</sup> On these remarkable objects and their functions see Kuo 2014.

<sup>710</sup> This is puzzling, for it is only to be expected that spells would have a strong association with certain times of the day (or the week) and calendrical phases. On this see for example Bühnemann 2014.

phenomena or events (such as the weather, or a battle) by reciting a certain spell. Thus, the mundane aspect was not particularly emphasised. This marks a strong contrast to the passages just quoted.

Another point to keep in mind is the lack of detailed ritual descriptions, complex procedures or statements about mediation by the priesthood. This was interpreted as an attempt on part of the redactors to make these scriptures and their spells as widely available and appealing as possible.

Merit is a key notion both in PP spell scriptures as elsewhere. The idea of gaining large amounts of merit by reciting a short text representing the synthesis of a larger teaching is found e.g. in the *dhāraṇī-parivarta* of the *Laṅkāvatāra*.<sup>711</sup>

Of course spells can also purify one's past karma and this is indeed a major tenet of many *dhāraṇī*-works, not only PP spell scriptures. In many such sources, one finds statements addressing how latent karma will be purified, resulting in a good rebirth, even in heavenly Buddha-fields.<sup>712</sup> Two key examples from the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* and the *Ratnaketu-parivarta* are presented in Davidson 2014. In the first, even the bad consequences of the "five sins of immediate retribution" are prevented by *dhāraṇī* cultivation.<sup>713</sup> In the second, not only the same kind of

---

<sup>711</sup> See Castro-Sanchez 2011:82.

<sup>712</sup> For a listing of relevant passages see Castro-Sanchez 2011: 61f, section titled 'karmic purification'.

<sup>713</sup> See the passage presented in Davidson 2014: 29.

sins, but even “any other defilement maturing from results of body speech and mind, are all destroyed”.<sup>714</sup>

Just as in the present corpus, this process of purification is often linked to the rise of the resolve to become a Buddha (*bodhicittotpāda*), the gaining of insight and wisdom, and ultimately awakening itself. Davidson had identified this element in some *dhāraṇī* sources, and spoke of what in his view is an “uneasy relationship between worldly and religious priorities”.<sup>715</sup> He quotes a passage from the *Ṣaṇmukhīdhāraṇī*, which mentions not only the destruction of karma, but even the attainment of supreme awakening.<sup>716</sup>

Thus, supramundane benefits in terms of karma and insight into reality are not exclusive of PP spell scriptures, and are found, often along with mundane benefits, across *dhāraṇī* literature.

It might be useful to trace some parallels for the SvalP’s remarkable statements about spell practice. When it comes to the SvalP’s reference to keeping a manuscript at one’s home, one is reminded of the colophon of Nepalese *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* Cambridge Add. 1362, which also mentioned keeping a MS copy ‘at home’ (*grhe*).<sup>717</sup>

The passages of the SvalP mentioning how this work is meant to be used by people with little merit and the capacity for less effort were particularly striking.

---

<sup>714</sup> *Ibid.* The passage again is presented by Davidson both in Skt. and English translation.

<sup>715</sup> See Davidson 2014: 30.

<sup>716</sup> *Ibid.* (the passage is presented in Skt. and English translation).

<sup>717</sup> Details on this were given in Chapter 2.4.

Characterisations of that kind are otherwise rare in the present corpus, with the majority of works avoiding any talk of prerequisites on part of the practitioner. Some parallel expressions are found in the famous Cuttack stone inscription, which teaches a *dhāraṇī* and describes how it should be deposited within *stūpas*. Schopen pointed out that the spell corresponds to the *Bodhigarbhālaṃkāralakṣadhāraṇī*.<sup>718</sup>

The Cuttack *dhāraṇī*-stone comes with a sort of ‘colophon’ which gives vital information. This deserves to be quoted in full:

*yaḥ kaś cid bhikṣur vā bhikṣuṇī vopāsako vōpāsikā vā, anyo vā  
yaḥ kaś cit śrāddhaḥ kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā imāṃ  
dhāraṇīṃ likhitvā ‘bhyntaraṃ prakṣipyā caityaṃ kariṣyati,  
tenaikena caityena kṛtena lakṣaṃ tathāgatacaityānāṃ kṛtaṃ  
bhavati [...] evaṃ mayānanda saṃkṣiptena deśitaṃ  
**mandapuṇyānāṃ** aparīśuddhānāṃ mithyādr̥ṣṭivaimatikānāṃ  
ānāntaryakāriṇāṃ **alpāyuṣkāṇāṃ**  
narakatiryagyoniyamalokaparāyaṇānāṃ sattvānāṃ arthāya |  
yadbhūyasā-m-ānaṃda grhasthā...<sup>719</sup>*

“Whatsoever monk or nun or layman or woman, or whatsoever other devout son or daughter of good family, after having written this *dhāraṇī*, after having deposited it inside, will make a *caitya*, by that single *caitya* being made a hundred thousand *caitya* of the

<sup>718</sup> See Schopen 1982: 107 (“The text on the ‘Dhāraṇī stones from Abhayagira’. A minor contribution to the study of Mahayana literature in Ceylon”), reprinted in Schopen 2005.

<sup>719</sup> The edition by Gosh 1941: 173 (EI 26) was improved by Schopen (see 2005: 314-344). The latter’s edition is followed here.

Tathāgata are (in effect) made. [...] Thus by me, Ānanda, was (this) taught in brief for the sake of living beings who have little merit, who are impure, who have false views and doubts, who have committed acts with immediate retribution, who are short lived and are destined for hells, animal births and the world of Yama. For the most part, Ānanda, householders ...”<sup>720</sup>

The following points are worth noting. Thanks to the *dhāraṇī*, once again a small, limited act can bear the same fruit as a much more elaborate act of worship (*ekena caityena kṛtena lakṣaṃ tathāgatacaityānāṃ kṛtaṃ bhavati*).

This time the target demographic includes lay persons (*gṛhastha*) who have gathered little merit so far (*mandapuṇya*). This is the very expression used in the SvalP.<sup>721</sup> Thus, once again a link is made between lack of merit - along with lack of general spiritual/intellectual achievements - and the practice of spells. This is probably best understood in terms of openness - or indeed primary emphasis - of the practice to commoners and less gifted devotees.

The terms *saṃkṣiptena* ‘in concise form’ is quite common in the present corpus. The expression *svalpākṣarā* ‘[the Prajñāpāramitā] in few syllables’ could be seen as emphasising the same notion.<sup>722</sup>

---

<sup>720</sup> See Schopen 2005: 329.

<sup>721</sup> The relevant passage was presented above.

<sup>722</sup> For more information on the Orissan *dhāraṇī* inscriptions see the recent contribution by Mishra (2016).

Hopefully these examples will suffice to illustrate how the kind of practices and supporting statements found within PP spell scriptures are shared with a number of other sources. It is important to avoid equating *dhāraṇī*-practices with magic or mundane purposes *tout court*, as is sometimes done. PP scriptures are a very good example of how spells can be used in a less ritualised environment, in conjunction with the aim for catharsis and gnosis. However, in practice one usually encounters a combination of possible benefits.

## 4.4 Summary of Observations

This chapter was devoted to the presentation and analysis of the spells and accompanying statements found in PP spell scriptures. First of all, it was pointed out that spells are integrated within such sources in a variety of ways. The main divide is found between works with a *sūtra* framework and those which lack it. The *dhāraṇī*-units - single or multiple - are found in a variety of positions, ranging from the very end of a work, to its centre, and to its start. While these features could be useful for taxonomical purposes, one should keep in mind that there is not always a direct link between structure and the actual contents of a work. Also, fluidity in terms of textual transmission makes relying on these structural features more challenging. However, lack of *sūtra*-narratives and presence of embedded *dhāraṇīs* are often found in conjunction with an emphasis on practice

and performance. Some specimens are typologically quite close to certain kinds of *Dhāraṇīsūtras*.

In terms of actual spells, most of them are also found in PP-related works outside the Selected Sources in what is a remarkable degree of continuity. However, many spells are also shared with a number of *Dhāraṇīsūtras* and Tantras. Some of these can be explicitly linked to PP in such sources. There appears to have been a wide network of spells circulating independently from sūtras.

As for the practice of spells, it is clear that PP spell scriptures emphasise the quest for religious merit, karmic purification and religious aspirations (e.g. in strengthening the will to pursue supreme awakening). This is remarkable, as it shows a substantial lack of interest in mundane benefits, otherwise so characteristic of *dhāraṇī* sources. Nevertheless, there are a few statements concerning apotropaic benefits as well.

In terms of actual ritual procedures, they are most of the time left implicit. One could often assume a simple practice of recitation being intended. In one case (that of the SaśīP) there was mention of a practice extending over a number of days and involving a vision of the Buddha as a result.

## 5. TRACING THE INFLUENCE OF MATURE ESOTERIC BUDDHISM

### 5.1 Preliminary Observations

The aim of the present chapter is to introduce and discuss those aspects of PP spell scriptures which might betray the influence of mature esoteric Buddhism (see 1.2.2.1).

In general, PP spell scriptures do not represent mature esoteric Buddhism of the kind known from the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* and later Tantras (see 1.2.2.1). Therefore, one has to focus on the presence of selected elements. One could think of *maṇḍalas*, initiation ceremonies (*abhiṣeka*, or *pratiṣṭhā* in the case of statues), fierce deities, antinomian practices, advanced visualisation techniques, etc. One should be cautious here, as such features are neither a *necessary* nor an *exclusive* component of esoteric cultural expressions. Thus, if one is to resort to such elements in order to characterise esoteric Buddhism, one should specify that such characterisation is strictly polythetic. In fact, elements typically found in mature esoteric discourse also occur in earlier sources, some of which can go back to the Gupta period, if not even before. However, in the early period, many of the terms that will later become common had slightly different connotations. Thus, *maṇḍala* in the early sources can simply refer to a ritual space or 'altar', rather than the complex palace-shaped diagrams populated by various deities common today in Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>723</sup> However, some relatively

---

<sup>723</sup> See for example Copp 2014: 91.

early *dhāraṇī* sources do indicate the use of colour powders for the preparation of simple *maṇḍalas*.<sup>724</sup>

Scholars often use the term 'proto-esoteric', to indicate the presence of elements which will later become characteristic of mature esoteric Buddhism.<sup>725</sup>

That this term is problematic was pointed out above (1.3.3.5). Furthermore, it can hardly apply in the context of PP spell scriptures, for these were in all likelihood redacted at a time in which esoteric Buddhism had already become a fully developed system.

This brings up the challenging question of how to interpret certain features of PP spell scriptures, which could be taken as representing a link with more or less developed forms of esotericism. In most cases, one will only encounter short passages including specific terms, e.g. *maṇḍala* and *abhiṣeka*. While the evidence that can be gained from the Selected Sources is limited and fragmentary, a look at the wider place of PP within esoteric discourse will help throw further light on the issue of the interrelation between these traditions, as well as the composition of PP spell scriptures as a whole.

Before moving to the presentation and analysis of the relevant materials, it is necessary to spend a few introductory words about the complex relations between PP and esoteric Buddhism (also see the *Introduction* 1.2).

---

<sup>724</sup> See for example certain passages of the *Mahāpratisarā*: "one should draw a splendid *maṇḍala* with five-coloured powder" (Hidas 2011: 249).

<sup>725</sup> See for example Orzech et al. 2011: 216.

A common perception is that PP represents traditional Mahāyāna as opposed to, or at least separate from, esoteric Buddhism. However, beyond this preliminary distinction, one starts noticing how, in practice, PP and esoteric Buddhism were often considered, or promoted, as complementary. This is often done on the basis of the *pāramitānaya/mantranaya* framework. More importantly, in the later period the two traditions started to significantly overlap and mix with each other in a variety of ways.

Some of the earliest attestations of these interactions are found in Chinese sources. For example, the 7<sup>th</sup> C TJ testifies to a relatively early ritual environment of *maṇḍala* worship in which PP is embedded.<sup>726</sup> Also significant is the trajectory of the AdhyP. Despite Xuanzang's version of the AdhyP still being only mildly esoteric, this too exemplifies the beginning of a new trend.<sup>727</sup> In fact, it is the AdhyP which will come to represent the best example of a scripture labelled *Prajñāpāramitā de facto* endorsing esoteric teachings. For example, one could mention the AdhyP's treatment of the *viśuddhipadas*, a typically esoteric notion connected to a positive view of sensual pleasure.<sup>728</sup>

But apart from the AdhyP, other PP scriptures had a presence and ritual significance in esoteric environments. This is true of the PPH, the *Vajracchedikā*

---

<sup>726</sup> Shinohara has recently given some attention to the PP section, translating part of the description on the PP ritual procedures (2014: 54ff.).

<sup>727</sup> This work is found as the 10th section of the monumental T220. For a brief description of the many version of this important work, see Tomabechi 2009: xlv ff.

<sup>728</sup> See Tomabechi 2009: lviii ff.

and even the SaŚP, particularly in the East Asian context.<sup>729</sup> Furthermore, mention should be made here of the fact that copies of the AS appear to have been commissioned by esoteric practitioners, particularly in the later phase of the Pāla period.<sup>730</sup> Some esoteric sources mention the use of PP manuscripts in the context of esoteric rituals<sup>731</sup> and one notices the appearance of an esoteric iconographic program in some PP manuscripts.<sup>732</sup> More on these important aspects of the interaction between PP and esotericism will be said below.

The interaction, or complementarity between the two traditions is also testified by certain passages in Tibetan historiographical sources, which describe how Pāla kings had surrounded themselves with experts on PP as well as with specialists on esoteric scriptures.<sup>733</sup> However, there is some controversy regarding some of these claims and it is partly unclear to what extent they reflect actual Pāla practice rather than Tibetan agendas. In fact, one may wonder what was the specific role of the Tibetans in promoting the integration between PP and esoteric practice. One should not forget that foreign patronage was a key source

---

<sup>729</sup> Some comments on this can be found in Davidson 2011: 23.

<sup>730</sup> See the overview table on MSS - including patronage dynamics - at Kim 2013: 217ff.

<sup>731</sup> One can think for example of the famous *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. This work and some of its relevant passages will be introduced below. For reference to a *pustaka* 'manuscript book' being used in consecration ceremonies outlined in the *Vajrāvalī*, see Mori 1997: 147,1.

<sup>732</sup> Chapter five in Kim 2013 is dedicated to exploring this topic. Also see Allinger 2008.

<sup>733</sup> There is a very famous and programmatic passage by Tāranātha which depicts the PP scholar Haribhadra and the *tāntrika* Jñānapāda as representing exoteric and esoteric Buddhism respectively. Both scholars were apparently very close to the Pāla king (Chimpa 1990: 274).

of revenue for some monastic universities in Pāla Bengal. As Seton suggests, there is scope for exploring the extent of Tibetan influence upon the work of towering figures such as Ratnākaraśānti, who was actively involved in the scholastic formulation of the alignment between exoteric and esoteric Buddhist practice.<sup>734</sup>

While the great bulk of the evidence for an integration between the two traditions comes from East Asia, one should also consider Southeast Asian sources. In Cambodia, PP and Avalokiteśvara seem to *prima facie* epitomise traditional, i.e. exoteric, Mahāyāna. Developments in Avalokiteśvara cults were addressed by Green.<sup>735</sup> As for PP, in Khmer epigraphy one finds references to Buddhist scholars associated with both PP and esoteric scriptural traditions.<sup>736</sup> Alongside the development of possibly esoteric-driven iconographic trends - with the emergence of peculiar, multi-armed statues of PP<sup>737</sup> - some *praśastis* mention Prajñāpāramitā within innovative ‘constellations’ of deities.<sup>738</sup> Of course, Old Javanese sources are also relevant in this regard (see next Chapter).

Before developing the discussion further, let us assess the evidence presented by PP spell scriptures. The Selected Sources do include a number of fascinating passages which should definitely be considered when addressing this complex

---

<sup>734</sup> For references to Tibetans actively supporting (with donations of gold) the monastic universities of Pāla Bengal, see Seton 2015: 47.

<sup>735</sup> See Green 2014.

<sup>736</sup> One can think of inscription K.111. See Sanderson 2003: 427 (note 285).

<sup>737</sup> See Miltzer o’Naghten 2016: 51.

<sup>738</sup> See Harris 2005: 17.

issue. The evidence is actually not just textual but also extends to some of the MSS and objects on which the texts are preserved.

## 5.2 Esoteric Elements in the Selected Sources

### 5.2.1 A Practice-oriented Work

As pointed out above, the mere presence of spells in a PP scripture is not considered here sufficient reason to establish a link with (mature) esoteric Buddhism. There are nonetheless some statements within the Selected Sources which capture one's attention. One scripture which stands out in this regard is the *\*Prajñāpāramitā Nāmāṣṭaśatakā* (PNA).<sup>739</sup> The PNA's emphasis on performance is already represented by its structure, for the work lacks the classic *sūtra* opening and directly starts with a list of epithets of PP. This is followed by a *dhāraṇī*-unit which also includes descriptions of the benefits of recitation. The relevant passages were presented in the previous chapter, along with remarks on Conze's translation.

While the performance-related descriptions are more developed in the Tibetan text than in the Chinese version, even there one struggles to identify explicit reference to flagship esoteric practice or notions. This is despite Conze's puzzling mention of the presence of "orgiastic elements" in the PNA.<sup>740</sup> In fact, no

---

<sup>739</sup> For two short overviews of this work, see Conze 1978: 84f. and Lehnert 1999: 61f.

<sup>740</sup> See Conze 1978: 85.

antinomian practices appear to be endorsed by the PNA at all. The straightforward description also does not mention any particular prerequisite or entitlement on part of the reciter, a fact which appears to rule out an initiatory or otherwise sectarianly organised environment.<sup>741</sup> Moreover, typically esoteric terminology is almost entirely lacking. There are claims that the reciter will be protected by the Buddhas, that he will create the base for good future existence, and that he will also be able to grasp the entire *Śatasāhasrikā PP*.

Nevertheless, a passage towards the end of the work does refer to secret mantras and *vidyās* (*gsang sngags*, *rig sngags*).<sup>742</sup> Expressions such as ‘fully taking hold of mantras and *vidyās*’ are not common in the Selected Sources. In most cases, spells are not referred to at all, or the terms *dhāraṇī* or *hṛdaya* are used. Nevertheless, given the lack of further details in the PNA, it is difficult to speculate as to what such control over spells might actually involve.

It cannot be excluded that this is an attempt on part of a PP work to endorse an inclusivistic model of mantra practice, which would accommodate esoteric practices too. This would entail that the benefits of reciting PP names and spells could be of interest even to those otherwise involved in other forms of mantra practice. There is however, no explicit attempt at dissuading such practitioners by arguing that PP spells would be superior. Alternatively, one could speculate that the mantras and *vidyās* are references to non-Buddhist spells, e.g. Śaiva

---

<sup>741</sup> See the opening *su zhig* ‘anyone who [...]’ (Q172 rgyud, pa 18a,4 [vol. 6, p.279]).

<sup>742</sup> This expression appears to be absent in the Chinese version. See *ibid*. The passage is translated in Chapter 4.3.1 and the Tibetan text as recorded in the Peking edition is also presented.

ones. In this case, one would be looking at an underlying blurring of the boundaries between Buddhist and non-Buddhist practices. There is, however, little evidence which could substantiate this hypothesis, which at present seems quite far-fetched.

Regardless of the lack of decisive esoteric elements, it should be pointed out how the PNA does raise the bar in terms of emphasis on ritual practice and development of its descriptions when compared to most other PP spell scriptures selected in this study. Even works which lack the *sūtra* framework like the SaŚIP and the EkaP do not enter into such details in their descriptions.

Be that as it may, the PNA raises the question of the status of PP spells and what their recitation might have entailed for different kinds of practitioners.

### **5.2.3 References to *maṇḍalas* and Initiation**

The issues presented *in nuce* by the PNA are further developed in the SvalP. This work, however, presents itself as a fully-fledged short *sūtra* in all the extant versions and the bulk of the text is predominantly narrative and teaching oriented. This is probably the reason why the SvalP offers more details on what the practice of its spells would entail.

As a preliminary consideration, one should bear in mind that the textual transmission of the SvalP is complex. Yuyama's edition (1977) improved Conze's in several ways. Some of the Sanskrit passages and expressions on which Conze

based his description of the SvalP in the PPL are not found in Yuyama's critically edited text. However, there are a number of MSS which Yuyama did not use. One of particular importance is CTRC 8, which includes the SvalP. This Pāla witness offers some remarkable variant readings, some of which will be presented for the first time below.

At first, one notices that the shorter *dhāraṇī* of the SvalP, *oṃ mune mune mahāmunaye svāhā*, is also found in the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*, an early esoteric scripture.<sup>743</sup> However, this link should not be overemphasised, for the same spell is also found in other sources, including the *Amoghapāśahṛdayasūtra*, a *dhāraṇīsūtra*.<sup>744</sup> One should also bear in mind that self-referential passages in the Chinese translation of the SvalP indicate that the work in question should be considered a *dhāraṇīsūtra*.<sup>745</sup>

However, the SvalP is most striking for its phraseology and terminology. For the most part, the text could be addressing non-specialists who are simply willing to recite and copy the *dhāraṇīs* as a way to progress on the path to enlightenment. Even people of low merit and ability can benefit from the practice. This was pointed out in detail in the previous chapter.

---

<sup>743</sup> See Skorupski 1983: 149. Two mantras of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra* include the term *prajñāpāramitā* (p.128, p.144).

<sup>744</sup> See Meisezahl 1962: 320.

<sup>745</sup> In the main body of the text, where the Skt. reads *svalpākṣarā* (PP), the Chinese consistently has the equivalent of *\*prajñāpāramitādhāraṇī* (See Yuyama 1977: 291, note 103).

There are, however, at least two passages which seem to betray references to a more developed ritual background:

A) *ye ca sattvā mantrasādhana udyuktās teṣāṃ cāvighnena mantrāḥ sidherann[sic!] iti* (Yuyama 1977: 286, IIIa/IIIb)

‘Those beings who are engaged with the mantra-practice will have their mantras succeed without any obstacles’.

若有眾生發至誠心，受持讀誦此真言者，隨所求願，決定成就，無諸魔難 (T08n0258p0853a11)

B) [...] *anayā paṭhitamātrayā sarvamaṇḍalābhiṣikto bhavati, sarve ca mantrāḥ abhimukhā bhavanti* (*ibid.* p.287, Vh)

‘By the mere recitation of this [*prajñāpāramitā* (in the form of mantra)] one is consecrated in all *maṇḍalas*, and all mantras become present [to him]’.

若能受持讀誦此陀羅尼<sup>746</sup>者，便同入一切曼拏羅<sup>747</sup>中，得受灌頂。又如受持一切真言，皆獲成就。(T08n0258p0853c12)

Leaving aside the irregular form *sidheran*,<sup>748</sup> which is not found in Conze’s edition, one should focus on the three expressions *mantrasādhana* (and by

---

<sup>746</sup> Notice that the Chinese adds the transcription of *dhāraṇī* here.

<sup>747</sup> This is a transcription for *maṇḍala*.

extension of *mantrasiddhi*), *abhimukhā mantrāḥ*, and *sarvamaṇḍalābhiṣikta*.

These seem to be the only attestations of such expressions in PP spell scriptures.

In the following discussion, special attention will be given to how such notions are treated within an esoteric work commonly known under the title of *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (MMK), - although *Mañjuśriyamūlakalpa* might actually be the correct title - a vast compendium of medieval Buddhist practices, the bulk of which was probably composed after the 8<sup>th</sup> century, although individual sections could be older.<sup>749</sup>

According to Conze, in the MMK the deity Prajñāpāramitā is not found at the centre of any *maṇḍala*.<sup>750</sup> Nonetheless, there are a number of passages which refer to PP. The *Rājavyākaraṇa*, the famous chapter on dynastic history, does mention that king Turuṣka established (*pratiṣṭhitā*) Prajñāpāramitā in his

---

<sup>748</sup> Conze had access to an early MS from the Asiatic Society of Kolkata. However, since the beginning of the text was lost, he had to resort to the Tibetan translation. This term occurs in the part not covered by the manuscript. The later Nepalese Dhāraṇī Anthologies I have checked so far seem to actually have preserved the reading *sidheran* or *siddheran* (See for example Cambridge MS Add. 1326, f.202r).

<sup>749</sup> See the authoritative introduction on the website of the Centre for Tantric Studies, Hamburg: <https://www.tantric-studies.uni-hamburg.de/en/research/projects/manjusriyamulakalpa.html> (accessed Aug 2018).

<sup>750</sup> See Conze 1978: 15.

kingdom <sup>751</sup> . There are also references to PP-*mudrās* or hand placements/gestures as well as books <sup>752</sup> .

Let us now return to the three expressions identified from the SvalP.

The expression *mantrasādhana* is quite common in Sanskrit literature and is found across the spectrum of Indian religions and even outside of them. In fact, the general reader is more likely to come across this expression in Kāvya works, which feature a number of descriptions of allegedly powerful gurus and magicians, sometimes even with a clear satirical intent. <sup>753</sup> When it comes to Buddhist works, the term is also found in *dhāraṇī* literature such as in the short *Mahāgaṇapatiḥṛdaya*. <sup>754</sup> The term, however, is in all probability even more common in esoteric Buddhist writing.

There is no point in mentioning the hundreds of passages found throughout the MMK that deal with *mantrasādhana/mantrasiddhi*, either directly or indirectly. One passage of the *Rājavyākaraṇa* illustrates how such a notion is so pervasive in this context as to become virtually synonymous with esoteric Buddhism. In a prophetic passage employing the future tense, King Śīla of Valabhī is described as

---

<sup>751</sup> See Gaṇapatiśāstri 1920: 623, 11. For an elaboration on what this could mean for the origin of PP see Lamotte 1954, 389.

<sup>752</sup> See i.a. Gaṇapatiśāstri 1920:424,7. For depictions of PP *mudrās* see Lokesh Chandra 1999 (vol.9): 2673.

<sup>753</sup> The term is also found in the *Kādambarī*, in a very famous satirical description of an unlikely Śaiva ascetic who is attending to a temple of Caṇḍikā (see Kane 1911: 97,7).

<sup>754</sup> See Iwamoto 1937: 11. See Hidas 2015 for more information on this classic *dhāraṇī* scripture.

*nāsau mantrasiddhaḥ*, which Sanderson renders as “he will not achieve success through [the Buddhist Way of] Mantras”.<sup>755</sup>

This illustrates that, while not been exclusively tied to the esoteric context, the term *mantrasādhana* is quite characteristic of such context. This might be significant when it comes to the SvalP, particularly if the other passages found in this work point in the same direction.

Moving on to the next expression, I was not able to trace particularly numerous instances of the term *abhimukha* used with reference to mantras. Also, as far as I can see, the term is not recorded in *Tantrikābhidānaśāstra* I, nor in the *Addenda et Corrigenda* to volume II. The expression *abhimukhī + bhū* is, however, common in exoteric Buddhist works - including PP sūtras - often simply meaning ‘being present’.<sup>756</sup> Another common meaning is that found in the context of *maṇḍala* rituals, where *abhimukha* can translate as ‘facing’ (usually a certain direction).<sup>757</sup> When it refers to mantras, the term seems to indicate the attainment of a state of power over mantras on part of the *sādhaka*, in what is perhaps an extension of the common exoteric use.<sup>758</sup> The MMK has the following passage:

---

<sup>755</sup> See Sanderson 2009: 72 (note 90).

<sup>756</sup> The term can be found, for example, in the SaŚP itself. See Masuda 1930: 201,5.

<sup>757</sup> See for example the terms *purvāmukham/purvābhimukham* in Hidas 2012: 191,5.

<sup>758</sup> In a personal note, from Prof. Isaacson kindly mentioned that the expression is not very common with reference to mantras and would imply that the mantras become present/actual for the practitioner (personal communication, Sept 2018).

[...] *mantram japed aṣṭaśataṃ sarvavyādhivinirmukto bhavati, dīrghāyusaḥ sarvavighnais ca nābhibhūyate, sarvasattvānām adhr̥ṣyo bhavati, sarvamantrās cābhimukhībhavanti* [etc..]<sup>759</sup>

‘He should recite the mantra 108<sup>760</sup> times and he will become free from all disease, he will have a long life span, he will not be overcome by any obstacle, nor will he be vulnerable to anyone, all the mantras will become present [to him] [...].’

This is simply a list of benefits arising from various practices which also include the performance of *mudrās* etc. Although this is not a definition of *abhimukhā mantrā*, it is clear that the notion is treated as one of the possible attainments of esoteric practice. This is also how it could be read in the SvalP, for there too one finds a description of a final attainment. Notice that parallel expressions are found in similarly esoteric contexts not as referring to *mantras*, but to actions (*karman*) or perfections (*siddhis*).<sup>761</sup>

As for the third and last expression I have chosen to analyse, *sarvamaṇḍalābhiṣikta* would seem to establish at last a clear link with esoteric practice. This, however, is not as straightforward as one might expect. On the one hand, esoteric Buddhism makes of *maṇḍala*-initiation (*maṇḍalābhiṣeka*) one

---

<sup>759</sup> Gaṇapatiśāstri 1920: 421, 6. A similar expression is encountered on p.390, 9.

<sup>760</sup> It seems appropriate to take *aṣṭaśata* as an elided version of *aṣṭādharmaśata* in this context, thus meaning 108 and not 800.

<sup>761</sup> See Gaṇapatiśāstri 1920: 542, line 7 (from the bottom) *sarvakarmās cābhimukhā bhavanti*, as well as *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha: sarvasiddhayaś cāsyābhimukhībhavanti* (Yamada ed. p.70,9).

of its foundational ritual practices. On the other hand, both the terms *maṇḍala* and *abhiṣeka* are commonly found in non-esoteric contexts - with meanings such as circle, assembly, etc. for *maṇḍala*, and anointment, consecration (particularly of kings), etc. for *abhiṣeka*. Conze read the Skt. passage as *anayā paṭhitamātreṇa sarvaparṣaṇ[sic]maṇḍalābhiṣiktā bhavanti* and he rendered this elsewhere with “where it [i.e. the PP in form of mantra] has been read aloud, there all the assemblies are consecrated”.<sup>762</sup> Although it is not clear how such a translation can be reached if *sarvaparṣaṇmaṇḍalābhiṣiktā* is treated as a single compound in this sentence, in theory a similar interpretation of *maṇḍala* and *abhiṣeka* could be applied to Yuyama’s critically edited text (i.e. passage B quoted above). This would result in ‘by its mere recitation, he [i.e. the practitioner] becomes one who has been consecrated in all assemblies’. Interestingly, Yuyama is clearly not prepared to accept this, for he states in the relative footnote that “*maṇḍalābhiṣikta-* is without doubt used in a Tantric sense” and goes on to refer to Tucci’s *The Theory and Practice of the Maṇḍala*.<sup>763</sup>

Notice that the Chinese actually reads ‘one who has entered all *maṇḍalas*’, which could be the equivalent of *\*sarvamaṇḍalapraviṣṭa*. In the course of a research trip to Beijing, it has been possible to observe that the SvalP as found in CTTC 8 does indeed read *sarvamaṇḍalapraviṣṭa*.<sup>764</sup> Be that as it may, the act of entering a

---

<sup>762</sup> See Conze 1956: 115.

<sup>763</sup> See Yuyama 1977: 291 (note 98). Prof. Isaacson kindly suggested that *sarvamaṇḍala* might not have a particular technical meaning here. The text seems to imply that the recitation of the *Svalpākṣarā* PP has an effect equivalent to consecration in all *maṇḍalas*, with no need for an actual consecration (personal communication, Sept. 2018).

<sup>764</sup> See CTTC 8, folio 5a2.

*maṇḍala* could imply initiation, even if the actual term *abhiṣeka* is absent in these versions.

Incidentally, the same expression occurs in other works, like the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, in the context of *dhāraṇī* recitation for apotropaic purposes<sup>765</sup>, as well as the *Mahāpratisarā-mahāvidyārājñī*, which reads *sidhyante sarvakalpās ca praviṣṭaḥ sarvamaṇḍale*.<sup>766</sup> The latter is translated by Hidas as: “all ritual procedures succeed [for him], he [is equal to one who] has entered all *maṇḍalas*.”<sup>767</sup> The *Mahāpratisarā* is attested in 7<sup>th</sup> century MSS and it can be considered a relatively early work. The meaning of *maṇḍala* therein might not refer to the fully-fledged diagrams of the later tradition. However, at one point there is mention of colour powders used for tracing the *maṇḍala* itself.<sup>768</sup>

Unfortunately, the MMK does not offer many examples in this regard. A rather cryptic passage reads:

*sarvasattvānāṃ karuṇāyamānena utpāditabodhicittena*

*sarvasattvānukampayamānena sarvamaṇḍalāny abhilihitavyāni*

***sarvamaṇḍalābhiṣekābhiṣiktaiḥ mahāmaṇḍalābhiṣiktair vā*** |

‘All *maṇḍalas* should be drawn by one who is compassionate towards all beings, who has given rise to the thought of awakening, who is sympathetic towards all beings; by those who were initiated through

---

<sup>765</sup> The passage is translated in Bendall 1922: 136, line 14.

<sup>766</sup> See Hidas 2012: 114,7.

<sup>767</sup> See Hidas 2012: 208.

<sup>768</sup> See *ibid.*: 249.

initiation in all *maṇḍalas* or those who were initiated in the great  
*maṇḍala*'.<sup>769</sup>

The appearance of the two instrumental plurals along with the disjunctive *vā* is slightly puzzling. There could certainly be technical meanings of *sarvamaṇḍala* and *mahāmaṇḍala*.<sup>770</sup> However, these would hardly apply to the SvalP's scenario. Notice instead that the plural term *sarvamaṇḍalāni* could be taken as simply meaning 'all *maṇḍalas*', just like in the SvalP.

To sum up, the passages of the SvalP do include expressions that are found in the esoteric context, although perhaps not exclusively. One could speculate that the SvalP's redactors were deliberately attempting to be vague, so as to not overcharge the work with esoteric content. In fact, apart from the two short samples quoted above, the rest of the SvalP is fairly straightforward and is also styled in the way of a traditional *sūtra*.

Another way of dealing with the issue would be to consider the SvalP as a compilation of different passages added over time. Following this line of thinking, passages A) and B) could have been added or modified at a second time to favour the works circulation in esoteric circles. Against this view one could argue that not only the early translations, but even the significantly old extant Skt. versions such as CTRC 8 already contain such passages, albeit in slightly different versions.

---

<sup>769</sup> See the larger passage at Gaṇapatiśāstri 1920: 409, 2-14 .

<sup>770</sup> As is well known, the Skt. *mahat* can often mean something like 'special'. Also, the term *sarva* could perhaps refer to the *Sarvaguhya*, a *Sāmānyatantra*.

One might ask at this point what the actual intent of the SvalP's redactors was. There is no clear endorsement of esoteric practice here. What the SvalP seems to be saying is that the practice of its PP-related spells will bring about results which are as remarkable as those of some advanced esoteric practices. This, however, does not translate into trying to explicitly prevent *sādhakas* from pursuing the esoteric path. Perhaps the best way to take such passages is in terms of an attempt to promote PP spells in an environment in which esoteric practice was well represented. In such environment initiation and mantra-practices would have been associated with great powers. According to the redactors of the SvalP such powers can also be achieved by means of the practice of PP spells.

### 5.2.2 A Prajñāpāramitā with six arms

For an example of PP integrated within a more developed ritual context, one can turn to the *\*Buddhamātr* (BM). As mentioned above, this is a very short text extant in a Chinese translation dating to the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century. The title roughly translates as 'The scripture preached by the Buddha on the visualisation of the Bodhisattva Prajñāpāramitā, mother of the Buddhas'.<sup>771</sup>

---

<sup>771</sup> See T259 (佛說觀想佛母般若波羅蜜多菩薩經). Features of this title were discussed in Chapter 3.1. Notice that the title includes the equivalent of *bodhisattva*, thus signalling that the personification of PP is the main object of the work. For overviews see Lehnert 1999: 63 as well as Conze 1978: 90 (no.39). Also see the *Appendices* for a translation of this work.

The presence of the expression ‘mother of the Buddhas’ as a main component in the title of a shorter PP could be significant. To be sure, the notion of PP as mother is a very ancient one, already found in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*.<sup>772</sup> The notion is also found in a large number of epigraphical sources from the Pāla and Khmer kingdoms (see the *Introduction*) and can be considered rather common. However, PP’s female identity can have significant implications for the interaction with the esoteric context. In fact, in a recent contribution, Kim reminds us that the term ‘mother’ (母) appears in the title of the Song-dynasty translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* by Dānapāla (T228), while it is absent in the earlier titles.<sup>773</sup> More importantly, the same term is also attached to the titles of Song translations of the *Ratnaguṇasamcayagāthā* (T229), the PPH (T257), and the SvalP (T258).<sup>774</sup> With all due caution, it is not entirely out of place to propose that this new trend in PP titles might indeed reflect a renewed interest in PP as a female deity, perhaps under influence from esoteric Buddhism.

As is well-known, in certain strata of esoteric scriptures, female deities occupy a central position.<sup>775</sup> However, so far I have failed to trace particularly striking passages regarding Prajñāpāramitā from these sources. Interestingly, Kim has recently pointed at a remarkable passage from the *Guhyasamāja* in which PP does figure prominently:

---

<sup>772</sup> See Mitra 1888: 253ff. On the meaning of the term ‘mother’ as found in the PP scriptures see Kinnard 1999: 123ff.

<sup>773</sup> See Kim 2013: 32f.

<sup>774</sup> See Conze 1978: 53, 68, and Yuyama 1977: 282 respectively.

<sup>775</sup> One can think for example of the class of works known as *Yoginītantras* (see Szántó *Unpublished Draft*).

*mātrbhaginīputrīs ca kāmayed yas tu sādhaḥ  
sa siddhiṃ vipulāṃ gacchen mahāyānāgradharmatām  
mātaraṃ buddhasya vibhoḥ kāmayaṃ na ca lipyate  
sidhyate tasya buddhatvaṃ nirvikalpasya dhīmataḥ*<sup>776</sup>

‘The practitioner desiring the Mother, Sister or Daughter attains the wide-ranging perfection, which is the highest principle of Mahāyāna. Even though one desires the mother of lord Buddha, one is not tainted. Such a one, free from conceptualisation and wise, attains the perfection of Buddhahood.’

The *Pradīpoddyotana* clarifies that the ‘mother of the Buddha’ in this context actually is Prajñāpāramitā. The practitioner is apparently supposed to ‘unite’ (*sahasamāpatti*) with her in the course of a visualisation, although the technical details escape me.<sup>777</sup>

In the passage above there is a clear example of how Prajñāpāramitā as mother can be inserted into a ritual discourse addressing practitioners of esoteric Buddhism, along with the employment of sexualised imagery.

Another prominent example is the opening of the *Vajrārali*, where one reads that at one point ‘Bhagavān was residing in the vagina (*bha ga*) of

---

<sup>776</sup> See Matsunaga 1978: 15 (V.7).

<sup>777</sup> See Chakravarti 1984: 49. On the passage and the commentary see also Wayman 1977: 305.

Prajñāpāramitā of all the Tathāgatas'.<sup>778</sup> Similar formulas are common in this kind of literature, although I have not been able to trace other examples mentioning Prajñāpāramitā in the course of my research.

Rather explicit passages like these ones represent a certain stage of development in esoteric Buddhist discourse and are not found as such in the Selected Sources, including the BM. However, the fact that the BM does present a detailed iconographic description could be connected to PP's relevance as a female deity.

This description is embedded within a visualisation practice:

[opening mantra], 誦此真言七遍，以手於頭上灌頂及摩觸遍身，然後息念，志心作佛母般若波羅蜜多菩薩觀行。想此菩薩三面三眼，身真金色，坐吉祥藏師子座，座有千葉金蓮。身有六臂，右邊三臂，第一臂執數珠，第二臂執箭，第三臂作施願相。左邊三臂，第一臂執經，第二臂執弓，第三臂執如意寶。如是六臂種種莊嚴。於其身上，復放無數百千那由他俱胝光明，遍滿一切世界。復想一切如來及多羅菩薩等一切菩薩，具足相好，莊嚴其身，以諸香花而親供養。(T08n0259p0854a22)

[...] Reciting this mantra seven times, with one's hands one [should] perform the anointment (*abhiṣeka*) above the head and [then] smear [the liquid] all over the body.

After that, one [should] calm [one's] mental activity, the mind fixed on giving rise to the visualisation practice of the Bodhisattva Prajñāpāramitā, mother of the Buddhas. One [should] visualise the Bodhisattva as having three faces and three eyes, a golden

---

<sup>778</sup> See *bcom ldan 'das bzhing gshes pa thams cad kyi shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i bha ga la bzhugs so*, Sanderson 2009: 141f. (note 328).

body, and sitting on the 'auspicious repository' lion throne (*śrīgarbhasiṃhāsana*, 吉祥藏師子座).<sup>779</sup> The throne is decorated with golden lotuses with thousand petals. [Her] body has six arms. As for her three right arms, the first holds a rosary, the second an arrow, the third in the gesture of bestowing boons. As for her three left arms, the first holds a scripture, the second a bow, and the third the wish-granting jewel.'

'Thus her six arms are adorned in various ways. Above her body (?), she releases hundreds of thousands *nayutas koṭis*<sup>780</sup> of rays of light, which completely pervade all the worlds. Moreover, one [should] visualise all the Tathāgatas, along with Bodhisattva Tārā and all other Bodhisattvas - with complete primary and secondary marks adorning their bodies - personally offering her all sorts of perfumes and flowers.'

The presence of a PP with six arms might be significant here. Images of Prajñāpāramitā are known to have various numbers of arms. The two-armed and four-armed forms are rather standard and their descriptions can be found i.a. in the *Sādhnamālā* (SM), a work which will be treated below. Lokesh Chandra also reports one Green Tārā/Prajñāpāramitā with eight arms from Alchi, although I could not consult any expert for a second opinion regarding this identification.<sup>781</sup> Furthermore, some very fascinating and apparently unique images of PP with

---

<sup>779</sup> *Śrīgarbha* appears to be a kind of gem. The expression is translated semantically into Chinese and rendered accordingly into English.

<sup>780</sup> These terms are actually found in transcription in the Chinese text. On the whole this is a typical expression indicating an extremely high number.

<sup>781</sup> See Lokesh Chandra 1999 (vol.9): 2681.

more than eight arms are found in Cambodia, with one specimen showing as many as twenty-two arms.<sup>782</sup>

The six-armed Prajñāpāramitā is rather rare. As shown by Luczanits, the six-armed Prajñāpāramitā is portrayed in a remarkable Kashmirian bronze of ca. the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and is also a prominent feature in the iconographic program of the Alchi monuments, which could perhaps be dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> C.<sup>783</sup> Alchi, a Tibetan site in Ladakh, is known for its many *maṇḍalas* which depict Prajñāpāramitā, not only as a secondary deity but, quite remarkably, as the main *maṇḍala* deity itself. As for other examples of the six-armed form, Lokesh Chandra mentions the example found in a description of the *garbhadhātumaṇḍala* as well as a Nepalese sketch which is given without date.<sup>784</sup>

In terms of written sources which describe the six-armed Prajñāpāramitā, the iconographic section of the *Foshuo fomū banreboluomiduo daming guanxiang yigui* 佛說佛母般若波羅蜜多大明觀想儀軌 (T1152), a work centring on *maṇḍala* ritual referred to by Conze in the PPL<sup>785</sup>, is one of the few examples available. According to the description of T1152, two of the six arms performs the classic *dharmacakramudrā*, a feature which, although common in Luczanits examples, is surprisingly not present in the BM's description.

---

<sup>782</sup> See the dedicated article Miltzer o'Naghten 2016.

<sup>783</sup> On the complex issue of dating the Alchi monuments see Luczanits 2016, section "Dating Alchi".

<sup>784</sup> See Lokesh Chandra 1999 (vol.9): 2674ff.

<sup>785</sup> See Conze 1978: 90 (number 40).

This short sketch on the six-armed Prajñāpāramitā should suffice for the present purpose, which is simply to remind the reader that the Prajñāpāramitā as described in the BM is a rare form, with a rather strong connection to a *maṇḍalic* background.

One should also notice that the above visualisation practice involves the performance of a ritual anointment (*abhiṣeka*), although this does not imply a full initiation ceremony.

Another outstanding feature of the BM is the list of Bodhisattvas which closes the work after the last *dhāraṇī* section. In this particular context, the fact the Prajñāpāramitā is surrounded by a number of Bodhisattvas - which are actually named - is strongly suggestive of the constellations of deities found in fully fledged *maṇḍala* descriptions (see the *Appendices* for a translation of the whole text).

In terms of spells, the BM shows some close connections with the Svalp, which is of course one of the few PP spell scriptures with clear links to an esoteric background. Below is the preliminary Skt. reconstruction on the basis of the Chinese text, which largely matches the text found in Yuyama's edition of the Svalp (given in brackets for reference):

- 1) 唵曩莫舍吉野母曩曳 怛他誑哆 野囉賀帝 三藐三沒馱野 (T08n0259p0854a11)

[RECONSTRUCTION:] *oṃ namaḥ śākyamunaye tathāgatāyārhate samyaksaṃbuddhāya*

(cf. Yuyama 1977: 287, Vc)

- 2) 唵 曩莫 舍吉野母曩曳 怛他誑哆 野囉賀諦 三藐三沒馱野怛爾野他

野怛儻野他 唵 母儻 母儻 摩賀母儻曳 娑嚩賀 (T08n0259p0854a25)

[RECONSTRUCTION:] *oṃ namaḥ śākyamunaye tathāgatāya arhate samyakṣambuddhāya  
tadyathā oṃ mune mune mahāmunaye svāhā*

(cf. *ibid.*)

3) 唵 惹曳 惹曳 鉢納摩鼻 阿嚩弭 阿嚩弭 娑囉娑羅尼 地里地里囉地里地囉地里  
儻嚩哆努波羅儻 沒度哆囉尼 布囉野 布囉野 婆誡嚩底 薩里嚩舍 摩摩 波  
里布囉野

娑波里嚩囉寫 薩里嚩薩怛鏤 左 薩里嚩迦里摩嚩囉拏儻 尾輸馱野 尾輸馱野  
沒馱地瑟姪儻曩 娑嚩賀 (T08n0259p0854b05)

[RECONSTRUCTION:] *oṃ jeya jeya padmābhe avame avame sarasaraṇi  
dhiridhiriradhiridhiradhiri[?] devatānupālani buddhottāriṇi pūraya pūraya bhagavati  
sarvāśā mama paripūraya  
parivāraya sarvasatvānāṃ ca sarvakarmāvaraṇāni viśodhaya viśodhaya  
buddhādhiṣṭhāne(?) svāhā*

(cf. *ibid.*, Vg)

Thus, it appears that the spells of the SvalP overlap with those of the BM.

Nevertheless, apart from the overlapping *dhāraṇīs*, there is little else that both the BM and the SvalP actually share.

Overall, neither the *maṇḍala* context, nor esoteric notions of PP as a female deity attain full development in the BM. This work, however, is probably the

specimen that comes closest to outlining actual esoteric worship of PP among the Selected Sources. For examples of a fully-fledged esoteric practice one will need to turn to actual ritual works, which survive in small numbers in Chinese and Tibetan translation (e.g. T1152 mentioned above). However, before turning to these sources, one should spend a few words on another aspect of the interaction between PP spell scriptures and esoteric Buddhism: the role of manuscripts and their iconography.

#### 5.2.4 Evidence from the Manuscripts

Manuscripts of PP scriptures sometimes reveal links with esoteric Buddhist cycles. Such links are suggested by information given in the colophon or more generally by the MSS' iconographic program. In the first case, a colophon could indicate that the commissioner is also an esoteric practitioner. In the latter case, a MS's illuminations might include depictions of esoteric deities. The issue of the use of PP manuscripts in the context of esoteric Buddhism will be the subject of Jinah Kim's forthcoming monograph.<sup>786</sup> The question here is whether any relevant example can be detected in the case of MSS of PP spell scriptures.

The colophon of MS CTRC 8 has already been presented in Chapter 2. The wealthy donor, the *rāṇaka* Udayarāja, apparently was a devout layman (*paramopāsaka*). The religious merit earned through his pious gift was meant to aid all creatures, including his parents, teacher (*upādhyāya*) and guru (*ācārya*), in

---

<sup>786</sup> See Kim *forthcoming*.

the attainment of supreme knowledge (*anuttarajñāna*).<sup>787</sup> As pointed out in Chapter 2, the formulation of the colophon is very typical of this kind of MSS. In fact, so typical that it could almost be considered a 'formula'.<sup>788</sup> Thus, one should not be puzzled by the mention of (religious) teachers, for this is fairly standard and need not necessarily entail an esoteric background.

According to the data on patronage dynamics presented by Kim, after the 11<sup>th</sup> C there seems to have been a progressive tendency towards decentralisation in manuscript production, coupled with an increasingly important role played by lay esoteric practitioners.<sup>789</sup> Both of these dynamics reached their apex well after Śūrapāla II's reign, when CTRC 8 was apparently copied.

For more clues regarding a possible esoteric background of the MS, it is necessary to look at the miniature painting inside of it, as made available in the recent colour samples published by the CTRC.<sup>790</sup> The first folios show depictions of scenes from the Buddha's life, such as the Buddha's birth, the monkey's giving of honey, the *parinirvāṇa*, etc.<sup>791</sup> These are standard depictions in the context of AS copies from the Pāla period. However, the depictions on the closing folios are exactly the kind of material relevant to the present discussion. Two multi-armed copulating deities circled by flames are emphatically placed in central position, with other deities on both sides, two of which are of yellow and green colour

---

<sup>787</sup> See Tomabechi 2009: xxix.

<sup>788</sup> For another example of this kind see Kim 2013: 249.

<sup>789</sup> See the tables in Kim 2013: 217ff.

<sup>790</sup> See Danzeng 2011: 145f.

<sup>791</sup> *Ibid.*

respectively. The central male deities have been identified as Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra.<sup>792</sup>

Thus, the manuscript presents both exoteric and esoteric depictions, creating a fascinating dynamic. This kind of ‘hybrid’ setting is not unknown in PP manuscript production.<sup>793</sup> Since the same phenomenon is attested in the case of the AS, it does not seem that it was the presence of PP spell scriptures in CTRC 8 that prompted the choice of a hybrid iconographic program. The phenomenon is probably best understood in the wider context of Pāla MS iconography, although their presence in this witness should certainly be noted.

One should also point out here that during the Pāla period MSS were also worshipped as part of esoteric rituals. Clues regarding this practice can be found in stone steles depicting what appear to be scenes of book worship.<sup>794</sup> While this probably represents a continuation of traditional Mahāyāna practice, some depictions also include figures holding implements usually associated with esoteric ritual.<sup>795</sup> The use of MSS in this esoteric context is also attested by Abhayākaragupta’s *Vajrāvalī*.<sup>796</sup> Furthermore, the MMK does explicitly mention PP manuscripts to be used in the context of *maṅḍala* worship. The *maṅḍalavidhis* contain references to ‘uttering’ the book (*pustaka*) of PP, as well

---

<sup>792</sup> I thank Prof. Christian Luczanits for this identification (personal communication Sept. 2018).

<sup>793</sup> See Kim 2013: 174ff.

<sup>794</sup> See e.g. Kinnard 1999: 172.

<sup>795</sup> This was pointed out to me by Kim in a personal communication (May 2019).

<sup>796</sup> See for example a relevant Skt. passage in Mori’s edition (1999: 147,1).

as other Mahāyāna *sūtras*, in associations with certain directions<sup>797</sup> or placing it on the cloth-*maṇḍala* after having worshipped them.<sup>798</sup> The *pustakas* used in such rituals could easily have been typologically similar to the still extant copies of the AS commissioned by lay esoteric practitioners, although such expensive artefacts would not have been available to all practitioners.

In the present context, one has to wonder whether MSS of PP spell scriptures could have been used as cheaper substitutes for MSS of the AS. However, no evidence has been found in support of this hypothesis. It is hoped that a future inspection of the SvalP MS kept at the Asiatic Society of Kolkata might throw light on this issue. As pointed out in Chapter 2, this particular MS might have contained just the SvalP, rather than being part of an extensive collection of shorter PP works like CTRC 8. This means it could have been cheaper to commission, although one can hardly elaborate on this without inspecting the original.

There is also another MS relevant to the present discussion. As mentioned above, the PNA is attested in a Dunhuang composite MS catalogued as *Pelliot Tibétain* 45. Despite the fact that this MS appears to mainly contain works that are only mildly esoteric, one should notice the clear depiction of a *vajra* - a polysemic esoteric symbol - on the inside of its cover page.<sup>799</sup> The drawing is very simple compared to the fine miniatures of CTRC 8. Once again, however, the details of the ritual context remain unclear.

---

<sup>797</sup> See i.a. Gaṇapatiśāstri 1920: 38, 11.

<sup>798</sup> See Gaṇapatiśāstri 1920: 312, 7.

<sup>799</sup> For more details about this MS see chapter 2.2.2 above.

In conclusion, one does notice certain points of contact between witnesses of PP spell scriptures and the esoteric tradition. However, at present these seem to be aspects related to changing dynamics of manuscript worship at large, rather than to the specific features of these scriptures.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in East Asia shorter PP works like the *Vajracchedikā* PP and the PPH became associated with certain esoteric ritual environments. While one fails to track specific instances involving the Selected Sources, these examples nonetheless indicate that there was indeed some degree of interest in PP works on part of esoteric circles.

This concludes the survey of the connections between the Selected Sources and esoteric Buddhism. The rest of this chapter will be dedicated to exploring wider aspects of such connections, hoping to throw further light on the background and underlying agendas of works like the SvalP or the BM.

## **5.3 A Matter of Identity**

### **5.3.1 Prajñāpāramitā in Key Esoteric Sources**

There are a number of specialised ritual works which deal with PP, either in dedicated sections or exclusively. While a thorough examination of these sources lies beyond the scope of these pages, there are a number of aspects which should certainly be taken into account.

The following section will present selected materials from these important works. Given the preliminary stage of the discussion, the section will be mostly descriptive, with arguments and hypotheses left for the concluding section of this chapter. It seems to me that, in order to understand the place and significance of PP in esoteric rituals, scholars need to take at least the following aspects into account: the selection of spells and their possible overlap with other sources; the inclusion of traditional Mahāyāna notions and PP-related ones in particular; the promise of particular benefits connected to insight (*prajñā*), even from a mundane perspective; and finally the ‘tuning’ of PP discourse to fit an esoteric agendas.

Perhaps the earliest description of a *maṇḍala* ritual of PP is that provided by the TJ (T901). Recently, Shinohara translated a large portion of this section, making it readily available to scholars.<sup>800</sup> The ritual involves the recitation of PP spells and the drawing of the Prajñāpāramitā *bodhisattva*, who is holding a box with PP scriptures in one of her hands. Thus, already at this early stage one notices how PP spells are fully integrated within a *maṇḍala* context, as is the bodhisattva herself, carefully described in her iconographic details. In TJ, one finds the spell also attested in the PPH (i.e. *gate gate* etc).<sup>801</sup> Otherwise, some of its spells overlap with the virtually contemporary version of the AdhyP by Xuanzang

---

<sup>800</sup> See Shinohara 2014: 54ff.

<sup>801</sup> See T18n0901p0807b20.

(T220).<sup>802</sup> As pointed out in the previous chapter, these spells are also attested in many of the Selected Sources, in a remarkable display of continuity.

There are two more key sources which deal with PP in the context of *maṇḍalas*: the *Xiuxi banreboluomipusa guanxing niansong yigui* 修習般若波羅蜜菩薩觀行念誦儀軌 (T1151), associated with Amoghavajra (8<sup>th</sup> C), and the \**Prajñāpāramitā-maṇḍalopāyikā* by Ānandagarbha (9<sup>th</sup> C?), extant in Tibetan (To.2644).<sup>803</sup> In T1151, Prajñāpāramitā is visualised at the centre of the *maṇḍala* and she is surrounded by the ten Pāramitās.<sup>804</sup> In the \**Prajñāpāramitā-maṇḍalopāyikā*, PP is not surrounded by the ten Pāramitās but by other deities.<sup>805</sup> In terms of spells, T1151 does include some mantras commonly associated with PP, e.g. *oṃ dhīḥ śruti smṛti vijaye svāhā*.<sup>806</sup> However, most of the mantras of To.2644 are not found in the Selected Sources, although the opening one is the common *oṃ prajñe mahāprajñe*.<sup>807</sup>

---

<sup>802</sup> See for example the two long and overlapping *dhāraṇīs* at T07n0220p0991a04 and T18n0901p0807a15 respectively.

<sup>803</sup> These two works are listed in the Conze 1978 as number 37 and 36 respectively.

<sup>804</sup> See Conze 1978: 90. The passage reads: 於其殿中觀地字門成般若波羅蜜佛母, 以十波羅蜜圍遶。 (T20n1151p0612c01). ‘In the middle of the palace (i.e. *maṇḍala*) one should contemplate the *akṣara* ‘di’ constituting (?) Prajñāpāramitā, mother of the Buddhas, surrounded by the ten Pāramitās’. I am not entirely sure as to how 成 should be understood here. For a PP ritual involving the same *akṣara* see Orzech 1998: 186,6.

<sup>805</sup> The work in n.3468 of the Peking ed. (Suzuki). For example, on the East one finds \*Ratnasambhava (*dkon mchog 'byung gnas*). See Vol.77 p.32, folio264b, line 2.

<sup>806</sup> See T20n1151p0613c10 (which actually might read *hrīḥ* (訖哩) *dhīḥ* etc.)

<sup>807</sup> *Ibid.* folio 266b, line 5.

In terms of establishing a connection with typical Mahāyāna and PP-related notions, one notices that T1151 includes a passage on compassion for all beings.<sup>808</sup> The *\*Prajñāpāramitā-maṇḍalopāyikā* does mention emptiness, as well as the notion of rejoicing for other beings' merit (*puṇya*).<sup>809</sup> Thus one can see from these sources that the tradition of PP worship in the context of *maṇḍalas* continued to develop after the TJ. As pointed out above, the Alchi monuments still preserve some remarkable depictions relevant to this subject. It appears that the root of these developments can be found in a shift of the attention from the 'book' itself to the *bodhisattva*/deity. In the Selected Sources, one can see how the BM makes of this aspect its central concern. The dynamics of personification of *Prajñāpāramitā* and their role in the shift towards esoteric cults deserve some further remarks. Attempts at addressing this topic will be made in Chapter 6.

Further information on the fortunes of PP spells can be gathered from manuals associated with Amoghavajra and a PP-related scripture known as the *Renwang banreboluomi jing* 仁王般若波羅蜜經.<sup>810</sup> This scripture is often considered to be a Chinese creation and its later version (8<sup>th</sup> C) does include a number of esoteric elements.<sup>811</sup> In particular, the relevant works connected to the *Renwang* are the *Xinyi renwang banre jing tuoluoni niansong yigui xu* 新譯仁王般若經陀羅尼念誦儀軌序 (T994, but one should also consider T995), and the *Renwang banre*

<sup>808</sup> See 發起大菩提心 'he should give rise to the great thought of awakening' (T20n1152p0614a28) and 起大悲愍一切有情三界熾然 (T20n1151p0612a04) 'He should give rise to utter compassion for the suffering of all beings in the three realms'.

<sup>809</sup> See *ibid.* p.31, folio164a, line 2.

<sup>810</sup> For a concise overview of this work see Zacchetti 2015: 200f.

<sup>811</sup> This would be Amoghavajra's version, i.e. T246. On this, see Orzech 1988.

*tuoluoni shi* 仁王般若陀羅尼釋 (T996).<sup>812</sup> For the most part these works deal with an explanation of the spells associated with the *Ren wang*. Despite the fact that the overall context is rather remote with respect to that of the Selected Sources, it quickly emerged that the *dhāraṇīs* of T994 are in fact the same as those found in the SaśIP.<sup>813</sup> One also notices that *oṃ ārolik svāhā* of T995 is also found in the KauP.<sup>814</sup> While the reasons for such a striking overlap with the SaśIP remain to be clarified, this is once again an example of how spells associated with PP are often shared among the Selected Sources as well as more esoteric specimens.

PP spells or PP-related formulas are also not uncommon in *sādhana* works. For example, Ratnākaraśānti's *Bhramaharanāma Hevajrasādhana* includes a mantra which mentions emptiness *oṃ śūnyatājñānavajrasvabhāvātmake 'ham iti*.<sup>815</sup> This is followed by a formula involving PP: *saiva bhagavatī prajñāpāramitā saiva paramā rakṣā*.<sup>816</sup> As is well known, Ratnākaraśānti played a considerable role in developing a scholastic framework which would show how PP and esoteric Buddhism need not be mutually exclusive.<sup>817</sup> However, no example of PP spells also present in the Selected Sources could be located in this particular *sādhana*.

---

<sup>812</sup> In Conze's PPL, these works correspond to number 34, 28 and 27 respectively. See Orzech 19998: 174ff.

<sup>813</sup> See T19n0994p0518a02, which matches that in Komine et al. 2015: 108.

<sup>814</sup> See T19n0995p0520b12 and Conze 1956: 118 (mantra XIX).

<sup>815</sup> See Isaacson 2002: 159.

<sup>816</sup> *Ibid.*: 159.

<sup>817</sup> For an introduction to Ratnākaraśānti's philosophy see the first part of Seton 2015 (DPhil thesis).

In terms of the further development of visualisation practices involving PP such as those encountered in the BM, one can certainly think of the *Fomu banreboluomiduo daming guanxiang yigui* 佛母般若波羅蜜多大明觀想儀軌 (T1152), translated by \*Dānapāla (施護) around the turn of the millennium, as well as the well-known PP section of the *Sādhanamālā*.<sup>818</sup> In T1152 one finds a description of a PP with six arms, as already mentioned above. The work also clarifies that the book held in her hands is a PP sūtra.<sup>819</sup>

In terms of traditional Mahāyāna notions, there is reference in T1152 to the practitioner developing the thought of awakening (*bodhicitta*).<sup>820</sup> There is also a strong statement on the connection between mantra and knowledge, particularly in the context of meditative absorption (*samādhi*). This is found in the closing passage of T1152, which mentions the attainment of perfections (*siddhis*) as well as the realisation of the absorption into emptiness:

---

<sup>818</sup> See Bhattacharya 1968. According to Kinnard, the earliest MS of the SM is a Nepalese one dated 1167. This is just the *terminus ante quem*, and the text, or parts of it, could have certainly been composed before 1000. See Kinnard 1999: 134. The *sādhanas* of PP begin from number 151 in Bhattacharya's edition. For a glimpse at the various titles of the SM actually attested in MSS see Sakuma 2001.

<sup>819</sup> See 想此菩薩想身真金色有其六臂。[...]餘手持般若波羅蜜多經 (T20n1152p0614b07). 'He should visualise this Bodhisattva as having a golden body and six arms. [...] The remaining hand holds a Prajñāpāramitā book.' The SM also mentions *prajñāpāramitāpustakas*, e.g. Bhattacharya 1968: 312, 5 (from the bottom).

<sup>820</sup> See 發起大菩提心 'he should give rise to the great thought of awakening' (T20n1152p0614a28).

持誦一百八遍，或一千八十遍，若一月或六月，乃至一年不間斷者，即得最上勝悉地法。又復若聞若持若誦者，是人當得聞持具足證空三摩地。  
(T20n1152p0615a29)

‘One who recites [the mantra] uninterruptedly for 108 times or 1080 times, for one month or six months up to for one whole year - that person will obtain the quality of [master upon] the supreme and excellent perfections (*siddhis*). Also, one who hears, holds in mind, or recites [this mantra] will be someone who - through hearing and holding in mind - has fully realised the *samādhi* of emptiness.’

However, it is the *Sādhnamālā* (SM) which represents the full integration of PP as a *bodhisattva* - along with her spells - within the context of advanced visualisation practices. The SM contains a group of nine *sādhana*s dedicated to the deity PP.<sup>821</sup>

Here too one finds a number of notions which are associated with mainstream Mahāyāna as well as Prajñāpāramitā. One notices the mention of *sūnyatā* (emptiness), of *puṇyapariṇāmana* (transfer of merit), of the Four Immeasurable virtues (*maitrī* etc.)<sup>822</sup>, of *bodhicittotpāda* (arising of the thought of awakening) or, least but not last, of compassion as a key component of ritual practice.<sup>823</sup>

---

<sup>821</sup> See Bhattacharyya 1968: 310ff (henceforth ‘SM’ in the main text).

<sup>822</sup> These virtues are of course common in Buddhism even outside Mahāyāna.

<sup>823</sup> A passage in Bhattacharyya 1968: 315, 9-13 mentions meditating on emptiness, the four immeasurable as well as *bodhicittotpāda* and *puṇyapariṇāmana*. A similar passage

The signature transfer of merit for the benefit of the world is also found: [...] *mayā yat puṇyam avāptaṃ tenāstu nikhilo lokaḥ prajñāpāraparāyaṇaḥ*<sup>824</sup> ('may the whole world be intent on [reaching] the summit of wisdom, thanks to the merit gathered by me').

The meditative practices are also meant to change one's inner disposition in line with Mahāyāna soteriology. One passage reads *evaṃ dhyāyataḥ prasthānalakṣaṇaṃ cittam utpadyate* (159, 323) 'to one who meditates in this way, as state of mind characterised by the setting out (*prasthāna*) [towards awakening] arises'.

In terms of benefits promised by the SM, one notices the general emphasis on obtaining knowledge. *Sādhana* 151 reads *anena manreṇa saptābhimanritaṃ kṛtvāyācitam āranālaṃ ṣaṇmāsaṃ yāvat pibet mahāprājño bhavati* 'Having empowered the ritual drink, which was anasked for, with this mantra for seven times, he should drink it over six months and he will achieve great wisdom'.<sup>825</sup> Here, 'great wisdom' might entail practical skills, such as memorisation or ability in debate. It is a further extension of the benefits mentioned in Chapter 4 in the context of PP spell practice.

The author also introduces one of the *sādhanas* by addressing his own wish for the attainment of knowledge free from duality: *likhyate sādhanam tasyā [i.e. prajñāpāramitāyāḥ] advayajñānasiddhaye* 'her (i.e. Prajñāpāramitā's) cultivation

---

is found in Bhattacharya 1968: 317. A vivid description of the miserable state of beings and the need to save them is found in Bhattacharya 1968: 322f.

<sup>824</sup> See Bhattacharya 1968: 320.

<sup>825</sup> See Bhattacharya 1968: 311.

practice (*sādhana*) is [hereby] laid out in written form for the full attainment of non-dual knowledge'.<sup>826</sup> Similarly, at the end of SM 159, the practitioners are promised the attainment of a state of omniscience (*sarvajñam padam*, p. 325).

The emphasis on mastering the Buddhist teachings is also found at SM 155: [...] *yogy acireṇaiva kālena sarvvaśāstrakovido bhavati* 'in no time, the yogin will become one conversant with all scriptures'.<sup>827</sup> This mention of *śāstra*, i.e. organised bodies of knowledge, deserves to be noticed, for it is potentially linked to practices surrounding written texts. One verse passage of SM 151 mentions the benefits of muttered prayer: *lakṣajapaprayogeṇa śataślokaṃ dine dine / karoti cāprayatnena śatagranthaṃ ca dhārayet*.<sup>828</sup> The passage is not fully clear to me, but it appears to state that through a hundred thousand recitations the practitioner will be able to master a hundred verses per day, and to hold in mind without effort a large body of scripture.<sup>829</sup> This partially reminds one of the passage from the PNA quoted above: "When someone has learned this Perfection of Wisdom, he will thereby bear in mind the Perfection of Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Lines".<sup>830</sup>

---

<sup>826</sup> See Bhattacharya 1968: 321.

<sup>827</sup> See Bhattacharya 1968: 316.

<sup>828</sup> See Bhattacharya 1968: 311.

<sup>829</sup> *Śatagrantha* could mean a 'book consisting of hundred units' but also 'a set of one hundred books'. In the Cambodian epigraph K.111, mentioned above, one finds *lakṣagrantha*, which could be taken as meaning 'the (PP scripture) consisting of hundred thousand verses'. I do not know of a PP scripture which is traditionally referred to as consisting of only one hundred verses, unless this is used as an elided form for *śata[sāhasra]* or a similar expression.

<sup>830</sup> See Conze 1993: 198.

Most spells of the SM's relevant section are rather common and are found in other PP-related works, although not necessarily in the PP-*sūtras* selected here as primary sources . There is the mantra which aids in understanding of emptiness (*śūnyatābodhako mantrah*). It reads: *oṃ śūnyatājñānavajrasvabhāvātmako 'ham iti*.<sup>831</sup> This formula is also found in Ratnākaraśānti's *Bhramahara Hevajrasādhana*.<sup>832</sup>

Another closely related mantra found in the SM is *oṃ svabhāvaśuddhāḥ sarvadharmmāḥ svabhāvaśuddho 'ham iti* (158, p.320). The same mantra is also found in the PP ritual texts related to the *Ren wang* mentioned above.<sup>833</sup>

Among the SM's mantras one can also find *oṃ āḥ dhīḥ hūṃ svāhā*.<sup>834</sup> Monosyllabic spells of this kind are of course rather common in PP-related sources. They are interestingly also found on later Tibetan *tsha tshas* depicting PP, although in a slightly different form.<sup>835</sup>

The SM's most common mantra is certainly *oṃ dhīḥ śruti smṛti vijaye svāhā*,<sup>836</sup> which is also found in T1151.<sup>837</sup> One variation reads *oṃ prajñe mahāprajñe śruti*

---

<sup>831</sup> See *i.a.* p.314 and p.319.

<sup>832</sup> This work was mentioned above.

<sup>833</sup> See the mantra 唵娑嚩婆嚩輸鐸薩嚩達磨娑嚩婆嚩輸度撼 in T995 (T19n0995p0520a25) and T994 (T19n0994p0516b05). These can be found in the PPL under number 28 and number 34 (Conze 1978).

<sup>834</sup> See Bhattacharya 1968:312.

<sup>835</sup> Some have *oṃ aḥ hūṃ* (Lama Namgyal, personal communication, Aug 2018)

<sup>836</sup> See for example Bhattacharya 1968: 313.

<sup>837</sup> See T20n1151p0613c10 (which actually might read *hrīḥ* (紇哩) *dhīḥ* etc.)

*smṛti vijaye dhīḥ svāhā*.<sup>838</sup> As Conze rightly reports, parallel version of this very widespread mantra are indeed found in PP spell scriptures such as the KauP, the PNA and the Tibetan CandP.<sup>839</sup>

This is another example of actual overlap with the primary sources under discussion.

Before closing this section, mention should be made of a particular ‘genre’ of esoteric writing which has considerable links to the kind of PP worship under examination. This is the *ādikarma* literature - mentioned in the *Introduction* -, which focuses on practices recommended for beginner Bodhisattvas. Important sources dating from the 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> C are *Advayavajra Kudṛṣṭinirghātana* and *Anupamavajra Ādikarmapradīpa*.<sup>840</sup>

As Wallis highlights, the practice of the *pāramitās* plays a considerable role in the *ādikarma* section of the *Kudṛṣṭinirghātana*.<sup>841</sup> PP represents the culmination of all ‘perfections’ and her role as such is mentioned at a number of places (see e.g. stanza 9). Moreover, ritual recitation of PP works is enjoined at 24.9, and *punypariṇāma* as taught in the PP is mentioned at 28.14.<sup>842</sup>

---

<sup>838</sup> See Bhattacharya 1968: 320.

<sup>839</sup> See Conze 1978: 89.

<sup>840</sup> See Von Rospatt 2015: 821f. On the first work see Wallis 2003, on the second La Vallée Poussin 1898.

<sup>841</sup> See Wallis 2003: 11.

<sup>842</sup> See Wallis 2003: 25 and 28 respectively.

The *Ādikarmapradīpa* too enjoins the recitation of PP as part of a ritual.<sup>843</sup>

Furthermore, an actual PP *dhāraṇī* is given in the closing section as part of a ritual procedure (it starts with *namo bhagavatyai prajñāpāramitāyai bhaktivatsalāyai* and also includes the section *oṃ siddha siddha buddha buddha bodhaya bodhaya cala cala tiṣṭha tiṣṭha hrīḥ kampa kampa rāva rāva gaccha gaccha āgaccha āgaccha bhagavati mā vilamba alaṃ svāhā*).<sup>844</sup>

This is a fascinating example of how PP-related notions and spells would have been incorporated within esoteric ritual contexts.

### 5.3.2 Compromise and Appeal

Now that the data currently available has been laid out, certain patterns begin to emerge.

Despite the facts that some passages with striking esoteric connotations were found in the PNA, SvalP and BM, their terminology remains, overall, remarkably mainstream. This makes it challenging, if not impossible, to point at specific esoteric scriptures as sources. As a consequence, and also given the lack of commentaries written from a specific perspective, it is equally challenging to identify any particular agents and their agendas.

---

<sup>843</sup> See stanza 7 at La Vallée Poussin 1898: 186.

<sup>844</sup> See La Vallée Poussin 1898: 203.

Furthermore, the few extant manuscripts of PP spell scriptures are only indirectly linked to an esoteric background, mostly by virtue of their iconographic programs. Such programs are, however, not exclusive to MSS of the Selected Sources and should be seen as part of wider practices within the related cultural milieu.

Nonetheless, I would like to elaborate on a particular point which could be crucial. It seems only reasonable to assume that the complex interactions between PP and esoteric Buddhism would have been characterised by mutual advantage.

On the PP side, works like the SvalP do promise that simple acts of recitation of PP-spells will bring about the same benefits of advanced esoteric practice. This could indicate that in the redactor's cultural milieu esoteric practice was quite common (and indeed well established), and that mentioning certain types of benefits would have increased the appeal of a PP scripture. In a way, this would represent a process of 'updating' PP's message, in order for it to keep up with what could be seen as the new 'flavour of the month'. But this could also be a further indication that PP was still very much a lively tradition during the Pāla period. Perhaps an indication of this attitude can be seen in the way the SvalP refrains from either endorsing or criticising esoteric practice explicitly.

More complex is the question of direct involvement in this process on part of esoteric groups. Generally speaking, there are at least three ways by which such groups could have benefitted from the inclusion of PP-related materials: legitimisation, actual ritual practice, and foreign patronage.

It is quite established that esoteric Buddhism had to face serious questions regarding its identity.<sup>845</sup> First of all, while some evidence suggests that its practitioners sometimes peacefully shared institutional settings with Buddhists of other confessions,<sup>846</sup> there is also evidence which betrays how problematic this form of Buddhism was in the eyes of traditionalists. Tāranātha speaks of how *śrāvakayāna* monks in Sri Lanka “broke up the silver image of Heruka in the temple and burnt the collection of Tantras housed there, saying that these were the teachings not of the Buddha but of Māra, the evil obstructor of the Buddha’s enlightenment”.<sup>847</sup> A counterpart of this attitude are the warnings found in esoteric literature about possible attacks on part of other Buddhists, or discussions about the power of mantras to destroy anyone who harms esoteric practitioners and gurus.<sup>848</sup> One can imagine that such tensions would have been relatively common.

While there are many theories about the origin of esoteric Buddhism, it is probably not by chance that mainstream Buddhist elements are particularly emphasised in its documents. There was obviously a need to encode esoteric

---

<sup>845</sup> The following references are based on Sanderson’s *The Śaiva Age*, which is perhaps the most solid exploration of the ‘politics’ of esoteric Buddhism to this date. Another very valuable source is Davidson 2002, which often takes a different standpoint than Sanderson’s.

<sup>846</sup> See for example Tāranātha’s remarks on the presence of both Mahāyānists and Śrāvakas as permanent residents of Uddaṇḍapura (See Sanderson 2009: 98, note 194).

<sup>847</sup> Sanderson 2009: 240.

<sup>848</sup> For the first See the passage of the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi* translated in Sanderson 2009: 128 and one from the *Vajrabhairavatantra* translated in Sanderson 2015: 214 (note 162).

practices - which much resembled non-Buddhist ones - in traditional Mahāyāna language and notions.<sup>849</sup> This was partly illustrated above with reference to the SM and other ritual text.

As a major source of traditional Mahāyāna discourse, the language and very name of PP were probably seen as an asset in this regard.

While having mainstream Mahāyāna elements in the Tantras was probably advantageous in terms of self-identity and perhaps legitimation in the eyes of critics, other strategies were also available. The AdhyP is probably the best example of how different genres of Buddhist literature can be made to overlap. In this case, esoteric notions were endorsed by a scripture bearing the label of PP. The same scripture was also considered *bonafide* by Buddhist scholars, who even quoted it on occasion.<sup>850</sup>

But what about actual ritual practice? Here the evidence is even more elusive. As pointed out above, the MMK contains a number of references to manuscripts (*pustakas*) of PP being used in esoteric ritual. Further evidence comes from surviving Pāla manuscripts. The table published by Kim shows that a number of them were indeed commissioned by esoteric practitioners.<sup>851</sup>

In this context, PP spell scriptures might have represented an alternative to the use of longer scriptures like the AS. In particular, such alternative would have been cheaper to commission, given the conciseness of such sources. While the

---

<sup>849</sup> Sferra 1999 touches upon such issues.

<sup>850</sup> See Tomabechi 2009: xii. More on this will be said in the next chapter.

<sup>851</sup> See Kim 2013: 217ff.

evidence collected so far does not suffice to prove this point, it is true that in a ritual context, a shorter PP scripture could be recited in its entirety on a daily basis. This would have been impossible with the AS. Current Shingon practice perhaps helps exemplifying this point, for the concise AdhyP is indeed recited daily in that context.<sup>852</sup> There is, however, no evidence pointing at any of the Selected Sources in particular.

It is perhaps possible that dedicated manuals and *sādhana*s would have quickly made PP spell scriptures redundant. Such manuals would have presented the relevant spells, with the advantage of adding detailed explanations or ritual procedures. Within the Selected Sources, only the BM contains descriptions of one such procedure.

As pointed out in the previous section, integrating PP within esoteric practices such as complex visualisations was a way to promise certain benefits broadly connected to insight (*prajñā*) and intellectual ability, such as increased knowledge of scripture, enhanced memory, or skilfulness in scholarship and debate. This could have been used to target certain people with an intellectual inclination. As seen in Chapter 4, some PP spells scriptures do emphasise such benefits, although the ritual manuals addressed above do not fail to mention such benefits in detail, probably in a much more effective way.

As for the last of the three points, as recently stressed by Seton, one should not forget that monasterial universities were indeed partially funded by Tibetan

---

<sup>852</sup> See Tomabechi 2009: xi, which refers to Astley-Kristensen 1991: 1ff.

donors.<sup>853</sup> It would then be reasonable to expect that such donors may have exercised a certain influence even on scholastic production. Tibetan Buddhism being deeply linked with esoteric practices, some Tibetans would have shown an interest in resolving possible tensions in terms of legitimacy and links with mainstream scriptural authority. Scholars like Ratnākaraśānti could have played a significant role in this regard, for instance by explaining how PP and esoteric practice could be reconciled.

Thus one could ask then whether foreign influence, e.g. Tibetan or perhaps even Chinese, could have played a role in commissioning the composition of PP spell scriptures. Certainly, extensive translation activity of PP spell scriptures in both regions seems to suggest some degree of interest, perhaps even more interest than in South Asia itself. That a codex like CTCR 8 would be brought to Tibet - at a time which remains unknown - also points to this direction. On the other hand, the PPH had enjoyed considerable success and had become embedded in a number of esoteric contexts in East Asia.<sup>854</sup> This could also have prompted the composition, or commissioning, of more scriptures which were typologically similar. Researching the fortunes of PP spell scriptures in Tibet and East Asia is not the main concern of the present study. It is only likely that considerable additional evidence exists in support of an active foreign role in the development of PP spell scriptures. However, for the time being the topic has to be glossed over, with the exception of some remarks on Southeast Asia in the next chapter.

---

<sup>853</sup> See Seton 2015: 47 for key passages from hagiographies.

<sup>854</sup> Some comments on this were made for example by Davidson (2011: 23).

## 5.4 Summary of Observations

As shown above, some passages found in at least four shorter PP works - the AdhyP, the BM, the SvalP and the PNA - could indeed be interpreted as having links with mature esoteric background. Attempts at tracing the specific origin of such passages were made difficult by their rather common terminology. All one could do was to show that the same technical terms and notions occupy a special place in esoteric sources.

Manuscripts are surely one of the principal source of information. In the case of the Selected Sources, rather than the identity of the commissioner himself/herself, it is the iconographic program which betrays an esoteric dimension. However, such program can best be explained in the light of large scale MS practice rather than in connection with the specific sources selected for this study.

When it comes to explaining the presence of such elements, it seems that establishing links between PP and esoteric Buddhism could have been beneficial to practitioners on both sides. For example, PP remained in touch with the latest cultural developments within Buddhism, while esoteric circles could benefit from links with one of the foundational literary tradition of Mahāyāna.

One certainly could explore further issues such as general appeal, self-legitimation and identity, as well as patronage. A number of esoteric scriptures

integrating PP, as well as other sources, were used to illustrate the centrality of such aspects.<sup>855</sup>

---

<sup>855</sup> In the course of this study, two panels dedicated to exploring these issues were designed and proposed in collaboration with other scholars. Following the acceptance of such panels by the AAR and IABS for 2019 and 2020, it seems that there will be significant momentum to make actual progress in the study of the relations between PP and esoteric Buddhism.

## 6. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ SPELL SCRIPTURES WITHIN BUDDHIST AND ROYAL INSTITUTIONS

### 6.1 General Remarks

The present study would not be complete without an attempt at framing a discussion on the links between PP spell scriptures and various Buddhist or Buddhist-leaning institutions. By this I broadly mean the roles played by monastic centres and royal courts in sponsoring, engaging with, and disseminating these works. While much could be said on this topic on the basis of East Asian traditions,<sup>856</sup> this preliminary treatment will be limited to considerations about South and Southeast Asia.

Given the evidence presented above, one might assume that PP spells and spell scriptures were not generally the primary focus of attention on part of Buddhist institutions. Nevertheless, the matter is certainly quite complex and some evidence does partially challenge this assumption. Also, one might wonder why institutions seem to have privileged more traditional specimens of PP writing -

---

<sup>856</sup> Some useful references to this can be found both in Zacchetti's overview article for Brill's Encyclopedia (2015), as well as in Orzech et al. 2011. Some contributions included in the latter work mention the fortunes of the PPH, AdhyP, and *Vajracchedikā* in the East Asian context (e.g. p.506; p.531; p.656; p.666; and p.1026). One can also refer to Mair's article on the PPH in the East Asian context (2002). The occasional sponsoring of the carving of PP passages in stone was also mentioned above. For examples relating to the SaśP see Wang and Ledderose 2014: 43ff.

such as e.g. the AS - over the more innovative ones, especially as represented by the Selected Sources.

First of all, it might be useful to offer a brief survey of key Mahāyāna centres, offering some remarks on the production, systematisation, and circulation of PP scriptures in these areas. As explained in the *Introduction*, some of the events leading to the 7<sup>th</sup> C are particularly crucial in the present context. And while the beginnings of Mahāyāna's affirmation at institutional level are a complex and much debated issue, by the 5<sup>th</sup> C the process seems to have been well on its way. This is the time we start witnessing large-scale interaction between the Mahāyāna and royal centres on the Indian subcontinent.<sup>857</sup>

One could start by looking at the epigraphical records of Āndhradeśa, some of which testify to a strong presence of Mahāyāna in the region. In particular, the charters of the Viṣṇukuṇḍins (ca. 422-612) offer some evidence of what Tournier labelled "Bodhisattva ideology" being taken on board by rulers.<sup>858</sup> One encounters terms such as *bodhicitta* (the intention to attain awakening), as well as other notions which would be associated with an ideal 'awakened ruler', such as the perfection

---

<sup>857</sup> On royal patronage of Mahāyāna from the 5th C onwards a good place to start is the overview offered by Sanderson in "The Śaiva Age" (2009). The relevant section is structured chronologically on the basis of different royal centres. Notice that this publication includes a large amount of data relevant to the study of PP at institutional level, particularly under the Pālas. In opening the present overview with Āndhra and Gujarat, I am following Sanderson's blueprint.

<sup>858</sup> See Tournier 2018: 27.

of giving (*dānapāramitā*), or a certain emphasis on compassion (*karuṇā*).<sup>859</sup> Yet it remains difficult to trace the circulation of specific Mahāyāna scriptures. This is despite the fact that there is some evidence connecting parts of the Tathāgatagarbha tradition to the region and that one can study the work of authors apparently connected to the area, such as Bhāviveka and Candrakīrti.<sup>860</sup>

Buddhism also had a strong presence in Western India under the Maitraka rulers (ca. 6th-8th C). The large corpus of Maitraka copper-plate inscriptions (about one hundred complete copper-plate charters) provides extensive evidence for this.<sup>861</sup> Here, a large network of Buddhist monasteries supported by the royal house constituted a good environment for the development of Buddhist traditions, including Mahāyāna. Regarding the latter, one notices for example an important

---

<sup>859</sup> For an instance of *bodhicitta* see the inscription presented on page 28 (Tournier 2018). For a statement regarding the centrality of the notion of generosity (*dāna*) see page 33. Regarding the fascinating term *paramakāruṇika* ‘utterly compassionate’, the author points at a possible second interpretation. Terms such as *paramasaugata*, *paramabauddha* etc. usually indicate the religious persuasion of rulers in inscriptions (i.e. utterly devoted to the Sugata/Buddha). Perhaps *paramakāruṇika* might function in a similar way, if the ‘compassionate’ one is no other than the Buddha himself (p. 39).

<sup>860</sup> For some remarks on the Tathāgatagarbha issue see Jones 2015 (p. 76 [note 192], p. 267, p. 267 [note 707], p.420, p.420 [note 1069], p.423). Also see the references in Tournier 2018: 26 (note n. 14).

<sup>861</sup> For monograph studies of these materials see Njammasch 2001 and Shastri 2000. One should not forget the contributions by von Hinüber, one being a review of Njammasch 2001 (2004), the other being a study Buddhist terminology in inscriptions (2013). There is also hope that a project started in Berlin over a decade ago might one day lead to the publication of the entire corpus of Maitraka inscriptions.

reference to the worship of Tārā as well as a Mahāyāna monastery.<sup>862</sup> While Buddhist libraries are explicitly mentioned in the inscriptional records, once again identifying specific Mahāyāna scriptural works is a challenge.<sup>863</sup> For further clues, one needs to consider the work of Yogācāra exegetes who were possibly active in the region.<sup>864</sup>

Despite these important records, it is perhaps with the Gilgit manuscript collection that one gets a glimpse into an actual historical set of Buddhist works. While there is some controversy regarding the kind of institution that produced them,<sup>865</sup> they provide some of the earliest evidence (7th C) for contextualising PP scriptures. Here, however, one should clarify that geographically (and culturally) the area - situated on the Northern end of the greater Kashmir region - de facto represents a 'crossroad' between South Asia and Central Asia. This might raise question as to how such evidence would relate to the Buddhist culture of mainland South Asia.

Be that as it may, the contents of the collection should be considered carefully. By this time, one might have expected some evidence of PP spell writing, at least considering that Xuanzang had translated some of the relevant texts around the same period (e.g. an early version of the AdhyP and a version of the PPH). However, the PP scriptures attested at Gilgit are either specimens of the so-

---

<sup>862</sup> See Schmiedchen 2019: 206. inscriptions no. 45 and 70 in the useful list by Njammasch 2001 (p.366).

<sup>863</sup> See Sanderson 2009: 72f. For mentions of books in inscriptions see for example Bühler 1878: 67 (plate 2, line 5).

<sup>864</sup> See e.g. the discussion on Valabhī scholarship in Scharfe 2002: 154.

<sup>865</sup> On this topic see Schopen 2009.

called *Larger* PP or of the *Vajracchedikā*.<sup>866</sup> These are the PP scriptural works which appear to have enjoyed considerable attention in the early phases of PP circulation.<sup>867</sup> Of course, specimens of the ancient genre of *dhāraṇī* scriptures are attested.<sup>868</sup> This might lead one to suggest that PP spell writing was simply not yet established in South Asia, despite the fact that Chinese sources show evidence of an early interest in these materials.<sup>869</sup>

The picture is different in the post-8th Century Buddhism of Northeastern India, where one encounters direct evidence of an interest in PP spell scriptures. Manuscript CTRC 8 (see Chapter 2) is perhaps the key example, although little is known about the context of the commission of this assortment of shorter PP works. The wealthy status of the commissioner is self-evident, given the quality of the writing and of the iconographic program. The title *rāṇaka* in the colophon is further indication of social high-standing. However, one should bear in mind that this particular selection of PP work is unattested elsewhere and that PP spell scriptures are found side by side with more traditional specimens (such as the SaśP) which do not engage with spell practices. This raises questions regarding the actual appeal of these sources at institutional level.

There is some inscriptional evidence from this later period in which PP is directly mentioned. If my interpretation of the passage is correct, a common formulation

---

<sup>866</sup> For a list of relevant MSS see von Hinüber 2014: 97 (n. 10a); 102-103 (n.24,25,26,27,28,50); 107 (50); 108 (52d.2, 52d.3, 52d.4).

<sup>867</sup> See for example some of the evidence from Central Asia mentioned in Chapter 2.2.1.

<sup>868</sup> See von Hinüber 2014: 120 for the relevant mss.

<sup>869</sup> Some relatively early evidence for this was presented at the beginning of Chapter 4.

in Pāla copper-plate charters mentions the Buddha as the 'repository' of the *prajñāpāramitā* and other teachings.<sup>870</sup>

As previously pointed out, historiographical sources do mention the sponsoring of PP recitation and commentators refer to royal support.<sup>871</sup> More importantly, inscriptions also mention specific works, such as the AS, and the sponsoring of their recitation. One can think of the well-known Vipulaśrīmitra inscription which is relevant for the study of book-based practices in ancient India.<sup>872</sup> Also important is the Sarnath stone inscription, in which recitation of the AS is enjoined.<sup>873</sup> However, no such inscription appears to refer to a PP spell work. Overall, the AS seems to have attracted significant attention, a fact which is mirrored by the evidence from extant PP MSS from the period, which are mostly copies of this particular work (see Chapter 2).

---

<sup>870</sup> See for example a copper-plate charter of Gopāla II recently published by Furui (2008). The relevant expression - also found elsewhere in the corpus of Pāla inscriptions - reads *buddhabhaṭṭāarakasya prajñāpāramitādisakaladharmanetrīsthānasya* (p.73, insc. line 48), i.e. '[...] of the Buddha, who is the repository of the entire teaching (litt. the leading principle that is the dharma) consisting of PP etc'. On the term *dharmanetrī* as referring to a teaching see e.g. the *Kaśyapaparivarta* (Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya 2002: 15, verse portion of section 20). Also see the entry on *netrī* in Edgerton's dictionary (1993: 311).

<sup>871</sup> See for examples the passages from Tāranātha translated in Sanderson 2009: 92 (notes 167 and 168). Here, one also finds a translation of Haribhadra's famous address to a Pāla ruler at the end of his *Āloka* commentary (Sanderson 2009: 90, note 162).

<sup>872</sup> See Schopen 2005: 18 (notes 7 and 8). On this topic also see the remarks in von Hinüber 2016: 371f.

<sup>873</sup> See Mirashi 1955: 277 (line 12).

In order to get a more complete picture, one still needs to examine the role of Buddhist scholasticism, which was thriving in North-eastern India in this period. Something about the engagement of the learned Buddhist elite with PP sources will be said in the next section.

In general, as pointed out by a number of scholars, the overall picture to emerge is that of the *Larger* PP being the key scriptural specimen in the early period, being eventually obscured by a re-emergence of the AS during the Pālas.<sup>874</sup> At this stage, the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* constituted the main focus of attention for PP commentarial activity (see *Introduction*).

There is, however, some evidence for a continuation of the appeal of the *Larger* PP in the later period. In Sri Lanka, where Mahāyāna had a relatively strong presence,<sup>875</sup> one again fails to identify PP spell scriptures, despite the large amount of *dhāraṇī* sources in the inscriptional records.<sup>876</sup> However, some fragmentary texts have been identified as belonging to the *Larger* PP or - more precisely - to the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*.<sup>877</sup>

As already suggested, the links between PP writing and Buddhist institutions represent an immensely complex issue and the above sketch is merely

---

<sup>874</sup> On this one can consult the 'Historical Overview' in Zacchetti 2015: 176ff.

<sup>875</sup> See the Introduction for some of the relevant scholarly works, e.g. Mori 1999.

<sup>876</sup> Apart from the already mentioned contributions by Schopen and von Hinüber, one can approach these materials through the Epigraphia Zeylanica volumes. The ERC project Asia Beyond Boundaries (British Museum) is currently digitising a number of these inscriptions. They are appearing on the dedicated epigraphical website <https://siddham.network/>.

<sup>877</sup> See Paranavitana 1933: 200.

introductory. In order to offer some further insight into this fascinating topic, the following sections will briefly outline 1) the engagement of Buddhist scholars with PP spell scriptures; 2) the role of the personified Prajñāpāramitā as a key focus of institutional attention ; and 3) the transmission of PP works (including potentially esoteric ones) in Southeast Asia.

## 6.2 The Philosopher's Silence?

While not being the primary focus of the present study, Buddhist scholasticism is of primary importance if one is to understand the circulation and status attached to PP spell writing. Buddhist commentators and philosophers<sup>878</sup> often operated in a complex institutional environment which saw support from both royal patrons as well as Buddhist devotees. In such an environment, Buddhist knowledge became systematised, with the establishment of commentarial and doxographical traditions which remain the gateway for the study of Buddhist doctrines up to the present day. Thus, it is only obvious to attempt an enquiry into the status of PP spell scriptures within the Buddhist 'curricula' of places such as Nālandā or Vikramaśīla.

When it comes to the general engagement of philosophers with PP, one would perhaps first think of Madhyamaka writing, exemplified i.a. by some of the work

---

<sup>878</sup> In this section, the term 'philosopher' is used rather loosely with respect to exegetes and doctrinal experts.

ascribed to Nāgārjuna or Śāntideva. The latter's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (ca. 8<sup>th</sup> C) includes one seminal chapter on the Perfection of Insight, which exemplifies well the attitudes of some thinkers of the school towards key notions associated with PP, such as that of emptiness.<sup>879</sup> Of course, one should not forget that PP is also deeply entangled with the development of other Buddhist scholarly traditions besides Madhyamaka, such as the Yogācāra.<sup>880</sup>

There are also some fascinating verses dedicated to PP allegedly composed by Buddhist philosophers. One can think of Diñnāga's *Prajñāpāramitāpiṇḍārtha*, as well as Kambala's *Navasloki*.<sup>881</sup> The latter is particularly significant because it is included in MS CTRC 8 described above, which otherwise covers scriptural materials. Overall, however, both digests are rather traditional in their choice of topics and essential aspects of PP.

---

<sup>879</sup> See for example verses 48 to 52 in Crosby and Skilton's translation of the work (1998: 120). This section underlines the importance of the realisation of emptiness. The chapter itself is emphatically placed towards the end of the work, thus indicating the perfecting insight can be seen as the final stage on the path of cultivation.

<sup>880</sup> One can think of commentaries on PP written from a Yogācāra perspective or the presence of Yogācāra elements in shorter PP scriptures. On the first aspect see Makransky 1997: 8f., 153ff. (on the background of the *Abhisamayālamkāra*) as well as Conze 1978: 96f. (on commentaries to the *Vajracchedikā*). Some remarks on Yogācāra in shorter PPs will be offered below.

<sup>881</sup> Tucci 1947 includes both text and translation of the *piṇḍārtha*. The same author has also worked on Kambala's text (Tucci 1956: 211ff.). On the author of the *piṇḍārtha* one should consult Frauwallner 1959.

Eventually, scholarly engagement with PP became largely polarised around a verse commentary known as the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*.<sup>882</sup> In the Pāla period, scholastic engagement with PP had become integral part of the ‘Buddhist curriculum’, an activity for which one could hope to achieve great recognition.<sup>883</sup> It is probably in connection to such dynamics that a plethora of commentarial writing arose in connection to the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*.<sup>884</sup>

Thus, as a general remark, it would appear that the mainstream commentarial tradition on PP did not pay much attention to PP spells and spell scriptures, both in terms of texts to be commented upon independently, or of scriptures to be quoted as authorities while elucidating PP’s doctrinal intricacies.

An important exception to this is the fact that a number of commentaries to the PPH composed by South Asian and Tibetan authors do survive in Tibetan translation.<sup>885</sup> The PPH commented upon is usually the larger one, which is formed of a sūtra narrative framework,<sup>886</sup> a teaching section (which touches upon the notion of emptiness), as well as a spell section. According to remarks made by Lopez in his seminal study, one could perhaps identify a certain tension

---

<sup>882</sup> For introductory remarks on this important work see Zacchetti 2015: 183.

<sup>883</sup> See the references in Seton 2015: 57 (note 123). Also see Chimpa 1990: 304. This was already clear to Conze, as illustrated in the dedicated section of the PPL (Conze 1978: 101ff.).

<sup>884</sup> Nevertheless, as stated above an early commentary by Vimuktisena might actually date back to the 6<sup>th</sup> C (see Ruegg 1968: 305ff.). However, it is in the Pāla period that we get some of the most influential commentarial contributions, such as the *Āloka* by Haribhadra (for a translation see Sparham 2006-2012).

<sup>885</sup> Key treatments of these sources can be found in Lopez 1988 and 1996.

<sup>886</sup> For elaborations on this see Nattier 1992: 194.

between those commentators who take a more simplistic exegetical approach to the PPH and those who clearly wished to reframe the contents of this extremely brief and direct scripture according to the categories of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* and traditional exegesis on PP.<sup>887</sup> As Eckel remarks, the directness and simplicity of message of the PPH appears to have been seen by some commentators as a challenge, i.e. a potential obstacle to the establishment of well-structured exegetical parameters to PP writing.<sup>888</sup>

This opens a new and fascinating dimension to the question of why PP spell scriptures were apparently generally neglected at the level of Mahāyāna scholasticism. At first glance one might be tempted to gloss over the matter, simply assuming that such sources would have been intellectually less appealing to elite Buddhist thinkers. Nevertheless, this does not seem to be the actual crux of the matter. The maturity of Buddhist scholasticism also entailed establishing structured approaches to teachings that range from source selection to exegetical categories, etc.

On the one hand, perhaps PP spell scriptures would have potentially raised some challenges to established ways of framing exegetical discourse around PP, partly because of their leaning towards esoteric trends. One also wonders whether the practice of spells advocated within such sources could have been seen as problematic by some thinkers, particularly within the PP context. As pointed out above, these practices are usually unsupervised and suggest a quick, direct

---

<sup>887</sup> See Lopez 1996: 12.

<sup>888</sup> See Eckel 1987: 77.

access to spiritual benefits sometimes even on part of the ignorant, the beginner, or the sinner (see Chapter 4).

In fact, for some reason the more esoteric aspects related to the interpretation of the PPH are not particularly emphasised in this set of commentaries on the PPH. However, some passages do stress aspects related to the PPH's spell. For example, Jñānamitra's commentary mentions the usefulness of the PPH's spell for curing diseases and securing protection.<sup>889</sup> But on the whole such aspects are not explored, prompting Lopez to suggest a certain uneasiness on this front on part of some commentators.<sup>890</sup>

However, as seen in Chapter 5, certainly not all authors were sceptical about esoteric practices. Thus, there might be a more direct reason for a lack of engagement with the Selected Sources. For example, it is well known that the *Abhisamayālamkāra* is structured in a way that can be easily applied to the contents of both the *Larger PP* and the *AS*. Clearly PP spell scriptures did not follow such structure and as such engaging with them would have been less straightforward.

As a topic for future study, it might be fascinating to investigate the potential challenges presented by PP spell practice to Buddhist scholasticism and, by extension, Buddhist institutions, also considering the developments that took place on this front both in China and Tibet.

---

<sup>889</sup> See Lopez 1996: 149 for a translation of the relevant passage.

<sup>890</sup> See *ibid.* p.15.

Moving on, apart from this late and perhaps rather hesitant engagement with the PPH, one also encounters a few references to the esoteric AdhyP. This work appears to have actually been quoted by Buddhist scholars.<sup>891</sup> This points to the fact that the work was indeed known and accepted in scholastic circles, despite the general lack of PP-related content.<sup>892</sup> The passages which seem to have been quoted by Candrakīrti, however, are relatively simple and phraseologically traditional statements on the nature of *dharmas*.<sup>893</sup> As for Haribhadra's quotation in the *Āloka*, it is a stanza that does not refer to esoteric notions and, as far as I can tell, is inserted in the context of a discussion on transmigration and inherited propensities towards awakening.<sup>894</sup> Be that as it may, the fact that passages found in the AdhyP also occur in writings by scholars of this calibre should be certainly noted.

Apart from these examples, no other specimens among PP spell scriptures seem to have attracted the attention of elite Buddhist thinkers in South Asia. Once again, one could speculate that these sources were either considered too unattractive on the intellectual level or perhaps even a potential threat to some established and traditional ways of teaching (or even practicing) PP.

There are some indications of further engagement with shorter PP, albeit with those which do not contain spells. The SaŚP, which is found in a number of

---

<sup>891</sup> On this see the remarks in Tomabechi 2009: xii as well as Conze 1978: 80.

<sup>892</sup> On the basis of such quotations, Tomabechi suggests that the AdhyP “seems to have enjoyed the status of an authentic Prajñāpāramitā sūtra in India” (2009: xii).

<sup>893</sup> The passage is reported at Tomabechi 2009: 17.

<sup>894</sup> See *ibid.* p.23. The passage as inserted in Haribhadra's work can be found at Wogihara 1932-1935 (vol.1): 132 (line 6).

manuscripts dealt with in Chapter 2, did receive an important commentary by Kamalaśīla.<sup>895</sup> As pointed out above, the SaśP is included in CTRC 8, being its last and longest work. Yet the MS also includes Kambala's *Navasloki*<sup>896</sup> and the *Avikalpapraveśanāmadhāraṇī*. The latter is a scriptural source which does not directly belong to the PP genre but contains a treatment of important aspects of non-duality.<sup>897</sup> Perhaps the presence of these three works in the Pāla composite MS might betray the influence of institutionalised engagement with PP, although this remains speculative at the moment. The *Avikalpapraveśanāmadhāraṇī* as well as the commentary on the SaśP are being currently investigated by scholars of the IKGA in Vienna, whose research might one day help throw further light on the background of CTRC 8 as a composite manuscript.<sup>898</sup>

Finally, it should again be pointed out that the *Pañcaśatikā*, a shorter PP work which incorporates some notions typical of the Yogācāra school (also included in CTRC 8),<sup>899</sup> appears to have been quoted by a certain Asvabhāva in a *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāraṭīkā*.<sup>900</sup> This is a small example of the versatility of PP discourse, which ended up incorporating a variety of philosophical trends. It also reminds one that often scriptural production post-dates doctrinal developments,

---

<sup>895</sup> See Conze 1978: 60.

<sup>896</sup> See Tucci 1956: 211ff.

<sup>897</sup> See Tan *et al.* 2007.

<sup>898</sup> Dr. Birgit Kellner was able to have a preliminary look at the text of the *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* as recorded in CTRC 8 during our stay in Beijing in 2018.

<sup>899</sup> The Skt. text has been recently published in Li and Fujita 2016 on the basis of CTRC 8.

<sup>900</sup> See Li and Fujita 2016: lvii. On the possible dates of Asvabhāva see *ibid.* lxxxii. From the discussion, it appears that one is looking at developments that predate the 8<sup>th</sup> C, and thus also predate the composition of most Selected Sources.

a fact which can be easily forgotten. Another shorter PP which seems to actively promote Yogācāra notions is the \**Nītārthā* PP, a very short digest extant in Chinese translation.<sup>901</sup>

Thus, despite the potential opportunities opened up by the availability of shorter PP scriptures, attention appears to have largely remained focused on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*. This - compounded with the general paucity of extant manuscript sources - makes of PP spell scriptures the most elusive specimens within the entire PP tradition, at least in terms of institutional reception in the South Asian context. However, as hinted above, the reasons for this might be rather nuanced and deserve to be further explored.

### 6.3 The Role of Personification

The present thesis focused on scriptural sources and the manuscripts preserving them. However, it is necessary to stress once again the crucial role played by the complex dynamics of personification of Prajñāpāramitā.<sup>902</sup> In fact, many of the phenomena dealt with above - such as the appearance of PP spells, of esoteric

---

<sup>901</sup> See Lehnert 1999: 66. A passage mentioning the 10 *vikalpas* can be consulted directly here (T08n0247p0845b6-8).

<sup>902</sup> This does not amount to suggesting that these aspects should be seen as entirely separate. Clearly, there are many ways in which the personified form relates to manuscripts as well as texts. On the deity being 'present' in the PP MS see e.g. Emmrich 2009: 144.

systems of PP worship, of royal cults related to the deity, etc. - appear to have a very special connection to the personified form of Prajñāpāramitā.

Perhaps it is not entirely surprising that early references to PP spells are chronologically close to the first attested images of the deity, i.e. the Gilgit bronzes (7th C). The inscription on one such statues identifies the donor as Maṅgalaḥṣikā, who was a queen of the Palola Śāhi dynasty.<sup>903</sup> This is an important precedent to the better known statues of the deity from Northeastern India, which postdate the Gilgit ones by a few centuries.

In most representations, Prajñāpāramitā holds a manuscript book (*pustaka*) in her hands. This is already true of the Gilgit examples, one of which shows a *pustaka* inscribed with the word *prajñāpāramitā* itself.<sup>904</sup> In the Pāla period, the *pustaka* is a rather typical iconographic feature, shared with other deities - such as Mañjuśrī - in what Kinnard saw as an intricate web of imagery representing the abstract notion of *prajñā* i.e. 'insight'.<sup>905</sup> Some famous Orissan images also include scenes that appear to depict book worship.<sup>906</sup> From the perspective of the present study, it is important to note that some such depictions apparently show elements usually associated with esoteric worship (e.g. *vajras*).<sup>907</sup> These surely are important pieces of evidence that should be brought together with

---

<sup>903</sup> See von Hinüber 2007:39. On the dynasty see von Hinüber's 2004 monograph.

<sup>904</sup> See *ibid.* The publication includes photographic reproductions.

<sup>905</sup> As stated in the Introduction, Kinnard's *Imaging Wisdom* (1999) has been a major source of inspiration for the present study.

<sup>906</sup> References were given above. See for example Kim 2013: 33.

<sup>907</sup> This is going to be the topic of a presentation by Kim to be delivered at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion (November 2019).

textual sources - such as the *Vajrāvalī* or the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* - in order to better understand the dynamic of esoteric worship of PP manuscripts.<sup>908</sup> As seen above, some of the most representative treatments of PP are the visualisations described in works such as the *Sādhanamālā* (presented in Chapter 5). Here, one finds a synthesis of mature iconography, spell practices, as well as notions related to attaining insight and cognitive capabilities.

The few South Asian inscriptional records mentioning PP usually tell of the sponsoring of scriptural copying and recitation. The AS is explicitly mentioned in some remarkable Pāla examples.<sup>909</sup> However, at least one inscription from Eastern India tells of the instalment of the deity Prajñāpāramitā in a temple.<sup>910</sup> This is in line with the facts that Prajñāpāramitā statues do survive from this region and period.<sup>911</sup>

The evidence for cults centred specifically on the deity Prajñāpāramitā might not be abundant in South Asia. Nevertheless, the developments internal to the PP tradition taken up in the preceding chapters would not have been thinkable without a switch in focus to the personified form.

---

<sup>908</sup> On these works see the section of Chapter 5 dealing with manuscript sources (5.2.4).

<sup>909</sup> Apart from the ones quoted above in the present chapter, one should also mention a grant published in Mirashi 1955: 275 (from Sarnath, dating back to 1058 according to Mirashi). The grant mentions that the commissioned *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* PP is to be recited for “as long a time as the moon, the sun, and the earth will endure” (p.278).

<sup>910</sup> This is the Vajrayoginī grant (EI XXX, p. 359ff.) issued under the Varman dynasty of Northeastern India. Unfortunately the plate is fragmentary. Mention of *śrīprajñāpāramitābhaṭṭarikā* can be found on line 8 of the reverse.

<sup>911</sup> Kinnard 1999 does include a number of plates illustrating such statues.

This fact becomes even clearer once we turn to Southeast Asia, an area where the personified Prajñāpāramitā was to enjoy sustained royal and institutional attention. As explained in the *Introduction* (see Chapter 1), a study of this material can offer insights into the deity's prominent role in royal cults, transregional networks, as well as exoteric and esoteric forms of the religion.

Cambodia is one key region in which Mahāyāna was present and interacted significantly with royal institutions. While a good number of Prajñāpāramitā statues survives, one is struck by the fact that iconographically they tend to be rather different from their South Asian counterparts.<sup>912</sup> To a non-specialist, this is a good reminder that one cannot simply assume a continuation of Pāla models and prototypes in the Southeast Asia context, and that a deep acquaintance with the specificity and uniqueness of each region has to be sought for.

One fascinating aspect of Cambodian statues of Prajñāpāramitā is that some of them appear to show esoteric forms of the deity. One can think for example of the high number of arms of certain specimens, one of which reaches twenty-two.<sup>913</sup> This seems to be iconographically unparalleled in South Asia. The potential importance of the different number of arms was pointed out above, when dealing with the iconographic descriptions found in the Selected Sources (e.g. in the BM, see Chapter 5).

---

<sup>912</sup> My main source of information about these materials is a recent overview article by Miltzer o'Naghten (2016). The article (in French) contains a large number of illustrations. On the divergence from Indic models, see *ibid.*: 40f.

<sup>913</sup> See *ibid.* p 51.

Common images of Prajñāpāramitā are those found within triads with the Buddha and Avalokiteśvara. Possibly, the important and multifaceted connections between Prajñāpāramitā and Avalokiteśvara (Lokēśvara) are partly related to the centrality of notions of insight (*prajñā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*), respectively associated with the two deities.<sup>914</sup> It is not unlikely that some of the esoteric developments connected to the cults of these deities would have been linked to attempts at bringing together this two seemingly irreconcilable aspects.<sup>915</sup> In terms of the Selected Sources, one should remember that Avalokiteśvara was a key character both in the PPH and the SvalP. As pointed out above, the inclusion of this deity marked a rather drastic departure from traditional PP character selection.

But considerations on the personified Prajñāpāramitā should not be limited to statues and their archaeological contexts. A large body of evidence comes in the form of hymns to the deity, typically found at the beginning of inscriptions. Here too, one can use such references to unearth some of the notions associated with the deity (and possibly her cults), such as of course that of being the ‘mother of the Buddhas’.<sup>916</sup> However, as Miltzer o’Naghten indicates, it is not always

---

<sup>914</sup> See Green 2014: 87f as well as Sharrock 2006: 70f.

<sup>915</sup> See *ibid.* Green touches upon the figure of the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara (Ekādaśamukha) and his comprising both aspects of *prajñā* and *karuṇā*.

<sup>916</sup> As pointed out above, while this central notion was already attested in the AS, it resurfaced with a certain preeminence within the later esoteric context (see Chapter 5.2.2). This, however, does not directly explain the presence of such notions in Khmer inscriptions. In this context, one has to deal with notions of the construction of royalty from a Buddhist perspective. A most famous example relating to Jayavarman VII and his mother is discussed below. There are many references to a ‘mother of the

straightforward to assess whether a certain passage actually refers to this particular deity. References in hymns to a *vidyādhārī* and a *trailokyavijyāgīśvarī* are but two examples.<sup>917</sup>

Most hymns appear to have a generic devotional character, with Prajñāpāramitā being often associated with bestowing insight. However, some are slightly more elaborate, as for example K. 86's [...] *yā muktipradā prāṇabhṛtām acintyā / (a)vīkṣitā jñānad(r)śaiva tasyai muner jananyai satataṃ namo 'stu* 'Eternal homage to the mother of the Jina, who bestows liberation to living beings, is inconceivable, inscrutable even by one who sees with the eye of knowledge/ even by the eye of knowlegde'.<sup>918</sup> Other hymns may show possible esoteric connections.<sup>919</sup> While these sources are well known to scholars, some new materials do occasionally appear. For example, on the basis the forthcoming edition by Arlo Griffiths, stanza 13 of K.1297 says of a 12th C king that he was devoted to Prajñāpāramitā and supported the preachers of the dharma.

---

Buddhas/Jinas' in Khmer inscriptions, yet PP is not always explicitly mentioned. A more transparent example is perhaps that of K.872, which reads *prajñāpāramitā bhāti jīnasantānakāriṇī* (IC V, p. 99, 7) 'Prajñāpāramitā shines being the one who brings about the lineage of Jinas'.

<sup>917</sup> See Miltzer o'Naghten 2016: 36. The relevant inscriptions are K.214 and K132. For the former see IC II: 204 (Khmer portion; the Skt. portion mentions Prajñāpāramitā in the opening eulogy). For the latter see *ibid.* p.85 (line 3 mentions *vidyādhāraṇī*).

<sup>918</sup> See IC V: 283.

<sup>919</sup> See Sharrock 2006: 74, mentioning a link of Prajñāpāramitā with Vairocana.

Furthermore, stanza 53 appears to describe the ruler as possessing the perfection of wisdom.<sup>920</sup>

As with the common triads mentioned above, in inscriptions Prajñāpāramitā usually occurs as part of a series of deities. Typically, it is the Buddha and Avalokiteśvara whom are also praised, yet sometimes a connection with potentially esoteric ritual contexts becomes more prominent. One example is that of Cambodian inscription K.225, in which Prajñāpāramitā is mentioned in a set of six deities, also including Vajrapāṇī, Maitreya, and Indra.<sup>921</sup>

A crucial aspect that should be further investigated on the basis of such evidence is that of the links between Prajñāpāramitā and royal institutions. This can even be done in more depth than in the Pāla context. To refer to the most famous an iconic example, K.273 at Ta Prohm associates Jayavarman VII's mother with Prajñāpāramitā.<sup>922</sup> Given that the ruler's father is also associated with Avalokiteśvara, one can see an attempt at incorporating Mahāyāna ideology within the royal one. Clearly, the figure of the ruler becomes exalted, for he can by extension be identified with a Buddha himself.<sup>923</sup>

---

<sup>920</sup> I would like to thank Dr. Arlo Griffiths for discussing these passages with me (May 2019). He indicated that there might be other stanzas referring to Prajñāpāramitā under different names. Moreover, Dr. Dominic Goodall informed me of another unpublished inscription mentioning Prajñāpāramitā in its opening stanza (personal communication, May 2019).

<sup>921</sup> See Harris 2005: 17 as well as IC III, p.66 (Prajñāpāramitā is mentioned in stanza n. 2).

<sup>922</sup> The edition can be found in Coedes 1906 (see stanzas 5 and 36 in particular).

<sup>923</sup> For introductory remarks on Jayavarman VII's political ideology see Harris 2005: 19ff.

Avalokiteśvara is also well attested in the relatively limited Buddhist epigraphical records of the neighbouring Campā kingdom.<sup>924</sup> However, no direct reference to Prajñāpāramitā could be identified in the course of this study. As for statuary, fascinating images that may represent Prajñāpāramitā are indeed preserved in museum collections.<sup>925</sup> It is important to remember that here too Mahāyāna had become incorporated within royal ideology, figuring prominently in some inscriptional records.<sup>926</sup> Of course one does not fail to trace evidence of esoteric Buddhism, as exemplified for example by specific sets of deities mentioned in C.138.<sup>927</sup> Once again, the process of mapping this particular system with scriptural sources from South Asia is not entirely straightforward.<sup>928</sup>

But the influence of Prajñāpāramitā does not end here. The student of South Asian Buddhism is likely to remember that two Pāla manuscripts of the AS actually mention some Indonesian Buddhist sites.<sup>929</sup> Such mentions come in the form of captions attached to illuminations of particular deities. One remarkable specimen includes references to places in Sumatra, the Malay peninsula, and

---

<sup>924</sup> See Green 2014: 65ff. For a general introduction to Campā Buddhism, see Mabbett 1986 and Schweyer 2009. On the history of Campā see Vickery 2005.

<sup>925</sup> See Schweyer 2011: 412f. Also, see the *Vibrancy in Stone* catalogue (Võ Văn Thắng et al. 2018), specimens number 13 and 18 (pp. 152 and 170 respectively). I thank Dr. Peter Sharrock for kindly pointing out these specimens to me (personal communication Feb 2020).

<sup>926</sup> A list of relevant inscriptions can be found in Green 2014: 77, along with bibliographical information.

<sup>927</sup> This is possibly the most well-known Buddhist inscription from Campā. See the (non definitive) edition by Huber 1911: 277ff.

<sup>928</sup> See the comments in Schweyer 2009: 313ff.

<sup>929</sup> See the following notes for references.

Java.<sup>930</sup> A slightly later PP manuscript also includes important references to Java in the form of captioned miniatures.<sup>931</sup>

Indeed, one does not fail to trace numerous statues of Prajñāpāramitā from Sumatra and Java. Many of these were presented and discussed in an important study by Natasha Reichle, focusing on the Singasari-Majapahit period (13th-14th C).<sup>932</sup> The most well-known specimen is the Prajñāpāramitā statue currently housed at the National Museum in Jakarta, which has attracted the attention of historians, not least for its artistic merits. Statues of the deity are also linked to temple complexes, such as the Eastern Javanese site of Boyolangu.<sup>933</sup>

As Reichle explains, the presence of such images does raise profound questions regarding the role of Prajñāpāramitā within royal ideology as well as ritual (much like it did in the Cambodian context). The vexed question of these statues representing portraits of Buddhist queens cannot be taken up here.<sup>934</sup> However, in general, this evidence testifies to a certain endurance of Prajñāpāramitā's royal appeal in the period of the Majapahit dynasty, which marks the last

---

<sup>930</sup> This is Cambridge Library MS 1643 (1015 CE). See Kim 2013: 57.

<sup>931</sup> See *ibid.* MS 'B2' (1071 CE).

<sup>932</sup> See Reichle 2007, esp. Chapter 3. Prajñāpāramitā is also attested at the northern Sumatran non-costal site of Padang Lawas. The statue is presented in Perret 2014 at various places (e.g. p.68). There are also fascinating bas-reliefs one should consider, like e.g. the one on Candi Mendut in Central Java.

<sup>933</sup> See *ibid.* p.62f. for photographic reproductions as well as the general discussion.

<sup>934</sup> See *ibid.*

centuries before the final decline of Buddhism in much of the Nusantara region.<sup>935</sup>

Crucially, roughly contemporary written sources in Old Javanese do survive. First of all, one should consider epigraphical sources. Even a very cursory engagement with inscriptions in Old Javanese brought to the identification of the term *prajñāpāramitā* in a number of them. While it appears that some members of the royal families carried the name ‘Prajñāpāramitā’, references to the deity are also found.<sup>936</sup>

More accessible to the uninitiated is the Old Javanese *Deśavarṇana/Nagarakṛtāgama*, whose PP-related materials are also discussed by Reichle. In this work, one find a number of references to the deity. The work clarifies that some royal figures were indeed named *Prajñāpāramitā*.<sup>937</sup> But perhaps the most striking section is that which deals with the *śraddhā* rites of the queen mother (chiefly cantos 63-67).<sup>938</sup> The work rather clearly associates the queen with the deity, although the precise nature of this identification is a delicate matter which transcends the present scope.<sup>939</sup> Other passages

---

<sup>935</sup> See Sanderson 2003: 377 - which mentions *Prajñāpāramitā* cults in ancient Indonesia - as well as the introductory remarks on p.350f.

<sup>936</sup> See for example Van Stein Callenfels 1924. A reference to the deity *Prajñāpāramitā* could be present at p.26, 15. Inspection of the rubbings or plates would be needed to confirm the reading, as the edition reads *bhaṭāri prajāparamikasa*.

<sup>937</sup> See the translation of the relevant passage in Robson 1995: 58.

<sup>938</sup> I thank Prof. Thomas Hunter for discussing this section and sharing his partial edition and translation with me (August 2019).

<sup>939</sup> See canto 67.2: *Prajñāpāramitā tēmah nira n umantuk ring Mahābuddhaloka* ‘*Prajñāpāramitā* is what she [i.e. Rājapatnī] finally became as she returned to the realm

apparently speak of Prajñāpāramitā shrines and even of Prajñāpāramitā rituals performed by certain officiants.<sup>940</sup> The same work also includes an important - an in fact puzzling - reference to a 'Subhūti Tantra', on which some thoughts will be offered below.<sup>941</sup>

Finally, the deity is also mentioned in other Old Javanese works like the *Sutasoma* and the *Advayasādhana* (although in the latter it also figures as part of the common set of 'perfections').<sup>942</sup> Overall, these materials exemplify how PP cults became intertwined with esoteric rituals and eventually should be studied

---

of the Great Buddha' (I thank Andrea Acri and Thomas Hunter for their help with this and the following passages in Old Javanese).

<sup>940</sup> See canto 69.1-2 "Prajñāpāramitāpurī is the name by which the holy sanctuary is generally known, and a Prajñāpāramitā-ritual was performed [= *prajñāpāramitākriyā inulahakēn* see Pigeaud 1960: 53] by Śrī Jñānawidhi to establish it" (Robson 1995: 75). Stanza 2 possibly mentions the Boyolangu temple from Eastern Java mentioned above (Reichle 2007: 61).

<sup>941</sup> See Robson 1995: 55 (and the relevant note).

<sup>942</sup> The *Sutasoma* is a 14<sup>th</sup> C court poem which was edited and translated by Santoso (1975). The passage in question was also covered in Ensink's 1974 study. The passage *nāhan hetu bhaṭāra Buddha kahiḍēp putrāprameyeṅ jagat / saṅ hyaṅ Advaya* [Ensink has *Hadvaya*] *rāma tattva nira de saṅ paṅḍitāṅhayvani / Prajñāpāramitebu tan sah i sēḍēnniṅ yoga sānusmṛti* / (41.4) was translated by him as "That is why the Lord Buddha is considered to be the son, incomparable in the world. The divine non-duality has the nature of a father according to the wise in general agreement. Prajñāpāramitā is the mother, who ever abides in yoga and concentration" (p.221). As for the *Advayasādhana*, see the passage (Kats 1910: 48, 12) *saṅ hyaṅ advayajñāna sira ta devī bharālī Prajñāpāramitā naranira, sira ta ibu de bhaṭāra hyaṅ Buddha* "The divine knowledge of non-duality is the Divine Lady Prajñāpāramitā. She is the mother of the Lord Buddha" (Ensink 1974: 203).

carefully along with parallel innovations known from Pāla Bengal (explored partly in the previous Chapter).

Thus, not only Cambodia, but Sumatra and indeed Java were centres in which the institutionalisation of Mahāyāna opened the door for Prajñāpāramitā to be integrated in a number of contexts, most notably in those of royal ideology and ritual. As much as this is a fascinating aspect of the enduring appeal of Prajñāpāramitā as a deity, one still faces the question of what would have been the possible textual basis for such cults and practices. At present it seems unlikely that any of the Selected Sources played a crucial role in the region. However, related works like the *AdhyP* or the *Vajracchedikā* might have had a more significant role to play, as will be discussed in the following *Excursus*.

## **6.4 Excursus: Tracing Prajñāpāramitā Works in Southeast Asia**

As explored in the above chapters, later PP works can be traced in manuscript form or translation in most regions in which Mahāyāna Buddhism spread, including China and Tibet. One relatively neglected yet potentially rewarding area of inquiry is that of the circulation of PP works in Southeast Asia. This wide and diverse region presents many cultural connections with Pāla Buddhism, although important and influential regional traditions did develop as well. This

chapter will end with an excursus on this topic, offering some preliminary observations.

As mentioned above, most of the art-historical and epigraphical materials testifying to the presence of Prajñāpāramitā in Southeast Asia are related to her personified form. Statues of the deity are relatively common - at least in some regions - while numerous hymns and records of her installations in temples and shrines can be found in inscriptions and chronicles.

Here, the question I would like to raise is that of the identification of PP works circulating in Southeast Asia in the medieval period,<sup>943</sup> particularly from the 7th C onwards. At present, all that can be offered is a mere sketch, although some fascinating implications do seem to already emerge.

Students of Buddhist scriptures would be familiar with the work of medieval translators and scholars somehow linked to Southeast Asia, who also engaged with PP scriptures. One such case is that of \*Mandra, the translator of the SaśP into Chinese active in the 6th C. According to an important catalogue (T2154), he was from Funan, a region which partially overlapped with modern-day Cambodia.<sup>944</sup> One could also think of Song dynasty translators such as \*Dānapāla

---

<sup>943</sup> Elsewhere in the thesis, I have adopted the common expression 'early medieval period' extending roughly from the fall of the Guptas (6th C) to that of the Pālas (13th C). This periodisation is grounded in South Asian history and might not apply smoothly to Southeast Asia. For example, the phenomena that interest me continue to be attested in the 14th and perhaps even the 15th C, at least in Java. I will attempt to give the necessary chronological references below.

<sup>944</sup> The relevant passage was presented above. On \*Mandra see also Harris 2005: 6.

(施護, e.g. KauP - T249), who is said to have been familiar with the scripts of Śrīvijaya and Java.<sup>945</sup> Also, Amoghavajra, whose PP-related manuals were referred to in Chapter 5, is said to have visited Java.<sup>946</sup> A systematic study of such and other figures might potentially shed some light on the circulation of PP works. However, one has to wonder whether more direct evidence exists at all. The existence of a bronze manuscript box from Indonesia, inscribed with the words *bharālī*<sup>947</sup> *prajñāpāramitā*, is certainly encouraging in this sense.<sup>948</sup>

One might want to actually start from Cambodia, for the evidence in form of inscriptions relevant to the history of Buddhism is indeed extremely rich there. However, at the present state of this research the only potential reference to a PP scripture remains the one pointed out by Sanderson and stemming from inscription K.111 (968 CE).<sup>949</sup> Here one finds a reference to a *lakṣaḡrantha-abhiprajñā*,<sup>950</sup> which could be taken as referring to a PP scripture. Considering that *lakṣaḡrantha* seems to refer to a measure of length, one could perhaps think of the *Śatasāhasrikā* as the related scripture. This, however, remains

---

<sup>945</sup> See Sen 2003: 122.

<sup>946</sup> See Aciri 2016: 12.

<sup>947</sup> I assume *bharālī* would be an equivalent of *bhaṭṭārī/ bhaṭṭārikā*, a title commonly used with deities.

<sup>948</sup> See Herni P. *et al.* 2007. I thank Arlo Griffiths for pointing this out to me.

<sup>949</sup> See Sanderson 2003: 427 (note 284) and Harris 2005: 16.

<sup>950</sup> Note that Sanderson is suggesting a slight emendation to the text (see *ibid.*). See also Sharrock 2006: 17.

speculative. It would be partially surprising to have this specimen as the focus of attention, instead of one of the PP scriptures more fashionable in Pāla India.<sup>951</sup>

Apart from this instance, one does find mention of notions such as *sūnyatā* (emptiness) or *nairātmya* (lack of self).<sup>952</sup> These notions, however, need not be necessarily tied to PP sources and thus cannot be used for the identification of specific scriptures without further evidence. In the case of *nairātmya* as mentioned in K.111, it seems that it is Yogācāra influences which should be considered.<sup>953</sup>

Moving further South into Sumatra, one is confronted with questions regarding Mahāyāna Buddhism in the Śrīvijaya context. There can be little doubt that this tradition was highly influential and was supported by rulers.<sup>954</sup> According to Skilling, the *Durbodhāloka* - a commentary apparently composed here - presupposes a knowledge of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* tradition.<sup>955</sup> It could well be that some developed monastic centres around Muara Jambi - one of the key

---

<sup>951</sup> Nevertheless, one fascinating aspect regarding the Cambodian evidence is that sometimes one can observe the preservation of features that would otherwise seem archaic in the South Asian context (I thank Peter Szántó for sharing this insight with me). That being said, the *Śatasāhasrikā* continued to circulate in Nepal, and is even recorded in fairly recent MSS (see Zacchetti 2005: 29, note 110).

<sup>952</sup> See Harris 2005: 15 (K.806) and 16. Sanderson noted that the notion of emptiness also occurs with a certain frequency in Indonesian Śaiva sources (see Sanderson 2009: 122).

<sup>953</sup> See Green 2014: 72 (and note).

<sup>954</sup> See for example Miksic 2010: 9.

<sup>955</sup> This work is the subject of Skilling's 1997 study. His findings are also referred to in Aciri 2016: 11 (with reference to the PP tradition).

archaeological sites - housed learned communities of monks, some of whom would have engaged with the rich commentarial tradition on PP.<sup>956</sup>

As for Java, we luckily possess a few surviving Buddhist works in Old Javanese, as mentioned above. One such work, the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānan Mantranaya* (pre 10th C?), is one of the key sources for the study of esoteric Buddhism in the region.<sup>957</sup> Interestingly, some scholars have pointed out that there might be traces of the AdhyP in this compendium of Buddhist scriptural knowledge.<sup>958</sup> One should be careful here, for the parallels identified by de Jong (1974) actually relate to what Tomabechi calls the Paramādya<sup>959</sup>, i.e. an enlarged version of the AdhyP (particularly the Tibetan one).<sup>960</sup> That means that there would be no direct connection with the AdhyP as instantiated in MS CTC8.

Also important is the fact, already pointed out above, that some *dhāraṇī* sources from Indonesia do incorporate stanzas which are known to occur in the *Vajracchedikā*.<sup>961</sup> This is certainly another scripture which one could expect to have been circulating in Southeast Asia.

A fascinating question arises in this regard from the Old Javanese *Deśavarṇana* (14th C).<sup>962</sup> Here, one finds a reference to a 'Subhūti Tantra', with which the king

---

<sup>956</sup> See Miksic's remarks in Acri 2016: 263.

<sup>957</sup> See Kandahjaya's contribution in Acri 2016.

<sup>958</sup> The topic is briefly treated in Woodward 2004: 339f.

<sup>959</sup> See Tomabechi 2009: li.

<sup>960</sup> See de Jong 1974: 469 for the identifications.

<sup>961</sup> See Griffiths 2014: 146f.

<sup>962</sup> Robson's translation of 1995 was referred to in the previous section.

seems to have been familiar.<sup>963</sup> As is well known, Subhūti is a character often encountered in the PP context.<sup>964</sup> While the AdhyP is the main candidate for the label of ‘tantra’ within PP sources, the presence of Subhūti might make one think of the *Vajracchedikā* itself, particularly given the evidence from *dhāraṇī* inscriptions I have just mentioned. One ought to bear in mind that traditional PP works were often embedded within esoteric cults, as pointed out above. In this sense, it might not be entirely impossible to think of this work as being referred to here. However, the actual work being referred to as the ‘Subhūti Tantra’ remains unidentified.<sup>965</sup>

Despite the fact that it remains challenging to clearly identify PP works in Southeast Asia, the above sketch should at least suggest that some PP materials were indeed circulating and being used. Certainly PP was not only seen as a deity or a symbol of wisdom and some people would have been aware of the vast scriptural background which was preserved elsewhere in the Buddhist world. It seems that here too one has to think in terms of ‘institutions’ of learning - possibly more interested in the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* tradition - and communities

---

<sup>963</sup> See Robson 1995: 43 (canto 43.3), apparently the king ‘in his old age, only performed steadfastly all sorts of rituals which pertain to the spiritual realm (or: rituals and spiritual undertakings), primarily the Tantra Subhūti, whose essence, so they say, was remembered and summarised in the heart’ (*ndan riñ vṛddha nireki mātra rumĕgĕp sarvakriyādhyātmika, mukhyaṅ tantra subhūti rakva tineñĕt (tiniñĕt) [ta iniñĕt]*) *kempĕn rasanya i hati*, based on Pigeud 1960: 32; I thank Andrea Aciri for decisive help with this passage (May 2020). See also Reichle 2007: 55.

<sup>964</sup> See Zacchetti 2015: 173 (second column).

<sup>965</sup> See also another reference to a Subhūti tantra discussed by Kandahjaya in Aciri 2016: 93.

focusing on esoteric practice - in which works like the AdhyP or the *Vajracchedikā* could have been studied and worshipped. In both cases, the crucial role of royal patronage can often be studied in some detail. The circulation and use of specific PP spells remain obscure, although such spells would have certainly been represented to some degree.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

### 7.1 On the Methodology and Structure of this Study

Now that the body of available evidence has been laid out and discussed, it is possible to suggest some preliminary conclusions. This will be done in multiple steps.

First of all, one should try to assess the benefits and efficacy of the chosen methodological approach as well as of the overall structure of the study. This is not merely a self-assessment exercise, as much as a reflexion on how to best approach the primary sources in a sound scholarly fashion.

The present study identified at the outset a group of scriptural sources as the primary object of investigation.<sup>966</sup> Thanks to the flexible approach taken in terms of source selection, the diversity of the scriptural specimens has been highlighted. This is indeed important, for it helps avoid the long standing tendency of considering PP scriptural production as an endless re-formulation of the same materials and notions.

In fact, PP spell scriptures can hardly be treated as a defined 'corpus'. This would be artificial and potentially detrimental to an overall understanding of the underlying historical and doctrinal dynamics.

---

<sup>966</sup> See Chapter-section 1.3.2.

The entire set of the Selected Sources is never found within the same textual repository. This is not only true of composite manuscripts, but even of huge repositories such as the Chinese or Tibetan Buddhist canons.

In this scenario, there can never be total consensus around the selection of the specific sources. This study adopted a very broad outlook, partially motivated by current trends in the field as well as by the need to rediscover neglected PP scriptures. Thus, the Selected Sources ended up covering a spectrum which ranged from the ArdhaP - a sūtra-like compilation of stock passages that does not actually include spells - to the BM - which is in fact a brief ritual manual on visualisation.

Specific reasons were given as to why the ArdhaP needed to be considered: the fact of its late translation into Chinese;<sup>967</sup> that it is inserted into *Dhāraṇīsamgrahas* and occasionally titled *-dhāraṇīsūtra*;<sup>968</sup> that it contains formulaic passages linked to speaking performance,<sup>969</sup> etc. Most of all, the ArdhaP has been seen as relevant because of its typology as scripture, i.e. a collection of fragments with a strong link to earlier PP literature. The same phenomenon has been observed in the PPH, the KauP, and in general in the sūtra-like specimens.<sup>970</sup>

As for the BM, while it stands apart in so many ways, its spells are the same as those found in the SvalP and it is by no means the only specimen which lacks the

---

<sup>967</sup> That would have been completed after 980 CE according to Lehnert 1999: 66.

<sup>968</sup> See Chapter 3.1.

<sup>969</sup> See Chapter 4.1.2.

<sup>970</sup> See Chapter 3.2.2.

sūtra frame-narrative (e.g. the SaŚIP).<sup>971</sup> It also highlighted the centrality of Prajñāpāramitā as a female deity, which is crucial for a number of reasons, partly traceable to other PP spell scriptures as well.<sup>972</sup>

Thus, rather than seeing the Selected Sources as an established 'corpus' on either emic or etic levels, it is useful to see them as part of a highly interrelated web of notions and practices which profoundly shaped the meaning of PP in the periods concerned.

This brings up the long-standing question of taxonomy. As explained at the beginning, it was never the intention of this study to propose yet another classification of PP scriptures.<sup>973</sup> That being said, I would argue that it is crucial to identify basic structural features, and compare the various sources on such basis. In my opinion, the single most important feature is that of the presence or absence of the sūtra frame-narrative.<sup>974</sup> Such feature can be used to set different degrees of emphasis on the ritual dimension. For example, it is quite clear that works which lack the sūtra frame-narrative - like the EkaP, the SaŚIP, the PNA, and the BM - form a sub-group of their own, in which the performance of spell recitation and its ritual benefits occupy a central position.<sup>975</sup> On the other hand, works like the ArdhaP, the KauP, the CandP, and the SvalP, are to be seen as

---

<sup>971</sup> See Chapter 4.1.2.

<sup>972</sup> See Chapter 5.2.2.

<sup>973</sup> See Chapter 1.3.3.4.

<sup>974</sup> See Chapter 4.1.

<sup>975</sup> See Chapter 4.1.2.

fully-fledged sūtras with a more complex relation to earlier PP literature and ritual performance.

One should, however, bear in mind that there could be multiple recension of a given specimen which can vary greatly. This is perhaps best exemplified by a work like the PPH, which survived in a longer and a shorter recension.<sup>976</sup> The fact that such variations are detected illustrates that redactors were aware of aspects related to the presence or absence of frame-narratives.

Connected to the sūtra-narrative issue is that of the placement of the spells, although the various versions of a work might sometimes diverge too significantly to allow for a strict categorisation. Nonetheless, it is important to note the difference between having spells as a sort of 'appendix' as in the KauP, or having them embedded within the body of a scripture. An example of the second case would be the SvaIP.<sup>977</sup>

Thus, if a taxonomy of these sources is to be developed one day, I would strongly argue that features such as the above should constitute its foundation.

This brings to the next issue which is that of esoteric passages. The relation between PP spell scriptures and Buddhist esotericism is certainly more complex than previously assumed. This is why I attempted to problematise the use of

---

<sup>976</sup> I have tried to keep track of these variations as best as I could. On this issue, see the introduction to Chapter 4. On the philological approach adopted in this thesis see 1.3.3.2.

<sup>977</sup> Again see Chapter 4.1.

common labels such as ‘esoteric PP works’ or ‘tantric PP works’ in relation to the Selected Sources.

Thus, minimalist spell works like the EkaP or the SaŚIP are merely concerned with revealing a spell and outlining some of its general benefits. Instead, a fully-fledged and narration-oriented sūtra like the SvalP abounds in terminology which betrays awareness of a mature esoteric environment.<sup>978</sup>

This is perhaps one of the more ambitious suggestions to arise from this study. That is, one cannot simply equate PP spell scriptures with an esoteric agenda *tout court*. This idea was partly inspired by those studies which problematise the notion the *dhāraṇī* practices should be automatically seen as falling under the purview of ‘esoteric Buddhism’.<sup>979</sup> I think that the evidence presented above could be used to further support this view. A number of scriptural specimens were concerned with enunciating a spell for the purpose of creating merit and removing karmic obstacles. As explained, such notions and practices are far too common - and indeed ancient - in Buddhism to be equated with the much more nuanced and developed agendas of mature esoteric Buddhism. From this perspective, I agree with those scholars who think that even the label of ‘proto-esoteric’ might in fact be slightly misleading. This is why I adopted the more neutral expressions ‘spell practices’ and ‘spell scriptures’.<sup>980</sup>

---

<sup>978</sup> This was illustrated and explained in detail in one of the core sections of the present thesis, i.e. 4.3 ‘The Practice of Spells’.

<sup>979</sup> On this see Chapter 1.3.3.1 and 1.3.3.5.

<sup>980</sup> See Chapter 1.3.3.5.

Let us move to the next issue. At the methodological level, one might question whether it is feasible to explore such major implications given the still shaky philological basis. Not only are most of the Selected Sources unavailable in critical editions, but even the few extant critical editions (e.g. of the SvalP by Yuyama 1977) could not take into account recent manuscript discoveries.

This question could be answered on two levels. First, the situation is such that in some cases there is still scope for identifying new witnesses of the Selected Sources in partly unexplored composite MSS. Some such identifications constitute part of the contributions of the present study. For example, it is only recently that scholars have come to know that MS CTRC 8 includes the SvalP.<sup>981</sup> This is due to the (possibly) mistaken internal colophon. Furthermore, Nepalese repositories of *dhāraṇīs* span over hundreds of folios. The time-consuming work of identifying PP works - sometimes of just a few lines - within them has only begun. The topic would surely require a dedicated study under the guidance of experienced codicologists of the Malla and Shah periods. In this study, the identification of some sources was meant as a preliminary contribution, also considering that the importance of DSs had not been fully highlighted in the Conzeian tradition of PP studies.

Yet there is another dimension to be considered. This has to do with the philological considerations made at the outset. The present study attempted to focus on the main recensional divergences within a given work's textual transmission, pointing them out whenever possible. For this purpose, comparing

---

<sup>981</sup> See Chapter 2.3.1.

the Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan texts was deemed particularly vital, even if it implied using specific Skt. MS witnesses or certain editions of the Chinese and Tibetan Canons. This was an attempt to explore the technical concept of ‘triangulation’, as explained in the *Introduction*. While this is again a preliminary step, it appears that a number of substantial considerations could indeed be made. However, one should again stress the extent to which Conze had been already able to explore such aspects, which is truly remarkable considering the time of his writing.

It appears that the philological challenges are similar to those encountered with regard to other Buddhist scriptural sources (see 1.3.2.2). I would like to point out two particularly fascinating issues with regard to edition these sources. First, as the diplomatic editions in the *Appendices* will illustrate, one can find significant variations even when it comes to the order and insertion of stock-materials such as lists well known in the PP context. I wonder what would be the causes for such variations and whether there might be deeper implications than simple carelessness on part of copyists. I suspect that this has to do with their semi-independent status as textual units, which would have allowed for their insertion and deletion on the basis of various considerations (e.g. the balance between PP-related materials and spell-units; the overall length of the work; etc.).

Furthermore, as expected the editing of spells presents some considerable challenges, particularly at places where they are unintelligible or do not form part of a full sentence. Here, one can make full use - with all due caution - of the ‘web’ of interrelated spell attestations uncovered in Chapter 4.

Future editors of PP spell scriptures will have to explore these two aspects in considerable depth.

Lastly, while so much has been said in criticism to the value and usefulness of Song period translations, it would appear that such problems are not terribly limiting in the case of PP spell scriptures. That is to say, Song translations were found to be reasonably accurate and approachable synoptically. This is probably due to the fact that the Selected Sources are not extremely technical in their language, with the prevalence of well-established expressions known from earlier Buddhist sources.

Another issue of methodology has to do with the multidisciplinary dimension of the present study. A multidisciplinary approach appears reasonable with respect to a tradition like PP, where various types of evidence - archaeological, art-historical, and codicological - are definitely interconnected. Attempts were made at identifying clay sealings and statues of PP, particularly those with a certain number of arms which matched the descriptions found in the primary sources.<sup>982</sup> Equally, the iconographic program of certain MSS was found to be potentially relevant to the study of PP and its status within certain Buddhist communities.

Nevertheless, it has proved impossible to deal systematically with this kind of evidence, with Chinese and Tibetan archaeological sources being only hinted at on some occasions, despite being potentially very significant.

---

<sup>982</sup> See Chapters 2.5; 5.2.4; and 6.3.

There was sometimes a tension in the above pages between the need to refer to key evidence from East Asia and the overall intention to focus on South Asia specifically. This is not, however, a negative fact, inasmuch as the picture of PP that emerges is one with some potential pan-Asian implications. Furthermore, there is one particular issue that connects and partially justifies referring to multiple regions. This is the need to identify and distinguish between Pāla or South Asian 'stimulus' and what are instead to be seen as localised practices. This came out particularly clearly of the discussions in Chapter 6.<sup>983</sup>

It is hoped that the present study will at least partially challenge the idea that scripture can be studied on its own, without consideration of archaeological and art-historical evidence, if this is at all available. I have tried to illustrate connections among different kinds of sources wherever possible, even if just by way of illustration. I think the subject matter would benefit from a collaborative study on part of a team of experts across various disciplines (codicology, art-history, etc.). This could be a way to reach more conclusive and long-standing results.

In conclusion, the rather ambitious and broad approach outlined in the *Introduction* did bear its fruits, albeit somewhat preliminary in nature. The way the study was articulated in terms of chapter-units surely did require some effort on part of the reader. This is why an overview description of the Selected Sources was given in the *Introduction*. Nonetheless, I believe that arranging chapters by key topics/issues was an instrumental strategy in highlighting the

---

<sup>983</sup> See Chapter 6.3 and 6.4.

many interconnections between PP spell scriptures and the rich scriptural and cultural backgrounds of Buddhism in this period.

## 7.2 The Main Features of Prajñāpāramitā Spell Scriptures

Leaving aside the thorny issues of methodology, one can now reassess the key features of PP spell scriptures which have been identified in this study. These were treated specifically between chapters 2 and 5, in what was meant to be a comprehensive assessment of the position of the Selected Sources within Buddhist scriptural writing.

The discussion in Chapter 2 took up the issue of the transmission of these sources in the manuscript tradition. In part, the aim was to fill some gaps that remain in the mapping of the available sources. This involved a fresh look at relatively unexplored Pāla sources (such as CTRC 8), as well as at the large Nepalese text-repositories known as *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas*.<sup>984</sup>

One of the key observations made was that the very concise PP spell scriptures are mostly attested within composite manuscripts. One kind of repository is characterised by the prevalence of PP works. One can think here of CTRC 8, which included a number of shorter PPs, along with a few PP spell scriptures. This tendency towards collecting PP works in one repository has ancient roots, that go back to Xuanzang's monumental DB.

---

<sup>984</sup> See Chapter 2.3.1 and 2.4.3.

In this context, it was pointed out that sometimes PP MSS which centre on the AS or other individual work, in fact also contain other textual units. As is well known, many of the later Skt. MSS usually include the *Prajñāpāramitāstotra* in opening position as well as formulas and, occasionally, *dhāraṇīs* at the end. However, on the whole, composite MSS exclusively dedicated to later PP works appear to be rather rare. Indeed, as far as one can tell, CTRC 8 is unique both in its structure and work selection.

The next major typology of composite manuscript is that based on *dhāraṇī* works. Already with PT 45, one noticed a PP spell scripture being found among spell works otherwise unrelated to the PP tradition.<sup>985</sup> But it is with the Nepalese *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas* that this phenomenon reaches its apex. In these MSS, one finds a handful of PP scriptures embedded among hundreds of spell scriptures and individual spells. Very often the title of such PP specimens is adjusted to ends with *-dhāraṇīsūtra*.

While these MSS are often the main - if not the only - witnesses for some PP spell scriptures, their relation to PP literature is more complex. First of all, *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas* include not only PP spell scriptures, but other PP works as well. For example, the SaŚP occurs regularly in these MSS, often in opening position. As far as one could tell, this is the single longest work included in the MSS. It was speculated above that its inclusion might be linked to the fact that Mañjuśrī appears as the main character, while at the same time occupying a central position in Buddhism of the Kathmandu valley.

---

<sup>985</sup> See Chapter 2.2.2.

However, the inclusion of PP works is not limited to shorter sūtras, for even the stanzas of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* are included. This is the verse commentary which has largely shaped the doctrinal engagement with PP in South Asia. The inclusion of such a work into *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas* suggests that the MSS are meant to represent PP works in general and as a principle. This greatly removes the emphasis from PP spell scriptures as a specific component, suggesting instead that what matters most is for a work to be labelled *prajñāpāramitā*, while also being of a manageable size.

Another important consideration is that of dating. The specimens identified so far as typologically significant are all paper MSS, dating approximately from the 18<sup>th</sup> C. This has important implications for the question of the influence of possible pre-existing Pāla models. Some earlier Skt. MS repositories of *dhāraṇī* scriptures are known, yet they do not seem to include PP specimens. As mentioned, a forthcoming study by Gergely Hidas should cast some light on this issue. Interestingly, the Tibetan tradition of *Gzungs 'dus* offers a parallel. PP spell works are indeed found among hundreds of *dhāraṇī* works, making these repositories typologically similar to the Nepalese ones. At present the general impression is that both traditions represent later developments put in motion by the need to collect and systematise various shorter Buddhist scriptures. A direct connection with the Pāla milieu could not be traced at this stage.

In terms of use and function, colophons occasionally provide information on mundane benefits (such as curing diseases) as well as the usual 'supramundane' ones (such as the attainment of awakening on part of all beings). These benefits

seem to be mostly connected to the commissioning of the copy of the manuscripts. However, there are references to keeping the manuscripts within what seem to be domestic environments.<sup>986</sup> These were probably recited on special occasions. It can only be expected that these manuscripts would serve some kind of apotropaic function. By extension, the PP works included would also become part of this wider context of notions and practices.

Finally, chapter 2 engaged with the question of other attestations of PP spells and spell scriptures.<sup>987</sup> Despite some initial hope regarding the occurrence of PP spells on clay sealings and statues, such examples do not seem to be well attested in South Asia. It could be that the turn towards spells in the PP tradition did not extend to overlap significantly with traditional stūpa practices, perhaps remaining once again a Mahāyāna alternative to them. The Sri Lankan examples of fragments from the *Larger* PP having been found on metal tablets, placed near a stūpa, remain quite unique in the South Asian context.

Yet things are much more complex than this. Beyond South Asia, one does come across a considerable number of clay sealings depicting PP, sometimes - as in the Tibetan examples - along with PP spells. There are also examples of shorter PP being found within miniature stūpas, as in Japan.

Some practices involving PP spell scriptures, such as the Chinese *dhāraṇī* pillars seem to represent local developments rather than reflect South Asian models.

---

<sup>986</sup> See e.g. the Cambridge Library specimen at Chapter 2.4.2.

<sup>987</sup> See Chapter 2.5.

In Chapter 3 the focus shifted to the legacy of earlier PP writing as attested in the selected sources. It was already quite clear at the outset that most specimens would carry titles and self-referential statements establishing a link with the PP scriptural tradition. The question then was whether such connection could be found to be deeper and more complex than that. The AdhyP, a strongly esoteric specimen which falls outside of the Selected Sources, could be taken as an example of a PP 'in name only', despite the presence of a few sections which are in line with traditional phraseology. On the other hand, one had a specimen like the PPH, which basically consisted of a section extracted directly from the *Larger* PP. With these two remarkable and yet highly diverse specimens in mind, we embarked on a close analysis of the Selected Sources.

The section on titles and self-referential statements confirmed the presence of the term *prajñāpāramitā* throughout the sources. However, it was pointed out that a tendency towards labelling these works *dhāraṇīsūtras* is not only established in later Nepalese composite MSS but in the Chinese transmission as well (e.g. in the SvalP).<sup>988</sup>

Next, it was explored how these works include a number of semi-independent text units which provide a strong link with Mahāyāna writing in general and sometimes PP in particular. Such units are for the most part well-known lists or stanzas. The inclusion of these units is particularly characteristic of some sūtras like the ArdhaP and the KauP.<sup>989</sup>

---

<sup>988</sup> See Chapter 3.1 and 3.2.1.

<sup>989</sup> See Chapter 3.2.2.

After this, it was pointed out that connections are also present at the level of general phraseology. In some cases, it was possible to identify specific passages from the AS or the *Larger PP*.<sup>990</sup> It should be noted that Conze had already made quite a remarkable progress in the identification of such elements, as with that of stock-materials.

Only some sections appear to include more scholastics-oriented contents. In some works of the Candragarbha group, this phenomenon can be observed to a higher degree, particularly with regard to statements on the nature of *dharmas*. Nevertheless, it is not easy to identify such passages as direct quotations from earlier PP works. Sometimes, it would seem more prudent to treat such passages under the category of phraseological alignment (see 3.2.3).

Finally, the evidence was compared to that obtained from other shorter PP works. One key example is the SaŚP, which as noted above is consistently found alongside the Selected Sources in Skt. composite MSS.<sup>991</sup> In this work, the creative word play on the basis of well-known PP notions might be characterised as ‘variations on a theme’, using an expression borrowed from musical discourse. The SaŚP abounds in elaborate pontifications, conceptual elaboration in the typical paradoxical PP fashion, as well as arguments against conceptual hypostatisation. However, it is important to note that these aspects can hardly be found in the Selected Sources, where semi-independent structural units of a less discursive nature become the main building blocks.

---

<sup>990</sup> See Chapter 3.2.3.

<sup>991</sup> See Chapter 2.3.1 and 2.4.

In conclusion, the Selected Sources are not PPs 'in name only' and should be kept on an entirely different level than the AdhyP. This could be significant, since most scholarly discussions of PP spell scriptures list them under the same category as the more esoteric AdhyP. On the contrary, it is the PPH which could be seen as incorporating a scriptural typology also reflected in the other sources. This is despite the fact that scholars usually place this work under a different class, along with the *Vajracchedikā* and other most renowned specimens.

Despite the presence of a number of links with earlier PP writing, one is certainly justified in considering the PPH and other PP spell scriptures as marking a significant shift in the PP tradition. One could actually speak of a recasting, or even of a re-invention within the genre, a consideration which is hinted at by the very title of the present study.

In Chapter 4, the focus moved to the defining feature of such scriptures, i.e. the presence of spells and of a series of statements outlining the potential benefits of their practice. At the outset, it was pointed out that some references to PP spells predate the 7th C by a rather significant margin.<sup>992</sup> These are found in Chinese sources and indicate that there had indeed already been a long formative period, which probably saw spells arising as a consequence of, or at least in connection with, a long process of deification of Prajñāpāramitā and PP scriptures. Of course, it is with the 7th C that one starts witnessing a large-scale development of these ideas and the affirmation of dedicated PP works which include spells.

---

<sup>992</sup> See introductory notes to Chapter 4.

As part of the findings of Chapter 4, it was pointed out that the structure of individual PP spell scriptures can be particularly meaningful. First of all, the sources were divided into two groups: those presenting a sūtra frame-narrative and those which do not. Then, the position of the *dhāraṇī*-units was brought into relation with the wider structure. Within the sūtra kind, one could identify a difference between the KauP and SvalP, for example. In the former, spells are appended and barely integrated with the rest of the work. In the SvalP, two *dhāraṇī* units are found embedded within the main body of the text, and are introduced and followed by dedicated sections which highlight their significance.<sup>993</sup>

As can be expected, works which lack the sūtra frame-narrative tend to emphasise more aspects such as recitation and performance over that of teaching, which is nonetheless quite minimal even in the sūtra specimens.

When it comes to the actual spell-units, one notices a high degree of variety.<sup>994</sup> Here, I largely follow the typological framework developed in Davidson's recent studies on *dhāraṇīs* (in particular 2014a). Most of the elements he identified in his studies of spells can also be found within the selected sources.

Clearly the spell-units are composite units, often made of invocations, opening words (*tadyathā*), and formula markers (*oṃ ... svāhā*), besides the actual spells. As for the *dhāraṇīs* themselves, they tend to follow well-known patterns, such as that of the waxing syllables, the reduplication of terms, the series of double

---

<sup>993</sup> See Chapter 4.1.1.

<sup>994</sup> See Chapter 4.2.

imperatives, or the series of unintelligible terms. Despite this variety, one or two key spells seem to be particularly well established and often other blocks are added to them, thus building more complex spell-chains.

This brings us the issue of the attestation of these spells in what is truly a complex and far-reaching ‘web’ of spell references. First of all, overlap is attested within the Selected Sources themselves. For example, the spell of the PPH occurs in the KauP, while those of the BM are also found in the SvalP, etc. This points to the fact that there is some commonality when it comes to the selection of spells.

Even more importantly, many of the same *dhāraṇīs* are attested in the 7th C works like Xuanzang’s version of the AdhyP or the TJ. They can in fact even be traced to almost contemporary Nepalese MSS, where they are often found in isolation simply labelled as ‘PP *dhāraṇīs*’. This is a rather remarkable degree of continuity.<sup>995</sup>

But some of the spells found within PP spell scriptures also occur in a number of other well-known *dhāraṇīsūtras* and esoteric Buddhist works. Sometimes, these sources indicate a connection between a given spell and Prajñāpāramitā (either as teaching or deity). At other times one finds that rather common spells not necessarily associated with the deity have found their way into the Selected Sources. In all likelihood, a significant number of overlaps are still to be identified. In particular, it is not easy for non-specialists of medieval Chinese to reconstruct the Skt. equivalent of spells found in Chinese transcriptions. Some attempts have been made above, although they should be seen as provisional attempts.

---

<sup>995</sup> Note that the website <https://www.dharanipitaka.net/dharani.html> offers Indic renderings of some of the spells found in these Chinese sources (visited April 2019).

The most important section of chapter 4 is certainly the one on the practice of spells.<sup>996</sup> While most scholars speak of magic and apotropaic purposes in relation to PP spell scriptures, the results of the present study point in a rather different direction. Surely there are indications that a work like the PPH was used for the purpose of protection, and some of the manuscript specimens identified in Chapter 2 also seem relevant in this regard. Nonetheless, equating the practice of PP spell scriptures with the quest for mundane magic - e.g. protection against everyday dangers (such as diseases) - might not be entirely accurate.

In fact, most of the passages identified in this study suggest a significant emphasis on what could be labelled 'supramundane' benefits. First of all, there is considerable stress on the attainment of good karma and the getting rid of negative one. But the ultimate aim is the attainment of awakening (including e.g. through a rebirth in spiritually favourable conditions).

This overall emphasis on karma is in fact not at all innovative in the PP context. Despite the common association of this tradition with key metaphysical tenets, such as that of the emptiness of *dharmas*, most people who have explored works like the AS in depth would probably point out that concerns about karma are absolutely central. Besides, practices like that of book worship - attested from the earliest stages - are intimately associated with gaining merit.

In PP spell scriptures, karma is not treated in the subtle way known from the AS, in which karmic effects - also positive ones - are carefully controlled and re-directed (*pariṇāmanā*) in order to proceed on the way to Buddhahood. Here,

---

<sup>996</sup> See Chapter 4.3.

good karma will result in a good rebirth, either in the presence of a great teacher or as someone with the inner qualities conducive to awakening. This seems to result in a certain emphasis on the direct fruition of karmic fruits.

This is not to say that there are not more complex practices and benefits mentioned. While the more esoteric aspects are treated in Chapter 5, it was pointed out the SaŚIP does describe what seems to be a recitation practice that lasts over a number of days. At the end of the practice, the reciter will have a vision of the Buddha sitting in the lotus posture. On the whole, however, such a description is an exception, with most specimens actually avoiding any descriptions of actual practices, moving directly to the benefits. It seems most likely that simple recitation/memorisation practices are meant in these cases.

In chapter 5 the focus shifted to a defining feature of some specimens within the Selected Sources: the presence of elements that could potentially be linked to mature esoteric Buddhist discourse. The methodological approach had been already outlined in the *Introduction* (see 1.2.2.1). In short, we defined (mature) esoteric Buddhism at two levels. On the one hand, we stressed a certain new emphasis on the soteriological significance of the initiation ritual. As could be expected, none of the selected PP sources is claiming to offer something along these lines. This is why the definition was expanded to include further elements. This broader definition was a polythetic one, stressing how a certain group of features (such as *maṇḍalas*, *mudrās*, fierce deities, etc.) became quite characteristic of the esoteric tradition, while at the same time not being necessarily present, not indeed necessarily unique to it. As an example, it was

pointed out that the term *maṇḍala* already occurs in early *dhāraṇī*-sources of the Gupta period. However, in these early days it had a different connotation, representing a minimalistic ritual-space, or ‘altar’, rather than the complex evolutions typical of the later period.

At this point, it was possible to go through the Selected Sources looking for any features which could betray a link with the esoteric tradition. First of all, some passages which refer to spell by terms other than *dhāraṇī* were pointed out.<sup>997</sup> But it was the BM which offered more relevant materials.<sup>998</sup> This could be seen as a short visualisation manual. Here, one finds a description of multi-armed forms of PP which also occur in the context of *maṇḍala* descriptions of PP. There were references to a self-performed anointment and the visualisation itself was similar to those familiar from esoteric sources.

Finally, the SvalP contains some passages which mention an anointment (*abhiṣeka*), *maṇḍalas*, as well as perfecting one’s mantra practice (*mantrasādhana*).<sup>999</sup> These were taken up in detail, attempting to explain them in the light of the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* and other esoteric sources.

It was observed that on the whole the SvalP is not trying to actively endorse nor criticise esoteric practice. Instead it makes hyperbolic statements about the fact that the PP spells can bring results which are as great as those of esoteric

---

<sup>997</sup> See Chapter 5.2.1.

<sup>998</sup> See Chapter 5.2.2.

<sup>999</sup> See Chapter 5.2.3.

practices. This was taken as indication that esoteric Buddhism was influential in the environment in which the SvalP was redacted.

Next, the question of esoteric elements in material and visual aspects of the MS tradition was addressed briefly.<sup>1000</sup> Some specimens like CTRC 8 do present the 'hybrid' iconographic program which includes both scenes from the Buddha's life as well as deities like Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra. On the whole however, most manuscript colophons read thus far did not present clear indications of them being commissioned by esoteric practitioners.

At this point it became necessary to broaden the scope of the discussion, to include also those manuals which deal with PP in the context of *maṇḍala* rituals and advanced visualisation practices.<sup>1001</sup> A number of overlaps could be detected. First, one notices considerable overlap at the level of PP spells. For example, a work like the SaśIP is linked to some of the Chinese manuals associated with Amoghavajra, at least on the level of spell selection. However, esoteric sources of PP tend to emphasise the shorter spells, or indeed monosyllabic ones, rather than the more verbose and formulaic ones of the Selected Sources, described in Chapter 4.2.

It was also observed that these manuals too present a series of passages and notions which are perfectly in line with more traditional Mahāyāna scriptures. This is probably part of an effort to infuse specifically Buddhist meaning into practices that to many would not have looked particularly 'Buddhist' in the first

---

<sup>1000</sup> See Chapter 5.2.4.

<sup>1001</sup> See Chapter 5.3.1.

place. Furthermore, in some contexts PP and related teachings play a role with regard to preliminary practice (*ādikarma*).

Also, these manuals tended to emphasise how PP practice would result in enhanced cognitive capabilities, such as the ability to excel in debate, or memorise hundreds of scriptures. Such benefits are also found in PP spell scriptures, but not in such a prominent position, with karmic results usually remaining the central focus of the spell practice.

Finally, it was outlined how the complex relation between PP and esoteric Buddhism could be seen as mutually beneficial for people on both fronts.<sup>1002</sup>

Given that promoters of esotericism had a rather serious problem legitimising their practices, PP could have served as an ally. Surely having a work labelled 'PP', such as the AdhyP, in fact endorsing esoteric notions would have been advantageous. Traditional Mahāyāna sūtras were also integral part of some book-centred rituals which esotericists had further developed.

On the other hand, by showing some recognition of esoteric practices, the PP tradition maintained its characteristic flexibility, possibly in an attempt to increase its appeal within new circles and audiences. This was also done by appropriating forms of religious writing which had proved very successful.

The above four chapters exploring the features and cultural background of PP spell scriptures were then supplemented by a final chapter with a wider

---

<sup>1002</sup> See Chapter 5.3.2.

historical outlook. In Chapter 6, attempts were made at tracing the links between later PP writing and various institutions, such as Buddhist monasteries and royal courts.

This was done in multiple steps. First of all, I attempted to trace a general picture of PP's role within Buddhist and Buddhism-leaning institutions. This included a brief look at the formation of key Mahāyāna centres from the 5th C onwards, including the regions of Āndhra and Gujarat.<sup>1003</sup> While some evidence for the circulation of specific Mahāyāna scriptures could be found, I pointed out that it is with the Gilgit manuscript collection that one gets a more accurate picture into the circulation of these materials. However, the peculiar position of the Gilgit region - *de facto* at the crossroad between South and Central Asia - raised some question regarding its mirroring of Indic models. Importantly, while Buddhist spell writing is attested in the collection, one fails to identify PP spell scriptures.

From here we moved to the more extensive evidence from Northeastern India, roughly attested from the 8th C onwards. Here the scholar of PP has a plethora of evidence to consider. Certainly one cannot overlook the extant statues of the deity which were produced in this region and period. Furthermore, epigraphical evidence records the names of specific PP scriptures (i.e. the AS) whose copying and recitation was commissioned during the Pāla period. As is well known, Tibetan historiographical sources, as well as evidence from manuscript colophons, all seem to indicate that activities around PP scriptures were relatively fervent both from monastic and royal point of views.

---

<sup>1003</sup> See Chapter 6.1.

With this general introduction in mind, one could then attempt to tackle more specific issues in relation to PP spell writing. First, it was pointed out that fascinating perspectives can arise from engagement with Buddhist scholasticism of the Pāla period.<sup>1004</sup> In an environment where exegetical categories built around the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* set the norm, PP spell scriptures did not receive extensive attention. It seems reasonable to assume that this is mostly due to the fact that these later, concise sources can hardly fit within the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra's* structure, which instead applies well to the *Larger* PP and the AS. Also, it might be that at least some authors felt a sense of uneasiness given the emphasis of such sources on spell practices.

This is not to say that one cannot trace any signs of engagement at all. In fact, a number of shorter PP works were quoted and commented upon. Such cases were pointed out and their importance was discussed. However, these sources fall outside the Selected Sources.

Finally, it was pointed out that scholastic traditions on PP might have had an impact on source selection in a composite MS like CTRC 8. The SaŚP, the *Pañcaśatikā* PP, the *Avikalpapraveśanāmadhāraṇī*, as well as Kambala's *Navaślokī* - are all works included in CTRC 8 which bear major connections with Buddhist scholasticism and its developments.

Next, the focus moved to the issue of the personification of Prajñāpāramitā and its role in creating further scope for institutional engagement with PP.<sup>1005</sup>

Generally, spell practices seem to have arisen in chronological alignment with

---

<sup>1004</sup> See Chapter 6.2.

<sup>1005</sup> See Chapter 6.3.

the development of Prajñāpāramitā personification, reaching a mature form around the 7th C. From then on, personification did play a key role in the inclusion of PP within esoteric cults, including visualisation and *maṇḍala* rituals.

And yet personification also played a key role on the institutional front. At least one Northeastern inscription appears to record that Prajñāpāramitā was installed within a temple (Vajrayoginī plate). However, evidence from Southeast Asia was brought in to illustrate Prajñāpāramitā's appeal to royal courts as well. Given the endurance of notions such as the deity being the 'mother of the Buddhas', royal ideologies oriented towards Mahāyāna could be developed to link royal figures - such as a king's mother - to the deity itself.

Of course, such aspects do find a connection with the Selected Sources, not only by virtue of the links between spells and the personified form of Prajñāpāramitā, but also because of the presence of iconographic descriptions within visualisation rituals (e.g. in the BM).

Finally, I presented a brief excursus on the circulation of PP writing in Southeast Asia from the 9th C to the 14th C.<sup>1006</sup> In principle, this is a key area of inquiry, for in this region PP was often not only a constituent part of royal Buddhist ideology, but was also surrounded by - and blended with - esoteric Buddhist culture. However, here one faces the significant challenge of tracing evidence for the use and circulation of specific works. This is partially due to the paucity of extant manuscript sources. The materials presented, mostly based on epigraphical records, clearly pointed at a rather substantial presence of PP, although specific

---

<sup>1006</sup> See Chapter 6.4.

works can hardly be traced. A peculiar case was presented by the mention of a 'Subhūti Tantra' in Old Javanese sources of the 14th C. It is quite possible that this is a reference to a shorter PP work, although the precise specimen cannot be identified at present. Be that as it may, it is remarkable that the closing reference to an 'esoteric' PP scripture within this thesis stems from this relatively late period. The reference is also found in a region quite distant from Northeastern India, in the context of royal ritual practices. This is further indication that despite the occasional elusiveness of the Selected Sources, the phenomena we have been dealing with can at times be traced to the very apex of institutional life in the ancient Buddhist world.

### **7.3 Prajñāpāramitā as a Dynamic Force in the Later Phase of South Asian Buddhism**

Given the above considerations, it is now possible to touch upon some of the wider implications of the rise of PP spells and spell scriptures. This involves looking at PP's place within later Buddhism from a variety of angles and using different kinds of sources. In fact, I believe that an important synergy can arise, once considerations on scriptural sources are brought together with codicological, epigraphical and art-historical evidence.

In general, an important consideration one needs to bear in mind is that PP incorporated and represented certain key aspects of traditional Mahāyāna ideology and practices. And yet despite this central role, its message and format were adapted and 'updated' throughout the period in question. This is a fact that is worth exploring, for its implications for the understanding of later Buddhist culture might be significant.

Furthermore, one should ask why, among all Mahāyāna scriptures, it was PP in particular that continued to attract attention throughout this period and whether such attention involved a shift in focus on some aspects of PP rather than others.

None of these issues can be addressed here in a conclusive way. Nevertheless, I would like to offer the following observations, hoping that such key issues will be approached more systematically in a future study.

In the post-Gupta period, many of the features which had characterised the PP tradition remained at its forefront. The centrality of the book - already stressed in the main scriptures by means of self-referential passages - finds new and truly remarkable expressions in the lavishly decorated book-manuscripts of the Pāla period. Art-historical remains such as the famous Orissan sculptures depicting book worship are another prominent example. In many ways PP spell scriptures carry this notion forward, as the discussions in Chapters 2 and 3.3 have shown.

Equally long-lasting is the centrality of merit. This, many would argue, was a key notion and concern of the bodhisattva path as presented by the AS, being in

many way more significant than the notion of emptiness itself. Book practices too were deeply entangled with the gaining and sharing merit. The Selected Sources emphasise this notion in a number of ways, thus prolonging its centrality within the PP scriptural tradition.

Surely expressions like that of 'mother of the Buddhas', already attested in the AS, maintain a prominent position in the discourse on PP in the later period. This is particularly clear from the epigraphical context. Yet some of the Selected Sources too include passages or invocations to the deity which seem to be devotionally charged. In such contexts, as well as in that of the PP *stotras*, notions of PP as a female deity continue to be developed to various degrees.

The overall emphasis expressed in the early scriptural sources on correct view as well as profound insight into reality is not only carried forwards, but in the Pāla period even achieves new heights. Some of these are particularly powerful on the iconographic level, as studies by Kinnard have argued.<sup>1007</sup> In PP spell scriptures, the emphasis might not be on developing further the doctrinal discussions that characterised earlier writing. Nevertheless, the emphasis on achieving insight into reality is retained in the descriptions of the benefits of spell practice.

But perhaps the most striking signal of longevity of the PP tradition is the fact that the AS - representing a scriptural family with roots that might even precede the beginning of the Common Era - occupied a relatively exalted position in the Pāla period and even remains relevant in the contemporary Nepalese tradition.

---

<sup>1007</sup> See Kinnard 1999.

Thus, PP spell writing did not substitute earlier specimens. On the contrary, it worked along with them in order to cover certain gaps in the outreach of PP in what was a changed and diverse doctrinal landscape.

While one should certainly not overemphasise the actual impact of PP on everyday Buddhist practice, nor on the developments of Buddhist doctrine, continuities such as the above can certainly be observed and should be given due consideration.

That being said, the present thesis also attempted to stress a rather different aspect, that of innovation. Sometimes, the PP tradition is described as essentially monolithic and stable, with variation occurring mostly on the level of scriptural format rather than of actual content or overall meaning. The body of information presented above should suffice to indicate that there is another aspect to the PP trajectory, this time characterised by adaptation and fluidity on all levels, not only that of scriptural format. This can already be perceived in some shorter PP works, which clearly aim to introduce new concepts within the PP scriptural tradition (e.g. the *Pañcaśatikā* or the *\*Nītārthā*). However, this is best observed in PP spell scriptures or the more esoteric specimens like the AdhyP.

Yet even outside scriptural sources one witnesses overlap and interaction with practices related to stūpa worship, spell recitation, esoteric rituals, etc., in what was clearly a sign of vitality and adaptability (see Chapters 2.5, 5.2.2, and 5.2.4).

Perhaps the most prominent interaction of this period is that with esoteric Buddhism. This happened on multiple levels. New scriptures were composed

which recognised esoteric Buddhist practices; manuals centring on the worship of PP in advanced visualisation or *maṇḍala* rituals were composed; hybrid iconographic programs were developed to juxtapose traditional imagery with fierce deities in PP MSS; philosophers argued for a complementarity of the paths of perfections and that of mantra; and so on and so forth (see Chapter 5.3).

What made it possible for PP to represent the most traditional Mahāyāna while at the same time interacting with what were at different times the most cutting-edge innovations? And did this come at a cost for the overall clarity and power of PP's message?

Surely, on the one hand one can point out that PP is not just one scripture or even a set of scriptures. PP has many aspects and meanings, with the scriptural one being only one of them. For example, PP had a very close relation to notions of the 'book', as of some iconographic developments pointed out above. By extension, PP was also stood for the quintessential Buddhist teaching. It also represented the very notion of insight into reality as one of the traditional Buddhist 'perfections' or - more generally - virtues. Especially in the later period, PP is a female deity and is particularly associated with notions of motherhood as well as gnosis. Thus, this polysemic dimension to PP's identity was certainly a catalyst for its promotion at multiple levels. I think the present study exemplifies this rather clearly.

Once one starts observing the various representations of PP in given cultural contexts, it becomes clear that as an entity it represented certain ideals. Perhaps the notions of 'brand' would not be entirely out of place here, although they

should not be taken in a demeaning sense. A brand that stands for traditional Mahāyāna can command considerable authoritativeness. The sources suggest that it is often specific actors, such as rulers, esoteric masters, learned doctrinal experts, etc. that interact with the PP label in order to promote a particular kind of content. These actors are pursuing their own agendas using PP as a versatile element in order to create a certain kind of Buddhist meaning. While many scholars are wary of the term 'legitimation', perhaps this does partially capture some of these dynamics.

Note that these actors are usually part of the social elite, albeit in different ways. The question of the impact of PP at grass-root level is even more complex and obscure. Some indication of PP penetrating at this level can be found in all Buddhist cultures, although the evidence is usually not that abundant. Whatever the case, PP spell scriptures did play a role also in this respect. These rather humble scriptures testify to PP's interactions with various traditions and were not necessarily targeting the elite practitioners or learned exegetes. The fact that they were usually neglected by them is rather suggestive.

However, the actual social dimension of PP spell scriptures remains obscure at this stage. One could suggest that PP spell scriptures arose as a consequence of the PPH's success. Perhaps a short PP work which included a spell did indeed resonate with the needs and interests of the average Mahāyāna devotee. After all, joining PP with simple acts of spell recitation might have been quite appealing within a Mahāyāna community. However, the PPH in particular did

succeed in drawing the attention of the learned elite, as exemplified i.a. by Xuanzang's keen interest in this work.

Another question that arises here is that of geo-cultural developments. Was foreign interest in shorter PP scriptures - e.g. on part of the Chinese or Tibetans - the actual catalyst for this rather large-scale production of works? Or was it instead an essentially Pāla development, then exported to other regions? Rather than attempting to solve this issue here, it might suffice, at this stage, to identify it as a possible focus for further study. In this regard, one could consider the question of the transmission of PP in Southeast Asia much more closely (see Chapter 6.3 and 6.4). There too, the relation between Pāla models and notions of PP and local ones is very complex and multifaceted.

In conclusion, there is no single answer to the question as to why or how the phenomena studied in this thesis came to flourish as they did. Yet I would argue that this is precisely what makes the study of PP's role in this period so rewarding, for it can truly shed light on aspects of the later phase of Buddhist life in South Asia and beyond.



## Editorial Conventions

Variant readings reported in footnotes refer to a whole uninterrupted segment. If only part of the segment is meant - e.g. within a long compound - the sign ° is used.

**om.** indicates omission of the segment.

**add.** indicates addition of the segment.

Text added or considered superfluous by the editor is indicated as **[+abc]** and **[-abc]** respectively.

A final capital consonant indicates presence of *virāma* (e.g. etaT = etat,)

The ≡ symbol is used to refer to the presence of line-fillers. These can take various forms, yet only one symbol will be used here.

A punctuation such as , within the edition indicated that a comma-like punctuation sign is found in the original.

The **[sic]** expression is not meant to indicate mistakes. As is well known, in Buddhist Skt. *sūtra* works many of the rules of classical Skt. are not observed. Therefore, [sic] is used mostly to signal to the reader that what is reported as the reading is not a typo, but is actually found in the MS. While this would not be needed in case of printed editions (which would have been proof-read multiple times), I believe a thesis like the present one would benefit from offering this sort of confirmation to the reader. In most cases it might actually be useful to draw the reader's attention to such 'irregularities'.

The § symbol indicates editorial addition as already found in the MS. The added segment - e.g. found above the line - will be embedded within two symbols, such as in §*abc*§.

The X signals that an *akṣara* or full syllable cannot be read. This could be due to a number of reasons affecting the substratum (such as a fragmentary leaf, faded ink, etc.)

Text embedded within {} is identified as not belonging to the original syntactic structure of a sentence. I would tend to consider such passages as spurious, in all likelihood due to scribal lapsus.

On occasion I use the question mark (?)/ (*abc*?) to indicate a personal limitation, e.g. the inability to understand a term or to read an *akṣara* with certainty. This is

the kind of situation where a more experienced scholar might well be able to read and interpret with clarity.

Note: the Chinese punctuation is that found in CBETA 2016.

## APPENDICES

- A) An Exercise in Translating the \**Buddhamāṭṛ* (BM)
- B) Manuscript MBB I-7: List of Included Works
- C) Manuscript MBB III 53: List of Included Works
- D) The *Saptaśloṅikā* (SaŚIP) from MBB III 53 in Comparison with the CTRC Text
- E) Towards a Critical Edition of the *Ardhaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā*: a Collation of Sample Materials.
- F) Further Primary Sources (Texts and Translations)
  - A) *Ekaśloṅikā prajñāpāramitā*
  - B) 聖八千頌般若波羅蜜多一百八名真實圓義陀羅尼經 (T230)
  - C) 'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa lag na rdo rje'i mdo theg pa chen po
  - D) 'Phags pa zla ba'i snying po shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa theg pa chen po'i mdo
  - E) *Prajñāpāramitānāmadhāraṇī*
- G) List of Spells in the Selected Sources
- H) Selected Variants from the CTRC Manuscript

## Appendix A)

### An Exercise in Translating the \**Buddhamāṭṛ* (BM)<sup>1008</sup>

[This work was discussed at multiple places in the above study, particularly in section 5.2.2]

佛說觀想佛母般若波羅蜜多菩薩經 (T259)

‘The Scripture preached by the Buddha on the Visualisation of Bodhisattva Prajñāpāramitā, Mother of the Buddhas’

西天譯經三藏朝散大夫試鴻臚少卿明教大師臣天息災 奉詔譯

‘Translated by imperial order (奉詔) by Tianxizai<sup>1009</sup>, the Great Master of the Luminous title, Acting Chief Minister of State Ceremonies, Grand Master for Closing Court, Translator [expert in] the Three Repositories From Western India (西天).’<sup>1010</sup>

灌頂真言：

唵曩莫舍吉野母曩曳但他誑哆野囉賀帝三藐三沒馱野

‘The consecration mantra [is]:

---

<sup>1008</sup> Note that variant readings are not included or discussed here. The text is that of CBETA 2016.

<sup>1009</sup> The name is usually reconstructed as \*Devaśānti (see Lehnert 1999: 61). While it is quite possible that 天 renders *deva*, the second part of the name could render other underlying Indic terms.

<sup>1010</sup> On these titles see Sen 2002: 45, as well as Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985.

*om namaḥ śākyamunaye tathāgatāyārḥate samyakṣambuddhāya '*

誦此真言七遍，以手於頭上灌頂及摩觸遍身，然後息念，志心作佛母般若波羅蜜多菩薩觀行。想此菩薩三面三眼，身真金色，坐吉祥藏師子座，座有千葉金蓮。身有六臂。右邊三臂，第一臂執數珠，第二臂執箭，第三臂作施願相。左邊三臂，第一臂執經，第二臂執弓，第三臂執如意寶。

'Reciting this mantra seven times, with one's hands one [should] perform the anointment (*abhiṣeka*) above the head and [then] smear [the liquid] all over the body.

After that, one [should] calm [one's] mental activity, the mind fixed on giving rise to the visualisation practice of the Bodhisattva Prajñāpāramitā, mother of the Buddhas. One [should] visualise the Bodhisattva as having three faces and three eyes, a golden body, and sitting on the 'auspicious repository' lion throne (*śrīgarbhasiṃhāsana*, 吉祥藏師子座).<sup>1011</sup> The throne is decorated with golden lotuses with thousand petals. [Her] body has six arms. As for her three right arms, the first holds a rosary, the second an arrow, the third in the gesture of bestowing boons. As for her three left arms, the first holds a scripture, the second a bow, and the third the wish-granting jewel.'

如是六臂種種莊嚴。於其身上，復放無數百千那由他俱胝光明，遍滿一切世界。復想一切如來及多羅菩薩等一切菩薩，具足相好，莊嚴其身，以諸香花而親供養。

'Thus her six arms are adorned in various ways. Above her body (?), she releases hundreds of thousands *ṇayutas koṭis*<sup>1012</sup> of rays of light, which completely pervade all the worlds. Moreover, one [should] visualise all the Tathāgatas, along with Bodhisattva Tārā and all other Bodhisattvas - with complete primary and secondary marks adorning their bodies - personally offering her all sorts of perfumes and flowers.'

---

<sup>1011</sup> *Śrīgarbha* appears to be a kind of gem. The expression is translated semantically into Chinese and rendered accordingly into English.

<sup>1012</sup> These terms are actually found in transcription in the Chinese text. On the whole this is a typical expression indicating an extremely high number.

如是觀想已，復念心真言：

唵曩莫舍吉野母曩曳怛他誑哆野囉賀諦三藐三沒馱野 怛爾野他 唵母爾母  
爾摩賀母爾曳娑嚩賀

‘Having visualised in this way, one [should] recite the mantra:

*oṃ namaḥ śākyamunaye tathāgatāya arhate samyaksaṃbuddhāya tadyathā oṃ  
mune mune mahāmunaye svāhā ’*

次誦根本真言：

怛爾野他 唵 惹曳惹曳鉢納摩鼻 阿嚩弭阿嚩弭 娑囉娑羅尼地里地里囉  
地里地囉地里爾嚩哆努波羅爾 沒度哆囉尼 布囉野布囉野 婆誑嚩底 薩  
里嚩舍 摩摩 波里布囉野 娑波里嚩囉寫薩里嚩薩怛鏤左 薩里嚩迦里摩  
嚩囉拏爾 尾輸馱野 尾輸馱野 沒馱地瑟姪爾曩 娑嚩賀

‘Next one should intone the root mantra:

*oṃ jeya jeya padmābhe avame avame sarasaraṇi dhiridhiriradhiridhiridhiri[?]  
devatānupālani buddhottāriṇi pūraya pūraya bhagavati sarvāśā mama  
paripūraya saporivāraya sarvasatvānāṃ ca sarvakarmāvaraṇāni viśodhaya  
viśodhaya buddhādhiṣṭhāne[?] svāhā ’*

誦此真言已，復作觀行。想彼佛母般若波羅蜜多菩薩右邊，有釋迦世尊、燃  
燈世尊、無量壽世尊、智決定世尊、光明王世尊、雷聲吼音世尊、金花世尊、  
散花世尊。

‘Having intoned this mantra, one should practice [the following] visualisation.

One should visualise that , on the right side of that Bodhisattva Prajñāpāramitā,  
Mother of the Buddhas, there are [these Buddhas]: the World-Honoured One

Śākya[muni]<sup>1013</sup>, the World-Honoured One Burning Lamp (Dīpaṃkara), the World-Honoured One Measureless Life (Amitāyus), the World-Honoured One Knowledge Certainty, the World-Honoured One King of Radiance (Jvalanādhipati), the World-Honoured One Voice of Thundering Roar, the World-Honoured One Golden Flower (Suvarnapuṣpa), [and] the World-Honoured One Scattered Flower.’

於菩薩左邊，毘婆尸世尊、羯俱村那世尊、迦諾迦牟尼世尊、迦葉世尊、寶手世尊。

‘On the Bodhisattva’s left side [one should visualise]: the World-Honoured One Vipaśyin, the World-Honoured One Krakucchanda (?), the World-Honoured One Kanakamuni, the World-Honoured One Buddha Kāśyapa, [and] the World-Honoured One Treasure Hand (Ratnapāṇi).’

於菩薩前面，大遍照世尊、寶生世尊、阿彌陀世尊、不空成就世尊、阿閼世尊。

‘In front of this Bodhisattva [one should visualise]: the World-Honoured One Great Thorough Shining, the World-Honoured One Treasure Arising (Ratnasambhava), the World-Honoured One Amitā[bha], the World-Honoured One Non-Empty Accomplishments (Amoghasiddhi), [and] the World-Honoured One Buddha Akṣobhya.’

於菩薩後面，最上蓮華世尊、最上寶世尊、喜吉祥世尊、琉璃光世尊、不思議吉祥世尊。

---

<sup>1013</sup> The convention here is to follow the Chinese text’s rendering of names. Occasionally, Skt. rendering will be added in brackets. These provisional reconstructions are mere suggestions. In fact, identifying the Skt. equivalents of Chinese names in this context is notoriously difficult. Random reconstructions should probably be avoided.

‘Behind the Bodhisattva [one should visualise]: the World-Honoured One Supreme Lotus Flower, the World-Honoured One Supreme Treasure, the World-Honoured one Joyful Auspiciousness, the World-Honoured One Beryl Light, (Vaiḍuryanirbhāsa), and Buddha the World-Honoured One Inconceivable Auspiciousness<sup>1014</sup>.

於菩薩前，復有聖觀自在菩薩、慈氏菩薩、普賢菩薩、妙吉祥菩薩、歸命菩薩、不思議吉祥聲菩薩、金剛手菩薩、無盡意菩薩、辯積菩薩、無邊辯菩薩、虛空藏菩薩、無垢稱菩薩、自在行菩薩、法生菩薩、常啼菩薩、月光菩薩、法雲菩薩、地藏菩薩、寶藏菩薩、寶幢菩薩、尸棄菩薩、香象菩薩、金毘羅菩薩，如是等一切菩薩摩訶薩遍滿佛剎。

‘In front of the Bodhisattva, there are also Bodhisattva Noble Lord of Contemplation (Āryāvalokiteśvara), Bodhisattva Benevolent One (Maitreya) Bodhisattva Universal Good (Samantabhadra), Bodhisattva Wonderful and Auspicious (Mañjuśrī), Bodhisattva Obeisance, Bodhisattva Inconceivable Auspicious Voice, Bodhisattva Adamantine Hand (Vajrapāṇi), Bodhisattva Unexhausted Mind (Akṣayamati), Bodhisattva Eloquence Store, Bodhisattva Unlimited Eloquence, Bodhisattva Space Repository (Ākāśagarbha), Bodhisattva Esteem Without Blemish (Vimalakīrti), Bodhisattva Sovereign Practice, Bodhisattva Law Arising, Bodhisattva Constant Weeping (Sadāprarudita), Bodhisattva Moon Shine (Chandraprabha), Bodhisattva Law Cloud, Bodhisattva Earth Repository (Kṣitigarbha), Bodhisattva Treasure Repository (Ratnagarbha) Bodhisattva Śikhin, Bodhisattva Scented Elephant, Bodhisattva Kimbila - all of the Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas such as these pervade the Buddha fields.’

---

<sup>1014</sup> This is usually found as a rendering of Skt. *śrī*, which has a wide range of meanings, including ‘glory’, ‘lustre’, ‘wealth’, etc.

復有鬘眉明王等，亦在菩薩前。如是聖眾一一觀想已，復想人間天上殊妙香花珍寶供具，以用供養佛母般若波羅蜜多菩薩，并諸眷屬一切菩薩。作此觀已，是人不久當成正覺。(T08n0259p0854b26)

‘There are also wise kings like Bhṛkuṭī etc. who stay in front of the Bodhisattva. Having thus visualised one by one the members of such a retinue of saints, one should imagine the marvellous offerings by men and Gods of scents, flowers and precious objects, with which one should make offering to the Bodhisattva Prajñāpāramitā, as well as to all the Bodhisattvas of [her] retinue. Having practiced this visualisation, this person will quickly attain perfect awakening.’

## Appendix B)

### ***Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* MBB I-7: List of Included Works<sup>1015</sup>**

[The contents of *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas* like MBB I-7 were discussed in Chapter 2.4 of the present study. On this topic, see Hidas *forthcoming*]

Note: The following is a reproduction of an handwritten table of contents in Latin alphabet added by the IASWR team. It can be found at the opening of the relevant microfiche set for MBB I-7. It is reported here to exemplify the possible contents of a DS, in conjunction with Appendix C. The numbers, e.g. 1) etc., are also found in the original. The spelling of titles of the various works has been normalised as far as deemed possible and/or convenient.

- 1) Saptaśatikā prajñāpāramitā
- 2) Abhisamayālaṅkāraprajñāpāramitā
- 3) Pīṭavarṇaprajñāpāramitā
- 4) Āryaśrīkaruṇāpuṇḍarīkamahāyānasūtra
- 5) Nityāryānityatāsūtra
- 6) Yakṣāṣṭaka
- 7) Jambhalajalendra
- 8) Vasundharādhāraṇī
- 9) Āryāmoghapāśahṛdayamahāyānasūtra
- 10) Bhadracaripranidhāna
- 11) Pratīsarāmahāvidyādhāraṇī
- 12) Daśabhūmīśvaramahāyānasūtra
- 13) Samādhirājadhāraṇī

---

<sup>1015</sup> On the basis of the handwritten Table of Contents found included in the IASWR microfiche collection.

- 14) Gandhavyūhadhāraṇī
- 15) Saddharmapuṇḍarīkadhāraṇī
- 16) Mahāmāyāvijayavāhinī
- 17) Laṅkāvatāra
- 18) Lalitavistara
- 19) Kurukullādhāraṇī
- 20) Ekajaṭā dhāraṇī
- 21) Āryanāmasaṅgīti
- 22) Yogeśvarasya karmarāja
- 23) Kālacakranivardhana
- 24) Hevajrapūjāvidhi
- 25) Pañcarakṣāmahādivyāsādhana
- 26) Hastapūjāvidhāna
- 27) Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇasya dhāraṇī
- 28) Mahāsa(mv)arasya karmarājaviśuddhi
- 29) Nāgārjunapādaiḥ pātālād uddhṛtā [sic!]<sup>1016</sup>
- 30) Āryaparamitāyurnāmamahāyānasūtra
- 31) Mahāpratyāṅgirā mahāvidyārājñī
- 32) Grahamātrikādhāraṇī
- 33) Lokeśvaraśatakam
- 34) Sūryaśatakam
- 35) Mahāmegha(n)-mahāyānasūtra
- 36) Vāgīśvarīpūjāvidhi
- 37) Svayambhūcaityamahimā
- 38) Aśvaghoṣāvadāna

---

<sup>1016</sup> This is not a title but one of the closing formulas sometimes found in colophons. This expression is also found in MSS of the SvalP.

- 39) Triskandhaka
- 40) Nīlatantra
- 41) Suvarṇaprabh(ā) Sarasvatīparivarta
- 42) Pañcatathāgatajñānastuti
- 43) Māyācakratantra
- 44) (Ś)oda(ś)ayoginīstotram
- 45) Sukhavativyūha
- 46) Tattvajñānasamsiddhi
- 47) Suvarṇaprabha
- 48) Caṇḍamahāroṣātantra
- 49) Cakrasaṃvaratantra
- 50) Mahākāl[+a]tantra
- 51) Mañjuśrīmantrasūtra
- 52) Guṇakaraṇḍavyūha-mahāyānasūtra
- 53) Siddhakaravīrakhe(ś)ricaṇḍamahāroṣāṇa
- 54) Siddhakaravīratantra by siddha Bandhudatta
- 55) Ratnaguṇasaṃcayaprajñāpāramitā
- 56) Cakrasaṃvaravivṛtitantra
- 57) Vas(un)dharādharmaṇī
- 58) Buddhagaṇḍī

## Appendix C)

### ***Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* MBB III 53: List of Included Works<sup>1017</sup>**

[The contents of *Dhāraṇīsaṃgrahas* like MBB III 53 were discussed in Chapter 2.4 of the present study. On this topic, see Hidas *forthcoming*]

Note: The following reproduces a table of contents found at the end of the MS. It is written in the same Nepalese script also used for the main body of the MS. It thus appears to have formed an integral part of the MS itself. The titles are arranged into four columns per folio, each column-line having one title (from top to bottom, ca. 9 titles per column). On occasion, folio numbers were also added. Each of the following titles starts in the MS with *śrī-*. While *śrī-* is not reported here, its presence could be relevant for a study of historical title attestations. One titles are too long to fit the column width, the writer has used a circular sign (°) to indicate incompleteness. In most cases *dhā°* would be an abbreviated form of *dhāraṇī*.

Mahāyānasūtraṃ [sic]

Vajrasatvadhāraṇī

Vajrasatvakavacadhāraṇī

Buddhadhāraṇī

Dharmadhāraṇī

Samghadhāraṇī

Vairocanadhāraṇī

Akṣobhyadhāraṇī

Ratnasambhavadhāraṇī

Amitābhadhāraṇī

Amoghasiddhidhāraṇī

---

<sup>1017</sup> From the IASWR manuscript collection (microfiche).

Vipaśvidhāraṇī  
Śikhidhāraṇī  
Viśvabhuvadhāraṇī  
Kakucchandadhāraṇī  
Kanakamunidhāraṇī  
Kāśyapadhāraṇī  
Śākyamunidhāraṇī  
Nāmasaṃgītidhāraṇī  
Prajñāpāramitā Svalpākṣa [sic]  
Advayaprajñāpāramitādhā°  
Aparimitādhāraṇī  
Mahāmaṃjuśrīdhāraṇī  
Arapacanamaṃjuśrīdhā°  
Dharmadhātuvāgīśvaradhā°  
Lokātītadhāraṇī  
Durgatipariśodhanadhāraṇī  
Dānapāramitādhāraṇī  
Śīlapāramitādhāraṇī  
Kṣāntipāramitādhāraṇī  
Vīryapāramitādhāraṇī  
Dhānapāramitādhāraṇī  
Prajñāpāramitādhāraṇī  
Sarvamaṅgaladhāraṇī  
[FOLIO TURN]  
Uṣṇīṣacakravarttidhāraṇī  
Puṇyavivarddhadhāraṇī

Jātismaradhāraṇī  
Bhaiṣajyarājadhāraṇī  
Gandhavyūjadhāraṇī  
Laṃkāvatāradhāraṇī  
Aṣṭabhayapuṃgaladhā°  
Saptabuddhastavadhāraṇ  
Jihvottaradhāraṇī  
Karṇṇajāyādhāraṇī  
Sarvapāpadahanadhā°  
Bhadracarīdhāraṇī  
Karūṇapuṇḍarīka  
Saddharmmapuṇḍarīkā [sic]  
Pratisarādhāraṇī  
Sāhasrapramarddanī  
Mahāmāyūrīdhāra°  
Śītavatīdhāraṇī  
Mahāmantrānusāraṇī  
Vajravidāriṇīdhā°  
Gaṇapatiḥṛdayadhā°  
Uṣṇīṣavijayādhā°  
Māri[sic]cīnāmadhāraṇī  
Parṇaśavarīdhāraṇī  
Grahamātrkādhāraṇī  
Dhvajāgrakeyūrīdhāraṇī  
Pratyamṅgirādhāraṇī

Ṣanmuṣa<sup>1018</sup>dhāraṇī  
Amoghapāśadhāraṇī  
Padmapāṇidhāraṇī  
Ānandādidhāraṇī  
Jaṭādhārilokeśvararadhā°  
Sahasrabhūjalokeśvaradhā°  
Nīlakaṇṭhalokeśvaradhāraṇī°  
Halāhalalokeśvaradhāra°  
[FOLIO TURN]  
Hariharavāhanadhāraṇī  
Ṣaḍakṣarilokeśvaradhāraṇī  
Sahasrāvarttāvalokidhā°  
Mukhogī[ṣic]lokeśadhāra°  
Siṃhanādalokeśvaradhā°  
Abhayaṃkaridhāraṇī  
Sarvalokeśvaradhāra°  
Trailokyavasamaṃkaradhāra°  
Vajrapāṇilokeśadhā°  
Māyā(n)ālalokeśadhāra°  
Padmaṇṛtyeśvaradhāraṇī  
Raktavarṇalokeśvaradhāra°  
Mahārakṣālokeśadhāra°  
Arapacanamaṃjuśrīdhāra°  
Pratijñāmaṃjuśrīdhāraṇī  
Maitreyadhāraṇī

---

<sup>1018</sup> Probably pronounced as *ṣanmukha*.

Maitreyapratijñādhāraṇī  
Jambhalajalendradhāraṇī  
Kṣat(?)āsanadhāraṇī  
Vajrapāṇidhāraṇī  
Hemāṅgāthādhāraṇī  
Jāṅgulīdhāraṇī  
Maitreyavyākaraṇa  
Vasum̐dharādhāraṇī  
Aṣṭottaradhāraṇī  
Sarasvatidhāraṇī  
Cundānāmadhāraṇī  
Āryyatārāstava  
Āryyatārādhāraṇī  
Ekaviṃśati [sic]  
Vajratārādhāraṇī  
Ekatārādhāraṇī  
Māmakītārādhāraṇī  
Locanītārādhāraṇī  
Pāṇḍalātārādhāraṇī  
Āryya(śa)tārādhāraṇī  
[FOLIO TURN]  
Mahātārādhāraṇī  
Vasatārādhāraṇī  
Varadatārādhāraṇī  
Ekajaṭadhāraṇī  
Puṣpatārādhāraṇī

Dhū(p)atārādhāraṇī  
Dīpatārādhāraṇī  
Gandhatārādhāraṇī  
Naivadyatārādhāraṇī  
Daśabhūmīśvaradhāraṇī  
Saptas[ic]atikā prajñāpāramitā  
Vacchadedikā[i.e.Vajracchedikā] prajñāpāramitā  
Dharmmadhātuhṛdayavairocana  
Akṣobhyahṛdayadhāraṇī  
Ratnaketuhṛdayadhāraṇī  
Amṛtarucihṛdayadhāraṇī  
Amoghasiddhihṛdayadhāraṇī  
Śā(kya)ketuhṛdayadhāraṇī  
Vāgīśvarahṛdayadhāraṇī  
Bhūmīndratathāgatadhāraṇī  
Vāgvāṇīsarasvatidhāraṇī  
Saptākṣaramaṅjughoṣadhāraṇī  
Śivarūpatathāgatadhāraṇī  
Pārvatītārādhāraṇī  
Gaṃgādhāraṇī  
Caturbhūjamahākāladhāraṇī  
Ṣaḍbhujamahākāladhāraṇī  
Dvādaśabhujamahākāladhā°  
Ṣoḍaśabhujamahākāladhā°  
Yamāntakadhāraṇī  
Prajñāntakadhāraṇī

Padmāntakadhāraṇī  
Vighnāntakadhāraṇī  
Acalavīradhāraṇī  
Tarkkarājadhāraṇī  
Nīladaṇḍadhāraṇī  
[PAGE TURN]  
Mahābaladhāraṇī  
Uṣṇīṣavīja[sic]dhāraṇī  
Sumbharājadhāraṇī  
Cakrasamvaradhāraṇī  
Cakrasamvaraviśuddhi  
Mahāsamvaradhāraṇī  
Herukasarvarogapraśamani  
Mahāsamvaramūlamantra  
Yogāmbarakarmarāja  
Herukacaturviṃśatipī°  
Dvibhujasamvarahṛdaya  
Ṣaḍbhujasamvarahṛdaya  
Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇadhāraṇī  
Caṇḍavīra(v)īradhāraṇī  
Trailokyavijayāhṛdaya  
Hevajradhāraṇī  
Kālacakradhāraṇī  
Vajravārāhīdhāraṇī  
Vajravārāhīphalasiddhi  
Vajrayoginīdhāraṇī

Vajrayoginīviśuddhi  
Kolāsyāmantrodhāra°  
Nairātmāhṛdaya  
guhyeśvarīdhāraṇī  
Chinnamastakayoginī  
Triśaktihasiddhidhāraṇī  
Vacchalādevīdhāraṇī  
Tripurapramarthanīdhāraṇī  
Vidyādhārīdhāraṇī  
Meghasūtradhāraṇī  
Mahāmāyāvijayavāhinī  
Brahmāyaṇīnāmadhāraṇī  
Māheśvarīnāmadhāraṇī  
Kaumārīnāmadhāraṇī  
Vaiṣṇavīnāmadhāraṇī  
[PAGE TURN]  
Vārāhīnāmadhāraṇī  
Indrāyaṇīnāmadhāraṇī  
Cāmuṇḍanāmadhāraṇī  
Mahālakṣmīnāmadhāraṇī  
Pīṭhā[sic]stavadhāraṇī  
Subā(hu)gāthādhāraṇī  
Ādityadhāraṇī  
Somadhāraṇī  
Maṅgaladhāraṇī  
Budhadhāraṇī

Bṛhaspatidhāraṇī  
Śukradhāraṇī  
Śaniśvaradhāraṇī  
Rāhudhāraṇī  
Ketudhāraṇī  
Nakṣatradhāraṇī  
Sarvasiddhidhāraṇī  
Sarvaduṣṭanāśadhāraṇī  
Pṛthvīmātānāmadhāraṇī  
Aṣṭabhairavadhāraṇī  
Kṣetrapāladhāraṇī  
Mṛtyuvaṃcanadhāraṇī  
Śragdharādhāraṇī  
Siddhenta[sic]ridhāraṇī  
Kanavīradhāraṇī  
Vajrasarasvatīdhāraṇī  
Āryyāvalokiteśvarahṛdaya  
Hevajrahṛdaya  
Mahākālatantrotahṛdaya  
Vajravilāsinīhṛdaya  
Vajranairātmāhṛdaya  
Khagānanāhṛdaya  
Nairātmā Amṛtaprabhā  
Nairātmāviśuddhi  
Jayavagīśvarīhṛdaya  
[PAGE TURN]

Niṣpannayogāṃvarahṛdaya  
Vajravārāhīkalpadhāraṇī  
Vārāhi[sic]Kalpadhāraṇī  
Vajradharasaṃgītāstuti  
Vajravārāhīkalpaika [sic]  
Vajravārāhīkatrisamaya  
Vajravārāhīsādhana  
Vajravārāhībhāvanā  
Vajrabhairavakālacakranāma  
khagānanāguhyeśvarīnāma°  
Navagrahakṛtastuti  
Chatīsavīreśvara  
Saptaślokiprajñāpāramitā  
Karaprasāmanināmadhāraṇī  
Vajraśṛṅghalānāmadhāraṇī  
Striyadhva[sic]sarvatathāgata  
Saptasaṃmyakbuddhanāmadhāraṇī  
Āryyāmitābhanāmadhāraṇī  
Sarvabuddhabodhisatvanāma [sic]  
Āryyapūṅgaladhāraṇī  
Tārāśatanāmastava  
Pūṅgalanāmadhāraṇī  
Sarvabhayanāsanītārānā°  
Sarvaduḥkhanāsanītārā  
Śāntikatārānāmadhā°  
Svastikatārānāmadhā°

Vaiśvānaratārānāma°  
Kṛṣṇavadanatārānāmadhāraṇī  
Bhṛkutimukhatārānāmadhāra°  
Mahābalatārānāmadhāraṇī  
Mahākārūṇikatārānāmadhā°  
Mahāgāmbhīryatārānāmadhā°  
Caṇḍavajrapāṇināmadhāra°  
Padmantakanāmadhāraṇī  
Hayagrīvanāmadhāraṇī  
Nīlāambaravajrapāṇināma°  
[PAGE TURN]  
Sarvamaṅgalavastunāmadhā°  
Catumahārājā[sic]nāmadhā°  
Sarvadigāvasthitatathāgata  
Vajragandhārīnāmadhāraṇī  
Mahābrahmānāmadhāraṇī  
Indranāmadhāraṇī  
Maheśvaranāmadhāraṇī  
Vaiṣṇavanāmadhāraṇī  
Navadurgānāmadhāraṇī  
Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣasitātapatra  
Sarvatithinakṣatradhāraṇī  
Sarvakarmakarīnāmadhāraṇī  
Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣavijayā  
Sarvabuddhajayottarīdhāraṇī  
Aparājitadhvajāgrakeyūra

Asurājitadhvajāgradhā°  
Nṛtyanāthadhāraṇī  
Nandināmadhāraṇī  
Mahākālanāmadhāra°  
Mṛtyum̐jayanāmadhā°  
Bhīmasenanāmadhā°  
Durppa[sic]tīnāmadhāra°  
Ādityanāmadhāra°  
Somanāmadhā°  
Aṃgāranāmadhā°  
Budhanāmadhāraṇī  
Bṛhaspatināmadhā°  
Śukranāmadhāraṇī  
Śaniśvaranāmadhāraṇī  
Rāhunāmadhāraṇī  
Ketunāmadhāraṇī  
Janmanāmadhāraṇī  
Śatākṣaranāmadhāraṇī  
Samantabhadranāmadhāraṇī  
Dhṛtarāṣṭranāmadhāraṇī  
Virūḍhakanāmadhāraṇī  
[PAGE TURN]  
Virupākṣānāmadhāraṇī  
Vaiśravanānāmadhāraṇī  
Varuṇanāgarājā[sic]nāmadhāra°  
Anantanāgarājā[sic]dhāraṇi[sic]

Padmanāgarājadhāraṇi[sic]  
Takṣakanāgarājā[sic]dhāraṇi[sic]  
Vāsuṭināgarājā[sic]dhāraṇi[sic]  
Saṃkhapālanāgarājā[sic]dhāra°  
Karkāṭakanāgarājā[sic]dhāra°  
Mahāpadmanāgarājā[sic]dhā°  
Kulikanāgarājādhā°  
Śītalādevīnāmadhā°  
Bauddhāṣṭakaṃ[sic]nāmadhāraṇī  
Samvarāṣṭavanāmadhāra°  
Meṣasamvarāṣṭavanāma°  
Aśvānanāstavanāmadhā°  
Vyāprasamvarastavanāma°  
Kūrmāsamvarastavanāma  
Matsyasamvaranāmadhāra°  
Ma[sic]krasamvaranāmastava°  
U(gra)samvarastavadhā°  
Gajasamvarastavadhā°  
Maṇḍukānanasamvara°  
Ahimukhasamvaradhā°  
Śūkānanāsamvara°  
Siṃhānanāsaṃvaradhā°  
Markaṭāsyasaṃvaradhā°  
Śvānanāsamvaradhāra°  
Ghṛṣṭimukhasamvaradhāra°  
Sivānanāsamvaradhāra°

Grddhānanāsamvaradhāra°

Kākānanāsamvaradhāra°

Ulūkānanāsamvaradhā°

Tārṣānanāsamvaradhā°

Govaktrānāmadamvara°

Kharānanāsamvaradhā°

[PAGE TURN]

Mahiṣāsyasamvaradhāraṇī

Virālāsyasamvaradhāra°

Śālvānanāsamvaradhā°

Krauñcānanasamvaradhā°

Ulkānanāsamvaradhā°

Haṃsānanāsamvaradhā°

Mṛgavadatāsamvaradhā°

Cakravākānanāsamvara°

Ajānanāsamvaradhāra°

Kukkuṭānanāsamvaradhā°

Sārasānanāsamvaradhā°

Muṣānanāsamvaradhā°

Kapotānanāsamvaradhā°

Śālukāsyasamvaradhā°

Grāhānanāsamvaradhā°

Cihnāsyasamvaradhā°

Caṭākānanāsamvara°

(S)ārasānanāsamvara

Khaṃjāsyasamvaradhāra°

Kurmakarpāsyasaṃvara°  
Śaśakānanasamvara°  
Bhallukāsyasaṃvaradhā°  
Pikāsyasaṃvaradhā°  
Bakānanāsamvara°  
Khaḍgīmukhasamvara°  
Karkaṭāsyasaṃvaradhā°  
Śallukīmukhasamvara°  
Vṛścikānanasamvaradhā°  
Alivaktrāsamvaradhā°  
Jāhakāsyasaṃvaradhāraṇī  
Camaryyāsyasaṃvaranāmadhā°  
Simrāsyasaṃvaradhāraṇī  
Goḍhāsyasaṃvaradhāra°  
Cakorāsyasaṃvaradhā°  
Godhikāsyasaṃvaradhā°  
Makṣikāsyasaṃvaradhā°  
[FOLIO TURN]  
Pataṅgāsyasaṃvaranāmadhāraṇī  
Naravakrasamvaranāmadhāraṇī  
Śṛṣṭisamvaranāmadhāraṇī  
Sthitisamvaranāmadhāraṇī  
Pralayasamvaranāmadhāraṇī  
Jyotisaṃvaranāmadhāraṇī  
Jyotisaṃvaranāmadhāraṇī [sic]  
Catuṣaṣṭīyoginīdhāraṇī

Kalyāṇāstavadhāraṇī

Śragdharāstavadhāraṇī

Lokeśvaraśataka

Avalokiteśvarasūtra

## Appendix D)

### The *Saptaśloṅikā* (SaŚIP) from MBB III 53 in Comparison with the CTRCT 8 Text

[This work was discussed at various places, particularly in Chapter 4.1.2 and 4.3.1, also see the Editorial Conventions before Appendix A]

Editorial Note: The text reproduced here is that of MS MBB III 53 from the IASWR microfiche collection. The notes indicate variants from the second Sanskrit witness i.e. CTCRC8 (CTRC Beijing), edited in Komine et al. 2015: 108f. This second witness appears to be significantly less corrupt and is used as basis for the English translation. For details see Chapter 2.2.1.

[folio 245 , 1] om̐ namo bhagavatyai āryyapra(line 2)jñāpāramitāyai || om̐ namo bhagavate vairocanaprabhavarājāya<sup>1019</sup> tathāgatāyārhatē samyaksambuddhāya || namaḥ<sup>1020</sup> āryyasamantabhadrāya bodhisatvāya ma(line 3)hāsātṅvāya mahākāruṅikāya || tadyathā || om̐ jñānapradīpe [ILLUMINATION-1] akṣayakośe pratibhānavati sarvabuddhāvalokite yoga(line 4)pariṅṣpanna<sup>1021</sup> gambhīraduravagāhayadhvapariniṅṣpanna<sup>1022</sup> bo[ILLUMINATION-1]dhicittasam̐jñānani<sup>1023</sup> sarvābhīṣiktaḥ<sup>1024</sup> sarvatathāgatabhāṣi(line 5)ta<sup>1025</sup> dharmmasāgaratanute<sup>1026</sup> dharmmarājabhāṣita<sup>1027</sup> amoghāśra[ILLUMINATION-

---

<sup>1019</sup> CTCRC 8: 1b5] *āryavairocanāya*.

<sup>1020</sup> CTCRC 8: 1b5] *namo bhagavate*.

<sup>1021</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a1] *yogapariniṅṣpanne*.

<sup>1022</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a1] *gambhīraduravagāhe tryarthapariniṅṣpanne*.

<sup>1023</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a1] *bodhicittasam̐janani*.

<sup>1024</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a2] *sarvābhīṣekābhīṣikte*.

<sup>1025</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a2] *sarvatathāgatabhāṣite*.

<sup>1026</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a2] *dharmasāgarasambhūte*.

<sup>1027</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a2] om. *dharmmarājabhāṣita*.

1]vaṃṇa<sup>1028</sup> mahāsamantabhadrābhūminiryāte || vyākaraṇapari(line 6)prāpaṇi  
sarvasiddhanamaḥkr̥te<sup>1029</sup> || sarvabuddhabodhisatvasaṃ[ILLUMINATION-  
1]jñānānir<sup>1030</sup> aparimitabhagavatībuddhamātre<sup>1031</sup> || oṃ araḍe (line 7) karaḍe 2  
<sup>1032</sup>mahāprajñāpāramite svāhā || aparimite jānu[ILLUMINATION-1]saṃśaya<sup>1033</sup>  
imāṃ pa<sup>1034</sup> tisakalpasahasropacite<sup>1035</sup> karmmāva(line 8)raṇam eva  
karmmavalamanusmāya<sup>1036</sup> sarvataparisaṃkṣayaṃ<sup>1037</sup> ||  
buddhasahasropacite<sup>1038</sup> kuśalamūlo bhavati(ṃ)<sup>1039</sup> kalpasahasraṃ saṃsārāt<sup>1040</sup>  
paścāt<sup>1041</sup> sukhī(line 9)karoti<sup>1042</sup> jātiparivāsa<sup>1043</sup> cakravarttirājyaṃ sahasraṃ<sup>1044</sup>  
pratilabhate || maraṇakālasamaye<sup>1045</sup> buddhasahasraṃ paśyati<sup>1046</sup>  
śuddha<sup>1047</sup> buddhakṣetreṣūpa(FOLIO TURN, line 1)padyate ||  
ekaviṃśatidivāsāni<sup>1048</sup> triṣkṛtvā<sup>1049</sup> rātrau triṣkṛtvā<sup>1050</sup> divāsam<sup>1051</sup>  
anupatsyate<sup>1052</sup> || ekaviṃśatime divase<sup>1053</sup> buddhaṃ bhagavantaṃ padmāsane  
niṣa(line 2)raṇa<sup>1054</sup> paśyati pariśuddhabuddhakṣetropapattim<sup>1055</sup> ca pratilabhate

<sup>1028</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a2] *amoghaśravaṇe*.

<sup>1029</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a2] *sarvasiddhanamaskṛte*.

<sup>1030</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a2] *sarvabuddhabodhisatvasaṃjanani*.

<sup>1031</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a2] om. *aparimita; buddhamāte*

<sup>1032</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a3] adds: *araḍakaraḍe*. Number actually found in MBB MS.

<sup>1033</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a3] *aparimito trānuśaṃsaḥ*.

<sup>1034</sup> Circular sign probably indicating abbreviation.

<sup>1035</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a3] om. *imāṃ pa<sup>o</sup>tisa; kalpasahasropacitaṃ*.

<sup>1036</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a4] *ekavelām anusmārya*.

<sup>1037</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a4] *sarvaṃ vrajati saṃkṣayaṃ*.

<sup>1038</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a4] *buddhasahasropacitakuśalamūlo*.

<sup>1039</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a4] *bhavati*

<sup>1040</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a4] *saṃsārāṃtyaś* (conj. Komine: *saṃsārāntyam?*)

<sup>1041</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a4] om. *paścāt*.

<sup>1042</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a4] *cābhimukhīkaroti*.

<sup>1043</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a4] *jātiparivartta* (em. Komine: *parivarte*)

<sup>1044</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a4] *cakravarttirājasahasraṃ*.

<sup>1045</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a4] *marāṇakāle samaye*.

<sup>1046</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a5] *paśyatiḥ* (em. Komine: *paśyati*)

<sup>1047</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a5] *pariśuddha...*

<sup>1048</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a5] *ekaviṃśatidivāni*.

<sup>1049</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a5] *triṣkṛto* (em. Komine: *triṣkṛte*)

<sup>1050</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a5] *triṣkṛte*.

<sup>1051</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a5] *divā*.

<sup>1052</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a5] *uccāya* (Komine: *uccārya*)

<sup>1053</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a5] *ekaviṃśativatsa* (em. Komine: *ekaviṃśatidivase*)

<sup>1054</sup> CTCRC 8: 2a5] *padmāsananiṣaṇṇaṃ*.

<sup>1055</sup> Komine's edition ends here.

bodhisattvasaṃgītisūtram padyate<sup>1056</sup> || ity āryyasaptaślokiaprajñāpāramit(line  
3)tā samāptaM ||

**Translation** (based on the CTCRC text, see the collation notes above or Komine 2016):

Oṃ Homage to the venerable one the noble Prajñāpāramitā. Oṃ Homage to the venerable one the noble Vairocana, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the perfectly awakened. Homage to the venerable one the noble Samantabhadra, the bodhisattva *mahāsattva*, the great compassionate one.

*Tadyathā* | Oṃ oh lamp of knowledge, inexhaustible treasure, eloquent one, blessed by all buddhas, perfected in yoga, profound and hard to fathom, perfected in the three meanings (? *tryarthapariniṣpanne*), producer of the resolve for awakening, anointed in all anointment rites, uttered by all *tathāgatas*, born of the ocean of dharma, effective to hear, produced from the stage of the great Samantabhadra, who delivers the prophecy (to become a buddha), saluted by all *siddhas*, producer of all buddhas and bodhisattvas, venerable one mother of buddhas,

*araḍe karaḍe araḍakarāḍe mahāprajñāpāramite svāhā*

Infinite here is the benefit. Having brought this<sup>1057</sup> to mind just one time, all the karmic impediments collected over thousands of *kalpas* are destroyed, [and one becomes a person] possessing the wholesome roots of thousands of buddhas. One faces the end of *saṃsāra* which lasts *thousands* of kalpas. Upon obtaining a new birth, one obtains a thousand [times] the kingship of a *cakravartin*. At the time of death, one sees thousands of buddhas and is reborn in pure buddha-fields. Having uttered over twenty-one days, three times at night [and] three times by day, on the twenty-first day one sees the venerable buddha seated in the lotus posture and one obtains birth in the pure buddha-fields. Thus one reads in the *Bodhisattvasaṃgītisūtra*.<sup>1058</sup>

---

<sup>1056</sup> CTCRC 8 possibly reads *paṭhyate*.

<sup>1057</sup> Note that the Nepalese MS reads *imām etc.*, absent in the Pāla witness. The passage remains obscure, although it either refers to the reciting of the spell or the SaśīP as a whole.

<sup>1058</sup> The reading *paṭhyate* is uncertain.

## Appendix E)

### **Towards a Critical Edition of the *Ardhaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā*: a Collation of Sample Materials.**

[This work was discussed at various places, particularly in Chapter 3.2.2 and 4.1.2; also see the Editorial Conventions before Appendix A]

Editorial Note: The text edited here diplomatically is that of Cambridge MS 1326. The notes provide readings from the *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* Tokyo witness 418 (Tok 418), as well as the *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* reproduced in *Kṛtibodha* 6 (National Mission for Manuscripts, New Delhi, p.130ff. – Ktb 6). For details on the MSS see Chapter 2.

**[NOTE: THE TEXT ORIGINALLY PRESENT HERE IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE ONLINE VERSION. PLEASE CONSULT THE BODLEIAN COPY OR CONTACT THE AUTHOR]**



























## Appendix F)

### Further Primary Sources (Texts and Translations)

#### 1) *Ekaślokikā prajñāpāramitā* (with opening invocations)

From Danzeng 2011: 145 (coloured photograph sample folios of the CTRC 8 MS)

[1b1] om<sup>1059</sup> namo buddhāya | namo dharmāya | nama saṃghāya || nama  
sarvabuddhabodhisattvebhyaḥ || namo bhagavatyai āryaprajñāpāramitāyai ||

utpādasthitibhaṅgadoṣa<sup>1060</sup>rahitāṃ sarvāsravonmūlinīṃ  
[1b2] - - - (bh/t)i(yo)gayogavigatāṃ<sup>1061</sup> nābhāvabhāvānvitāṃ  
tām antadvayavarjjitāṃ nirupamām ākāśavan<sup>1062</sup> nirmalāṃ  
prajñāpāramitāṃ jinasya jananiṃ śṛṇvantu bodhyarthinaḥ ||

namo bhagavatyai ārya[1b3]prajñāpāramitāyai |  
(sa)kalamahāyānāgryadharmatāyai ||

tadyathā | om dhīḥ hṛīḥ śrīḥ śrutismṛtīvijaye svāhā ||

tārakā timiraṃ dīpo  
māyāvaśya[sic]ya budbudam  
svapnañ ca vidyudabhrañ ca  
evaṃ [1b4] draṣṭavya saṃskṛtaṃ ||

(nirātmā)na(:)sarv(e) bhāvāḥ kṣaṇikaṃ sarvasaṃskṛtaṃ śāntaṃ nirvāṇam ity eṣā  
dharmamudrā trilakṣaṇā || idam avocad bhagavāN ||

ity ekaślokikā bhagavatī prajñāpāramitā[1b5]tā samāptā | ॥ ॥

---

<sup>1059</sup> Symbol similar to a vertical hook.

<sup>1060</sup> Tomabeche 2009: *kṣaya*

<sup>1061</sup> Tomabeche 2009: *vimalāṃ*

<sup>1062</sup> Tomabeche 2009: *ākāsarva nirmalāṃ*, later emended.

## Translation

Homage to the buddha. Homage to the dharma. Homage to the saṅgha. Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas. Homage to venerable Prajñāpāramitā.

[Those] who seek awakening should listen to the Prajñāpāramitā, mother of the Buddha // who is free from the defects of arising, sustenance, and decay; who eradicates all influxes (*āsrava*); // separate from [...]; not constrained by inexistence or existence; // devoid of end or duality; without comparison; space-like; spotless //. <sup>1063</sup>

Homage to the noble Prajñāpāramitā, highest principle of the entire Mahāyāna,

*tadyathā oṃ dhīḥ hrīḥ śrīḥ śrutismṛtivijaye svāhā*

A shooting star, an obscuration of sight, a lamp // an illusion, dew, a bubble, // a dream, lightning (or) a rain-bearing cloud // - thus should one see the conditioned (world) //. <sup>1064</sup>

All phenomena are without self-being, the entire conditioned (world) is momentary, the 'blowing out' (*nirvāṇa*) is peaceful - such is the dharma-seal with its threefold characteristics.

Thus spoke the venerable one.

This concludes the venerable *prajñāpāramitā* in one *śloka*.

---

<sup>1063</sup> Note that the correlative to *tām* might be found in the undeciphered portion. Here all feminine accusive attributes are rendered directly as qualifying the *prajñāpāramitām* of the last verse.

<sup>1064</sup> This is the famous stanza also found in the *Vajracchedikā*. See Harrison 2006: 158.

## 2) *Prajñāpāramitā Nāmāṣṭasatakā*

CBETA Chinese text (T230) with selected Tibetan sections (Q172 rgyud, pa 16b7-18b4 (vol. 6, p.278)). Punctuation as per CBETA 2016. Only a few, minor variants are reported in Taishō and Zhonghua *apparatuses*.

聖八千頌般若波羅蜜多一百八名真實圓義陀羅尼經

**‘The *Dhāraṇī* of True and Complete Meaning and the 108 Names from the Noble *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*’**

歸命最勝諸佛母， 般若波羅蜜多法，  
過去未來及現在， 一切諸佛從是生。  
善生諸佛為佛母， 無性自性我清淨，  
佛為須菩提廣說， 如其所說今畧集。

Homage to the wonderful mother of buddhas, the *Prajñāpāramitā-dharma* //

All buddhas of past, future and present have sprung forth from her //

Being skilled in giving birth to all buddhas, she is the mother of buddhas. Her true nature is the absence of nature, she is purity of self //

The buddha told [it] extensively to Subhūti, and accordingly is told now in abridged form //<sup>1065</sup>

般若波羅蜜多有一百八名：一者最勝般若波羅蜜多，二、一切智，三、一切相智，四、實際，五、真如，六、無壞真如，七、無異真如，八、實性，九、

<sup>1065</sup> Compare Conze 1993: 196 (note 1).

如實生，十、不顛倒，十一、空無相無願，十二、無性，十三、自性，十四、無性自性，十五、法性，十六、法界，十七、法定，十八、法住，十九、法無我，二十、法相，二十一、非眾生，二十二、非壽命，二十三、非長養，二十四、非士夫，二十五、非補特伽羅，二十六、非語言，二十七、非語言道，二十八、離心意識，二十九、無等，三十、無等等，三十一、無僞，三十二、無我，三十三、無戲論，三十四、離戲論，三十五、過諸戲論，三十六、一切佛母，三十七、出生一切菩薩，三十八、出生一切聲聞緣覺，三十九、長養攝持一切世間，四十、無盡福行具足，四十一、運用智慧，四十二、起作神通，四十三、作淨天眼，四十四、作淨天耳，四十五、作他心智，四十六、作宿命智，四十七、作漏盡智，四十八、聖清淨，四十九、吉祥，

Prajñāpāramitā has 108 names: the 1st is Excellent Prajñāpāramitā; 2nd is Omniscience; 3rd is Knowledge of the attributes; 4th is Upper limit of reality; 5th is Suchness; 6th is Non-destroyable suchness; 7th is Non-separate suchness; 8th is Ultimate nature; 9th is Born according to truth; 10th is Not Distorted; 11th is Emptiness, Signlessness and Aimlessness; 12th is Without own-being;<sup>1066</sup> 13th is True nature; 14th is True nature of no own nature; 15th is Dharma nature; 16th is Dharma realm; 17th is Fixedness in Dharma; 18th is Dharma adherence; 19th is Selflessness of dharmas;<sup>1067</sup> 20th is Dharma characteristic; 21st is Not being (\*sattva); 22nd is Not Life (\*jīva); 23rd is Not nourishing (\*poṣa); 24th is Not being (\*puruṣa); 25th is Not person (\*puḍgala); 26th is Not utterance; 27th is Not the way of words; 28th is Separate from mind; 29th is Without equal; 30th is Equal with the without equal; 31st is Without pride; 32nd is Without self; 33rd is Without wrong views; 34th is Separate from wrong views; 35th is Beyond all

<sup>1066</sup> From no. 12 to 18 one finds what seems to be a list of synonyms of *tathatā*. For a partial parallel see 具壽善現復白佛言：「何等名為無為法？」佛告善現：「若法無生、無滅、無住、無異，若貪盡、瞋盡、癡盡，若真如、法界、法性、不虛妄性、不變異性、平等性、離生性、法定、法住、實際。善現！此等名為無為法。」(T07n220p59c25). See also the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* (ed. Kimura I-2 p. 27): *subhūtir āha: katame bhagavann asaṃskṛtā dharmāḥ? bhagavān āha: yeṣāṃ dharmāṅāṃ notpādo na nirodho nānyathātvaṃ prajñāyate rāgākṣayo doṣākṣayo mohākṣayaś ca, tathatā avitathatā ananyatathatā dharmatā dharmadhātur dharmasthititā dharmaniyāmatā bhūtakotiḥ, ima ucyante asaṃskṛtā dharmāḥ.*

<sup>1067</sup> From no. 19 to 25 one finds some overlap with common list of terms denoting selfhood. See for example Zacchetti 2005 (GZJ § 3.2): 207 and 327-329. See also *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* (ed. Kimura I-2 p. 54): *tadyathāpi nāma sārīputra ātmeti cocyate, na cātmā upalabhyate, na sattvo na jīvo na poṣo na puruṣo na puḍgalo na manujo 'py upalabhyate, etc.*

wrong views; 36th is Mother or all buddhas; 37th is Giving rise to all bodhisattvas; 38th is Giving rise to all *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*; 39th is Nourishing and supporting all worlds; 40th is Possessing endless meritorious actions; 41st is Applying insight; 42nd is Give rise to powers; 43rd is Rise of the pure divine eye; 44th is Rise of the pure divine hear; 45th is Rise of notion of others; 46th Rise of memory of former lives; 47th is Rise of knowledge of the outflows; 48th is Sagely and pure; 49th is Auspicious;

五十、安住四念處，五十一、具四正斷，五十二、運四神足，五十三、諸根清淨，五十四、諸力具足，五十五、嚴七覺支，五十六、示八聖道，五十七、施七聖財，五十八、圓滿九次第定，五十九、具十自在，六十、安住十地，六十一、圓滿十力，六十二、十遍處莊嚴，六十三、運用十智，六十四、善作調伏十種勝怨，六十五、出生諸禪定，六十六、超過三界，六十七、妙住一切正遍知覺，六十八、具一切智智，六十九、內空，七十、外空，七十一、內外空，七十二、空空，七十三、大空，七十四、勝義空，七十五、有為空，七十六、無為空，七十七、畢竟空，七十八、無際空，七十九、散空，八十、無變異空，八十一、共相空，八十二、自相空，八十三、不可得空，八十四、無性空，八十五、自性空，八十六、無性自性空，八十七、無起作，八十八、不生，八十九、不滅，九十、不斷，九十一、不常，九十二、非一義，九十三、非多義，九十四、非來，九十五、非去，九十六、善觀緣起，九十七、非尋伺，九十八、無攝藏，九十九、無所有，一百、本來無所作，一百一、無二，一百二、非無二，一百三、寂靜慧無所趣，一百四、無繫無染與虛空等，一百五、離十相語，一百六、諸法自性猶如幻夢，一百七、如陶家輪，一百八、一切法同一味。

50th is Well-established in the four forms of mindfulness; 51st is Equipped with the four correct abandonments; 52nd is Using the four powers; 53rd is Purification of the senses; 54th is Possessing all strengths; 55th is Garland adorning the seven branches of awakening; 56th is Reveals the eightfold path of the noble; 57th is Donates the seven saintly goods; 58th is Completes the 9 successive states; 59th is Equipped with the ten freedoms; 60th is Well-placed on the ten stages; 61st is Completes the ten strengths; 62nd is Adornment of the ten pervasive places; 63rd is Employs the ten insights; 64th is Effective in taming the ten kinds of grate evil thought; 65th is Gives rise to the absorptions; 66th is Exceeds the triple world; 67th is Wonderfully abiding in the awakening of the

perfectly awakened; 68th is Knowledge of the omniscient; 69th is Internal emptiness;<sup>1068</sup> 70th is External emptiness; 71st is Internal and external emptiness; 72nd is Empty of emptiness; 73rd is The great emptiness; 74th is Ultimate emptiness; 75th is Emptiness of conditioned; 76th is Emptiness of non-conditioned; 77th is Absolute emptiness; 78th is Limitless emptiness; 79th is Emptiness of the Dispersed; 80th is Immutable emptiness; 81st is Emptiness of common characteristics; 82nd is Emptiness of own characteristics; 83rd is Ungraspable emptiness; 84th is Emptiness without nature; 85th is Emptiness of own nature; 86th is Emptiness of absence of nature and of own nature; 87th is Without arising; 88th is Not born; 89th is Indestructible; 90th is Non-interruption; 91st is Impermanent; 92nd is Not single; 93rd is Not plural; 94th is Not come; 95th is Not gone; 96th is Properly contemplating caused arising; 97th is Not reflection and investigation; 98th is Absence of gathering; 99th is Without possessions; 100th is Originally without beginning; 101st Without duality; 102nd is Not without duality; 103rd is Calm insight without bending; 104th is Without binds and stains like space; 105th is Separate from the 10 kinds of speech; 106th is Dharma's own nature is like a dream; 107th is Like a potter's wheel; 108th is Sameness of taste of all dharmas.

如是般若波羅蜜多一百八名，若常持誦者，銷滅一切罪，一切諸佛所共稱讚。一切菩薩及諸賢聖，於長時中常所衛護。即說般若波羅蜜多真實圓義陀羅尼曰：<sup>1069</sup>

'The one who constantly recites such 108 names of Prajñāpāramitā destroys all offences, and all the Buddhas praise him together. All bodhisattvas and sages constantly protect him at all times. Now is declared the Dhāraṇī of true e complete meaning of the Prajñāpāramitā'

<sup>1068</sup> On the list of forms of emptiness (nos. 69-ff.) and its Sanskrit equivalents, see Lamotte, *Traité* (IV): 2028ff. as well as Zacchetti 2005: 180 (§ 1.135) and 2005: 296-299.

<sup>1069</sup> Compare the Tibetan (Passage Translated in full on page 228): su zhig shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'i mtshan brgya rtsa brgyad pa 'di 'don pa de ngan song thams cad las rab tu thar par 'gyur ro | sangs rgyas thams cad kyis kyang dgongs par 'gyur ro | byang chub sems dpa' thams cad kyis kyang rtag par rgyun du bsrung ba dang, skyob pa dang, sbed par byed par 'gyur ro |

但[寧\*也]他 唵 鉢囉倪 鉢囉倪 摩賀鉢囉倪也 婆西 鉢囉倪也 路葛葛哩  
 阿倪也 那尾馱摩泥 悉提 蘇悉提 悉奠觀彌婆誑嚩底 薩哩嚩三鉢但野  
 薩哩網誑孫捺哩 薄訖底嚩蹉梨 鉢囉薩哩多訶薩底 摩說薩那葛哩 底瑟  
 姪底瑟姪 紺波紺波 左羅左羅 誑嚩誑嚩 誑哩惹誑哩惹 阿誑蹉阿誑蹉  
 婆誑嚩底摩尾藍摩莎賀 提 紇凌 室凌 率嚕底 三蜜哩底 尾惹曳莎賀

Compare Tibetan Spell section: <sup>1070</sup>

om prajñe prajñe mahāprajñe | prajñāvabhāse prajñālokakare | ajñānavidhamane<sup>1071</sup> | siddhe  
 susiddhe | siddhamane<sup>1072</sup> | bhagavati sarvāṅgasundari<sup>1073</sup> | bhaktivatsale<sup>1074</sup> | prasāritahaste |  
 samāśvāsakari | tiṣṭha tiṣṭha | kampa kampa | cala cala | rāva rāva | gaccha gaccha<sup>1075</sup> | āgaccha  
 āgaccha | bhagavati mā vilamba svāhā

此陀羅尼祕密章句，若常憶念受持讀誦者，所獲功德不可稱計。

<sup>1076</sup>(T08n230p0685b13)

‘As for the sacred and arcane sentences of this *dhāraṇī*, if one constantly keeps in mind, holds (in mind) and recites these words, the merit one will obtain will be incalculable’.

<sup>1070</sup> On the editorial difficulties related to this particular spell see Conze 1993: 198. Conze’s reconstruction is for the most part followed here, with supplementary references to the Peking edition.

<sup>1071</sup> Pek: adjñānavidhamani?

<sup>1072</sup> Pek: siddhyamana?

<sup>1073</sup> Pek: °sundhari?

<sup>1074</sup> Pek: bhagavati vadsamli?

<sup>1075</sup> Am unable to read Pek here.

<sup>1076</sup> Compare the Tibetan (passage translated in full on page 228): shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ’di ’dzin na, shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ’bum bzung par ’gyur ro | rtag tu bzlas brjod byas na de ’i las kyi sgrib pa thams cad ’byang par ’gyur ro | de nas shi ’phos nas kyang skye ba dran pa dang, yid gzhungs shing shes rab mtshungs pa med par ’gyur ro | dus gsum gyi de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi chos ma lus par bzung bar ’gyur ro | gsang sngags dang rigs sngags thams cad kyang bzungs par ’gyur ro | ’di nas shi ’phos nas kyang skye ba dran pa dang, yid gzhung shing shes rab chen por ’gyur ro | (Q172 rgyud, pa 18a,4-[...]-18b,4 (vol. 6, p.279))

## **APPENDICE F3 to F5**

**[NOTE: THE TEXT ORIGINALLY PRESENT HERE IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE ONLINE VERSION. PLEASE CONSULT THE BODLEIAN COPY OR CONTACT THE AUTHOR]**















## Appendix G)

### List of Spells in the Selected Sources

Note: the following list of spells is meant as a general overview to complement the treatment of Chapter 4. The reader should refer to the relevant editions, which might record a number of variant readings.

Here, the vertical stroke (|) has been added at discretion of the present author and does not necessarily reflect a punctuation mark found in either editions or manuscript sources.

Irregularities which were deemed to be typos were corrected by the present author. One should still refer to the key editions for all matters of textual criticism, which the present overview does not aim to substitute.

#### SvalP

1) namo ratnatayāya | namaḥ śāyamunaye tathāgatāyārhate  
samyaksaṃbuddhāya | tadyathā | oṃ mune mune mahāmunaye svāhā | (see Yuyama 1977: 287 (Vc-d))

2) tadyathā | oṃ jaya jaya padmāhe avame sara saraṇi dhiri dhiri dhirā dhiri khiri  
khiri khirā khiri devatānupālani buddhottāraṇi pūraya pūraya bhagavati sarvāsāṃ  
mama pūraya saparivāraya sarvasattvānāṃ ca sarvakarmāvaraṇāni viśodhaya  
viśodhaya buddhādhiṣṭhānena svāhā | (see Yuyama 1977: 287 (Vg))

#### KauP

namo daśasu dikṣu sarveṣāṃ atītānāgatapratyutpannānāṃ trayāṇāṃ ratnānāṃ |  
namo bhagavatyai prajñāpāramitāyai sarvatathāgatasunibhāyai  
sarvatathāgatānujñātavijñātāyai |  
(oṃ) prajñe mahāprajñe prajñāvabhāse prajñālokakāri ajñānavidhamane siddhe  
susiddhe siddhyamane (bha)gavate sarvāṅgasundari (bha)ktivatsale prasārahaste

samāśvāsakare sidhya sidhya budhya budhya kampa kampa cala cala rāva rāva  
 āgaccha bhagavate mā vilamba svāhā |  
 namo dharmodgatasya bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya mahākāruṇakasya |  
 namo prajñāpāramitāyai | tadyathā | munidharme saṃgrahadharme  
 anugrahadharme vimokṣadharme sattvānugrahadharme vaiśramaṇadharme  
 samantanuparivartanadharme guṇigrahasaṃgrahadharme  
 sarvatrānugatadharme sarvakālaparipūrṇadharme svāhā |  
 namo prajñāpāramitāyai | tadyathā | akhane nikhane mukhana nekhane  
 (avaravandane) paṭane paṭane paṭare svāhā |  
 namo prajñāpāramitāyai | tadyathā | gaṅgā gaṅgā na tīrāvabhāsa gaṅgā svāhā |  
 namo prajñāpāramitāyai | tadyathā | śrīye śrīye muni śrīye śrīyase svāhā |  
 namo prajñāpāramitāyai | tadyathā | oṃ vajrabale svāhā |  
 namo prajñāpāramitāyai | tadyathā | oṃ hrī śrī dhī śruti smṛti mati gati vijaye  
 svāhā |  
 namo prajñāpāramitāyai | tadyathā | bambari bambari mahābambari būru būru  
 mahābūṃru svāhā |  
 namaḥ prajñāpāramitāyai | tadyathā | hūte hūte hūvitāśane  
 sarvakarmāvaraṇane svāhā |  
 namaḥ prajñāpāramitāyai | tadyathā | oṃ ārolik svāhā |  
 namo prajñāpāramitāyai | tadyathā | oṃ sarvavit svāhā |  
 namaḥ prajñāpāramitāyai | tadyathā | gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi  
 svāhā | (see Conze 1956: 117f.)

### **PNA**

oṃ prajñe prajñe mahāprajñe | prajñāvabhāse prajñālokaḥ |  
 ajñānavidhamane | siddhe susiddhe | siddhamane | bhagavati sarvāṅgasundari |  
 bhaktivatsale | prasāritahaste | samāśvāsakari | tiṣṭhā tiṣṭhā | kampa kampa |  
 cala cala | rāva rāva | gaccha gaccha | āgaccha āgaccha | bhagavati mā vilamba  
 svāhā | (see Conze 1993: 198)

## SaŚIP

namo bhagavate āryavairocanāya tathāgatāyārhatē samyaksambuddhāya |  
namo bhagavate āryasamantabhadrāya bodhisatvāya mahāsatvāya  
mahākāruṇikāya |  
tadyathā | oṃ jñānapradīpe akṣayakośe pratibhānavati sarvabuddhāvalokite  
yogapariniṣpanne gambhīraduravagāhe tryarthapariniṣpanne  
bodhicittasamjanani sarvābhiṣekābhiṣikte sarvatathāgatabhāṣite  
dharmaśāgarasambhūte amoghaśravaṇe mahāsamantabhadrabhūminiryāte |  
vyākaraṇapariprāpaṇi | sarvasiddhanamaskṛte |  
sarvabuddhabodhisatvasamjanani bhagavati buddhamāte | oṃ araḍe karaḍe  
araḍakaraḍe mahāprajñāpāramite svāhā |

## EkaP

namo bhagavatyai āryaprajñāpāramitāyai | (sa)kalamahāyānāgryadharmatāyai |  
tadyathā | oṃ dhīḥ hṛīḥ śrīḥ śrutismṛtīvijaye svāhā | (see *Appendix F*)

## PVPD

oṃ namo ratnatrayāya | |  
tadyathā oṃ munidharme saṃgrahadharme<sup>1077</sup> anugrahadharme vimuktidharme  
sadānugrahadharme vaiśravaṇaparivartitadharme  
sarvakāryapariprāpaṇa<sup>1078</sup> dharme samatānuparivartitadharme svāhā |  
oṃ prajñā dhṛti vijaye<sup>1079</sup> svāhā | (see Filliozat 1962: 41)

## CandP

prajñe prajñe mahāprajñe candraprajñe sarvaśā sagari<sup>1080</sup> svāhā | (cf. Conze  
1993: 151)

---

<sup>1077</sup> In some witnesses *dharme* is absent here or elsewhere in the series (see e.g. Tok 419 folio 55b, 4)

<sup>1078</sup> A number of witnesses seem to read *parip(+r)āraṇa* (see e.g. Tok 202 folio 305a, 4).

<sup>1079</sup> Some witnesses add *gati* or *smṛti gati* before *vijaye* (see e.g. Tok 418 folio 124b, 3).

<sup>1080</sup> See variants in the edition.

## VajrapP

tadyathā | om muni muni | mahāmunaye svāhā | (cf. Conze 1993: 152)

## BM

1) 唵曩莫舍吉野母曩曳 怛他誑哆 野囉賀帝 三藐三沒馱野

(T08n0259p0854a11)

2) 唵 曩莫 舍吉野母曩曳 怛他誑哆 野囉賀諦 三藐三沒馱野怛爾野他 野怛爾

野他 唵 母爾 母爾 摩賀母爾曳 娑嚩訶 (T08n0259p0854a25)

## ADHYP (T220)

1) 納慕薄伽筏帝 鉢刺壤波囉弭多曳 薄底筏擦羅曳 鞞跋履弭多窣拏曳  
薩縛呬他揭多跋履布視多曳 薩縛呬他揭多奴壤多奴壤多邨壤多曳 呬姪他  
鉢刺吟鉢刺吟 莫訶鉢喇吟 鉢刺壤娑娑羯囉 鉢刺壤路迦羯囉 案馱迦囉  
毘談末涅 悉遞 蘇悉遞 悉殿都漫薄伽筏底 薩防伽孫達囉 薄底筏擦囉  
鉢刺娑履多喝悉帝 參磨濕嚩娑羯囉 勃[口\*陀]勃[口\*陀] 悉[口\*陀]悉[口  
\*陀] 劍波劍波 浙羅浙羅 曷邏嚩曷邏嚩 阿揭車阿揭車 薄伽筏底 麼  
毘濫婆 莎訶 (T07n0220p0990c24)

2) 納慕薄伽筏帝 鉢刺壤波囉弭多曳 呬姪他 牟尼達嚩 僧揭洛訶達嚩  
遏奴揭洛訶達嚩 毘目底達嚩 薩馱奴揭洛訶達嚩 吠室洛末拏達嚩 參漫  
多奴跋履筏刺呬那達嚩 窣拏僧揭洛訶達嚩 薩縛迦羅跋履波刺那達嚩 莎  
訶 (T07n0220p0991a04)

3) 納慕薄伽筏帝 鉢刺壤波囉弭多曳 呬姪他 室囉曳 室囉曳 室囉曳  
室囉曳細 莎訶 (T07n0220p0991a10)

## PPH (T251)

揭帝 揭帝 般羅揭帝 般羅僧揭帝 菩提 僧莎訶 (T08n0251p0848c23)

**TJ (T901) - [selected]**

A) 跢姪他 揭帝 揭帝 波羅揭帝 波囉僧揭帝 菩提 莎訶 (T18n901p807b21)

B) 那謨 婆伽幡帝 那謨摩訶波羅若波囉弭多曳 哆姪他 摩爾達迷 僧伽囉訶  
達迷 阿弩伽囉訶達迷 昆目底達迷娑 陀弩伽囉訶達迷 裴舍囉麼拏達迷  
娑曼多拏跛喇幡囉跢那達迷 瞿拏伽囉訶僧伽囉訶達迷 薩婆跢囉弩伽跢達  
迷 薩婆伽囉跛喇波囉拏達迷 徒弭喇底阿娑波囉慕娑那達迷 莎訶  
(T18n901p807b06)

C) 那謨 婆伽婆帝 摩訶波囉若波囉彌多曳 薄訖底伐蹉囉曳 阿波喇彌多瞿  
拏曳 薩婆怛他揭多波喇布自多曳 薩婆怛他揭多努若多努若多毘若多曳  
跢姪他 波囉若 波囉若 摩訶波囉若 波囉若婆娑揭喇 婆囉若嚧迦揭喇安  
馱迦囉毘馱麼尼 徒提 蘇徒提 徒殿覩縵 婆伽婆底 薩防伽孫怛喇婆枳底伐  
蹉哩婆囉娑哩跢訶悉羝三摩莎婆羯哩 勃地勃地。冒馱耶冒馱耶 悉地悉地  
劍婆劍婆 迦羅迦羅 者羅者羅 頰婆頰婆 阿揭車阿揭車 婆伽婆帝 摩 毘  
嚧婆 莎訶 (T18n901p807a15)

From **Meisezahl 1957: 101f.** (*Die Tibetischen Handschriften und Drucke des  
Linden-Museums in Stuttgart*)<sup>1081</sup>

a) *Shes rab kyī pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag brgya pa gzung bar 'gyur ba ni*

tadya thā | om mu ni dharme saṃ gra ha dharme bi mu dhi dharme sa dā a na  
gra ha dharme bai śra ba ṇa pa ri barta ta dharme sarba kārya pa ri pra mā ṇa  
dharme sa manta pa ri varta na dharme sba ha || om prajñā śru ti smri rti bi ja ye  
dhī dhā ra ṇī ye sbāhā | om prajñā pā ra mi tā ba la sbā hā |

<sup>1081</sup> See also the spells reported on p.49f.

*b) Stong phrag nyi shu lnga pa gzung bar 'gyur ba ni*

tadya thā oṃ prajñā prajñā prajñā ba bhā se prajñā ba bhā se | prajñā ba la ga ti  
sarba dharma ardha ka ra bhi dha mā ni | siddhe su siddhe | si dhyantu māṃ bha  
ga ba te sarba jñā na saṃ dha ri bha ga ba ti bacche la pra sa ra de hasta ma ma  
su ka ra siddhi siddhi | buddha buddha kampa kampa pā la pā la dha ra dha ra ba  
ra ba ra garjā garjā ā gaccha ā gaccha bha ga ba ti mā bi lamba sbā hā |

*c) Brgyad stong pa gzung bar 'gyur ba ni*

tadya thā | oṃ hrīḥ śruti smṛ ta bi ja ye sbā hā | prajñā pā ra mi tā yai sarba  
durga ti śodhā ya rā jā ya sbā hā |

## Appendix H)

**[NOTE: THE TEXT ORIGINALLY PRESENT HERE IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE ONLINE VERSION. PLEASE CONSULT THE BODLEIAN COPY OR CONTACT THE AUTHOR]**













## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acri A., 2016 *Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia : Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons*. [Nalanda-Sriwijaya Ser. 27]. Singapore: ISEAS.

Allinger E., 2008 "A Pāla-Period Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Manuscript Distributed Between Five Collections" *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* Bd. LI, pp.77-121.

Allon M., 1997 *Style and Function: A study of the dominant stylistic features of the prose portions of Pāli canonical sutta texts and their mnemonic function*. [Studia Philologica Buddhica (Monograph Series XII)]. Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies.

Analayo Bhikku, 2009 "Waxing syllables" In: *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, Colombo: Dept of Buddhist Affairs, pp.740-741.

Apple J.B., 2014 "The Phrase *dharmaparyāyo hastagato* in Mahāyāna Buddhist Literature: Rethinking the Cult of the Book in Middle Period Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 134, No. 1, pp. 25-50.

Asher F.M., 2015 *Nalanda : Situating the Great Monastery*. Mumbai: Marg Foundation.

Astley-Kristensen I., 1991 *The Rishukyō: The Sino-Japanese Tantric Prajñāpāramitā in 150 Verses (Amoghavajra's Version)*. Tring: Institute of Buddhist Studies.

Attwood J., 2017 " 'Epithets of the Mantra' in the Heart Sutra" *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies* 12, pp. 26-57.

Idem., 2018 "The Buddhas of the Three Times and the Chinese Origins of the Heart Sutra" *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies* 15, pp. 9-27.

Bailey H. W., 1956 *Indo-Scythian Studies, Being Khotanese Texts Volume III*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bailey H.W., 1963 *Indo-Scythian Studies: being Khotanese Texts Volume V*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bakker H., 2014 *The World of the Skandapurāṇa : Northern India in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries*. [Supplement to Groningen Oriental Studies]. Leiden, Boston: Brill.

Bajracharya M.B., 1975 *IASWR Buddhist Sanskrit Manuscripts: A Title List to the Microfilm Collection*. New York: Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions.

Bendall C., and Rouse W. H. D., 1922 *Śikshā-samuccaya : A Compendium of Buddhist Doctrine*. [Indian Text Series]. London: John Murray, Albermarle Street.

Bentor Y., 1995 "On the Indian Origins of the Tibetan Practice of Depositing Relics and Dhāraṇīs in Stūpas and Images". *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115.2, pp. 248-261.

Bhattacharyya B. (ed.), 1968 *Sādhanamālā*. [Gaekwad's Oriental Ser.; No. 26, 41]. (repr.). Baroda: Oriental Institute.

Bhosekar A. (ed.), 2017 *Dhāraṇī Saṃgraha*. [Kṛtibodha Series 6, National Mission for Manuscripts]. New Delhi: Rāṣṭrīya Pāṇḍulipi Miśan.

Boucher D., 1991 "The *Pratītyasamutpādagāthā* and its role in the medieval cult of the relics". *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist studies* 14 (1), pp. 1-27.

*Idem*, 2008. *Bodhisattvas of the forest and the formation of the Mahāyāna: A study and translation of the Rāṣṭrapālapariṣcchā-sūtra*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Bowring R., 1992 "Brief Note: Buddhist Translations in the Northern Sung", *Asia Major* 5.2. [Third Series], pp. 79-93.

Braarvig J., 1985 "Dhāraṇī and Pratibhāna: Memory and Eloquence of the Bodhisattvas". *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 8 (1), pp. 17-29.

Bühler G., 1878 "Additional Valabhī Grants, Nos IX - XIV". *The Indian Antiquary* 7, pp.66-68.

Bühnemann G., 2014 "A Dhāraṇī for Each Day of the Week: The Saptavāra Tradition of the Newar Buddhists". *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 77(1), pp. 119–136.

Capitanio J., 2011 "Esoteric Buddhist Elements in Daoist Ritual Manuals of the Song, Yuan, and Ming". In: Orzech, C., Sorensen H.H. , and Payne R.K. (eds.) *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*. [Handbuch Der Orientalistik. Vierte Abteilung, China]. Leiden: Brill, 2011, pp. 529-539.

Castro-Sanchez P.M., 2011 *The Indian Buddhist Dhāraṇī: An Introduction to Its History, Meanings and Functions*, diss., University of Sunderland.

Chakravarti C., 1984 *Guhyasamājantrapradīpodyotanaṭīkāṣaṭkoṭīvyākhyā*. [Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series 25]. Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute.

Champakalaksmi R., 1986. "Urbanization in Early Medieval Tamilnadu". In: *Situating Indian History*, Sabyasachi Bhattacharya and Romila Thapar (eds.). Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 34–105. [Reprinted as chapter 4 ('Developments Within: Urban Processes in the Early Medieval Period A.D. 600 to c. 1300') of her *Trade, Ideology, and Urbanization. South India 300 BC to A.D. 1300* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996.)]

Chimpa L. (et al.), 1990 *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India, translated from the Tibetan*. 2nd ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Ciurtin E. 2009 "The Buddha's Earthquakes [1] *On water: earthquakes and seaquakes in Buddhist cosmology and meditation, with an appendix on buddhist art*". *Studia Asiatica* X, pp. 59-123.

Clarke S., 2015 "Vinayas". *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism (Vol.1)*. Ed. by Jonathan A. Silk *et al.* Leiden: Brill, pp. 60–87.

Cœdès G., 1906 "La stèle de Ta-Prohm". *Bullettin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 6.2. pp. 44-82.

*Idem.*, 1937-1966 *Inscriptions Du Cambodge*. [Collection De Textes Et Documents Sur L'Indochine, 3]. Hanoi: Imprimerie D'Extrême Orient.

Cone M., 2001 *A Dictionary of Pali*. Oxford: Pali Text Society.

Conze E., 1948 "Text, Sources, and Bibliography of the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*," *Journal Royal Asiatic Society* 80/1, pp. 33–51.

*Idem.*, 1949 “The Iconography of Prajñāpāramitā” Part I *Oriental Art* ed. William Cohn Vol. II The oriental art magazine, London, pp. 47-51.

*Idem.*, 1968 “The Iconography of the Prajñāpāramitā”. In: *Thirty years of Buddhist Studies*. Oxford: B. Cassirer, pp. 243-268.

*Idem.*, 1956 “Tantric Prajñāpāramitā Texts”. *Sino-Indian Studies* vol.5/2, pp.100–122.

*Idem.*, 1974 *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*. [Serie Orientale Roma XIII], 2nd ed. Roma: ISMEO.

*Idem.*, 1978 *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature*. 2nd, Rev. and Enl. ed. [Bibliographia Philologica Buddhica. Ser. Maior; 1]. Tokyo: Reiyukai.

*Idem.*, 1993 *Perfect Wisdom : The Short Prajñāpāramitā Texts*. 2nd ed. Ashprington: Buddhist Publishing Group.

Copp P. F., 2014 *The Body Incantatory : Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*. [Shen Yen Series in Chinese Buddhist Studies]. New York: Columbia University Press.

Copp P. F., 2008 “Notes on the term ‘*dhāraṇī*’ in medieval Chinese Buddhist thought”. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 71/3, pp. 493–508.

Copp P.F., 2011 “*Dhāraṇī* Scriptures”. In: Orzech, C., Sorensen H.H. , and Payne R.K. (eds.) *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*. [Handbuch Der Orientalistik. Vierte Abteilung, China]. Leiden: Brill, 2011, pp. 176-181.

Crosby K., and Skilton A., 1998 *The Bodhicaryāvatāra*. [Oxford World's Classics] Oxford - New York: Oxford UP.

Dalton J., 2005 "A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra during the 8th–12th Centuries". *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28, pp. 115–181.

Dalton J., 2016 "How Dhāraṇīs WERE Proto-Tantric: Liturgies, Ritual Manuals, and the Origins of the Tantras" In: Gray D.B. and Overbey R. (eds.), *Tantric Traditions on the Move*. Oxford: OUP, pp. 199-229.

Dalton J. P., and van Schaik S., *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang : A Descriptive Catalogue of the Stein Collection at the British Library*. [Brill's Tibetan Studies Library V.12]. Leiden - Boston: Brill.

Danzeng N., 2011 *Luobulinka zhen cang wen wu ji xuan* 罗布林卡珍藏文物辑选. Beijing: China Tibetology Publishing House.

Davidson R., 2002 *Indian esoteric Buddhism : A social history of the Tantric movement*. New York: Columbia UP.

Davidson R., 2009 "Studies in *Dhāraṇī* literature I: Revisiting the Meaning of the Term *Dhāraṇī*". *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 37/2, pp. 97-147.

*Idem.*, 2014 "Studies in *Dhāraṇī* Literature II: Pragmatics of *Dhāraṇīs*". *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 77/1, pp. 5-61.

*Idem.*, 2014b "Studies in *Dhāraṇī* Literature III: Seeking the Parameters of a *Dhāraṇī Piṭaka*, the formation of the *Dhāraṇīsamgrahas*, and the Place of the Seven Buddhas". In: R. K. Payne (ed.) *Scripture: Canon: Text: Context—Essays Honoring Lewis R. Lancaster*. Berkeley: Institute of Buddhist Studies, pp. 119-180.

Deeg M., 2005 *Das Gaoseng-Faxian-Zhuan als religionsgeschichtliche Quelle. Der älteste Bericht eines chinesischen buddhistischen Pilgermönchs über seine Reise nach Indien mit Übersetzung des Textes*. [Studies in Oriental Religions, Vol. 52]. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Deleanu F., 2000, "A Preliminary Study on Meditation and the Beginning of Mahāyāna Buddhism". *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology* no.3, pp.65-113.

Deleanu F., 2006 *The Chapter on the Mundane Path (laukikamārga) in the Śrāvakaśāstra : A Trilingual Edition (Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese), Annotated Translation, and Introductory Study*. [Studia Philologica Buddhica. Monograph Ser. ; 20.] Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies.

de Jong J.W., 1974 "Notes on the sources and the text of the Sang Hyang Kamahāyāna Mantranaya". *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 130, pp. 465-482.

De Simini F., 2016 *Of Gods and Books : Ritual and Knowledge Transmission in the Manuscript Cultures of Premodern India*. [Studies in Manuscript Cultures ; v. 8]. Berlin - Boston: De Gruyter 2016.

De Visser M. W., 1935 *Ancient Buddhism in Japan : Sūtras and Ceremonies in Use in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries A.D. and Their History in Later times*. [Buddhica. Première Série, Mémoires]. Paris: P. Geuthner.

Donaldson T.E., 2001 *Iconography of the Buddhist Sculpture of Orissa*. New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts : Abhinav Publications, 2 vols.

Drège J.P., 2014 "Le stûpa du Sûtra du cœur de la perfection de gnose". In: Drège J.P., and Moretti C. *La Fabrique Du Lisible : La Mise En Texte Des Manuscrits De La Chine Ancienne Et Médiévale*. [Hors Collection (Institut Des Hautes études Chinoises)], pp. 287-290.

Drewes D., 2011 "Dharmabhāṅakas in early Mahāyāna". *Indo-Iranian Journal* 54 (4), pp. 331-372.

Drewes D., 2015 “Oral Texts in Indian Mahāyāna”. *Indo-Iranian Journal* 58 (2), pp. 117-141.

Dutt N., 1984 *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. VI. [Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica 24]. Delhi. pp. 139-170.

Eckel M.D., 1987 “Indian Commentaries on the Heart Sūtra: The Politics of Interpretation”. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 10/2, pp. 69-79.

Edgerton F. 1985 *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. Grammar and Dictionary*. Vol. 1 Grammar. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Idem., 1993 *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. Grammar and Dictionary*. Vol. 2 Dictionary. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Eltschinger V., 2008 “Dharmakīrti on mantras and their efficiency”. In: ICEBS (ed.), *Esoteric Buddhist Studies: Identity in Diversity*. Koyasan, pp. 273–89.

Idem., 2014 *Buddhist Epistemology as Apologetics : Studies on the History, Self-understanding and Dogmatic Foundations of Late Indian Buddhist Philosophy*. [Sitzungsberichte (Österreichische Akademie Der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 851. Bd.)]. Wien: Verlag Der Österreichischen Akademie Der Wissenschaften.

Emmrich C., 2009 “Emending Perfection: Prescript, Postscript and Practice in Newar Buddhist Manuscript Culture”. In: S.C. Berkwitz, J. Schober & C. Brown (eds.), *Buddhist Manuscript Cultures: Knowledge, Ritual, and Art*, London: Routledge 2009, pp. 140–156.

Ensink J., 1974 “Sutasoma’s teachings to Gajavakra, the snake and the tigress” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 130, pp. 195-226.

Everding K.H., 2015 *Tibetische Handschriften und Blockdrucke Teil 18. Prachthandschriften, alte Blockdrucke und eine Dhāraṇī-Sammlung, Bestand der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz*. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag.

Falk H., and Karashima S., 2012 "A First-century Prajñāpāramitā manuscript from Gandhāra – parivarta 1". [Texts from the Split Collection 1]. *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology* 15, pp. 19–61.

Feer L., 1899. *Papiers d'Eugène Burnouf conservés à la Bibliothèque nationale*. Paris: Honoré Champion.

Filliozat J., 1941 *Catalogue Du Fonds Sanscrit. Fascicule I, Nos 1 à 165 / Bibliothèque Nationale, Département Des Manuscrits*. [Librairie D'Amérique Et D'Orient]. Paris: Adrien-Maissonneuve.

Foucher A. C., 1900 *Étude Sur L'iconographie Bouddhique De L'Inde, D'après Des Documents Nouveaux*. Paris: E. Leroux.

Formigatti C. A., 2016 "A Forgotten Chapter in South Asian Book History? A Bird's Eye View of Sanskrit Print Culture". In: *Tibetan Printing: Comparisons, Continuities and Change*. Leiden: Brill.

Francis E., 2018 "Indian Copper-Plate Grants: Inscriptions or Documents?" *Manuscripts and Archives*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, pp. 387-418

Frauwallner E., 1959 "Dignāga: sein Werk und seine Entwicklung," *Wiener Zeitschrift fuer die Kunde Sud- und Ostasiens* 3, pp. 93–164.

Funayama T., 2006 "Masquerading as translation: examples of Chinese lectures by Indian scholar-monks". *Asia Major* 19, no. 1-2. 3, pp. 39-55.

Fujieda Akira, 藤枝晃 1961 “Tonkō shutsudo no Chōan kyūtei shakyō” 敦煌出土の長安宮廷写経. In: *Bukkyō shigaku ronshū: Tsukamoto hakushi shōju kinen* 仏教史学論集—塚本博士頌寿記念 (*Essays on the History of Buddhism presented to Professor Zenryu Tsukamoto on his retirement from the Research Institute for Humanistic Studies*). Kyoto: Tsukamoto Hakushi Shōju Kinenkai 塚本博士頌寿記念会, pp. 547-667.

*Idem.* 1966, “The Tunhuang Manuscripts: A General Description (Part I)”, *Zinbun* no. 9, pp. 1-32.

*Idem.* 1969, “The Tunhuang Manuscripts: A General Description (Part II)”, *Zinbun* no. 10, pp. 17-39.

Furui R., 2008 "A New Copper Plate Inscription of Gopala II" *South Asian Studies* 24, no. 1 2008.8, pp. 67-75.

Gaṇapatiśāstrī T., 1920 *The Āryamanjuśrīmūlakalpa*.  
[Anantaśayanasamskṛtagranthāvaliḥ]. Trivandrum: Printed by the  
Superintendent, Govt.

Gellner D. N., 1992 *Monk, Householder, and Tantric Priest : Newar Buddhism and Its Hierarchy of Ritual*. [Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology ; 84]. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

*Idem.*, 2001 “‘The Perfection of Wisdom’: A Text and its Uses in Kwa Bahah, Lalitpur”. In: *The Anthropology of Buddhism and Hinduism: Weberian Themes*, New Delhi: Oxford UP, pp. 179-193.

*Idem.*, 2004 “Himalayan Conundrum? A Puzzling Absence in Ronald M. Davidson's *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*”. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 27/2, pp. 411-417.

Gonkatsang T. and Willis M., 2018 “How to use a text and what to expect: Translation of the instructions appended to the *Āryatathāgatoṣṇīṣasītātapatre aparajītamahāpratyamgīraparamasiddhanāma dhāraṇī*”. [published online by M. Willis - Zenodo.org]. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1470799

Gosh A., 1941 “A Buddhist Tract in a Stone Inscription in the Cuttack Museum”. *Epigraphia Indica* 26, pp. 171-174.

Giunta P., 2008 “The Āryadhvajāgrakeyūrā nāma dhāriṇī: Diplomatic Edition of MS Tucci 3.2.16”. In: F. Sferra (ed.), *Sanskrit Texts from Giuseppe Tucci’s Collection*, Rome, pp. 187–194.

Green P. S. E., 2014 “The Many Faces of Lokeśvara: Tantric Connections in Cambodia and Campā between the Tenth and Thirteenth Centuries”. *History of Religions* 54:1, pp. 69-93.

Griffiths A., 2014 “Written traces of the Buddhist past: Mantras and Dhāraṇīs in Indonesian inscriptions”. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 77(1), pp. 137-194.

Goodall D. and Isaacson H., 2011 “Tantric Traditions”. In: J. Frazier (ed.): *The Continuum Companion to Hindu Studies*. London/New York: Continuum, pp. 122-137, 189-191 (notes).

Gomez L. O., 1996 *Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light: Sanskrit and Chinese Versions of the Sukhavatī Sutras*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press

Kulke H., and Rothermund D., *A History of India*. 3rd ed. London ; New York: Routledge, 2002.

Hahn M., 1988 "Bemerkungen zu zwei Texten aus dem Phudrag-Kanjur". In: H. Eimer (ed.) *Indology and Indo-Tibetology. Thirty years of Indian and Indo-Tibetan studies in Bonn. Indica et Tibetica 13*. Bonn: Indica et Tibetica Verlag.

Hall K.R., 1985 *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: Hawaii University Press.

Harris I. C., 2005 *Cambodian Buddhism : History and Practice*. Honolulu: U of Hawai'i.

Harrison P. M. and Hartmann J.-U., 2014 *From Birch Bark to Digital Data : Recent Advances in Buddhist Manuscript Research : Papers Presented at the Conference Indic Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field, Stanford, June 15-19, 2009*. [Beiträge Zur Kultur- Und Geistesgeschichte Asiens ; Nr. 80]. Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Harrison P., 1995 "Searching for the origins of the Mahayana: What are we looking for?". *The Eastern Buddhist*, New Series 27 (1), pp. 48–69.

*Idem.*, 2018 "Early Mahāyāna: Laying out the Field". In: Harrison, Paul M. (ed.) *Setting out on the Great Way : Essays on Early Mahāyāna Buddhism*. Sheffield, Equinox Publishing, pp. 7-31.

Herni P. et al., eds. 2007. *Pusaka aksara Yogyakarta: alih aksara dan alih bahasa prasasti koleksi Balai Pelestarian Peninggalan Purbakala Yogyakarta*. Bogem, Kalasan, Yogyakarta: Balai Pelestarian Peninggalan Purbakala Yogyakarta.

Hidas G., 2015 "Dhāraṇī Sūtras". In: J. A. Silk (ed.) *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism*. Volume One. Leiden: Brill, pp. 129-137.

Hidas G., 2012 *Mahāpratisarā-Mahāvīdyārājñī = the Great Amulet, Great Queen of Spells : Introduction, Critical Editions and Annotated Translation*. [Śata-piṭaka

Ser. ; v. 636]. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan.

*Idem.* 2019 *A Buddhist Ritual Manual on Agriculture.*

*Vajratuṅḍasamayakalparāja – Critical Edition.* Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.

*Idem., (forthcoming) Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha – Spell Collection: A Buddhist Textual Tradition in South Asia. Introduction, Editions of the Earliest Palm-leaf Bundle from the 12th–13th Centuries and a Paper Manuscript from 1719 CE, Appendices with Tables of Contents of Further Manuscripts and Related Sources.*

Hikata, R., 1958 *Suvikrāntavikrāmi-paripṛcchā-Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra. Edited with an Introductory Essay,* Fukuoka, Kyushu University.

Hinüber O. von, 1980 “Remarks on the Problems of Textual Criticism in Editing Anonymous Sanskrit Literature”. In: Proceedings of the First Symposium of Nepali and German Sanskritists 1978. Institute of Sanskrit Studies, Tibhuvan University, Dang Nepal Research Centre, Kathmandu, pp.28-40.

*Idem.,* 1983 “Sieben Goldblätter einer Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā aus Anurādhapura”. *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* 7, pp. 189–207.

*Idem.* 1989 “Buddhistische Inschriften aus dem Tal des oberen Indus”. *Antiquities of Northern Pakistan.* Vol.1 Rock Inscriptions in the Indus Valley. Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, pp.73-106.

*Idem.* 2004, "Njammasch, Marlene, Bauern, Buddhisten Und Brahmanen. Das Frühe Mittelalter in Gujarat [Asien- Und Afrika-Studien Der Humboldt-Universität Zu Berlin Band 2]: Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2001, Pp. XXI, 423. ISBN 3-447-04137-4. DM 116.–." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 47.3-4, pp. 308-20.

*Idem.*, 2007 "Three new Bronzes from Gilgit". *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University for the Academic Year 2006*, 10, pp. [39]-43.

*Idem.* 2014, "The Gilgit Manuscripts: An Ancient Library in Modern Research". In: Harrison P. M. and Hartmann J.-U., 2014 *From Birch Bark to Digital Data : Recent Advances in Buddhist Manuscript Research : Papers Presented at the Conference Indic Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field, Stanford, June 15-19, 2009*. [Beiträge Zur Kultur- Und Geistesgeschichte Asiens ; Nr. 80]. Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 79–135.

*Idem.*, 2016 "Receptacle of the Sacred. Illustrated Manuscripts and the Buddhist Book Cult in South Asia, Written by Jinah Kim." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 59.4, pp. 371-82.

Horiuchi Kanjin, 1983. *Bon-Zō-Kan Shoe-Kongōchōgyō no Kenkyū: Bonpon Kōtei Hen, Jō Kongōkai-bon, Gōzanze-bon*. [An annotated critical edition of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*]. Koyasan: Mikkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo.

*Idem.*, 1997. *Bon-Zō-Kan Shoe-Kongōchōgyō no Kenkyū: Bonpon Kōtei Hen, Ge Henchōbuku-bon. Gijōju-bon, Kyōri-bun*. [An annotated critical edition of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*]. Koyasan: Mikkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo.

Hoernle A. F. R., 1916 *Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature Found in Eastern Tukestan : Facsimiles with Transcripts, Translations and Notes*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Huber E., 1911 "Études indo-chinoises". In: *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient*. Tome 11, pp. 259-311.

Isaacson H., 1998 "Tantric Buddhism in India (from c. A.D. 800 to c. A.D. 1200)".  
In: *Buddhismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Band II. Hamburg, pp. 23-49.  
[revised online version].

*Idem.*, 2002 "Ratnākaraśānti's Bhramaharanāma Hevajrasādhana: Critical Edition  
(Studies in Ratnākaraśānti's tantric works III)". In: *Journal of the International  
College for Advanced Buddhist Studies* [vol. 5], p. 151(80)-176(55).

Iwamoto Y., 1937 "Kleinere Dhāraṇī Texte", *Beiträge zur Indologie* [2], Kyoto, pp.  
10-12.

Jones C. V., 2015 *The Use of, and Controversy Surrounding, the Term ātman in  
the Indian Buddhist Tathāgatagarbha Literature*. Oxford, Dphil Thesis.

Kāṇḍe P. V., 1911 *The Kādambarī of Bāṇabhaṭṭa : The Portion Prescribed for the  
B.A. Examination in 1912 and 1913*. Bombay: Published by the Author.

Kats J., 1910 *Sang hyang Kamahâyânikan: Oud-Javaansche tekst, met inleiding,  
vertaling en aanteekeningen*. 's-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff.

Kern, H. and Nanjio B., 1912 *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtram = Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*.  
[Bibliotheca Buddhica ; 10]. St. Pétersbourg: Impr. De L'Académie Impériale Des  
Sciences.

Kim J., 2013 *Receptacle of the Sacred : Illustrated Manuscripts and the Buddhist  
Book Cult in South Asia*. South Asia across the Disciplines. Berkeley, U of California  
Press.

*Idem.*, forthcoming - *Garland of Visions: Color, Tantra and a Material History of  
Indian painting* (University of California Press).

Kimura Takayasu., 1986-2007 *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. 6 vols.  
Tokyo, Sankibo Busshorin Pub. Co.

Kinnard J. N., 1996 "Reevaluating the Eighth-Ninth Century Pala Milieu: Icono-Conservatism and the Persistence of Sakyamuni," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* [20.1], pp.281-300.

*Idem.*, 1999 *Imaging Wisdom : Seeing and Knowing in the Art of Indian Buddhism*. Curzon Critical Studies in Buddhism. Richmond: Curzon.

Komine Michihiko (小峰彌彦) & Katsuzaki Yūgen (勝崎裕彦) & Watanabe Shōgo (渡辺章悟), eds., 2015 *Hannyakyo daizen* (般若經大全), Tokyo.

Kuo L., 2014 "Dhāraṇī Pillars in China: function and symbol". In: Wong D. and Heldt G. (eds.), *China and Beyond in the Mediaeval Period: Cultural Crossings and Inter-Regional Connections*. New Delhi and New York: Manohar Publishers and Cambria Press.

Kurumiya Yenshu, 1978 *Ratnaketuparivarta : Sanskrit Text*. Kyoto, Heirakuji-Shoten.

Lainé B., 2009 "Canonical Literature in Western Tibet and the Structural Analysis of Canonical Collections" *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies (JIATS)*, vol. 5, pp. 1-27.

Lalou M., 1939 *Inventaire Des Manuscrits Tibétains De Touen-houang, Conservés à La Bibliothèque Nationale (Fonds Pelliot Tibétain)*. Paris, Librairie D'Amérique Et D'Orient.

Lamotte E., 1954 "Sur La Formation Du Mahayana" in *Asiatica Festschrift Frederich Weller*. Leipzig, O. Harrassowitz, pp.377-396.

Lawson S. D., *A Catalogue of Indian Buddhist Clay Sealings in British Museums* (1982). Oxford, Dphil Thesis.

*Idem.*, 1983. "Dhāraṇī Sealings in British Collections". *South Asian Archaeology* 2, pp. 703-717.

Lehnert M., 1999 *Die Strategie Eines Kommentars Zum Diamant-Sutra : (Jingang-boruo-boluomi-jing Zhujie, T. 1703)*. [Freiburger Fernöstliche Forschungen, Bd. 4]. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Leumann E., 1930 "Die Nordarischen Abschnitte der *Adhyardhaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Text und Übersetzung mit Glossar," *Taishō Daigaku Gakuhō* 6–7, Tokyo, Taisho Univ., pp. 47–88.

Li X., Fujita Y., (ed.), 2016 *Pañcaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā: Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts*. (*Sanskrit Texts from the Tibetan Autonomous Region* 20.) Beijing, Vienna, Austrian Academy of Sciences Press.

Li R., 1995 *A biography of the Tripiṭaka master of the great Ci'en Monastery of the great Tang dynasty / translated from the Chinese of Śramaṇa Huili and Shi Yancong* [BDK English Tripiṭaka 77], Berkeley, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research.

Li R., 1996 *The great Tang dynasty record of the western regions* [BDK English Tripiṭaka ; 79]. Berkeley, Calif. Numata Center for Buddhist Translation & Research.

Lokesh Chandra, 1999 *Dictionary of Buddhist Iconography*. [Śata-piṭaka Ser. ; v. 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 616]. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan.

Lopez, D.S., 1988 *The Heart Sūtra explained : Indian and Tibetan commentaries* [SUNY series in Buddhist studies]. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Lopez D.S., 1996 *Elaborations on emptiness : Uses of the Heart Sūtra*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Luczanits C., 2016 “Prajñāpāramitā, Alchi and Kashmir, On the Cultural Background of a Unique Bronze”. In: *An Exceptional and Magnificent Bronze Alloy Figure of Prajnaparamita*, ed. Luo Wenhua, no page numbers (24 pages). Beijing.

Mabbett I., 1986 “Buddhism in Champa”. In: *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, ed. D. Marr and A. C. Milner. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, pp. 289–314.

Maggi M., 2009 “Khotanese Literature”. In: R.E. Emmerick & M. Macuch, eds., *The Literature of Pre-Islamic Iran: Companion Volume I to A History of Persian Literature*. London, Tauris., pp. 330–417.

Maggi M. and Martini G., 2012 “The *Prajñāpāramitā* in Khotanese (2). *Adhyardhaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā*”. In: *Newsletter of the Dharma Drum Buddhist College 20*. Taiwan, page 4.

Makransky J.J., 1997 *Buddhahood Embodied: Sources of Controversy in India and Tibet*. Albany, SUNY Series in Buddhist Studies.

Mair V.H., 2002 “*The Heart Sutra and The Journey to the West*”. In: Wang Gungwu & R. de Crespigny & I. de Rachewiltz, eds., *Sino-Asiatica: Papers dedicated to Professor Liu Ts'un-yan on the occasion of his Eighty-fifth Birthday*. Canberra, Australian National University, pp. 120-149.

Masuda J., 1930 “*Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā, Text and the Hsüan-chwang Chinese version with notes*” *Journal of the Taisho University* 6–7. Tokyo, Taisho University, pp. 185–241.

Matsunami S., 1965 *A Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Tokyo University Library*, [Suzuki Research Foundation]. Tokyo, Sanyosha Printing Co.

McBride D., 2005 “Dhāraṇī and Spells in Medieval Sinitic Buddhism”. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28:1, pp. 85–114.

McCombs J., 2014 *Mahāyāna and the Gift: Theories and Practices*, PHD dissertation (UCLA).

McRae J.R., 1988 “Chan Commentaries on the Heart Sūtra: Preliminary Inferences on the Permutation of Chinese Buddhism”. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 11/2, pp. 87-115.

Meinert C., 2003 “Structural Analysis of the bSam gtan mig sgron. A Comparison of the Fourfold Correct Practice in the *Āryāvikalpapraveśanāmadhāraṇī* and the Contents of the four Main Chapters of the bSam gtan mig sgron”. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 26/1, pp. 175-195.

Meisezahl R.O., 1957 *Die Tibetischen Handschriften und Drucke des Linden-Museums in Stuttgart*. Linden-Museum Stuttgart.

*Idem.*, 1962 “The Amoghapāśahṛdaya-dhāraṇī. The Early Sanskrit Manuscript of the Reijunji Critically Edited and Translated”. *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 17, [No. 1/4], pp. 265-328.

*Idem.*, 1964 *Tibetische Prajñāpāramitā-Texte im Bernischen Historischem Museum*. Munksgaard - Kopenhagen.

Miksic J., 2010 “The Buddhist-Hindu Divide in Premodern Southeast Asia” *Issue 1 of Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre working paper series* Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Singapore, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre.

Milikowsky, Chaim. 2006. "Reflections on the Practice of Textual Criticism in the Study of Midrash Aggada. The legitimacy, the indispensability and the feasibility of recovering and presenting the (most) original text." In: C. Bakhos (ed.), *Current Trends in the Study of Midrash*. Leiden, pp. 79-110.

Mirashi V. V., 1955 *Inscriptions of the Kalachuri-Chedi Era* [Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum 4, Part 1]. Gov. Epigraphist for India, Ootacamund.

Mishra U., 2016 "Dhāraṇīs from the Buddhist Sites of Orissa". *Pratnatattva Journal of the Dept. of Archaeology Jahangirnagar University*, Vol. 22; June, pp. 73-84.

Mitra R., 1888 *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. [Bibliotheca Indica 110]. Calcutta, Baptist Mission Press.

Moretti C., 2012 "Visible and Invisible Codicological Elements in Manuscript Copies of Commentaries on the Yogacārabhūmi-śāstra from Dunhuang". In: I. Galambos (ed.), *Studies in Chinese manuscripts: From the Warring States period to the 20th century*, Budapest, ELTE, p. 177-190.

Mori 1997 *The Vajravali of Abhayakaragupta: A critical study, Sanskrit edition of selected chapters and complete Tibetan versions*. PHD Thesis, SOAS.

Mori Sodō., 1999 *Mahāyāna Buddhism in Sri Lanka*. Nisshin-shi.

Mudiyanse N., 1967 *Mahāyāna Monuments in Ceylon*. Colombo: M.D. Gunasena.

Multzer o'Naghten H., 2016 "Prajñāpāramitā dans le bouddhisme du Cambodge ancien". *Arts Asiatiques* 71, pp. 31-54.

Namgyal Lama K., 2013 "Tsha tsha inscriptions: a preliminary survey". In: *Tibetan Inscriptions*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill. Available From:

<[https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004252417\\_002](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004252417_002)> [Accessed Sept 2019].

- Nattier J., 1992 "The Heart Sūtra: A Chinese Apocryphal Text?" *Journal of the International Association Buddhist Studies* 15/2, pp. 153–219.
- Idem.*, 1995 "Response to Fukui Fumimasa: "Hannya shingyō no kenkyūshi - genkon no mondaiten" (published in *Bukkyōgaku* No. 36 [December 1994], pp. 79-99)." Unpublished Paper.
- Idem.* 2003, *A Few Good Men: The Bodhisattva Path According to the Inquiry of Ugra (Ugrapariṣcchā)* . Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Nepālarājakīya-vīrapustakālayastha-hastalikhita-pustakānām Bṛhatsūcīpatram* (The Great List of Manuscripts in the Royal Nepalese Vīra Library) 1963-1968, vols. IV/1-2 (Buddhist Tantric Works) and vols. VII-1-3 (Buddhist Works), Kathmandu.
- Newell C., 2010 "Approaches to the Study of Buddhism". In: *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 388-406.
- Ngawang S. and Bahulkar S.S., 2007 "Vasudhārādhāraṇīsūtra", *Dhīḥ Journal* [44], pp. 129-147.
- Njamasch M., 2001 *Bauern, Buddhisten Und Brahmanen : Das Frühe Mittelalter in Gujarat*. [Asien- Und Afrika-Studien Der Humboldt-Universität Zu Berlin, Bd. 2]. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Orzech *et al.*, 2011, Orzech, C., Sorensen H.H. , and Payne R.K. (eds.) *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*. [Handbuch Der Orientalistik. Vierte Abteilung, China]. Leiden: Brill.
- Orzech C. D., 1998 *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom : The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism*. [Hermeneutics, Studies in the History of Religions (University Park, Pa.)]. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Paranavitana S., 1933 "Indikaṭusāya Copper Plaques," *Epigraphia Zeylanica* 3, London, pp. 199–212.

Payne R. K., 2011 "The Fourfold Training in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism". In: Orzech, C., Sorensen H.H. , and Payne R.K. (eds.) *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*. [Handbuch Der Orientalistik. Vierte Abteilung, China]. Leiden: Brill, pp. 1024-1028.

Pensa C., 1967 *L'Abhisamayālaṃkāravṛtti Di Ārya-Vimuktisena : Primo Abhisamaya*. [Serie Orientale Roma; v. 37]. Roma: Istituto Italiano per Il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

Perret D., 2014 *History of Padang Lawas, North Sumatra. Societies of Padang Lawas* (mid-9<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> C CE). Paris: Association Archipel.

Pigeaud T., 1960 *Java in the 14th Century : A Study in Cultural History : The Nāgara-Kērtāgama by Rakawi Prapañca of Majapahit, 1365 A. D.* The Hague : M. Nijhoff .

Piriya K., 1980 *Art in Peninsular Thailand Prior to the Fourteenth Century A.D.* Bangkok: Fine Arts Department.

Powell K. M., 2018 *Rituals and Ruins: Recovering the History of Vajrayāna Buddhism in Sri Lanka*. MA Dissertation. UC Berkeley.

Radich M., 2015 "Review of Paul Copp, *The Body Incantatory: Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*". *Tang Studies* 33, pp. 91-110.

Reichle N., 2007 *Violence and Serenity: Late Buddhist Sculpture from Indonesia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Rinpoche S. and Dwivedi V., 1992 *Kṛṣṇayāmarī-tantram with Ratnāvalī Pañjika of Kumāracandra*. [RBTS, no. 9]. Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies.

Rinpoche S. and Pandey J., 1999 "Pratisarākalpadhāraṇī". *Dhīḥ Journal* 28, pp. 140-142.

Robson S., 1995 *Deśawarṇana (Nāgarakṛtāgama)* by Mpu Prapañca. [Verhandelingen Van Het Koninklijk Instituut Voor Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde 169]. Leiden: KITLV Press.

Rospatt A. von, 2014 "The Mural Paintings of the Svayambhūpurāṇa at the Shrine of Śāntipur, and their Origins with Pratāpa Malla". In: Bogin B. and Quintman A. (eds.) *Himalayan Passages. Tibetan and Newar Studies in Honor of Hubert Decler*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, pp. 45-68 (plus plates).

*idem.* 2015 "Local Literatures: Nepal". In: Eltschinger V. et al. (eds.) *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism* V.1, pp.819-830.

Ruegg S. D., 1968 "Ārya and Bhadanta Vimuktisena on the gotra theory of the Prajñāpāramitā". In: *Beiträge zur Geistesgeschichte Indiens: Festschrift für Erich Frauwallner* = Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd und Ostasiens 12-13, pp. 303-317.

*Idem.*, 1981 *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India*. [History of Indian Literature ; v. 7, Fasc. 1]. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Saigusa, M., 1983 "*Hannyakyō no seiritsu* (般若經の成立)" In: Y. Kajiyama, ed., *Hannya shisō* (般若思想). Tokyo, pp. 86-122.

Sakuma R., 2001 "Sanskrit Manuscripts of the *Sāadhanamālā*". Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism: Saṃbhāṣā 21, pp. 27-43.

Sander L., 1968 *Paläographisches Zu Den Sanskrithandschriften Der Berliner Turfansammlung*. [Verzeichnis Der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland ; Supplementband, 8]. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner.

Sanderson A., 1995 “Vajrayāna: Origin and Function”. In: *Buddhism into the Year 2000. International Conference Proceedings*. Bangkok and Los Angeles, Dhammakāya Foundation, pp. 89-102.

*Idem.*, 2003 “The Śaiva Religion among the Khmers (Part I)”. In: *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient*. [Tome 9091], pp. 349-462.

*Idem.*, 2009. “The Śaiva Age: an explanation of the rise and dominance of Śaivism during the early medieval period”. In: Einoo, Shingo (ed.), *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*. Tokyo, Institute for Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, pp. 41–350.

Santoso S., 1968 *Boddhakawya-Sutasoma : a study in Javanese Wajrayana, text - translation - commentary*. PHD Thesis, The Australian National University (3 Vols).

Santoso S., 1975 *Sutasoma: a Study of Javanese Wajrayana*. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture.

Sato K., 2007 “A Critical Edition of *Saptaśatikā prajñāpāramitā*”. *Taishodaigaku Daigakuin kenkyuronshu* 大正大学大学院研究論集 31 (Taisho University), pp. 1-20.

*Idem.*, 2011 “An attempt to classify Sanskrit manuscripts of *saptaśatikā prajñāpāramitā*” 三康文化研究所年報=Annual of the Sanko Research Institute for the Studies of Buddhism 42. Tokyo, pp. 1-12.

*Idem.*, 2014 “The Composite Structure of Toyo Bunko’s *saptaśatikā prajñāpāramitā* palm-leaf Manuscript”. *Pure Land Teaching and Buddhism: in honor of Professor G. Hirokawa on his seventieth birthday* (廣川古稀記念), pp. 33-43 (604-594).

Schaik S. van and Galambos I., 2012 *Manuscripts and Travellers : The Sino-Tibetan Documents of a Tenth-century Buddhist Pilgrim*. [Studies in Manuscript Cultures; v. 2]. Berlin - Boston: de Gruyter.

Schaik S. van, 2013 "Dating Early Tibetan Manuscripts: A Paleographical Method". In: B. Dotson, Iwao Kazushi & Takeuchi Tsuguhito, eds., *Scribes, Texts and Rituals in Early Tibet and Dunhuang*. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, pp. 119–135.

*Idem.*, 2014 "Towards a Tibetan Paleography: A Preliminary Typology of Writing Styles in Early Tibet". In: Jan-Ulrich Sobisch and Jörg B. Quenzer (eds), *Manuscript Cultures: Mapping the Field*. Berlin: de Gruyter, pp. 299–337.

Schmid N., 2011 "Dunhuang and Central Asia (with an Appendix on Dunhuang Manuscript Resources)". In: Orzech, C., Sorensen H.H. , and Payne R.K. (eds.) *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*. [Handbuch Der Orientalistik. Vierte Abteilung, China]. Leiden: Brill, pp. 265-278.

Schmiedchen A., 2019 "Medieval Endowment Cultures in Western India: Buddhist and Muslim Encounters - Some Preliminary Observations". In: Strauch I., and Blain H. A. (eds.) *Encountering Buddhism and Islam in Premodern Central and South Asia*. Berlin: de Gruyter. pp, 203-218.

Schopen G., 1982 "The Text on the 'Dhāraṇī Stones from Abhayagira': A minor contribution to the study of Mahāyāna Literature in Ceylon". *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* [5.1], pp.100-108.

*Idem.*, 1989 "The Manuscript of the Vajracchedikā Found at Gilgit". In: Gomez L.O., Silk J.A. (eds.) *Studies in the Literature of the Great Vehicle*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan. pp. 98-145.

*Idem.*, 2005 *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India: More Collected Papers*, Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press.

*Idem.*, 2009 "On the Absence of Urtexts and Otiose Ācāryas : Buildings, Books, and Lay Buddhist Ritual at Gilgit". In: Colas G. and Gerschheimer G.(eds.), *Écrire et transmettre en Inde classique*. [Études thématiques; 23]. Paris: EFEO.

Schweyer A.-V., 2009 "Buddhism in Čampā". *Moussons* 14.13-14, pp. 309-37.

*Idem.*, 2011 *Ancient Vietnam: History, art and archaeology*. Bangkok : River books.

Sen T., 2002 "The Revival and Failure of Buddhist Translations during the Song dynasty". *T'oung Pao* 88, no. 1, pp. 27-80.

*Idem.*, 2003 *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600-1400*. [Asian Interactions and Comparisons]. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Seton G., 2005 *Defining Wisdom: Ratnākaraśānti's Sāratamā*. DPhil thesis, Oxford.

Sferra F., 1999 "The concept of purification in some texts of late Indian Buddhism". *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 27, pp. 83–103.

Sharrock P.D., 2006 *The Buddhist pantheon of the Bāyon of Angkor: an historical and art historical reconstruction of the Bāyon temple and its religious and political roots*. PhD Dissertation, SOAS.

Shastri H.P., 1917 *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Government Collection under the Care of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Vol 1. Calcutta: Asiatic Society.

Shakya M.B., 1998 "Arya Advayaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra". *Buddhist Himalaya* 1.2. Nepal : Nagarjuna Institute of Exact Methods, pp. 82-84.

Shinohara K., 2014 "Dhāraṇīs and Visions in Early Esoteric Buddhist Sources in Chinese Translation". *Bulletin of The School of Oriental and African Studies, University Of London* 77, no. 1, pp. 85-103.

*Idem.*, 2014b *Spells, Images, and Mandalas : Tracing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Rituals*. [Sheng Yen Series in Chinese Buddhist Studies]. New York-Chichester-England: Columbia UP.

Silk J., 1994 *The Heart Sūtra in Tibetan : A Critical Edition of the Two Recensions Contained in the Kanjur*. [Wiener Studien Zur Tibetologie Und Buddhismuskunde 34]. Wien: Ernst Becvar.

*Idem.*, 2002 "What, If Anything, is Mahāyāna Buddhism? Problems of Definitions and Classifications". *Numen : International Review for the History of Religions* 49(4), pp. 355-405.

*Idem.*, 2010 "Test Sailing the Ship of the Teachings: Hesitant Notes on *Kāśyapaparivarta* §153-154". In: Franco E, Zin M (eds.) *From Turfan to Ajanta: Festschrift for Dieter Schlingloff on the Occasion of his Eighteenth Birthday*, pp. 897-924.

*Idem.*, 2016 "Peering Through a Funhouse Mirror: Trying to Read Indic Texts Through Tibetan and Chinese Translations". In: Wangchuk, D. (eds.) *Cross-Cultural Transmission of Buddhist Texts: Theories and Practices of Translation*. [Indian and Tibetan Studies no. 5]. Hamburg: Department of Indian and Tibetan Studies, Universität Hamburg, pp. 287–311.

Sircar D., 1966 *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

- Idem.*, 1971 *Studies in the Religious Life of Ancient and Medieval India*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Skilling, Peter. 1992. "The Rakṣā Literature of the Śrāvākayāna", *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 16: 109–82.
- Idem.*, 1997 "Dharmakīrti's *Durbodhāloka* and the Literature of Śrīvijaya" *Journal of the Siam Society* 85, pp. 187–194.
- Idem.*, 2008 "Buddhist sealings and the *ye dharmā* stanza". In: G. Sengupta and S. Chakraborty (ed.). *Archaeology of Early Historic South Asia*. [Centre for Archaeological Studies and Training, Eastern India]. New Delhi/Kolkata: Pragati Publications, pp. 503–525.
- Idem.*, 2016 "Praising the Buddha: Stotras in Mahāyāna Dharmaparyāyas". *Journal of Buddhist Studies* XII 2014-2015, pp. 1-62.
- Skilton A., 2002 "State or Statement?: 'Samādhi' in Some Early Mahāyāna Sutras". *The Eastern Buddhist*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 51–93.
- Skorupski T., 1983 *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra, Elimination of All Evil Destinies. Sanskrit and Tibetan texts with introduction, English translation and notes*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass.
- Slouber M., 2017 *Early Tantric Medicine : Snakebite, Mantras, and Healing in the Garuda Tantras*. Oxford: OUP.
- Sørensen H. H., 2011 "On Esoteric Buddhism in China: A Working Definition". In: Orzech, C., Sorensen H.H. , and Payne R.K. (eds.) *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*. [Handbuch Der Orientalistik. Vierte Abteilung, China]. Leiden: Brill, pp. 155-175.
- Idem.*, 2011b "The Apocrypha and Esoteric Buddhism in China". In: Orzech, C., Sorensen H.H. , and Payne R.K. (eds.) *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East*

Asia. [Handbuch Der Orientalistik. Vierte Abteilung, China]. Leiden: Brill, pp. 181-196.

Sparham G., 2006-2012 *Abhisamayālaṃkāra with Vṛtti and Ālokā*. Fremont, Calif.: Jain Pub.

Stein A., 1900 *Kalhaṇa's Rājatarāṅgiṇī : A Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr*. 2 Vols. Westminster: A. Constable.

Strauch I., 2014 “The Evolution of the Buddhist Rakṣā Genre in the Light of New Evidence from Gandhāra: The \**Manasvi-nāgarāja-sūtra* from the Bajaur Collection of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts”. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 77, pp.63–84.

Szántó P.D., (*unpublished draft*) “The rise of mature esoteric Buddhism” (ca. 20 pages).

Tabuko S., 1972 *Ārya-Mahā-Māyūrī Vidyā-Rājñī*. Tokyo.

Tan *et al.* 2007 (Tan Xiyong, Shen Weirong, Shao Gongxiong) *A study of the Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī: its historical and doctrinal implications, with a comparative study of its various Tibetan and Chinese translations*. Beijing: Zhongguo Zang xue chu ban she.

Thapar R., 2002 *The Penguin History of Early India : From the Origins to AD 1300*. London: Penguin.

Tomabeche T., 2009 *Adhyardhaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā : Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts*. [Sanskrit Texts from the Tibetan Autonomous Region; No. 5]. Vienna : Beijing: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press ; China Tibetology Publishing House.

Takeuchi Kozen, 1975 武内孝善宋代翻譯經典の特色について--附 宋代翻譯經典編年目錄= “On the Translation of Sutras in ‘Sung’ Period Appendix : A

Chronological Catalogue of the Translations". 密教文化=*Journal of Esoteric Buddhism*, pp. 27-53.

Tournier V., 2012 "The Mahāvastu and the Vinayapiṭaka of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādin". *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University for the Academic Year 2011* [= ARIRIAB], vol. XV, pp. 87-104.

*Idem.*, 2018 "A Tide of Merit." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 61, no. 1, pp. 20-96.

Tucci G., 1923 "Saptaçatikāprajñāparamitā". In: *Rendiconti della R. Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* (Anno CCCXX – 1923) [Memorie della Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche, vol. XVII]. Rome, pp. 116–139.

*Idem.*, 1947 "Minor Sanskrit Texts on the Prajñā-pāramitā 1. The Prajñā-pāramitā-piṇḍārtha of Diṅnāga". *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 79/1–2, pp. 53–75.

*Idem.*, 1956 *Minor Buddhist Texts*. [Serie Orientale Roma IX]. Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

Ujike Kakusho, 1987 氏家覚勝. *Darani shisō no kenkyū* 陀羅尼思想の研究. Osaka: Tōhō Shuppan 大阪東方出版.

Van Stein Callenfels P. V., 1924 "Stukken betrekking hebbend op Oud-Javaansche opschriften in de Bibliothèque Nationale te Parijs". *Oudheidkundig Verslag, Bijlage B.*, pp. 23-27.

Veidlinger D., 2006 "When a Word Is Worth a Thousand Pictures: Mahāyāna Influence on Theravāda Attitudes Towards Writing". *Numen* 53, no. 4, pp. 405-47.

Vickery M., 1998 *Society, Economics, and Politics in Pre-Angkor Cambodia: The 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Tokyo: Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for UNESCO

*Idem.*, 2005 “Champa revisited”. [Asia Research Institute Working Papers Series 37]. Singapore: Asia Research Institute, pp. 3-89.

von Hinüber - see ‘Hinüber’

von Rospatt - see ‘Rospatt’

Von Stael-Holstein A., 1936 “Avalokita and Apalokita”. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 3, No. 4, pp. 350-362.

Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya M.I. 2002 *Kāśyapaparivarta : Romanized Text and Facsimiles*. [Bibliotheca Philologica Et Philosophica Buddhica ; 5]. Tokyo: International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University.

Võ Văn Thắng et al., 2018 *Vibrancy in stone: Masterpieces of the Đà Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture*. Bangkok: River books.

Waley A., 1931 *A catalogue of paintings recovered from Tun-Huang by Sir Aurel Stein*. London: Trustees of the British Museum and the Government of India.

Wang Y, and Ledderose L., 2014 *Buddhist Stone Sutras in China: Shandong Province*. Vol. 1. Hangzhou and Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz and China Academy of Art Press.

Wayman A., 1977 *Yoga of the Guhyasamājantra, The Arcane Lore of Forty Verses, A Buddhist Tantra Commentary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Watanabe Shōgo (渡辺章悟), 2009 *Hannyashingyō: tekusuto, shisō, bunka* (般若心経 - テクスト・思想・文化), Tokyo.

Weissenborn K., 2012 *Buchkunst aus Nālandā : die Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā-Handschrift in der Royal Asiatic Society, London (Ms. Hodgson 1)*

*und ihre Stellung in der Pāla-Buchmalerei Des 11./12. Jahrhunderts.* Wien :  
Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien.

Wille K. and Karashima S., 2009 *The British Library Sanskrit Fragments*. Vol. II.1  
[Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia]. Tokyo: IRIAB.

Wille K. et al., 1965-2017 *Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden*. 12 Vols.  
[Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland]. Wiesbaden,  
Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Wille K., 2014 "Survey of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Turfan Collection  
(Berlin)". In: Harrison P. M. and Hartmann J.-U., 2014 *From Birch Bark to Digital  
Data : Recent Advances in Buddhist Manuscript Research : Papers Presented at  
the Conference Indic Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field, Stanford, June  
15-19, 2009*. [Beiträge Zur Kultur- Und Geistesgeschichte Asiens ; Nr. 80]. Wien,  
Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 187- 212.

*Idem.*, 2014b "Survey of the Identified Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Hoernle, Stein,  
and Skrine Collections of the British Library (London)". In: Harrison P. M. and  
Hartmann J.-U., 2014 *From Birch Bark to Digital Data : Recent Advances in  
Buddhist Manuscript Research : Papers Presented at the Conference Indic  
Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field, Stanford, June 15-19, 2009*.  
[Beiträge Zur Kultur- Und Geistesgeschichte Asiens ; Nr. 80]. Wien, Verlag der  
Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 223- 246.

Williams P., 2009 *Mahāyāna Buddhism : The Doctrinal Foundations*. 2nd ed.  
[Library of Religious Beliefs and Practices]. London: Routledge.

Willis M., 2009 *The Archaeology of Hindu Ritual: Temples and the Establishment  
of the Gods*. New York, N.Y. ; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

*Idem.* (forthcoming) *Precious Treasures from the Diamond Throne. Finds from the Site of the Buddha's Enlightenment.* London: BM Press.

Wogihara U. 1932-1935, *Abhisamayālamkārikā Prajñāpāramitāvyaḥkyā the Work of Haribhadra – Together with the Text Commented on.* Tokyo, The Toyo Bunko.

Woodward H., 2004 “Esoteric Buddhism in Southeast Asia in the Light of Recent Scholarship”. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 35(2), pp. 329-354.

Yamada, I. 1981 *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha Nāma Mahāyāna-sūtra : A Critical Edition Based on a Sanskrit Manuscript and Chinese and Tibetan Translations.* [Śata-piṭaka Series v. 262]. New Delhi: Sharada Rani.

Yuyama A., 1977 “Svalpākṣarā Prajñāpāramitā”. In: L. Kawamura, ed., *Buddhist Thought and Asian Civilization: Essays in Honour of H.V. Guenther.* Emeryville CA: Dharma Publishing, pp. 299–301.

Zacchetti S., 2005 *In Praise of the Light: A Critical Synoptic Edition with an Annotated Translation of Chapters 1–3 of Dharmarakṣa's Guang zan jing 光讚經, Being the Earliest Chinese Translation of the Larger Prajñāpāramitā.* [Bibliotheca Philologica et Philosophica Buddhica 8]. Tokyo, The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology.

*Idem.*, 2015 “Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras”. In: J.Silk, O. von Hinüber, V. Eltschinger (eds.) *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism.* Vol.1., Leiden: Brill, pp. 171-209.

*Idem.* forthcoming. *The Da zhidu lun 大智度論 (\*Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa) and the History of the Larger Prajñāpāramitā. Patterns of Textual Variation in Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature.* Leiden.

Zakharov A.O., 2019 "State Formation in First Millennium Southeast Asia: A Reappraisal" *Social Evolution & History*, Vol. 18, No.1, pp. 217-240.