Christopher V. Jones
St Peter's College, Oxford

The use of, and controversy surrounding, the term *ātman* in the Indian Buddhist *tathāgatagarbha* literature.

Thesis for the degree of D.Phil.

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Thesis Abstract

The use of, and controversy surrounding, the term *ātman* in the Indian Buddhist *tathāgatagarbha* literature.
Submitted for the degree of D.Phil.

The *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine of Mahāyāna Buddhism affirms the existence of some permanent, significant content of sentient beings that is of the same character as a Buddha. While this alone was an important innovation within Buddhist thought, some of its authors ventured further to deem this significant content an *ātman*: a 'self', in apparent contradiction to the central Buddhist teaching of the absence of self (*anātman*) in the constitution of all beings.

The aims of this thesis are two. Firstly, to examine usage of the term *ātman* in the Indian *tathāgatagarbha* sources which develop use of this expression. This entails a close reading of relevant sources (primarily Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature), and attention to how this term is used in the context of each. These sources present different perspectives on the *tathāgatagarbha* and its designation as a self; this study aims to examine significant differences between, and similarities across, these texts and their respective doctrines.

The second aim is to attempt an account of why authors of these texts ventured to designate the *tathāgatagarbha* with the term *ātman*, especially when some of our sources suggest that this innovation received some opposition, while others deem it in requirement of strong qualification, or to be simply inappropriate. It is not my objective to account for whether or not the *tathāgatagarbha* is or is not implicitly what we may deem 'a self' on the terms of Buddhist tradition; rather, I am concerned with the manner in which this expression itself was adopted, and – in light of clear difficulties raises by it – what may have motivated those authors responsible.

I argue not only that we can trace the development of this designation across the *tathāgatagarbha* literature, but also that those authors responsible for its earliest usage adopted an attitude towards non-Buddhist discourses on the self that requires special attention. This, I believe, had its roots in an account of the Buddha and his influence that advances our understanding of one tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhology, and its ambition to affirm its superiority over other Indian religious traditions.

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1. Introduction

1.1 *The* Tathāgatagarbha *Literature*

It is commonly held that virtually all Buddhist traditions, with reference to the earliest *sutta*-s recounting the very first expounding of the *dharma*, hold that the Buddha taught the absence of a self (*ātman*) – a permanently existing, stable ego – in the constitution of sentient beings.[1] Indeed the doctrine of the absence of the self (*anātman*), most frequently understood as the denial that there is anything in existence which properly warrants the designation *ātman*, is a hallmark of Indian Buddhism, which though developed as Buddhism spread outwards from the subcontinent remains a core expression of the *dharma* as first taught.[2] To many modern readers, including contemporary Buddhist practitioners, it could appear that denial of the self is an essential characteristic of Buddhism in all permutations, in distinction from other known schools of Indian thought: all of which, in conjunction with teaching liberation from mortal suffering, held that there must be something essential to beings which would be the recipient of just such a release.

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[1] I will throughout this thesis use the English 'self' to reflect the Sanskrit *ātman* (Tibetan *bdag*; Chinese 我). It should be understood that I intend this to communicate the sense of *ātman* as a feature of Classical Indian thought discussed herein.
I employ an asterisk (*) on any occasion where a reconstructed Sanskrit expression is open to some doubt: most frequently the case when a Chinese text does not find parallel content in corresponding Tibetan (though finding as such does not, in all cases, guarantee any particular translation either).
I note already that there is not consensus among scholars that all authors of the Pāli *sutta*-s held there to be no unchanging basis of personhood, though this was clearly the dominant interpretation by later Buddhist readers: see Vetter (2000: 66-73), also p.16,ft.41.

[2] Recently discussed in Park (2012).

The reality is not so clear. An exception to this generalized understanding of Buddhist thought is the *tathāgatagarbha* tradition: known also (in reference to a near synonym of the *tathāgatagarbha*, the *buddha-dhātu*) as that of the Buddha-nature.[3] This tradition, known to us in its earliest Indian form through a select few *sūtra*-s and still fewer śāstric sources, held that all sentient beings (*sattva*-s) have in their constitution an intrinsically pure, religiously significant nature that was of the same character as that of a Buddha: possessing all the qualities and attributes of an awakened being, though, regrettably, conjoined with mental afflictions (*kleśa*-s) that render it bound to *saṃsāra*.[4] Though not a necessary feature of this tradition, it is also the case that some sources refer to this significant nature as precisely *ātman*: a self very much in the sense of a permanent, unchanging nature, apparently in contradiction to the doctrine of *anātman*, that appears otherwise to be a cornerstone of the *dharma*.[5] It is the intention of this study to examine the use of the expression *ātman*, and its defense in response to apparent opposition, by exponents of this tradition of Indian Buddhism.

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[3] It will not be my convention to hyphenate Sanskrit compounds (apart from in the titles of texts, which is purely stylistic). I make an exception of 1) different forms of *dhātu*, in the sense of nature or element, in order to sometimes draw attention to the equivalence of what is signified by this term across compounds including *buddha-dhātu*, *sattva-dhātu* and *ātma-dhātu*, with which the reader will be frequently confronted, and 2) forms of *nirmita* discussed in the final chapter, to preserve a similar (though less pivotal) distinction between important expressions discussed therein.

[4] Exceptions being those labeled *icchantika*-s: a category certainly wanting for further study across this literature. See p.77,ft.195; 186,ft.499; pp.326-322.

[5] An attitude well represented by the closing verses of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa-Bhāṣya*, which deems correct understanding of non-self to be 'the only path to the city of *nirvāṇa'* (*nirvāṇapuraikavartinī*): Pradhan (1975: 478,17-24).

Concerning the origins of this expression, Zimmermann has considered the term *tathāgatagarbha* to be closely related to *padmagarbha*, used in the introduction of the *Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (*TGS*), and the first of its nine similes describing to what this term refers: describing magically created *tathāgata*-s (i.e. Buddhas) enveloped in lotus calyxes, appearing miraculously before the congregation of those hearing that *sūtra*.[6] As such, Zimmermann clarifies that this term may first may have been a *bahuvrīhi* or *tatpuruṣa* compound with a meaning akin to that of *padmagarbha*: i.e. that either a sentient being is one 'containing a *tathāgata'* or that any being can be considered a 'store of a *tathāgata'*. In so doing, Zimmermann refers us to Monier-Williams' definition of *garbha* as 'the inside, middle, interior of anything, calyx (as of a lotus)…any interior chamber, adytum or sanctuary of a temple etc.'[7]

As we see from most descriptions of the *tathāgatagarbha* (as a designator for sentient beings) found in one recension of that text (*TGS*[2]: see next chapter), this is a fitting account of the heart of this text's doctrine. However for the most part this literature (at least as it survives in Tibetan or Chinese translation) reads the *tathāgatagarbha* as itself referring to some content of beings: well communicated by the Tibetan translation of this *garbha* as *snying po*, which has the clear sense of an embryo or essence (and hence

[6] Zimmermann (2002: 40).
[7] Monier-Williams (1899: 349b-350b). An interesting precursor to the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine may be that identified by Seyfort Ruegg (1977: 288) in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*: …*tathāgatadhātugarbhān stūpān kārayet* (see Vaidya 1960: 31,10-11) Herein the *stūpa* is called the 'container (*garbha*) for the relic (*dhātu*) of a *tathāgata*', seeming to echo both the sense of *tathāgata*(*dhātu*)*garbha* as a *bahuvrīhi*, yet also some connection of this expression to the *dhātu* as a bodily presence within the *stūpa*.

always something 'contained') within the constitution of sentient beings.[8] Hence:

> 'The richness of the term *garbha*, which means 'containing', 'born from', 'embryo', '(embracing/containing) womb', 'calyx', 'child', 'member of a clan' and even 'core' would from the very beginning tend to keep its semantic range from being reduced to a single word.'[9]

Hara concurs that the sense of *garbha* extends to mean 'germ, seed, infant, child'; i.e. with precisely the sense of contained element communicated by the Tibetan *snying po*, and in proximity to the term *gotra* that is a key concern of several *tathāgatagarbha* sources.[10]

This is the most obvious reading of the term used in one recension of the *TGS* (*TGS*[1]); and indeed throughout the rest of the literature that we shall address. It agrees also with that important epithet for the *tathāgatagarbha*, the *buddha-dhātu* or 'nature of a Buddha', which is certainly something 'possessed' by beings, often deemed to be within their bodies.[11] Where this clearly refers to the *tathāgatagarbha*, the latter must surely be also some 'contained' reality. All of this does not prevent Zimmermann's preferred

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[8] For another account, see Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 507-513).
[9] Zimmermann (2002: 45).
[10] Hara (1997: 52-55). Hara considers also the connotations of '(legitimate) patronage' in the term *garbha*, which are of significance when the *RGVV* considers this doctrine in terms of the *buddhagotra*, or 'gene/lineage of the Buddha', to which all beings belong. Similarly, Takasaki (1966b: 91) stresses the proximity of the *buddha-dhātu* to the *buddhagotra*, very likely for the purpose of encouraging all beings towards awakening.
[11] See chapter 3.4.

translation for one recension of the *TGS*, reading the *tathāgatagarbha* as a *bahuvrīhi* compound in which beings are 'containing a Tathāgata', and as such we remain alert to the possible breadth of this term.[12] Similar issues arise regarding the equally polyvalent *(buddha-)dhātu*, but the central import of this doctrine in all expressions remains that in all beings there is some nature proper to them (presented in terms of some resident entity or otherwise) that reflects already the goal of full awakening and yet, while still transmigrating, concealed beneath afflictions.[13]

Regarding the place of this literature in the broader category of the Mahāyāna, a key presupposition of this study is Zimmermann's claim that the *TGS*, and likely the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine in general, is heavily indebted to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtra* (*SPS*). In particular this is in regards to the declaration by the latter that all beings will, eventually, attain full awakening: a position that might have warranted an account of what guarantees this, i.e. the *tathāgatagarbha*.[14] However our texts, being as they are typical

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[12] Indeed this is preserved in *RGV(V)* 1.144-152, which provides three interpretations of the expression based on the nine similes of the *TGS* (see Johnston 1950: 69,19-73,16, also chapter 2.3-4). The first (identifying the *tathāgatagarbha* as *dharmakāya*) and second (as reality 'as it is' (*tathatā*)) preserve this reading as a *bahuvrīhi*, while the third (as *gotra*, or 'spiritual gene' of all beings) deems there to be a *garbha* of beings, called also (in possible reference to the doctrine of the *MPMS*) *tathāgatadhātu*: *tathāgatadhātur eṣāṃ garbhaḥ sarvasattvānām*): see Johnston (1950: 72,8-9).

[13] Zimmermann (2002: 61) contends that the biological metaphor used in rendering *garbha* as 'womb' or 'embryo' should not be misread as implying that the nature possessed by sentient beings is somehow there *in potentia*. The Tathāgata of *tathāgatagarbha* is never wanting for any development: rather, crucially, it remains to be manifested in the world following the removal of afflictions.

[14] See Zimmermann (1999: 165-168). Furthermore, we shall see that our texts often share a model of the Buddha as a cosmically significant, even god-like

expressions of Buddhist *sūtra* literature, do not necessary provide philosophically systematic defenses of this or any other doctrine: the accounts of no two *sūtra*-s (or portions thereof), though employing similar terminology, being necessarily the same.

What is more, our sources all too frequently rely on similes and parables which, by our texts' own admission, attempt to describe a doctrine beyond full comprehension for those not yet awakened.[15] Nevertheless, I hold that *sūtra* literature belonging to the *tathāgatagarbha* corpus remains polemical rather than simply dogmatic: its authors not only affirm the truth of what they teach, but clearly attempt to defend certain aspects of it from perceived (or anticipated) objections in a manner that can be unpacked by a close, critical reading of our sources. This relates to another key observation of Zimmermann's: that the 'non-philosophical' style of the *TGS* (shared, certainly, by at least some portions of other *sūtra*-s discussed in this study) may imply that its audiences were 'hitherto neglected segments of the Buddhist community, or even groups outside it'.[16] Though this is possible for the *TGS*, I do not hold this can be true of other texts we shall address: presupposing, as they seem to, a great acquaintance with earlier Buddhist categories and language on the part of their audience. The supposed

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being, whose activity in the world is not restricted to the dictation of what is clearly the *saddharma*: a model which will play a central part in understanding the notion of 'Buddhist selfhood' found throughout the *tathāgatagarbha* literature. See Bielefeldt (2009: 67).

[15] A late, but poetic, expression of this aspect being *RGV* 1.153 (Johnston (1950: 74,1-2) which emphasizes that only through faith (*śraddhā*) in the Buddha can one know of the *tathāgatagarbha*: just as one without eyes cannot himself see the sun.

[16] Zimmermann (2002: 15).

audience and function of this literature, or specifically that of its doctrine of Buddhist selfhood, is an issue to which this study will later return.[17]

My primary sources are those Indian Mahāyāna texts which 1) discuss in some detail the *tathāgatagarbha* as a central revelation of the *dharma*; and 2) consider (approvingly or otherwise) the application of the language of selfhood to this doctrine. A significant exception is the *TGS* itself (chapter 2): more than likely the earliest of our texts. This does not meet the second criterion, yet should be considered for the manner in which it likely provides the groundwork for the *tathāgatagarbha* considered as a self that is developed in other, later sources.[18]

The remaining relevant literature consists of three texts that belong to what has been called the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Mahāsūtra* group (*MPMS*-group): namely the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Mahāsūtra* (*MPMS*: chapter 3), *Aṅgulimālīya-Sūtra* (*AMS*: chapter 4) and *Mahābherī-Sūtra* (*MBhS*: chapter 5) (with the exclusion of the *Mahāmegha-Sūtra* (*MMS*), which though related to these does not make central the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine); then the

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[17] Chapter 8.

[18] This does not include texts of a Yogācāra disposition (with two key exceptions: see ft.19) that consider the *tathāgatagarbha* an epithet of the *ālayavijñāna*: see Nakamura (1987: 229-231). Similarly, sources that merely mention the *tathāgatagarbha*, perhaps betraying only superficial interest their authors had with this doctrine (occasionally possibly later contributions to otherwise very developed texts), shall not be considered.
In the concluding chapter I shall address the *Bodhisattvagocaropāyaviṣayavikurvāṇanirdeśa-Sūtra*, one version of which perhaps makes just enough of this doctrine to meet the first criterion (though not the second), though its precise relationship to our other texts is hard to discern. We shall also consider across more than one chapter the *Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśa-Parivarta* (T.668), an influential successor to the *TGS* that nevertheless does not meet the second criterion, regarding designation of the *tathāgatagarbha* in terms of selfhood.

Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda-Sūtra (*ŚDS*) and (somewhat exceptional: see ft.19b) *Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra* (chapter 6); and finally śāstric sources, foremost the *Ratnagotravibhāga-Śāstra* and its *vyākhyā* (*RGV(V)*: chapter 7) which attempt a reconciliation of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine with broader Mahāyāna categories (in particular, for the *RGV(V)*, those of the *prajñāpāramitā* literature).[19]

This is not an exhaustive list of all texts that espouse the *tathāgatagarbha*: an important third criterion is 3) the requirement that a text be known to have been composed in India. Several texts, which indeed meet our other criteria above, will then not be addressed. Specifically, these are the *Dasheng Qixin Lun* (大乘起信論: T.1666) or *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, that was so influential for the development of Chinese Buddha-nature thought; the *Fo-xing Lun* (佛性論: T.1610) or **Buddhagotra(/dhātu)-Śāstra*, which appears to be profoundly influenced by the *RGV(V)*, and the later portion of Dharmakṣema's translation of the *MPMS* (T.374)[20] No good

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[19] a) Identification of a '*MPMS*-group', sharing various themes that shall be discussed in chapters 3-5), dates back to Takasaki (1974), though has in more recent years been used by scholars such as Suzuki (2002) and Hodge (2006).
b) The *Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra* (and with it the śāstric *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, considered in chapter 7) is exceptional here for not meeting the first of my above criteria, being a Yogācāra text that considers the *tathāgatagarbha* merely an epithet, employed as a provisional teaching, of the *ālayavijñāna*. However its consideration of the *tathāgatagarbha* as selfhood, clearly a response to ideas found in the *MPMS*-group, is too important to overlook. For a dated but still useful overview of this literature, see Nakamura (1979: 229-233).

[20] The *Awakening of Faith*, attributed in China to the C2nd poet Aśvaghoṣa, is now widely accepted to be a Chinese creation, or possibly (though not conclusively) attributable to its 'translator' Paramārtha: see Gosnick (1983; 1989). For doubt over this, see Tarocco (2008: 323-330).

evidence exists for the origin of these sources in India (e.g. Tibetan translations produced from Indian material, fragmentary manuscripts, or mention of their names in any known Indian source).[21] No doubt all of the above are significant for understanding the development of the Buddha-nature doctrine in China, though our interest remains with this doctrine as it first developed in India.

I discern sufficient similarity between the *sūtra*-s considered herein that it seems probable that they their authors were frequently aware of, and indeed responsive to, each other's content.[22] This is supported by recurring motifs and themes throughout our texts: not just a model of awakening as the manifestation of latent, awakened qualities, but also interest in the account of some common element uniting experience of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*; awareness of some miscomprehension of emptiness teachings; and the accessibility of the *tathāgatagarbha* only through faith in what can be known

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King (1991: 21-26) argues that Paramārtha is the most likely author of the *Fo-hsin Lun*, which represents a link between the doctrine of the *RGVV* and the more Yogācāra-oriented form of *tathāgatagarbha* that gained prominence in China (in part due to the popularity of the *Awakening of Faith*).
The later material of Dharmakṣema's Chinese translation of the *MPMS* (*MPMS*^{C2}) has no correspondence in either of its counterparts, does not feature in any Sanskrit fragments of the text so far discovered, nor is quoted in any extant Indian sources. See also Nakamura (1987: 229-233).

[21] There exists a Tibetan translation of Dharmakṣema's *MPMS*, though it is very clear that this has been produced from the Chinese (which, admittedly, testifies to some importance having been attributed to Dharmakṣema's text, which in China was influential for its clarification of the status of the *icchantika*): p.77,ft.195. This received attention in Bu ston's C14th *mDzes rgyan*, translated and discussed in Seyfort Ruegg (1973). See also de Jong (1979: 311-312).

[22] Or, at any rate, the opinions of their authors.

by a Buddha.[23] Moreover, I perceive herein a trajectory in the development of the *tathāgatagarbha* presented as a kind of self, which is reflected in the ordering of these texts in the chapters that follow.[24]

As shall become apparent, the innovation of a Buddhist self was a central concern of those espousing the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine: due, no doubt, to this being a significant departure from the normative Buddhist position, that of *anātman* as a comprehensive teaching concerning all sentient beings (*sattva*-s). In such a departure, our authors were however engaging in a discourse more pervasive still, which certainly pre-dated (and indeed outlived) the existence of Buddhism in India.

1.2 *Selfhood in Indian Literature*

Discourse on the existence and nature of the self was among those most pervasive in classical Indian thought. Such consideration of the self and its characteristics will throughout this study be referred to as *ātmavāda*: a term employed pejoratively in Buddhist literature to refer to not simply a position on the self (*ātmadṛṣṭi*), but an entire religio-philosophical discourse which most Buddhist authors clearly regarded as soteriologically misguided.[25] It appears

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[23] This is distinct from opposition to *śūnyatādṛṣṭi*-s as found in texts such as the *Kāśyapa-Parivarta* (Vorobova-Desyatovskaya (2002: 26-27, §64)): warning against the adoption of fixed views on emptiness as some kind of absolute. However while this attitude is cited by the *RGVV* (see p.331), other *tathāgatagarbha* authors clearly opposed accounts of emptiness that might deny the 'non-emptiness' of liberation (*MPMS*) or the *tathāgatagarbha* (*ŚDS*): see p.72; pp.282-283.

[24] See chapter 8.1.

[25] I employ the term *ātmavāda* where to what is referred is not so much an erroneous view regarding selfhood (*ātmadṛṣṭi*), as a discourse (-*vāda*) regarding the self, engaged in by schools extraneous to the Buddhism.

that all other schools of Indian thought took a variety of positions on the existence of a self, some of which we must address here in order to ascertain that to which the *tathāgatagarbha* authors would have had their own notion of a Buddhist self compared.

No doubt the self denied by Buddhist tradition is no one thing.[26] It is a common Indian convention to classify philosophical schools, or literally perspectives (*darśana*), in terms of orthodoxy, i.e. recognition of the authority of the Vedas (*āstika*), or otherwise (*nāstika*). The *āstika* by definition accept as their authority the Vedas, and indeed it is in that literature that we have the earliest use of the term *ātman* carrying some metaphysical weight. In the *Ṛg-Veda*, the *ātman* carries the sense of 'breath' or 'vital force', usually (though not exclusively) distinguishable from the body, but certainly resident within it. Importantly it has the sense of something essential to beings, i.e. their *proper* nature, which is very much the sense accepted by all traditions that we shall here address.[27]

The Brāhmaṇa literature, which developed the concept of Vedic sacrifice into a system of magical, ritualistic associations between the sacrificer and the world, in turn began to consider the *ātman* something not of itself 'eternal', but certainly capable of attaining deathlessness (*amṛta*) through

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[26] For the *sutta* literature's own classification of wrong views, on the self or otherwise, see the *Brahmajāla-Sutta* (*DN*.I.1). This *sutta* remains something of a *locus classicus* for these, along with the poles of eternalism (*śāśvatavāda*) and annihilationism (*ucchedavāda*) that became the Scylla and Charybdis of Buddhist metaphysics. We shall see that one objective of the *tathāgatagarbha* authors is to steer its audience from a perceived proximity to the latter, to a position which it must defend from being too proximate to the former.

[27] See Elizarenkova (2005).

ritual activity.[28] This prefigured the centrality attributed to the self in many portions of the *upaniṣad*-s, which take as one of their primary topics its equation with what is absolute and fundamental (*brahman*). Though direct knowledge of any particular *upaniṣadic* account of the self seems lacking in the Pāli *sutta*-s, it is clearer that certain images used in these texts were known to authors of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature, and as we shall address were no doubt of some influence upon their thought.[29]

Some of the earliest upaniṣadic musings on the nature of the self are perhaps those of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* (*BĀU*), in which this self is the undying subject of transmigration: moving from one life to another like a caterpillar pulling itself across blades of grass. Alleviation from this is akin to a snake shedding its slough, in which a person, by knowing what they truly are, realizes himself as that which is supermundane.[30]

> …whose only desire is the self – his vital functions do not depart. Brahman he is, and to Brahman he goes.
>
> *BĀU* 4.4.5, Olivelle (1998: 120-121).

[28] Kazama (1962). Older than this, however, is the Vedic notion that through sacrifice one attains heaven (*svarga*): an account which imagines the self as the recipient of such a reward.

[29] I am not convinced that the earliest Buddhist authors responded to specific upaniṣadic understandings of the self, so much as some religious climate (no doubt reflected by that literature also) in which accounting for the nature of the self was seen as paramount. Gombrich (1996: 57-64) contends that material of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* may have been known to authors of the *Tevijja-Sutta*, which if nothing more certainly reflects knowledge of some see Vedic 'theology' surrounding the deity Brahma (see *DN*.I.239). For more relevant *sutta* passages, see Nakamura (1955: 75-80); or for an alternative account, see Bronkhorst (2007: 207-218).

[30] *BĀU* 4.4.3, Olivelle (1998: 120-121).

> About this self, one can only say 'not-, not-'. He is ungraspable, for he cannot be grasped. He is undecaying, for he is not subject to decay. He has nothing sticking to him, for he does not stick to anything. He is not bound; yet he neither trembles in fear nor suffers injury.
> These two thoughts do not pass across this self at all: 'Therefore, I did something bad'; and 'Therefore, I did something good.' This self, on the other hand, passes across both those; he is not burnt by anything that he has done or left undone.
>
> *BĀU* 4.4.22, Olivelle (1998: 124-125).

This self appears to be both beyond comprehension – subtle, and not discernable in the manner of what we might call an 'empirical' self – but through pursuit of it is the means to realizing the highest goal: identity with *brahman* as that which is eternal and, importantly, apart from further rebirth.

This account is certainly more poetic than it is comprehensive: such is the nature of the *upaniṣad*-s, which certainly do not all agree on their presentation of the self. As such, these sources employ myriad examples and images for the self that we shall discuss again, when considering how they are referenced in the *tathāgatagarbha* literature.[31] Importantly, the upaniṣadic self is generally passive: apart from any self that is discerned through introspection, or assumed as the performer of actions. It is on the one hand subtle and unknowable, yet frequently described in very corporeal terms:

[31] See chapter 4.4.2.

described as variously sized, or located in different parts of the physical body. It is not our concern here to make sense of these sources, or to stratify how they might have developed, but it is enough to know that a wealth of Vedic ideas concerning a self circulated India in the early centuries CE.[32]

Other *āstika* accounts of the self were those provided by the 'orthodox' schools of Indian philosophy: specifically the Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika and (various forms of) Vedānta. Literature pertaining to the last of these certainly post-dates the earliest *tathāgatagarbha* sources, but references to the other two do occur in these and other contemporaneous Buddhist literature.[33] There are also those accounts of the self associated with the theistic philosophical traditions, notable the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava, though such traditions (perhaps in relative infancy during the period when the *tathāgatagarbha* emerged) do not frequently acquire the attention of our authors. A couple of rare mentions of these traditions will, however, make an appearance in the sources that we shall address.[34]

What are called *nāstika* accounts of the self – those born from traditions that rejected the authority of the Vedas – are no less diverse. In the account of the *Sāmaññāphala-Sutta* (*DN*.I.47-86) we find mention of six ascetical teachers (*titthakara*-s: Skt. *tīrthikara*/*tīrthika*-s) who, in contrast to

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[32] Collins (1982: 79-84) provides a neat account of this trajectory: from the self of the Vedic sacrifice through to its apotheosis in the upaniṣadic literature.
[33] It is very probable that a formalized Vedic account of the *ātman-brahman* relationship, found in various schools of Vedānta (perhaps earliest recorded in the verses of Gauḍapāda, possibly originating in the early C6th: see Comans (2000: 88-184)), postdates the *tathāgatagarbha*. Hence any influence between these two traditions is more likely upon the Vedāntic authors rather than the other way around. See Seyfort Ruegg (1989a: 21,ft.6); Isayeva (1993: 11-15; 172-198); also Nakamura (1955; 1983: 154-157).
[34] See p.365-367; p.397,ft.1019.

the Buddha, espouse one path of practice or another that entail also an account of the self, though one generally less 'subtle' than those proclaimed by the upaniṣadic sages.[35] The most historically significant of these is the Jain account, represented in that *sutta* by Nighaṇṭa Nāthaputta, though the others present must in likelihood have represented other schools of thought, successful or otherwise, known to the authors of this text.[36]

We understand classical Jainism to teach the existence of a constantly transmigrating *jīva* that, upon attainment of liberation, ascends from the corrupt, *karman*-produced body to dwell in a kind of (meta?)physical stratosphere, occupied by previously liberated beings (*siddha*-s). Some Jain sources indeed employ the Prakrit *āyā*, corresponding to the Sanskrit *ātman*, which is sometimes characterized by the possession of knowledge, but it appears that the earliest Jain literature held the self to be passive, and apart from knowing or doing. Nevertheless, the 'classical' Jain model is one of an embodied, but otherwise 'pure', knowing self that wants for escape to another location in existence.[37]

Worthy of mention also are the Ājīvika-s (represented in the *Sāmaññaphala-Sutta* by their founder Makkhalī Gosāla), who by contrast taught a self locked into *saṃsāra* by a kind of karmic fatalism (*niyata*):

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[35] The term *tīrthika* I leave unstarred throughout this study, but should (when suggested as underlying material no longer available in Sanskrit) be seen as interchangeable for e.g. *tīrthya*, *tīrthaka* or *tīrthikara*. Those to whom it refers are best understood as religious teachers extraneous to Buddhism, characterized by engagement in discourse upon the self (*ātmavāda*), and adopting some (erroneous) position regarding it (*ātmadṛṣṭi*): see chapter 8.2.

[36] *DN*.I.48-49. Another important Jain interlocutor is Saccaka Nigaṇṭaputta (appearing in *MN*.I.227-237 and *MN*.I.237-251), considered again in chapter 8.6.

[37] See Dundas (2002: 42-44; 102-105); Bronkhorst (2007: 33-34).

requiring beings to live out an expansive (though finite) period of karmic retribution prior to their eventual liberation.[38] Also of note (though little survives describing them) are those *nāstika* teachers who denied the existence of any lasting self, the Cārvāka-s, whose alleged materialism made them an object of ridicule for other Indian schools.[39] We note, as we shall see below, that such teachers were in the eyes of Buddhist interlocutors still guilty of adopting so-called *ātmadṛṣṭi*-s: denial of the self being just as erroneous to the *sutta* literature as its affirmation. To understand why, we require an account of what precisely was meant by this highly influential, and most discussed, of the Buddha's central teachings.

1.3 *Non-Self in Buddhism*

The framework for discussing absence of self in the Pāli literature is the five *upādānakkhandha*-s (Skt. *upādānaskandha*-s).[40] Usage of this term across the Pāli canon – along with *khandha* as an abbreviation of this, and the five constituent members of this set – has been elaborated at length by Vetter (2000), and it will suffice here to consider how this model compensates for the absence of a permanent self as found in other Indian models of transmigration and liberation.[41] These *upādānakkhandha*-s are five constituents (*khandha*),

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[38] See Basham (1951: 226-239). A interesting reevaluation of their position on karma is presented by Bronkhorst (2007: 38-51).
[39] For a recent account of this tradition, see Bronkhorst (2007: 150-159).
[40] The five constituent *khandha*-s being translated by Vetter as body (*rūpa*); feeling (*vedanā*); ideation (*saññā*); impulses (*saṅkhārā*); and sensation (*viññāṇa*): see Vetter (2000: 19-20).
[41] It is worth noting that Western scholars have by no means been of one mind regarding the interpretation of early Buddhist accounts of this doctrine. For a brief account of different perspectives, see Collins (1982: 3-12). What is

which in the earliest Pāli materials are considered to be appropriated (*upādiyati*) by beings in successive lives: ever bound by the mechanics of *karman* and its fruition.[42] Hence in the model of dependent origination (Pāli *paṭiccasamuppāda*) expressed in, for example, the *Samādhibhāvana-Sutta* (*SN*.III.13-15) there occurs appropriation (*upādāna*) of the *khandha*-s, i.e. one's next body, sensations etc., preceded by craving (*taṇhā*), prior sensation (*vedanā*) etc. back to the root cause of continual transmigration: ignorance (*avijjā*).

The term *khandha* (Skt. *skandha*) in isolation (rarer in the Pāli *sutta*-s, but very common in later Buddhist literature) has the sense of a 'branch' or division: in context, denoting a constituent by which one's rebirth is composed. The connotations of this are necessarily pejorative, being as they are the substance of successive returns to suffering. This is reflected in a key passage at the heart of the Pudgalavāda doctrine (see 1.4.1, below) found in the *Bhāra-Sutta* (*SN*.III.25-26) in which these *khandha*-s are 'burdens' born by the transmigrating individual, which one naturally desires to deposit. This passage suggests a 'bearer' of the burden, though the more conventional understanding of this model is that the burden itself generates the sense of an individual undergoing suffering.[43] In short, realization that one is no more than these constituents, i.e. the removal of ignorance regarding the non-existence

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beyond doubt is that early Buddhism had preference for a discourse concerning the *absence* of self (whether or not this was to completely negate such an entity or not) rather than its presence.

[42] See *Cūḷakammavibhaṅga-Sutta* (*MN*.III.202); also Vetter (2000: 73-80).

[43] See Vetter (2000: 80-81).

of a self, removes the appropriation that gives rise to successive ‘burdens’ of body, feeling, etc.

The *khandha*-s are then the exhaustive constituents of any (re)birth, and as such the locus within which anything befitting designation as a self might be discerned. As such, the *Anattalakkhaṇa-Sutta* (allegedly recounting only the Buddha’s second teaching) considers the *khandha*-s in turn, and finds them lacking any trace of the characteristics of a self (*attalakkhaṇa*). The conclusion to this process of introspection provides a helpful summary of what precisely it is that the *bhikkhu* does not find.[44]

> *yaṃ panāniccaṃ, dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassituṃ 'etaṃ mama, eso'hamasmi, eso me attā'ti?*
> *no hetaṃ bhante.*
>
> *Anattalakkhaṇa-Sutta* (*SN*.III.67).

> What is impermanent, suffering, has a character subject to change: is it proper to regard that thus: ‘This is mine; I am this; this is my self?’
> [The monks replied:] It is not, Lord.

We infer from this that a self must be permanent (*nicca*, Skt. *nitya*), blissful (*sukha*) and with a character that does not change. Insofar as the *khandha*-s are marked by the ‘character of absence of a self’

[44] This kind of introspection as the means to affirming that there is no self is an important trope across Buddhist accounts of *anātman*. This will be most significant when we address the *AMS*: see p.150,ft.372.

(*anattalakkhaṇa*), there is nothing discernable amidst these, and hence in any sentient being, that could be called a self. We shall go on to see that *tathāgatagarbha* texts like the *MPMS* are replete with the positive language of precisely permanence, bliss, stability etc., describing both the state of liberation (in which the Buddha is deemed a 'self') and the *tathāgatagarbha* that is this true self indeed possessed by sentient beings.[45]

The qualities above are not sufficient attributes (at least in the Pāli tradition) for selfhood: the self must also, in some sense, be 'personal' in the sense of being the object of one's sense of ego.[46] The doctrine of non-self is frequently expressed by denial of two concepts: that of 'I' (the self) or possession (what is 'of the self'). This neat expression refers to both the sense of a subject (myself), and some object (that which is 'mine'; herein the *khandha*-s) that would necessitate a possessor, or ego. The sense of 'mine and I' in the lines of the *sutta* above is also denied across later Buddhist sources, in which the impression of a static subject to experience (what in Western terms might be considered the Cartesian ego), arisen from physical form, perception, feeling etc., is understood as wholly epiphenomenal.[47]

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[45] In regards to what can be said to transmigrate, some Pāli sources state consciousness (*viññāṇa*) to be that which continues across births, though the ever impermanent state of the mind (*citta*: sometimes synonymous with this sense of *viññāṇa*) means still that no 'self' can be discerned therein. See Norman (1991c: 254-257). Anālayo (2008) addresses how some suggestions of a transmigrating substance in the *sutta*-s appear only when taken out of pedagogical context.

[46] Arguably this differs in the common 'Mahāyāna' account of *dharmanairātmya*, in which absence of selfhood denies the notion of *svabhāva*, or own-existence, regarding all phenomena. See Collins (1982: 123-125); also p.25,ft.59.

[47] For a more thorough presentation of the non-self doctrine, see Collins (1982: 95-97).

Another important dimension to non-self pertains to lack of control over one's being in the world: expressed where the *Anattalakkhaṇa-Sutta* enquires of its audience whether any monk is able to will physical form or the other *khandha*-s to be as they please.[48] Of course they cannot, and as the *Cūḷasaccaka-Sutta* explains it is a lack of power (*vaśa*) over these constituents that demonstrates the absence of any self. This requirement for power or influence is central to how the Pāli literature explains the ubiquity of suffering: one's freedom to act and to be is constrained always by the stuff of which one's sense of self is necessarily produced.[49]

Aside from accounts of the Buddha engaging with teachers of rival traditions (such as those mentioned by name in the *Sāmaññaphala-Sutta* above), we find evidence of the Buddha engaging also with unspecified musings regarding selfhood that bring to mind the high-minded equation of the self with the absolute found in the *upaniṣad*-s.

> *attani vā bhikkhave sati attaniyam me ti assāti.*
>
> *evam bhante.*
>
> *attaniye vā bhikkhave sati attā me ti assâti.*
>
> *evam bhante.*

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[48] E.g. *AN*.III.67: *rūpañca hidaṃ bhikkhave, attā abhavissa nayidaṃ rūpaṃ ābādhāya saṃvatteyya, labbhetha ca rūpe evaṃ me rūpaṃ hotu, evaṃ me rūpaṃ mā ahosīti.*

[49] See e.g. *MN*.III.231: *yaṃ tvaṃ evaṃ vadesi: rūpaṃ me attāti, vattati te tasmiṃ rūpe vaso: evaṃ me rūpaṃ hotu, evaṃ me rūpaṃ mā ahosīti?*. See also Collins (1982: 97). This sense of self as 'mastery' shall be pivotal in understanding the doctrine of the *MBhS*: see chapter 5.3.

attani ca bhikkhave attaniye ca saccato thetato anupalabbhamāne yam p' idaṃ diṭṭhiṭṭhānaṃ: so loko so attā, so pecca bhavissāmi nicco dhuvo sassato avipariṇāmadhammo, sassatisamaṃ tath' eva ṭhassāmīti, nanāyaṃ bhikkhave kevalo paripūro bāladhammo ti.

Alagaddūpama-Sutta (*MN*.I.138)

If there is a self, monks, is it said, 'It is of my self'?

Yes, sir.

Or if there is what belongs to a self, is it said, 'It is my self'?

Yes, sir.

But, monks, if a self and what is of a self cannot be found in reality, in truth, then the speculative view: 'the world is the self; once dead I shall be permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change; I shall endure exactly like that which is eternal,' surely this, monks, is entirely and completely a doctrine of fools.

Again, the complementary notions of selfhood and possession are rejected. More revealingly, so is the equation of the self with the world, which certainly evokes the model of liberation with which the upaniṣadic authors dealt.[50] Although the precise form of Vedic thought surrounding the self referred to by the earliest Buddhist sources is unknown to us, it is certainly undeniable that interest in one's true nature, which might survive death (and

[50] See Norman (1981).

perhaps be capable of escaping it permanently), was prevalent during the Buddha's own lifetime.

However, denial of the self is not to reject meaningful reference to 'oneself' as a conventional reality: the monk cultivating non-self remains morally culpable, and ultimately (in the absence of any liberating deity) the only source of his own liberation.[51] In the *Alagaddūpama-Sutta* cited above, the Buddha states that there are six views to be abandoned including (in addition to that above): 'I have a self'; 'I have no self'; 'I perceive the self only by the self'; 'I perceive non-self only by the self'; 'I perceive the self only by non-self'.[52] What is clear is that the Buddha of these sources eschews *any* discourse on the existence of the self that would result in one or other 'view' regarding it.[53]

Still some account must be made for the conventional self, which is understood in terms of an agent, that is the performer of actions, and recipient, or 'enjoyer' of results. This is done always by recourse to dependent

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[51] Mention of a deity (with a function more like that of a demiurge), such as Brahma is quite frequent in the *sutta*-s, in which the value of such a deity (called *issara*; Skt. *īśvara*) in one's pursuit of liberation is challenged: see the *Brahmanimantanika-Sutta* (*MN*.I.326).

[52] See *MN*.I.136.
The last of these views supports this *sutta's* knowledge of upaniṣadic sources, e.g. Norman (1981). Certainly it suggests some encounter of the authors (or the Buddha himself) with what appears to be a monistic account of liberation, though a similarity to ideas found in texts such as the *BĀU* (specifically the *Yājñavalkyakāṇḍa* therein: see Bronkhorst (2007: 216-217)) does not prove conclusively, lacking more specific reference to it, that this was the source of this view.

[53] Indeed, in the *Pañcattaya-Sutta* (*MN*.II.233) the Buddha chastens ascetics and *brāhmaṇa*-s who hold the materialist view that death is the end of existence. Hence those absolutely denying the self also err by virtue of holding to an extreme, annihilationist position (*ucchedavāda*).
For an account of developments in the *anātman* tradition, see Wynne (2010).

arising, in which the Buddha stresses his teaching, as ever, to constitute a 'middle way' between a view of the self and denial of any kind of personhood.

> *ete te kassapa, ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathāgato dhammaṃ deseti: avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ…sokaparidevadukkhadomanassuupāyāsā sambhavanti.*
>
> *Acelakassapa-Sutta* (*SN*.II.20).

> To you, Kassapa, avoiding both extremes, the Tathāgata[54] teaches the *dhamma* according to the middle: because of ignorance, there are impulses; because of impulses, there is consciousness [etc.]…such is the origin of this whole mass of misery, woe and suffering.

Hence we do wrong to consider this a doctrine of non-self in the sense of any fixed position: it is certainly not presented by the Pāli literature as the opposite of an account of the self (either its existence, or negation). This is better a doctrine 'without the *notion* of a self', which accounts for sentient beings, their transmigration and liberation, without recourse to this category.[55] While musings upon the self were seemingly at the centre of other doctrines taught contemporaneously with the earliest period of Buddhist thought, the

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[54] I make a purely stylistic distinction between 1) italicized *tathāgata* and 2) 'Tathāgata' as referring to the Buddha speaking, or being spoken of, in any text.

[55] To put it differently, the Buddha of this literature holds beings to make a category mistake when imputing a self, or its absence, amidst the constituents of beings: such a thing can neither be found nor denied, as discussion of beings, or indeed *dharma*-s in general, pertains always to what is impermanent and dependently originated. See Smart (1964: 33-34).

perhaps unique position of the Buddhist *dharma* avoided positing in terms of the self *at all*: abstaining from this discourse in favour of another, on the Buddha's own terms. As such, we might characterize the Buddhist *dharma* as favouring what we might call a discourse (on personal existence) without recourse to any notion of selfhood: an '*anātmavāda*', in distinction from all other discourses concerning either its existence or negation.

Exploration of this *anātmavāda* is pervasive across most Indian Buddhist literature: as much as non-Buddhist traditions concern themselves with the self and what it is, the Buddhist *dharma* instead explores the manner in which no notion of self is required at all, and indeed should be avoided, in pursuit of liberation.[56] Non-Mahāyāna traditions, following *sutta*-s such as those above, generally considered the impression of a self to be produced from the *skandha*-s, themselves born of dependent origination, which explains all rebirth.[57] Such was accepted also by Mahāyāna authors: a fine example being provided by the **Mahāprajñāpāramitā-Upadeśa* (大智度論: T.1509), which clarifies the '*dharma* seal' (*dharmamudrā*) of non-self.

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[56] Hence this expression, as Collins (1982: 12) writes, constitutes something of a linguistic taboo, and perhaps served to distinguish the thought and practice of Buddhist monks from that of their brāhmanical opponents.

[57] See Collins (1982: 103-110). In contrast to the *sutta* material, authors of the abhidharmic tradition were more specific in their referencing of upaniṣadic ideas: see Nakamura (1955: 80-83). A classical example is Vasubandu's appendix to the *Abhidharmakośa-Bhāṣya*, which deals with the *ātmavāda* doctrines of both the Pudgalavāda, and extraneous *āstika* schools. Its classical Western translation remains that of La Vallée Poussin (1923), though for a more recent treatment of the text as it concerns selfhood, and its relation to Vasubandhu's opponents, see Duerlinger (2005).

一切法無我。諸法内，無主、無作者、無知、無見、無生者、無造業者。一切法皆屬因緣；屬因緣故不自在；不自在故無我，我相不可得故。

**Mahāprajñāpāramitā-Upadeśa*: T.1509, 222b6-8.

All phenomena lack self. Among all phenomena, there is no master (**īśvara*; *svāmin*), agent (**kāraka*), knower (**jāñaka*), perceiver (**paśyaka*), life (**jīva*) or doer of actions. All phenomena are subject to causes and conditions; subject to causes and conditions, they lack autonomy; lacking autonomy, they are without self; hence the characteristics of a self cannot be found.[58]

Herein what are denied are various notions of selfhood drawn from across the non-Buddhist intellectual landscape. The *prajñāpāramitā* literature (upon which this śāstric work is based) certainly accepted the *skandha*-oriented model of earlier Buddhism, though more frequently couched this in terms of the emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of all phenomena, including those entailed in dependent origination.[59] As we shall see, it is evident that some *tathāgatagarbha* authors identified, and strongly opposed, some audiences of

[58] See also Lamotte (1970: 1370), the conjectured Sanskrit terms being his own.

[59] It is well-recognized that the Mahāyāna accepted *anātman* to refer not just to sentient beings sentient beings (*pudgalanairātmya*) but also to all phenomena (*dharmanairātmya*), though Williams (2009: 53-54) stresses that this is not an innovation of the Mahāyāna in earlier Buddhist literature. See also p.19,ft.46.

this literature that denied the existence of all things, including the awakened Buddha himself.[60]

A more sophisticated interpretation of this literature was that represented by the various branches of the Madhyamaka, which interpreted emptiness as the lack of *independent* existence (*svabhāva*) in all entities, i.e. an absence of selfhood that does not negate the reality of *dharma*-s as conventional entities functioning in a process of origination.[61] This was taken differently by the Yogācāra, in which this same absence of independent existence is due to the dependence of all phenomena on the activity of a substrate mind (frequently called the *ālayavijñāna*), which itself is characterized by such impermanence that it could not be considered a self either.[62]

These are necessarily only very brief representations of *anātman* as received by different Indian Buddhist traditions. However the above serves to show that the dominant discourse accepted by most Buddhist expressions concerned the absence of selfhood in the constitution of sentient beings. Instead, the orthodox (or at least conventional) account is one of beings

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[60] E.g. chapter 5.7.

[61] One might consider the account of *anātman* provided by Candrakīrti (C7th) in his *Madhyamakāvatāra*(*-Bhāṣya*), see Duerlinger (2012). For a western philosophical analysis of this Mādhyamika model (contrasted with that of Vasubandhu), see Duerlinger (1993). Another Mādhyamika model, again relating to the refutation of various *ātmavāda*-s, is that of Śāntideva (C8th) found in the *Bodhi*(*sattva*)*caryāvatāra*, discussed by Saitō (2006).

[62] A concept which, according to Schmithausen (1987: 25; 56), can be seen in its earliest usage to not be confusable with any basis of selfhood: being first a mental stratum *dependent* upon the physical body and not, as it became by the time of texts such as the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, metaphysically prior to it. For the contrast between Madhyamaka and Yogācāra interpretations of emptiness, see Nagao (1991: 51-60; 189-200).

lacking any permanent nature: composed always of phenomena which themselves are mutually dependent, and in a constant state of flux.

1.4 *The Buddhist Self*

There were however two significant traditions of Buddhist thought that were exceptions to this trend, which engaged instead in what could more reasonably be called a discourse on selfhood, or *ātmavāda*. The second of these, which is the object of this study, is the *tathāgatagarbha* literature: very clearly a Mahāyāna expression that prescribes full awakening as the goal to which its audience should aspire. The other is the Pudgalavāda or 'school of personhood', belonging to the Śrāvakayāna: hence expressed not through 'new' *sūtra* material affirming a self (presented therein as *buddhavacana*), as in the case of the *tathāgatagarbha*, but through an unconventional interpretation of the *sutta* literature already discussed. The unifying trope of these two traditions, i.e. some engagement in a discourse eschewed by other forms of Buddhism, requires us to assess briefly the position of the former.

1.4.1 *The* Pudgalavāda*: an outline*

The most documented proponents of the Pudgalavāda were the Sāṃmitīya and Vātsīputrīya sects of Śrāvakayāna Buddhism, the former of whom the C7th pilgrim Xuanzang recorded as having been the most numerous non-Mahāyāna school in the subcontinent at his time of writing.[63]

[63] Priestley (1999: 2); also Bareau (2013: 153-154). Cousins (2000: 27-28) argues that the earliest form of this name may be Sāmitīya, i.e. 'those of [some] council'.

Their reputation in Buddhist literature is however somewhat notorious. Vasubandhu's appendix to the *Abhidharmakośa-Bhāṣya* (*AKB*), or *Pudgalakośa*, is for example devoted at least in part to undermining the doctrine of a person (*pudgala*) properly existing (though in an 'indeterminate' manner) amidst the *skandha*-s: the position to which these schools were considered to have adhered.[64]

A thorough discussion of surviving references to Pudgalavāda doctrine (primarily those composed by its critics) can be found in Priestley (1999).[65] Priestley finds that understanding the texts of these schools – primarily the **Sāṃmitīyanikāya-Śāstra* (T.1649), **Tridharmakhaṇḍaka* (T.1506; T.1505) and **Vinayadvāviṃśativyakti* (T.1461), along with various non-Pudgalavāda responses to their ideas – does not present a coherent picture of their doctrine, though some prevailing characteristics can still be discerned.[66] Most importantly, discussion of the *pudgala* is always in terms of the Buddha's declaration that there is no self to be found *among* the *skandha*-s, which are still accepted as the exhaustive constituents of a sentient being. The Pudgalavāda position is then that some self – the agent burdened by the *skandha*-s, and wanting for *nirvāṇa* – exists indeterminately neither within nor apart from them.[67]

In his C6th *Tarkajvāla*, Bhāvaviveka succinctly puts it that 'the *pudgala* is inexpressible as either the same as the *skandha*-s or not the same': it is

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[64] See Pradhan (1975: 460-479); also Duerlinger (2005: 73-95).
[65] For distinctions between different *pudgalavādin nikāya*-s, see Bareau (2013: 143-167).
[66] Priestley (1999: 44).
[67] See *SN*.III.25, as above.

then, as the *sutta*-s state, not a person amidst the *skandha*-s so much as one dependent upon them.[68] Importantly, the Pudgalavāda does not seem to have held that dependence on other existents (what Sarvāstivādin Abhidharmic tradition, for example, would generally call *dravya* or 'substance', contrasted to *prajñapti* or 'constructs' based upon this) denotes less than existence.[69] Rather, the indeterminate existence of the *pudgala* is its neither identity with nor separation from the *skandha*-s.

Their quarrel, it seems, is that the conventional self (never clearly denied by the Buddha of the *sutta*-s) is irreducible to the sum of its parts, i.e. the *skandha*-s. A range of texts mention the role played by the *pudgala* in this system: according to the *Vijñānakāya*, *Kathāvatthu* and *Tattvasaṃgraha-Pañjikā* it is the doer of actions and enjoyer of results; for the *Mahāvibhāṣā* and *AKB* it is the knower of *dharma*-s (and hence a requisite for the omniscience of the Buddha); and in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* alone is it the basis of memory.[70] However Priestley deduces that the authors of these texts began with an ethical concern: a need to preserve the sanctity of *extant* beings so as to condemn violence etc. This led to the development of a position difficult to sustain in the context of possibly later Abhidharmic categories: in particular as the above mentioned model of 'primary' and 'secondary' existents developed.[71] Hence the Pudgalavāda was pushed towards a position

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[68] See Priestley (1999: 53).
[69] For more on *dravya* and its Abhidharmic usage, see Cox (2004).
[70] Priestley (1999: 79).
[71] For example, regulation against killing would have no meaning if their were neither killer nor victim in any circumstance: T.1649, 465a15-18; see also Priestley (1999: 129). Tellingly, this is a very different account to the same problem posed by the *AMS*, which holds that killing is precisely the death of

'manifestly unbuddhist' in the eyes of their interlocutors: presenting an account of the self which (as presented by the *AKB*) appears contradictory.[72]

This *pudgala* develops from a conceptual existent (nonetheless held to be 'real'), through a state of being neither conceptual nor substantial, and eventually to being both substantial yet 'indeterminate'.[73] It is as such a slippery category, but one which certainly avoids any allegation of similarity to any upaniṣadic form of self that might be permanent or unchanging. This is expressed well when the Pudgalavāda compares this entity to fire: wholly dependent upon its fuel (the *skandha*-s) yet distinct from it, and uniquely characterized by the nature of the fuel that, of course, is determined by previous actions. The extinguishing of all flames is the same – denoting the singularity of *nirvāṇa* – but this state is precisely the *negation* of personhood, rather than an identification of it with the eventual goal.[74] In short, the *pudgala* of this system is never a self to be realized or liberated, so much as one that is to be abandoned in *nirvāṇa*.

This is very different to the account of a person found in the *tathāgatagarbha* literature. Furthermore, the Pudgalavāda seemed happy to have its notion of a *pudgala* affirmed in terms of what we shall call the empirical self that corresponds to our worldly perception of some embodied agent. The Sarvāstivādin **Vijñānakāya* contains the following declaration on their behalf.

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the *skandha*-s but not of the *buddha-dhātu* that is indestructible and the true character of a living being. See chapter 3.6.3.2.

[72] Priestley (1999: 87-88).

[73] Priestley (1999: 101). For another account of their position, see Cousins (2000).

[74] Priestley (1999: 165-186)

有我、有情、命者、生者、養育、士夫、補特伽羅。

**Vijñānakāya*: T.1539: 542b6-b7.

There is an *ātman*; there is a *sattva*; *jīva*; *jantu*; *poṣa*; *puruṣa*; *pudgala*.[75]

We shall see this stand in stark contrast to the *tathāgatagarbha* account of a Buddhist self, which repeatedly states that the self of its doctrine is none of the above.[76] Hence the Pudgalavāda argues closer to the position that the *worldly* self is a real existent: apparently a special category of indeterminate *dharma* that survives death and undergoes transmigration.

Summing up, the Pudgalavāda's conceptual problems concern a sentient being attempting to realize the *śrāvaka*'s goal of *nirvāṇa*: i.e. the extinguishing of a fire-like existence that suffers continual transmigration.[77] The model of the *tathāgatagarbha* is rather that of an awakened nature that requires purification: hence presupposing something that must survive the attainment of full awakening and constitute a basis for Buddhahood, the goal of the Mahāyāna. For the Pudgalavāda, the more conventional understanding of non-self has repercussions for both conduct and transmigration up to the

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[75] See p.161,ft.406.
[76] Chapter 4.4.
[77] Imagery used elsewhere in Pāli literature to describe the elimination of *kleśa*-s, very likely adopted to contrast with the fire imagery of the Vedic sacrifice: see Collins (1982: 84; 1998: 217). Poignantly (and in stark contrast to the Pudgalavāda position), in its reformulation of the four truths (see p.77,ft.194) the *MPMS* denies the view that *nirvāṇa* is akin to the extinguishing of any fire: see e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,883a24-25.

point of *nirvāṇa*, which remains the end of any personhood. However for the *tathāgatagarbha* authors the goal of full awakening is described very much in terms of the manifestation of a permanent, potent self that both precedes and enjoys liberation.

We should hence downplay surface similarities between these two traditions, though it is clear that both respond – at least in part – to a similar, fundamental stumbling block in Buddhist metaphysics: how any soteriologically significant continuity between existences (that of beings or, regarding the *tathāgatagarbha*, Buddhas) can be spoken of if there is no enduring self. Both do what the broader Buddhist tradition found was unacceptable: engage in a discourse on the self, and espouse the existence of some entity that displayed at least some of the characteristics of selfhood.

1.4.2 *The* Tathāgatagarbha*: preliminary thoughts*

This comparison leads us to a very significant innovation of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature. It seems that from the *TGS* onwards we are presented with an alternative model for the constitution of sentient beings. Though the *TGS* will be discussed in great detail in the next chapter, a portion of this text (drawn from explanation of its sixth simile concerning the *tathāgatagarbha*) encapsulates the core of this idea.

> *de la 'dod chags dang / zhe sdang dang / gti mug dang / sred pa dang / ma ring pa'i nyon mongs pa'i sbubs kyi nang na snying por gyur pa de*

bzhin gshegs pa'i chos nyid de ni sems can zhes bya ba'i ming du chags so //

TGS^{T}, Zimmermann (2002: 294).[78]

In this [above], the nature (*dharmatā*) of a *tathāgata*, being an essence within a sheath of afflictions – of desire, aversion, delusion, craving, ignorance – is called a sentient being.

Hence whether we understand the *tathāgatagarbha* as a designator for either beings or that which they possess, the kernel of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine from the *TGS* onwards can be considered a new understanding of what constitutes a sentient being. As stated above, a *sattva* is no more than the nature of a Buddha that is accompanied by (mental) afflictions. Such a definition has little need for the *skandha*-s, and indeed this literature makes only occasional use of them. This is most noticeable where our texts discuss the *tathāgatagarbha* as a kind of selfhood: eschewing the normal framework for discussing the presence or absence of a self, i.e. the *skandha*-s, our authors instead rely on this model of beings composed of a 'true self' and mental afflictions that are accidental to that.

I do not disagree with the opinion of some authors who consider the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine best considered as a soteriological category: as King writes, a universal 'promise' for awakening, which is best not considered

[78] See chapter 2.2.

in terms of a lasting, reified 'substance'.[79] However where our sources seek to unpack this principle, providing as they do an account of what beings properly 'are' rather than to what they should aspire, this model necessarily takes on just such a metaphysical flavour. It is even more revealing that some sources go further, and come close to affirming a very physical account of the *tathāgatagarbha* as some entity resident in the body (similar, though they contest otherwise, to the self of other Indian traditions).[80] When this occurs, we do well to remember (perhaps in spite of imagery employed by these texts) that this inherent nature is contrasted still to *mental* realities, i.e. afflictions such as desire, greed, delusion etc.: as such the context for discussion of the *tathāgatagarbha* should remain undoubtedly mental rather than physical *per se*.[81]

Where this is clearer, it is easy to see similarities between the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine and various expressions of Yogācāra, or mind-only (*cittamātra*), systems that express rebirth in terms of the ongoing activity of some mental substrate.[82] It is certainly true that the *RGV(V)* in particular conceives of the *tathāgatagarbha* in terms of an intrinsically luminous mind: a notion rooted in the Pāli literature.

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[79] King (1989: 167-169).
[80] Chapter 4.4.2.
[81] We cannot avoid some similarity between the two-fold model of beings comprising 1) a *tathāgata* and 2) *kleśa*-s (frequently presented as a 'covering' of the former), with the Jain account of beings as 1) a *jīva* conjoined with 2) *karman*, imagined in this system as adhesive, accrued substance that obstructs one's real nature. Though this does not necessitate influence of the latter model upon the former, I shall demonstrate that it is beyond doubt that the *tathāgatagarbha* authors felt some need to explain such similarities in favour of their own doctrine. See e.g. Jacobi (1908).
[82] For an account of the *ālayavijñāna* and its development, see Schmithausen (1987; 2014: 11-386).

pabhassaram idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ, tañca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhanti

AN.I.70

Luminous, monks, is this mind, but it is sometimes afflicted by adventitious afflictions.[83]

However the texts we shall here consider (including the *RGV(V)*, which has carried attribution to the Yogācāra masters Asaṅga and – for its commentary – Vasubandhu) lack the most important terminological hallmarks of the Yogācāra: e.g. the *ālayavijñāna* as designating a substrate consciousness, or indeed the expression *cittamātra* which expresses in no uncertain terms reduction of rebirth to the activities of the mind.[84] The emphasis of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature, we might say, is the reduction of the individual to an *already* awakened nature, which for the Yogācāra is more commonly a mind requiring some process of fundamental reorientation (e.g. *āśrayaparāvṛtti*). Our texts stress the immanence of the awakened qualities in

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[83] *RGVV* 1.64, Johnston (1950: 45,l.2-3): *tata ucyate prakṛtiprabhāsvaraṃ cittam āgantukair upakleśair upakliśyata iti*. See also Lamotte (1962: 53-56).

[84] This is to the exclusion of the *LAS*: see p.8,ft.19b.
Takasaki (1982: 564) recognizes that the *RGV(V)* certainly uses language commonly associated with the Yogācāra: e.g. the 'inversion of the basis' (*āśrayaparivṛtti*), in reference to the *tathāgatagarbha* as a 'pure mind', and the three bodies of the Buddha (commonly held to be a Yogācāra expression). However Schmithausen (1971: 124-126) argues convincingly that these must reflect later content of the text, and even so such usage appears to be in favour still of a *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, without reduction of this notion to the *ālayavijñāna* or any other hallmark of the Yogācāra. See p.313,ft.820.

every sentient being, which though requiring cultivation on the conventional level are, ultimately, already realized and wanting for manifestation.

Hence Grosnick is right to identify that a central idea in this literature is 'non-origination': i.e. the ultimately unreal character of the afflictions as not proper to the awakened nature.[85] Indeed, in the *MPMS*, *ŚDS* and *RGV(V)* we find the affirmation that cessation (or the truth thereof: *nirodhasatya*) properly refers not to the end of anything, so much as the presence already of the *tathāgatagarbha* (*MPMS*) or *dharmakāya* (*ŚDS*).[86] This model underlies all expressions of this doctrine that we shall consider: what should be cultivated by the audience is not so much the negation of what is accidental as the permanence of what is proper: i.e. the nature of a Buddha. This highlights a key trope in all of this literature (very much embodied in the use of the language of selfhood, also): the revision of accepted doctrinal categories – e.g. the four truths of the Nobles (*āryasatya*-s) and four distortions (*viparyāsa*-s), in both the *MPMS* and *ŚDS* – in such a way that they reveal what the *MPMS*-group refers to as the 'hidden' intent of previous teachings.[87]

Perceiving one's own awakened nature is, however, no small feat. Our texts state that this is possible only for a Buddha (or, in some cases, a very advanced *bodhisattva*).[88] This self-realization is not available for those with limited faculties, and hence still 'afflicted'. Being beyond the faculties of sentient beings, the *tathāgatagarbha* must instead be accepted on faith.[89] Its

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[85] Grosnick (1989).
[86] See p.76,194; 270,ft.718.
[87] See p.113.
[88] See chapter 3.6.4.
[89] See e.g. pp.177-179.

presence in beings is not presented as a guarantor of the ease with which one might attain liberation from *saṃsāra*: but instead confirms that for all beings the goal remains immanently present, even under conditions that seem unfavourable for making progress in pursuit of the *saddharma* (such as, importantly, the absence of a Buddha in the world).[90]

What is of interest to us, of course, is the manner in which this immanent nature is described: as such the intention of this thesis is to consider a lexical innovation on the part of some Buddhist authors. All *tathāgatagarbha* expressions affirm the existence of some significant, awakened nature, and the *TGS* and *Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśa-Parivarta* (*AAN*) – two texts very much belonging to the *tathāgatagarbha* corpus as defined above – do this without referring to selfhood in any sense. Other sources clearly approve of discussing the *tathāgatagarbha* in terms of selfhood: if not deeming it to be a 'true' self (in contrast to erroneous notions negated by the Buddha elsewhere), then clearly situating this doctrine within a discourse on selfhood in which the *tathāgatagarbha* takes centre stage. Others still challenge this presentation of the *tathāgatagarbha*: confirming that the adoption of this language by some authors was certainly contentious.

It is clear from the defensiveness of these texts that to advance the notion of a Buddhist self was to play with fire, and presumably at the time of their composition would be (or already had been) met with opposition. I hold that what we witness is a departure from the more conventional Buddhist exploration of *anātmavāda* teaching: again, defined as a discourse on

[90] For the danger of confusing this doctrine with a guarantee for awakening, see chapter 4.7.

personhood without recourse to a notion of (permanent, unchanging) selfhood. For some reason, authors in the *tathāgatagarbha* tradition very deliberately espoused an *ātmavāda* position: i.e. an account of the *true* self, which by virtue of recognizing the appropriateness of that term to refer to something real or true, engaged in a discourse better associated with teachers and doctrines extraneous to Buddhism.

This is not, importantly, to be construed as this literature exhibiting any 'un-Buddhist' doctrine.[91] Essentialist accounts of such a diverse and heterogeneous tradition as Buddhism do injustice both to the multifaceted nature of this religion, and to the complexities of interreligious relations in classical India. The swiftest response to such allegations of 'heresy' in regards to a Buddhist *ātmavāda* would refer to the acceptance of this literature by subsequent Buddhist scholars: reference to the *tathāgatagarbha* sources by śāstric commentators, which accept them still as *buddhavacana*, verifies that in India these texts were accepted as authoritative, though perhaps sometimes regarded provisional in meaning (*neyārtha*).[92]

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[91] For examples of dispute over this literature from the last century, see Hubbard and Swanson (1997): particularly articles by Matsumoto, King, Yamabe and Takasaki therein.

[92] Seyfort Ruegg (1989a: 32-38) considers the means by which later commentators could make sense of the *tathāgatagarbha* = self equation, but (under the guise of explaining certain texts as provisional or intentional) these seem to commit some hermeneutic violence against earlier authors, such as those of the *MPMS*, whom it would appear do indeed hold some kind of selfhood to be the 'end' of the *saddharma* (see e.g. chapter 3.6).
A key distinction may be between reception of the *tathāgatagarbha* systematized by the *RGV(V)* and that which we encounter in the *MPMS*-group of *sūtra*-s, which espouse a kind of Buddha-nature doctrine seemingly criticized by the *LAS*: one which Seyfort Ruegg (1989a: 39) similarly recognizes would have posed a greater challenge to later exegetes. This may

Furthermore, if it is the case that these texts betray influence by one extraneous teaching or another, it is certainly not for the absence of any positive expressions of higher reality found earlier in the Buddhist tradition.[93] As Williams astutely writes, 'the influenced tradition is already halfway there, there is never a complete change of direction'.[94]

Seyfort Ruegg (1989a) has previously addressed the use and defense of the *tathāgatagarbha* as a 'true self' in this literature, though limited his sources to later chapters in Dharmakṣema's translation of the *MPMS*.[95] Though presenting an account of the self not inconsistent with those we shall see, these come from chapters of that text which are now commonly thought to not have been of Indian origin, and hence shall not be considered in any greater depth by this study.[96] Nevertheless, these passages no doubt responded to an earlier *tathāgatagarbha* account of a self, and present a neat preamble to this investigation.

In these passages (put in the context of the Buddha's discussions with the six *tīrthika* teachers in the presence of King Ajātasattu) the Buddha teaches a true self in order to convert these rival teachers, then clarifying that

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contribute to the rarity of references to these texts in later Indo-Tibetan commentarial tradition.

[93] See, e.g. *AN*.I.70 (p.35). For positive expressions of *nirvāṇa* found in the Pāli literature, see Collins (1993: 213-233).

[94] Williams (2009: 100).

[95] Seyfort Ruegg (1989a: 19-26). This material is likely not to have been of Indian origin (see ft.21). Seyfort Ruegg's interpretation of this material is in greater accord with the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine of the *RGV(V)*, rather on the terms of the *MPMS* itself.

[96] See chapter 3.1.

this is taught only for that purpose, and that no real self could exist.[97] I paraphrase Seyfort Ruegg's translations (drawn from the Tibetan translation of Dharmakṣema's Chinese version of the *MPMS*).

> What is called 'self' is the Tathāgata. Why is this so? The [Buddha-] Body being infinite is free from the blemish of doubt, and it neither acts nor grasps, so that it is said to be 'permanent'. In virtue of non-production and non-cessation, it is said to be 'blissful'. In virtue of the absence of the impurities of *kleśa* it is said to be 'very pure'. In virtue of the absence of ten marks, it is said to be 'empty'. Consequently, the Tathāgata is permanent, self, very pure, empty and without marks…Many *tīrthikas* then took to religion in the Teaching of the Buddha with their minds full of faith.[98]

> This Buddha-nature is not in reality *ātman*, and it is for the sake of sentient beings that a self is spoken of…The Buddha-nature is not-self; and if the Tathāgata has spoken of 'self', this is because a designation has been employed.[99]

The above are significant for their citation by the C14th Tibetan master Bu ston, who read all designation of the *tathāgatagarbha* as self to be

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[97] Another form of this episode, aside from that found already in the *Sāmañña*phala-*Sutta*, can be found translated and discussed in Vogel (1970). The importance of the *tīrthika*-s in understanding the *tathāgatagarbha* literature shall be considered in chapter 8.
[98] Seyfort Ruegg (1989a: 22); also Seyfort Ruegg (1973: 123-124).
[99] Seyfort Ruegg (1989a: 23); also Seyfort Ruegg (1973: 113-114).

precisely an intentional expression (*ābhiprāyika*), hence also provisional, and taught for the purpose of 'luring' those who are attached to a notion of self into the *dharma*.[100] This is true of some of our Indian *sūtra* literature also: as we shall see, the *Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra* takes precisely this line in regards to all prior *tathāgatagarbha* teaching, which it sees as being for the purpose of converting those attached to notions of selfhood.[101]

The above portions of the (extended) *MPMS* addressed by Seyfort Ruegg introduce an important feature of the *tathāgatagarbha* and its affirmation of a Buddhist self. When Buddhist sources declare that there exists no self, and that this is the content of the Buddha's teaching, they have in mind always those who do not hold to this position. This is not necessarily the common person (*pṛthagjana*) holding to a worldly view of the self (*satkāyadṛṣṭi*), though it is certainly the position of these texts that the common person is wrong to hold that this exists in anything more than a conventional manner. More importantly, our texts seem to have in mind those designated by the term *tīrthika*, often unquestioningly translated in Western scholarship as 'heretic': a translation which certainly requires challenging, and to which we shall return in the concluding chapter.

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[100] Seyfort Ruegg (1989a: 22,ft.9; 1989b: 297-307); also Seyfort Ruegg (1985). This is in contrast to the position of the Tibetan Jo nang tradition, well-addressed by Hookham (1991). I note in particular the recognition this tradition gave to texts such as the *AMS* and *MBhS*, reference to which is rare in extant Indian commentary: see Hookham (1991: 100-104; 267).

[101] Ref. to *LAS* chapter. Couching these doctrines in terms of the *neyārtha*/*nītārtha* distinction is not common in this literature, though does feature in the *MBhS*: see chapter 5.6.

1.5 *Methodology & Objectives*

A problem in the study of Indian Buddhist literature is of course the absence of Sanskrit versions of many of our texts.[102] As such, this thesis must make use of extant Chinese and Tibetan translations, along with Sanskrit fragments where possible. It is generally the case that our Chinese translations pre-date those in Tibetan, and in some instances it is very likely that the Chinese represents an earlier Sanskrit version: missing entire passages (e.g. in the case of the *MBhS*) or lengthy elaborations (e.g. the *MPMS*) found in corresponding Tibetan versions. However as Habata has demonstrated in regards to the *MPMS*, this does not mean that the earliest translation always provides clearer access to an earlier Sanskrit source.[103]

Where a full Sanskrit edition of a text is available, that has been the primary focus of my reading, employing other versions only to clarify content of the Sanskrit, or (in the case of the *RGV(V)*) demonstrate a clear divergence in recensions. Where (frequently) this is not available, I present and translate text from extant Chinese and/or Tibetan sources, generally presenting one over the other with preference for the older version.[104] Where translations differ significantly, reflecting what seem to be key differences in Indian recensions, I present full translations based on both.

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[102] It remains uncertain that those texts seen by our translators were themselves Sanskrit, though lacking evidence to the contrary I shall throughout this study presume this as opposed to any possible form of Prakrit: see Skilling (2009).
[103] See Habata (2007b).
[104] Occasionally I favour the clarity of one version, or lack thereof in order to draw attention to features of the text: all versions are nonetheless considered in discussion of any passage.

In addressing Chinese texts, I refer to the Taishō edition (T) made available through the SAT Daizōkyō Text Database, and also via CBETA 2014.[105] I present variants in footnotes, favouring these when it is clear that they improve the text. When translating Tibetan passages, I present a critical edition of the text employing the following complete editions: Derge (D; taken as the basis of my edition), London (L), Narthang (N), Peking (Q), and Stog Palace (S); and, where materials are extant, of the Gondhla (Go) and Tabo (Ta) editions also.[106]

I make use of several significant studies of individual *tathāgatagarbha* texts: notably Zimmermann's treatment of the *Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (2002); Shimoda's of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Mahāsūtra* (1997); and Seyfort Ruegg's study of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine (1969), which focuses on the *Ratnagotravibhāga-Śāstra*(-*Vyākhyā*).[107] These will be referred to at greater length in relevant chapters.

As most of our sources belong to the broad and diverse genre of Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature, we cannot assume continuity between one text or another, nor take for granted that any one text should present a consistent account of any point of doctrine. For example, I accept for the most part the

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[105] The former accessed online: http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/index_en.html.

[106] With gratitude to Burkhard Quessel and Helmut Tauscher for providing access to the London edition, and Tabo and Gondhla editions, respectively, where available. Where it is possible, I reference texts with catalogue numbers locatable online via the University of Vienna: https://www.istb.univie.ac.at/kanjur/xml3/xml/index.php
Where Tibetan text is presented, the punctuation by *shad* follows that provided by the Derge edition. For a discussion of these editions and their history, see Harrison (1996).

[107] Each of these shall be considered further in relevant chapters.

stratification of the extensive and multifaceted *MPMS* by Shimoda, as just such an analysis helps to make sense of how the text shifts focus from one apparent usage of the term *ātman* to another. Where we have multiple versions of a *sūtra* available to us (albeit, regrettably, not in their original language), we witness divergence between recensions which might (though not always) betray the development of that text's content over time. Concluding that the version of a text underlying one translation might pre- or post-date another is no doubt bold, though on occasion I shall highlight where these differences, expansions and interpolations suggest an earlier or later version of significant content.

As Shimoda writes in regards to the *MPMS*, it is unwise to see this *sūtra* literature through the systematizing lens of the *RGV(V)*, which 'excels in abstracting and synthesizing all ideas concerning the *tathāgatagarbha* theory'.[108] This should be kept in mind regarding all *sūtra* materials that we shall address. The *RGV(V)* has no doubt played a formative role in the history of the interpretation of the *tathāgatagarbha* (especially in Tibet), though we note that it contains only one identifiable quotation from the *MPMS*, and makes no mention at all of either the *AMS* or *MBhS*. The more frequently quoted *TGS* and *ŚDS* have received more attention as sources for *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, overlooking the difficult, even provocative, accounts of this found in the *MPMS*-group: significant also for their conspicuous absence from later discussion of this doctrine.[109]

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[108] Shimoda (1997: 288 (E. 23); also 54-55 (E. 8)); also Silk (forthcoming: 3).
[109] See ft.100.

It has certainly been the case that scholarship has tended to address the *TGS*, *ŚDS*, *AAN* and *RGV(V)* as one cluster of texts and the *MPMS*-group (less frequently) as another, overlooking important similarities and unifying factors across all of the above.[110] One objective of this thesis is to address similarities as well as differences across this perceived division, and to give due attention to concerns shared by all of the above. Though, again, each text must be considered as an independent testimony to this doctrine, I focus on a recurring interest of nearly all of them all: that the designation *ātman* is appropriate, or at least of relevance, when discussing the *tathāgatagarbha*. The value of this usage, as we shall see, is not the same across each text: discerning its value in each instance shall be the primary objective of this study.

Hence this thesis is concerned not primarily with the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine *per se*, but rather this lexical innovation on the part of some of its advocates. The appropriation of the term *ātman* is not, after all, essential for affirming the presence of some permanent Buddha-nature, and it may not have been unimaginable for all *tathāgatagarbha* authors to have avoided the contentious waters of *ātmavāda* discourse.[111] Doing as much would have

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[110] Following Takasaki's identification of the *TGS*, *ŚDS* and *AAN* as one triad of *sūtra*-s, and the *MPMS*-group as a distinct set. See Silk (forthcoming: 1).

[111] My concern is not then with any implicit similarity of *tathāgatagarbha* teachings to e.g. Vedāntic monism, or what has been called a '*dhātuvāda*': all of which may or may not be implicit in this doctrine across some or all of our sources. See, e.g., Obermiller (1931: 104-105); Matsumoto (1997). For further examples, see King (1991: 99-100).
As shall become more apparent, those sources which present a Buddhist notion of selfhood (rather than those which seek to qualify this notion) seem not to be concerned with allegations of monism at all: rather, theirs is the introduction of a permanent element in any sentient being, which might be the

helped to distinguish their doctrine from that of extraneous systems, though instead the authors of this literature attempt to both have their cake and eat it: to declare this Buddha-nature to be a self, though distinguishing it from any other doctrine that uses such a term. The nature and purpose of this imagined distinction is another key concern of this investigation.

Hence, I shall account for what the various *tathāgatagarbha* sources mean and intend by using the term *ātman*, and present a hypothesis concerning the introduction of this language, and its defense, as it developed. I shall in the final chapter attempt to understand why such a clearly provocative designation was so defended by some authors of the *tathāgatagarbha* tradition, especially when not apparently 'essential' to this doctrine. It is evident that our authors were aware of the controversial nature of this language, and attention will be paid as much to what they claim the true self to be as to what they are adamant it is not: it being the case that these authors did not intend a complete *volte face* of the early Buddhist denial of any self or ego.

Due to the wealth of material (much of it little studied) relevant to the first problem, that of 'how' the designator *ātman* is used by our sources, I am forced to save some passages from texts considered early in this exploration until the final chapter. In the meantime, I preempt that discussion by suggesting that the relationship between our authors and how they present

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presence of a *discrete* awakened being. Insofar as this is what these texts seem to espouse, it is in accord with a Buddhology closer in type to that of the *SPS*, with its more personal, god-like notion of the Buddha, than that of the *prajñāpāramitā* literature (more discernable in the *ŚDS* and *RGV(V)*) in which we encounter more abstract notions of Buddhahood, in terms of the *dharmakāya*, *dharmadhātu* or otherwise.

the content of extraneous *ātmavāda* teachers is central to understanding the intent of the former. I shall argue that this is not simply the drift of some Buddhist authors towards categories employed by other religious milieu: or, at least, that such a drift was intentionally performed, with constant qualification, in order to express a uniquely Buddhist account of selfhood superior to that of their perceived rivals.

Presumed by my argument is the idea that the Mahāyāna in general problematized the absence of the Buddha in the world, and through one innovation or another sought to reaffirm his continued presence in *saṃsāra*.[112] Presumably this was for fear of a perceived distance between disciples of the Mahāyāna and the goal of full awakening: the acquisition of both merit and understanding being much greater when one is in the presence of a Buddha.[113] For the *tathāgatagarbha* authors, this distance is closed in two ways: most obviously by affirming that the goal is immanently present for all beings (should they endeavor to pursue it). We shall see also that closely related to this doctrine is affirmation of the permanence not only of the *tathāgatagarbha*, but also of the awakened Buddha: apparently absent, but still very much of influence in the world.[114]

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[112] See e.g. Wangchuk (2007: 74-77), also Hodge (2012: 34).
[113] See Nattier (2003b: 183). There is also perhaps the desire for a Buddha, like that in the *SPS*, who will make predictions of the future awakening of beings. In a sense the *tathāgatagarbha* helps justify a prediction of this for *all* beings, and as such is a prophesy for all beings. See also the parable of the ascetic boy in the *AMS* (chapter 4.6).
[114] This permanence of the Buddha may well have been inherited from the *SPS*, though it is pertinent to remember that the Buddha of that text is not so much 'permanent' as exceptionally long living. See Pye (2002).

I shall later argue that it is precisely the universalist angle of this doctrine, which would seek to incorporate all beings into the fold of those able to attain awakening, that may have prompted adoption of a Buddhist notion of selfhood. This universalism may not, however, have been in the spirit of concern for all beings: rather, it constitutes an attempt to express the influence of the Buddha wider than was otherwise apparent. Such an argument rests upon a connection between our texts and a common precursor clearly known to all of our authors: the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtra* (*SPS*). The notion of a Buddhist self found in some *tathāgatagarbha* sources, I shall argue, constituted the development of a Buddhological paradigm central to that text – of the Buddha as the source of all paths to liberation – in order to root the *tathāgatagarbha* at both the centre and culmination of discussion of the self in classical Indian thought.

2. *The Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra*

2.1 *The Text*

Perhaps our earliest scriptural source for any *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine is the *Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (*TGS*) itself. Herein the Buddha reveals to an audience of *bodhisattva*-s, *śrāvaka*-s, deities and kings the presence of some precious content in all sentient beings: called variously a *tathāgata*, the body of a *tathāgata*, the qualities of a *tathāgata*, the nature of a *tathāgata* and – of course – the *tathāgatagarbha* itself. The bulk of the text is taken up by nine similes explaining this doctrine, of great significance for the development of later *tathāgatagarbha* literature. Not only do other texts in this corpus employ images and examples strongly reminiscent of these, but the *RGV(V)* also presents these nine similes as authoritative explanations of this doctrine.[115]

The *TGS* survives in two Tibetan and two Chinese translations, along with sizeable quotations in the *RGV(V)*. These versions have been explored at length by Michael Zimmermann (2002), whose work on the various extant forms of the *TGS* is invaluable for studies such as this. Zimmermann finds that of the four forms of the *TGS* available to us the oldest Chinese translation represents one recension (TGS^{1}), and the other three another (TGS^{2}). The earliest translation (TGS^{C1}: T.666), produced by Buddhabhadra in 420CE, is shorter and lacks much material found in the other Chinese version. The

[115] I shall not dwell on the use of these similes in the *RGV(V)*, as these are part of a later presentation of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine which may not reflect the intention of the authors of the *TGS*. As this constitutes the only Sanskrit form of these similes it will however be of use in assessing some expressions present in TGS^{2}, in particular.

remaining three versions, representative of *TGS*^{2}, are the Tibetan canonical translation from c.800CE (*TGS*^{T}); the Tibetan para-canonical translation from Bathang (*TGS*^{B}); and the Chinese translation of Amoghavajra from the middle of the C8th (*TGS*^{C2}: T.667).[116]

Zimmermann finds that form of the nine similes present in the *RGV* suggests acquaintance with *TGS*^{2}. Establishing the *terminus ante quem* of the *RGV*(*V*) as 511CE (the latest date for its translation into Chinese), and believing that it is the earliest stratum of the *RGV* that contains a form of the nine similes present in the *TGS*, Zimmermann concludes that both recensions existed, at latest, shortly before the fifth century.[117]

A central aspect of Zimmerman's work is the relationship of the *TGS* to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtra* (*SPS*): the *TGS* constituting a doctrinal elaboration of the *ekayāna* that is so central to the *SPS*.[118] Though Zimmermann identifies structural features that link these two texts, a strong doctrinal debt of the *TGS* to the *SPS* is clear also: if (as the latter contends) all three vehicles can be subsumed within the one vehicle of the Mahāyāna, then all who might be taught by one or other can, eventually, attain full awakening.[119] The *TGS* itself does not use the term *ekayāna* at any stage (nor does it mention by name the *SPS*), but even if its proximity to the *SPS* is overstated we do know that other texts in this corpus – indeed, all that are at

[116] Zimmermann (2002: 16). All references to *TGS*^{T} and *TGS*^{B} refer to his critical editions of these in that work.
[117] Zimmermann (2002: 24).
[118] Zimmermann (1999).
[119] Zimmermann (1999: 165-168).

the centre of this study – certainly exhibit a debt to that text, establishing that the *SPS* was of importance across the *tathāgatagarbha* literature.[120]

The main structure of the *TGS* (and most likely its earliest content) consists of the aforementioned nine similes, expounded in both prose and (undoubtedly later) verse forms.[121] The introduction to the nine similes (called simile '0' below) is significant also, as it employs the image of an awakened Buddha enshrouded by what is unclean. In this, the Buddha delivering the *sūtra* produces shining *tathāgata* images kept hidden in putrid lotus calyxes: only visible to one who has the vision of a Buddha. Zimmermann conjectures that the compilers of the text employed the lotus flower imagery, perhaps introducing the term *tathāgatagarbha* itself, as a frame for eight already extant similes, then generating the ninth (though structurally first) simile. Simile '1' then acted as a bridge between the Buddha's miraculous creations and the content of what is declared to be the *Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* proper.[122] Hence, Zimmermann argues for three discernable stages in the textual history of the *TGS*: 1) the composition of eight similes ('2-9'); 2) the narrative frame of the Buddha's teaching, together with the 'old' lotus simile ('0'); 3) inclusion of a ninth simile ('1'), verse portions, and introduction of the term *tathāgatagarbha*. It is not surprising then that the first (i.e. latest) simile presents us with a clearer formulation of this doctrine than the others, which

[120] Scholarship on the *SPS* is extensive, especially in East Asia where its influence has been greatest. For discussion of how its composition has been understood (which prefigures Shimoda's account of the *MPMS*, discussed in the next chapter), see Ryōdō (1989: 22-33); Karashima (2001: 171-173); Kajiyama (2000: 72-75).
[121] Zimmermann (2002: 28).
[122] Zimmermann (2002: 31-32).

reflect all manner of angles on the central idea of beings possessing some 'awakened' nature or qualities.[123]

2.2 Doctrinal Overview

For a thorough account of the *TGS* and its content one should consult Zimmermann's study; our interest here is limited to how the text describes the significant content of sentient beings. From the outset it should be repeated that the *TGS* does not employ the designation *ātman* in reference to the *tathāgatagarbha*, however its similes deserve attention for being in all likelihood the earliest expressions of this doctrine, very much prefiguring its adoption of the language of selfhood.[124]

Each expression of the *tathāgatagarbha* in the *TGS* refers to a model of some precious reality surrounded by afflictions. Hence (as detailed in the sixth simile, quoted in 1.4.2, above) we normally encounter a bipartite model of beings composed of 1) an awakened reality and 2) what is extraneous to it.

Occasionally (e.g. in the third simile) what is implied is instead a tripartite model of 1) beings, 2) afflictions and 3) some precious content. Any distinction between the bodies of beings and their afflictions is problematic, in light of what seems to be clearly a bipartite model underlying most expressions of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine. However if a tripartite model is intended by some of these similes, this is certainly not a form of this doctrine adopted by other texts we shall address. We do well also to remember that

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[123] Zimmermann (2002: 32).
[124] It is possible that some material of the *MPMS* pre-dates the *TGS*: the structure and dating of that text shall be considered in chapter 3.1.

the physical body of a being can be considered a karmic product ultimately produced by afflictions: hence any distinction between (the bodies of) beings and their afflictions can be easily read as still reflecting a bipartite opposition between some precious nature and what remains accidental to that.[125]

Of course our interest in the *TGS* lies in how far either of these models provides the foundations for a notion of a Buddhist selfhood. As far as the contained reality is ever called 'permanently' present 'in' beings, or is represented as something substantial amidst their constitution, the stage seems set for other *tathāgatagarbha* authors to express this in terms of a self.

We note also an absence of the term *śūnyatā* in the *TGS*, and no attempt to justify its ideas against emptiness-oriented teachings, which is common elsewhere in this corpus.[126] This suggests that the *TGS* represents a *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine untroubled by comparison with *śūnyatāvāda* categories, nor any who suggest that this doctrine is too proximate to extraneous *ātmavāda* teaching.[127] Certainly, it might be the emergence of the term *ātman* in texts after the *TGS* that was so objectionable to some audiences. Either way, it is the case that the authors of the *TGS* show no concern to defend their doctrine from objectors, which might strengthen the case that we here encounter this doctrine in an early stage of its development.

In TGS^{1} (represented by TGS^{C1}) it appears that the term *tathāgatagarbha* normally designates a separate entity present within beings. This is in contrast to all three forms of TGS^{2} which seem to understand

[125] See chapter 1.2; also p.272,ft.725.
[126] Zimmermann (2002: 15); also e.g. chapter 5.7.
[127] See chapter 4.4.

tathāgatagarbha as a *bahuvrīhi* designating beings themselves, i.e. reading sentient beings to be cavities (*garbha*) containing a Tathāgata. Tibetan readings must understand this slightly differently: any being must therein be one with the embryo (*snying po*) of a Tathāgata.[128] In the end Zimmermann does not settle on which recension of the text might be earlier (and determining as much is not so important for this study), but the sense that Buddhabhadra's shorter, more concise text (very likely sticking firmly to the perceived meaning of an Indian original) would imply that understanding the *tathāgatagarbha* as the 'content' of beings was not a later interpretation.[129] As we shall see in later chapters this is the more commonly received understanding of the term, especially where this entity is persistently identified with some *dhātu* present within beings.[130]

We should also here consider an important hermeneutical concern that has repercussions for reading all *sūtra*-s in this study. Zimmermann stresses that the *TGS* and associated texts make use of similes and not allegories; the latter would allow parallels to be drawn between several aspects of both the expression (*upamāna*) and that to which it is comparable (*upameya*), which is not true of our examples. It would, for instance, go too far to identify in the bee/honey simile (discussed in a moment) any significance in the bees' reliance on the honey for their livelihood. Rather there is only so much content of the bee/honey image that informs about the *tathāgatagarbha*: the main

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[128] The Tibetan translations do not however express this sense of the Sanskrit compound as clearly as their language might allow (e.g. -*snying po can*), that would communicate beings 'possessing' the *tathāgatagarbha*.
[129] See Zimmermann (2002: 20-23).
[130] See chapter 3.4; also Zimmermann (2002: 18-22); Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 261-264); Takasaki (1966: 81; 91-92).

import being always the possession by beings of something soteriologically significant.[131]

This should be kept in mind where we consider similes or examples used by other *tathāgatagarbha* sources. It is certainly not the case that any simile was composed to reflect exhaustively how one should understand this doctrine, and we must be careful to extract the relevant import of any such example. However, while the texts themselves help us by unpacking their examples, we should remain alert to other presuppositions about the *tathāgatagarbha* that are to be implicitly understood in any such example.

2.3 *The Nine Similes*

We are here interested in two aspects of the nine similes as they appear across the four versions of the *TGS*. First, in what ways each render the *tathāgatagarbha* as some entity possessed by beings; and second (in section 2.4) how far these invite the language of selfhood.

It is first necessary to introduce the similes and some conceptual features peculiar to each. Each simile is here numbered, and titled in the form 'desirable content / undesirable exterior'.

0. Buddha image / lotus calyx.

This is the initial, miraculous appearance of Buddhas within calyxes of putrid lotus flowers, used to introduce the nine images given below. We note that this is the first instance in the text in which it is declared that sentient

[131] See Zimmermann (2002: 35).

beings *themselves* are covered in afflictions: e.g. that 'all living sentient beings are shrouded in ten million afflictions.[132]

1. Buddha image / lotus calyx.

As in the introductory simile, shining Buddha images are imagined within rotten lotus calyxes. A significant aspect of the simile is that the withered exterior of the calyxes is removed only by one with divine vision, representing how only a Buddha can recognize the nature of beings as (or as containing, in *TGS*^{C1}) a *tathāgatagarbha*.

2. Honey / bees.

Herein the skill of one capable of extracting honey from honeycombs surrounded by bees is compared to the Buddha's extraction of a *tathāgata* from afflictions. Implied by the *upamāna* is the unusual tripartite structure of afflictions (bees), *sattva* (honeycomb) and *tathāgata* (honey).

This simile (significant as perhaps being the first in a list pre-dating the formation of the *TGS*) we find a lengthy list of mental afflictions, not again unpacked in such detail by any other *tathāgatagarbha* sources. Following *TGS*^{T}: 2B.2-5, these might reflect the Sanskrit: *rāga*, *dveṣa*, *moha*, *māna*, *mada*, *mrakṣa*, *krodha*, *vyāpāda*, *īrṣyā*, *mātsarya*.[133] The verses of *TGS*^{C2} are

[132] *TGS*^{T}: 0M.8-11.
[133] *MPMS*^{C2} (T.374,377a11) suggests as many as fifty-seven types of *kleśa*, though does not list these.

significant for their mention of the *dharmakāya* (法身), otherwise absent from this text.[134]

3. Kernel / husk.

Kernels of corn are here distinguished from their useless husks, which must be removed in order to make use of what is edible. As Zimmermann notes, this simile employs a very commonplace activity to stress, perhaps, the ubiquity of the *tathāgatagarbha* and 'the normality of its manifestation'.[135]

4. Gold nugget / excrement.

This example describes some gold that has been lost in filth for hundreds of years: much like beings who have, for time immemorial, transmigrated with their afflictions. What is stressed is the imperishable character of the gold and the contrast between this and its surroundings (implying that even the most heinous of beings is, and always has been, *tathāgatagarbha*).[136]

5. Treasure / ground beneath a house.

A poor householder lives unaware of the treasure buried beneath his own house, which is revealed to him by someone with divine vision. Again the import is the need, if one is to realize one's true nature, for intervention by another with privileged insight (a Buddha), and also the immanence of this

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[134] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,462b4.
[135] Zimmermann (2002: 37).
[136] Zimmermann (2002: 37).

nature throughout the lives of beings. A very similar example is found in the *MPMS*, addressed in the next chapter.[137]

6. Sprout / seed.

Here the *tathāgatagarbha* is compared to the sprout of a plant that emerges from a seed. Zimmermann contends that both here and in the eighth simile it is not the sense of generation from something unlikely that is the main import of the example: it is rather the numerical identity of lowly sprout and fully-grown tree.

In contrast to most of the other similes no act of purification is needed: 'the ripening is described as a more or less automatic process once the seed has fallen on the soil'.[138] Also, versions of *TGS*^{2} make mention of the *sattva-dhātu*: a synonym for the *tathāgatagarbha* that shall be revisited throughout this study.[139]

7. *Tathāgata* statue / rags in wilderness.

Herein a valuable *tathāgata* image, wrapped in rags, is lost in a wilderness. Once again it is only after intervention by a being with divine vision that there is located the body of a *tathāgata*.

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[137] See chapter 3.6.2.
Zimmermann also identifies a similarity between this passage and *Chāṇḍogya-Upaniṣad* 8.3.2, concerning the world of Brahman hidden from beings like treasure under their feet. See Zimmermann (2002: 121,ft.137.2); Olivelle (1998: 276-277). See also chapter 4.4.2.
[138] Zimmermann (2002: 38).
[139] See chapter 4.2.

8. *Cakravartin* embryo / poor woman.

As with the sixth simile, this image could be interpreted to communicate the need for a development of what lies dormant in beings, i.e. the potential for awakening here represented by the embryo of a *cakravartin*. However as Zimmerman observes it appears that the simile is instead focused on the juxtaposition of the desperate woman and the remarkable nature of her child, teaching that beings should never have contempt for themselves, due always to their possessing the *tathāgatagarbha*.[140]

9. Golden figure / clay mould.

When the *tathāgatagarbha* is compared to a golden statue in a clay mould, the emphasis is on the Buddha as a skilled smith who knows when to break the mold. Alternatively this image may stress the suddenness with which the clay of a worldly being is shattered to reveal an awakened *tathāgata*.

2.4 *Designators for the Contained Reality*

The *TGS* exhibits a wealth of designators for what is proper to beings beneath afflictions. Full treatment of these similes, and accounts of what each describes as the significant content of sentient beings (along with references to each version of the text), can be found in the appendix to this work (also in the work of Takasaki (1974: 48-53) regarding the Chinese translations, and Zimmermann (2002: 50-52) regarding the Tibetan). To discuss these designators here, I abbreviate references to different forms and sections of

[140] Zimmermann (2002: 38).

the *TGS* in the following form: ‘simile number / recension or version / prose (p) or verse (v) form’.

Our interest remains how far any of the designators used in the *TGS* imply the existence of a permanent, substantial entity, which might prefigure understanding this entity as some form of self. On occasion this is avoided completely, as what is essential to beings is described as either a set of qualities or one particular attribute (e.g. 如來智: the knowledge of a *tathāgata*) which skirts around imagining some fixed entity underlying afflictions (3/*TGS*^{C1}/p; 3/*TGS*^{C2}/v; 5/*TGS*^{2}/p; 7/*TGS*^{2}/p; 9/*TGS*^{2}/v). In this we might understand that beings properly have such qualities, but fail to manifest them so long as afflictions obstruct their faculties. Sometimes this might be what is intended in the use of the Chinese 藏 (especially in *TGS*^{C1}). When a being is said to ‘have’ 如來藏 (5/*TGS*^{C1}/p; 5/*TGS*^{C2}/p) or 佛藏 (3/*TGS*^{C1}/v; 6/*TGS*^{C1}/v; 9/*TGS*^{C1}/p), the intention may be that there is in beings a ‘store’ of qualities, avoiding hypostasization of these into a single entity that underlies afflictions.[141]

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[141] a) This evokes also the permeating *tathāgatajñāna* of the *Tathāgatotpattisaṃbhavanirdeśa-Sūtra* (quoted in *RGVV* 24.3-6), though as Zimmermann clarifies this ‘knowledge’ (while its immanence regarding sentient beings may have been of influence upon the authors of the *TGS*) is not so much a constituent of beings so much as a faculty of the Buddha: better understood as a pervasive feature of awakening than some quality possessed by beings. See Zimmermann (2002: 54; 60-62). Its role in the genesis of *tathāgatagarbha* thought is discussed by Takasaki (1974: 575). b) The term 佛藏 (*TGS*^{C1}: T.666,457c22) is difficult to relate to any underlying Sanskrit (it not appearing in the Chinese *RGV(V)*). In *AMS*^{C} (T.120,531a7; 540b20) it appears to correspond to both *bde gshegs snying po* (Sanskrit *sugatagarbha*) in *AMS*^{T} (e.g. D.213,167a1; Q.879,174a5) and *de bzhin gshegs pa’i snying po* (e.g. D.213,196a4; Q.879,203b2) respectively. In *MBhS*^{C} we find one instance of 佛藏 corresponding to *MBhS*^{T}: *snying po*,

However there is also in the *TGS* the seed of a *buddha-dhātu* doctrine similar to that found in the *MPMS*-group of *sūtra*-s.[142] In the eighth simile we find TGS^{C2} and TGS^{B} reflect the expression *tathāgata-dhātu* as 如來界 and *de bzhin gshegs pa'i khams* respectively, confirming the presence of this term in some form of TGS^{2}. This occurrence in 8/TGS^{2}/p is explained by Zimmermann as an instance of the *upameya* employing language of the *upamāna*, in which the *dhātu* is an 'element' in the constitution of beings comparable to the embryo in the pregnant woman.[143] The equivalent in 8/TGS^{T}/p, *de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs*, takes its source to mean 'the lineage of a *tathāgata'*, perhaps reflecting the Sanskrit *gotra* (as it does throughout the Tibetan *RGV(V)*). Though this is not conclusive, we might infer from this that the term *dhātu* found in TGS^{C2} and TGS^{B} was proximate in meaning to whatever was seen by the translators of TGS^{T}: a spiritual 'gene', that we shall encounter again in the *RGV(V).*[144]

In TGS^{C1} we frequently encounter the nature of a Buddha/*tathāgata* (佛性/如來性) which, if the *MPMS*-group of *sūtra*-s are any guide, may have translated some form of *dhātu*.[145] This is possible for TGS^{C1} (1/TGS^{C1}/p; 4/TGS^{C1}/v; 7/TGS^{C1}/v; 8/TGS^{C1}/p; 9/TGS^{C1}/v), implying either that TGS^{C1} used *dhātu* frequently, or possibly that Buddhabhadra standardized various

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which strongly suggests that the Sanskrit of both is some compound form of *garbha*.

[142] See also Zimmermann (2002: 57).

[143] Zimmermann (2002: 57-58).

[144] See chapter 7.1.1.

[145] See chapter 3.4. The *RGVV* also employs 佛性 to reflect the expression *buddha-dhātu*, (e.g. T.1611,821c27; corresponding to $RGVV^{S}$: Johnston (1950: 5, l.5)).

Indic expressions as 如來性. Even if he did not, the fact that *TGS*^{2} lacks any sign of the *dhātu* apart from when *TGS*^{C2} provides 如來界 means we cannot eliminate the possibility that 如來性 instead reflects e.g. **tathāgatatva*. This expression may have the same force as **tathāgatadharmatā* (0/*TGS*^{T}/p; 0/*TGS*^{B}/p; 4/*TGS*^{T}/p; 4/*TGS*^{C2}/p): a designator for the 'nature' of a Buddha perhaps less substantial than that communicated by the term *dhātu*.[146]

We find other abstractions also, primarily in *TGS*^{T}: e.g. that beings contain precisely **buddhatva* (2/*TGS*^{T}/p), **svayaṃbhūtva* (3/*TGS*^{T}/p); **buddhabhūmi* (3/*TGS*^{T}/v) and **prakṛti* (4/*TGS*^{T}/v).[147] Elsewhere we find that what is contained is the (real) nature (e.g. *dharmatā*) of beings (3/*TGS*^{T}/v; 8/*TGS*^{2}/v), or in *TGS*^{2} their pure nature (4/*TGS*^{2}/v). These expressions are vague, but all still affirm the proper nature of *sattva*-s to be akin to that of a Buddha.[148]

Sometimes we are given unclear but nonetheless powerful language describing what beings truly are: notably in the prose form of simile 4: 'the indestructible nature of a *tathāgata'* (*TGS*^{T}); his 'changeless nature' (*TGS*^{B}); and the 'indestructible qualities' (*TGS*^{C2}). This account, found across *TGS*^{2}, communicates that what is of value here is both unchanging and indestructible: an attribute very much befitting of a notion of selfhood.[149]

Only once do we encounter the *dharmakāya* (2/*TGS*^{C2}/v), which although perhaps late (belonging to a verse simile of *TGS*^{2}) suggests that the

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[146] See Zimmermann (2002: 50); Takasaki (1966: 81).
[147] See Zimmermann (2002: 53).
[148] See Zimmermann (2002: 55).
[149] See chapter 3.6.3.3.

authors of that version incorporated a broader range of vocabulary for the *tathāgatagarbha* as the text developed. As we frequently find this content described as a collection of the Buddha's attributes, this is perhaps the *dharmakāya* best considered to be a 'corpus of qualities', as outlined by Harrison (1992), that we shall encounter throughout the *tathāgatagarbha* literature.[150]

We find also the term *sattva-dhātu* (有情界) exclusively in the sixth simile of *TGS*^{2}. The strength of this *dhātu* (reflected herein by the Tibetan *khams* and Chinese 界) will be discussed further in the next chapter, but suffice to say this may be the nature or essence of beings distinguishable from their afflictions, used as an epithet for the *tathāgatagarbha* in other sources that we shall consider.[151]

Most frequently, the *TGS* describes beings as possessing precisely a *tathāgata* (or Buddha/*jina*); i.e. that beneath their afflictions is a different kind of being (i.e. one fully awakened) that is not currently manifested in the world. This is present whenever beings are declared to 'be' *tathāgatagarbha*, which can be seen throughout *TGS*^{2} and, notably, 1/*TGS*^{C1}/p (perhaps supporting the claim that this simile may have been produced late in the development of *TGS*^{1}). This is perhaps different from the statement that all beings 'have' the nature of a *tathāgata*, in that the former imagines a fully realized being rather

[150] See Harrison (1992: 145-147); also p.284,ft.758.
[151] Zimmermann (2002: 127) contends that *TGS*^{T} cannot allow for this *sattva-dhātu* to mean an element or essence, reading an 'accumulation of knowledge in the *sattva-dhātu'*. This is in contrast to other forms of *TGS*^{2} (and also the *RGV*, in which we find in its place *śubhadharmadhātu*: see *RGVV* 1.116, Johnston (1950: 64.4)). The *RGVV* also cites the *AAN* in understanding *sattva-dhātu* as the *dharmakāya*, which can be identified with the *tathāgatagarbha* prior to its realization: see chapter 7.1.3; also 5.5.

than any nature as yet unrealized. Put another way, to say that a being contains a *tathāgata* is to stress the difference between a *sattva* and that which they 'contain'; to state that a being has the *nature* (e.g. *snying po*) of a *tathāgata* is to identify some qualitatively identical essence already shared by the two.[152] The image of a fully realized *tathāgata* is not common in other sources we shall address: it is apparent that the authors of other *sūtra*-s, as we shall see, preferred to discuss an essential nature of beings (e.g. *dhātu*) which identifies them with a Buddha, rather than stress the contrast between 'impure' beings and their (clearly imperceptible) 'pure' content.[153]

In many instances the contained entity is described as 'the body of a *tathāgata'* (1/*TGS*^{2}/v; 3/*TGS*^{C2}/v; 5/*TGS*^{2}/v; 6/*TGS*^{2}/v; 7/*TGS*^{C1}/v; 7/*TGS*^{2}/v; 9/*TGS*^{C1}/p). This might once again imply a lasting entity that might resemble a kind of self: a physical entity residing beneath afflictions. This may also be proximate to the sense of the *buddha-dhātu* as a *śarīra* or corporeal relic, considered by Shimoda in his analysis of the *MPMS*.[154] In short, some contributors to the *TGS* may also have imagined sentient beings as vessels for the lasting presence of the Buddha conceived in terms of his bodily remains.

We might also pursue a different understanding of these bodies, based upon the ambiguity of the Chinese 體. Where this expression is used (3/*TGS*^{C2}/p; 6/*TGS*^{C2}/v; 7/*TGS*^{C2}/v; 8/*TGS*^{C2}/p), it has properly the sense of the nature of something, perhaps reflecting the Sanskrit **svabhāva* and, as

[152] See Zimmermann (2002: 53).
[153] Arguably this is a perspective reflected more in the *MBhS*: see chapter 5.3.
[154] See chapter 3.1; 3.4. A thorough discussion of the Buddha's bodily remains as discussed in *sūtra* literature is provided by Silk (2006).

such, is closer in sense to e.g. *dharmatā*.[155] Hence the expression 佛體 may again have the sense of a 'Buddha-nature': less concrete than stating that beings possess a physical 'Buddha-body' that is better expressed where *TGS*^{C2} provides 身 in correspondence with the Tibetan *lus/sku* (e.g. 1/*TGS*^{T}/v).

Frequently whatever subject is deemed precious is described as residing within the bodies of sentient beings (1/*TGS*^{C1}/v; 5/*TGS*^{C1}/p; 5/*TGS*^{C1}/v; 5/*TGS*^{C2}/v; 6/*TGS*^{C1}/v; 7/*TGS*^{C1}/p; 8/*TGS*^{C1}/p; 8/*TGS*^{C2}/p; 8/*TGS*^{C2}/v; 9/*TGS*^{C1}/p), or instead the physical body is itself called *tathāgatagarbha*, i.e. the container for a *tathāgata* (8/*TGS*^{C1}/v). This features predominantly in both Chinese translations, though is implied in a Tibetan portion (8/*TGS*^{T}/p) where *de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs* is affirmed to be 'within' sentient beings. As we shall address in regards to the *MPMS* and *AMS*, the notion that the physical body is host to the *tathāgatagarbha* certainly lends itself to designating the latter as a self. We might consider again sources such as the *Anattalakkhaṇa-Sutta* and its focus on the *skandha*-s as the loci in which no kind of self can be discerned: only the first of these being physical form (*rūpa*), though the fact remaining that amidst none of these is anything that can be identified as a self.[156]

Where the *TGS* reveals any lasting reality beneath afflictions, it appears that something permanent and unchanging indeed resides 'within'

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[155] This occurs, for example, in *RGV(V)*: see *RGVV*^{C}: T.1611,828b11: 體及因果業; corresponding to *RGVV* 26,11; Johnston (1950: 26,12): *svabhāvahetvoḥ*. See Nakamura (1980: 910c; 976b).
[156] See p.18-19.

beings. This is particularly the case in 5/*TGS*^{C1}/v, in which we are given an account not only of the presence of a 'treasure' in the bodies of beings, but also of its permanence across transmigration.

佛眼觀衆生　雖流轉五道

大寶在身內　常在不變易

TGS^{C1}: T.666, 458b23-24.

The Buddha's vision observes that sentient beings, though they transmigrate through the five destinies, have in their bodies a great treasure that is permanent and unchanging.

There is mention of the permanence of the *tathāgatagarbha* elsewhere (e.g. 1/*TGS*^{C1}/p; 1/*TGS*^{C2}/p; 1/*TGS*^{T}/p; 7/*TGS*^{2}/v), though it is clear that the *TGS* does not prioritize the permanence of this reality in the manner of some other texts we shall address. Where it does, the *TGS* indeed evokes the notion of a self, set in opposition to the idea that *all* constituent factors of sentient beings are necessarily impermanent.

2.5 *Conclusions*

We risk taking too literally the *upameya* of our similes: it is very possible that the authors of the *TGS* did not intend us to imagine either a Buddha's body 'in' sentient beings, nor any entity within their own physical bodies. However in any given instance the authors choose to employ

particular language, figurative or otherwise, to nuance the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine. Perhaps, in accord with its confessed difficulty, the authors of the *TGS* find that corporeal language is the most reliable that they have to communicate the immanence of certain achievements in the prospects of its audience.[157] And while this does not mean that the *TGS* presents us explicitly with a form of *ātmavāda*, it is possible that this kind of imagery opened the door to conceptualizations of the *tathāgatagarbha* in precisely such terms.

With this in mind, we move on to consider other *tathāgatagarbha* texts that develop the idea of some precious reality possessed by sentient beings. What we have seen is that the varieties of expression for this entity found in the *TGS*, very likely a precursor to this doctrine as it appears in the rest of this literature, permitted some freedom in how this content be understood. Though in some instances the *tathāgatagarbha* might be something so abstract as the latent knowledge or qualities of a Buddha, it can also be described as the substantial 'body' of a Buddha inhabiting sentient beings. More tellingly, it can also be imagined as some element or nature (*dhātu*) within the constitution of these beings: residing permanently, without change, across transmigrations.[158] Insofar as this is the case, we find a space made for later authors to discuss this reality as a kind of self.

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[157] See Zimmermann (2002: 52-53).

[158] This sense of the *tathāgatagarbha* 'transmigrating' is expressed most profoundly by the *MBhS*: see chapter 5.5. Its being the basis of transmigration is an important theme of both the *ŚDS* and *AAN*, discussed in chapter 6.1.5.

3. *The Mahāparinirvāṇa-Mahāsūtra*

3.1 *The Text.*

Among those *tathāgatagarbha* texts that employ the term *ātman*, undoubtedly the most well-known is the (*Mahāyāna*) *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Mahāsūtra* (*MPMS*).[159] The *sutta* collections of Śrāvakayāna Buddhism contained various versions of the *Mahāparinibbāna-Sutta* detailing the final discourse of the Buddha upon his deathbed, though the *MPMS* represents an innovative reworking of this narrative centred on the Mahāyānist account of the permanently abiding Buddha.[160] Herein Śākyamuni is portrayed as a permanent, god-like being: the text stopping short of discussing his actual death, hence implying (and stating besides) his permanent existence.[161]

We possess 35 fragments of the Sanskrit *MPMS* from Central Asia, from a total of 23 folios that belonged to three separate manuscripts. One further, complete folio remains in Koyasan, Japan, the copying of which is

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[159] Habata (2007a: xliv-li; 104-105) draws attention to *MPMS*^{SF} 24.15, preserving the colophon of that manuscript, in which we find the text called (as in the colophon and text of *MPMS*^{T}) *mahāparinirvbāṇa- mahāsūtra-.* This continues a pattern also found in its mention of the *tathāgatagarbhamahāsūtra* and – possibly – also *saddharmapuṇḍarīkam(ahāsūtra)* in *MPMS*^{SF} 21: see ft.197, with Habata (2007a: xlv).
Following Skilling (1997: 20-31) regarding the *mahāsūtra* as a Śrāvakayāna category, this would suggest that the *MPMS* (if not these other texts also) was somehow preserved with the involvement of a lay community, though the precise role and usage of a self-proclaimed '*mahāsūtra'* (outside of those listed in the *vinaya*-s of the Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda traditions) remains unclear. See also Habata (1994).

[160] For the corresponding Pāli *sutta*, see *DN*.II.72-160. Also Silk (2006), regarding various Chinese versions of this story in the *āgama*-s.

[161] The issue of the Buddha's post-mortem existence having been much discussed in earlier Śrāvakayāna sources. See Norman (1991c).

attributed to the Shingon founder Kūkai during his stay at Chang'an.[162] The most complete fragment is however a passage of the *MPMS* that survives in the Sanskrit *RGVV*, to which we will return later, though no other quotations of the text are found in surviving Sanskrit sources.[163]

As with the *TGS*, we are then reliant on translations, of which three survive in Chinese.

1) 佛説大般泥洹經 (T.376: $MPMS^{C1}$), translated in 417/418CE by Faxian, Buddhabhadra, and/or Baoyun, in six *juan*.

2) 大般涅槃經 (T.374: $MPMS^{C2}$), translated by Dharmakṣema between 412-428CE; the so-called 'Northern Edition', in forty *juan*.[164] This is of much greater length than the above: its later chapters are generally not considered to have been of Indian origin and shall not be considered in this work.[165]

3) 大般涅槃經 (T.375), translated in C6th by Jñānabhadra, Huining, Huigan, Xie Linyun *et al* in C6th. A secondary redaction of the Dharmakṣema translation, the so-called 'Southern Edition', with material added from that of Faxian.[166]

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[162] See Habata (2007a); also Hodge (2012: 4-5).
[163] See chapter 7.1.2.
[164] For issues of dating, see Hodge (2012: 9-25).
[165] See Hodge (2012: 25-27); also p.8-9,ft.20.
[166] Hodge (2012: 3). See also Blum (2013) for translation of Dharmakṣema's text excluding the later material exclusive to that version. That of Yamamoto (2007), though stated by the author to be of T.374, is however rendered from T.375: see Radich (2011: 245,ft.64).

Based on biographical information pertaining to the translators of each version, Hodge suggests that Faxian's translation might represent a form of the *MPMS* as it might have existed in Pāṭaliputra by 407CE (but, based on internal evidence, that this version might be as much as 50 years older), and that the undoubtedly Indian material of Dharmakṣema's might represent a form of the text circulating North West India around 375CE.[167] It is certainly the case however that Dharmakṣema's version is not only longer (featuring so much unique material, not likely to be of Indic origin), but also exhibits signs of interpolation and expansion, which suggest that Faxian's translation reflects an earlier recension.[168] However examination of $MPMS^{C2}$ and $MPMS^{T}$ (in conjunction with $MPMS^{SF}$) sometimes reveals likely miscomprehension on the part of Faxian: as such we remain cautious not to accept the latter as providing foolproof access to an earlier form of the Indian text.[169]

Of two Tibetan translations available to us, one dates to the early C9th, and is attributed to Jinamitra, Jñānagarbha and Devacandra (D.120; N.107; L.123; Q.788; S.179), for which Hodge argues that a reliable *terminus ad quem* of the underlying Sanskrit text might be c.400CE.[170] Extant also is a Tibetan translation of the Chinese translation of Dharmakṣema (D.119; N.361;

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[167] Hodge (2012: 29-30).

[168] Hodge (2012) contends that $MPMS^{C2}$ occasionally betrays content prior to interpolations reflected in $MPMS^{C1}$ (which itself has been expanded in ways that $MPMS^{C2}$ was not). However where this dating is based on portions concerning the *buddha-dhātu* as a self $MPMS^{C1}$ appears generally clearer and more concise.
One insight into the earlier nature of $MPMS^{C1}$ is its use of *vaipulya* (方等), not present in the other versions, to designate the text's genre: see Skilling (2013: 84-97).

[169] For a likely example, see p.133,ft.332 regarding the parable of the lost sword. See also Habata (2007b).

[170] Hodge (2012: 70).

Q.787; S.333), dating to pre-843CE.[171] In the below I focus on the Faxian translation (*MPMS*^{C1}), and the Tibetan translation from Sanskrit (*MPMS*^{T}).[172] The first ten *juan* of the Dharmakṣema translation (i.e. those corresponding to the other two versions, and which are most reliably of Indian origin) shall also be considered (*MPMS*^{C2}), though less frequently presented in translation.[173]

Extensive scholarship on the *MPMS* is that of Shimoda Masahiro (1997), who discusses at length strata discernable within the text's development. Stephen Hodge (2012) has more recently developed a variation upon this model, but has yet to publish advancing this any further. Various articles by Habata Hiromi demonstrate that the complexities of the *MPMS* continue to resist a conclusive account of its origins and development. All references to *MPMS*^{T} herein refer to Habata's (2013) critical edition of that version.

Models such as that of Shimoda are valuable for addressing expansive texts such as this that clearly swelled in content over time. This study is primarily thematic, and concerned with what the *MPMS* as a mature work had to say about a given doctrine (i.e. that of a Buddhist self), but Shimoda's model is employed in order to make sense of where relevant portions of the text (e.g. those concerned with the *viparyāsa*-s, discussed below) seem to contradict one another, and hence betray a shift in the ideas of our authors.

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[171] See Hodge (2012: 4,ft.6).

[172] Hodge proves that *MPMS*^{T} reflects a text that has been the subject of conflation between material found in both *MPMS*^{C1} and *MPMS*^{C2}, but also containing material not present in either. Suffice to say that the textual history of *MPMS*^{T} appears extremely messy, but I choose to consult it here in order to address what must have been the latest form of the *MPMS* to have circulated India that is available to us. See Hodge (2012: 59-70).

[173] See p.69; also p.8-9,ft.20.

Relying on the chapters delineated by *MPMS*^{C1}, Shimoda's model might be summarized as follows.[174]

Stratum 1: chapters 1-7 (omitting chapter 5), focused on the permanence of the Buddha. Herein the Buddha himself is described as *ātman*: clearly with the intent of stressing his permanence as a supermundane being in contrast to the only conventionally imputed selves of sentient beings.[175]

Stratum 2.1: chapter 8. This is a sub-stratum of the second development of the *MPMS*, in which there is a perceived clash between the notion of the Buddha's permanence and a doctrine of emptiness.[176] Herein the text explains liberation to be a blissful continuity (e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376, 875a19: 眞解脫者，常住不變), and explains the 'non-emptiness' of liberation in the sense of a pot 'empty' of butter, yet not itself lacking form.[177] Here we

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[174] See Shimoda (1997: 163-171 (E.13)). These chapter delineations may well be of Faxian's creation (not reflected by our other versions), but remain helpful for distinguishing different portions of the text.

[175] Shimoda (1997:172-185 (E.15-16); 212-219 (E.18)). Shimoda considers this material to have been composed by an itinerant Buddhist community seemingly uninterested in the institutionalized *saṅgha*: a claim by no means proven, and tangential to the interests of this study.

[176] Poignantly, the only mention of any *prajñāpāramitā* source in the *MPMS* (the **Prājñāpāramitā-Mahāsūtra*) is employed to affirm the non-duality of self and absence of self: see *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376, 886b24-b25; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374, 411a9-a10; *MPMS*^{T}: §400,17-20. Though recognized by the *MPMS*, it is clear that what we might call *śūnyatāvāda*-oriented teachings are instructed to be considered with caution by its audience. See chapter 5.7, also.

[177] See *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376, 875a10-a20; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374, 395b14-c2; *MPMS*^{T}: §280. Herein emptiness refers to absence of afflictions, the twenty-five kinds of rebirth, and worldly activities, while non-emptiness is the Buddha's continued existence as fixed, joyous, permanent and unchanging (不動、快樂、常住、不變). *MPMS*^{C2} (T.374, 395b14-395b29) has expanded this list to

find perhaps the earliest account of a doctrine of 'non-emptiness' pertaining to the Buddha: found most famously in the *ŚDS*.[178] This implies that early in the life of stratum 2 our authors sought to clarify how the Buddha's permanence does not oppose teachings on emptiness, perhaps advocated by those who opposed the content of stratum 1.[179]

Stratum 2.2: chapters 5 and 9-18. Focus on the Buddha shifts to the *ratnatraya*, and there is more frequent mention of the *saṅgha* and its precepts (conspicuously absent from stratum 1). This stratum also makes more of the *śrāvaka*-s as opponents to the doctrine of the *MPMS*, betraying some perceived tension with non-Mahāyānists.

It is this last stratum that incorporates a doctrine of the *tathāgatagarbha*, calling this (most frequently) a *buddha-dhātu* present in the bodies of beings. Shimoda argues that this reflects an internalization of the *buddha-dhātu* as 'a relic of the Buddha' from the *stūpa* into the constitution of sentient beings.[180] Hence the *sattva* becomes a reliquary: sustaining the

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include the four qualities that are inversions of the *viparyāsa*-s (常、樂、我、淨、不動、不變). Compare also *MPMS*^{T}: §280.
In each version this 'empty-non-emptiness' is said to contradict liberation defined as 'absence of anything' (無所有; *ci yang med pa*) associated with the liberation of **nirgrantha*-s (*MPMS*$^{C1/T}$) or also **tīrthika*-s (*MPMS*^{C2}): perhaps opposing extraneous annihilationist doctrines exhibiting their own erroneous accounts of destructive 'emptiness'. See Suzuki (2000a); also p.76,ft.194.

[178] See pp.282-283.

[179] An alternative satratification proposed by Hodge (2012: 35-36) considers all of the above representative of a **Tathāgatanitya-Sūtra*: an earlier form of the text that is the kernel of what became the *MPMS*. Hodge has yet to publish a full account of this model, which is so far not entirely convincing.

[180] Shimoda (1997: 283-292 (E. 21-22)). Indeed this appears to be stated by the text itself: see *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,885a5-6; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,410a6-a9; *MPMS*^{T}: § 391,14-16.

presence of the Buddha in the world, and (as in the *TGS*) affirming the ability of all beings to realize themselves as Buddhas.[181] Herein the term *ātman* returns, but now clearly refers to this *buddha-dhātu* in unawakened beings. This account is at the centre of chapters 11-13, the last of which is concerned directly with the *tathāgata-dhātu* as the true self.[182]

3.2 *A Crisis of the* Saddharma.

The *MPMS* is almost certainly the earliest of a set of *sūtra*-s known to scholars as the *MPMS*-group, which share (among other features) a common prophecy of the decline of the *saddharma*.[183] Such prophecies are not uncommon in Buddhist literature (including the *SPS*): the most common timeframe suggesting that the *saddharma* will vanish five hundred years after the Buddha's demise.[184] However the *MPMS* presents the time between the Buddha's passing and the decline of the *saddharma* as seven hundred years.[185] The *MPMS*-group as a whole indicate that their reemergence in the world signals the final years of the *saddharma* in the world.[186]

Relics of a Buddha are presumed by wider Buddhist literature to be indestructible, or at least to last in the world as long as the influence of that Buddha's teaching: see Skilling (2005: 282); Collins (1998: 247-248).

[181] An excellent synopsis of Shimoda's position, expressing also how this functions as a polemic against veneration of physical relics, can be found in Radich (2011: 280-281). See also Schmithausen (2009: 109-113); Suzuki (2000a: 80).

[182] Shimoda (1997: 263-288 (E. 21-23)).

[183] See e.g. Takasaki (1974: 182). Also p.8,ft.19a.

[184] See Nattier (1991: 27-37). Herein Nattier questions the 'millennial' tone of such prophecies in the *SPS*, though nonetheless recognizes an account of the decline of the *dharma* after a 500 year period.

[185] For this 700 year prophecy, see *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376 880a23-24; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374, 402c25-c26; *MPMS*^{T}: §338,1-2. As Nattier (1991: 37-38) writes it is

佛告迦葉：善男子，我[187]後，正法欲沒之[188]餘八十年在， 此大乘經當復流布於閻浮提。經四十年，此經復沒。

MPMS^{C1}: T.376,877a28-b1.

The Buddha said to Kāśyapa[189]: Good son, after me, in the remaining eighty years of the decay of the *saddharma*, this Mahāyāna *sūtra* will again disseminate in Jambudvīpa. After forty years, this *sūtra* will again disappear.[190]

Hence the reading of the *MPMS* signaled a death knell for the *saddharma*, marking its departure within the next few generations. This may suggest to us that these texts existed in a period of perceived distress for their authors' tradition, perhaps coinciding with the early Gupta period in which Buddhist patronage seems to have declined across the subcontinent in favour

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however unclear whether this refers to the final disappearance of the *saddharma* or simply its decline.

[186] The *AMS* makes mention of the final eighty years of the *dharma*, and like the *MPMS* links this to a period in which *bodhisattva*-s abandon the inappropriate practices of monks: e.g. *AMS*^{C}: T.120,537c21-23; 538b16-b20. For similar in the *MBhS*, see e.g. T.270,294b29-c1.

[187] 我＋（泥洹）＜三＞＜宮＞

[188]〔之〕－＜三＞＜宮＞＜聖＞

[189] Mahākāśyapa is certainly of great importance for the *MPMS* and related texts, envisaged as the inheritor of the Buddha's authority after his (apparent) passing, see e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,862b1-7. For more on his role across Mahāyāna literature, see Silk (2003); also Lamotte (1962: 149-150,ft.18); Ray (1994: 105-118).

[190] Compare *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,398b27-b28; *MPMS*^{T}: §309,6-9.

of brāhmaṇical movements.[191] Hodge presents a different hypothesis, deducing from supposed mention of Gautamīputra Śātavāhana (reigning 106-130CE) in the *MPMS* that its authors might have anticipated the end of the *saddharma* c.220CE, and also that from mention of the text's transmission 'in the South' these texts were most likely produced in the Deccan around that time.[192]

Whether or not such speculative deductions (to which we shall return in later chapters) concerning the origins of the *MPMS* are accurate, it is certainly the case that during its development the authors perceived a decline in what they saw as good, dharmic conduct. The *MPMS* makes reference to the poor conduct of monks: for example their owning servants and keeping livestock.[193] It furthermore disapproves of some *śūnyatāvāda* teaching that opposes the permanence of the Buddha: that doctrine most central to the *MPMS*.[194] Such

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[191] See Nakamura (1987: 212).

[192] Hodge's argument (2006: unpaginated) for the historical and geographical context of the *MPMS* cannot be considered here, though if accepted does present an account of this text coherent with that of the *ŚDS* suggested by Wayman and Wayman (see chapter 6.1.1), which clearly responds to the *MPMS*. Hodge has revised his account to state that the text might have originated in the Andhra region, though he has yet to publish material in support of this claim. See Hodge (2012: 31-32).

[193] Most notably this occurs in the *MPMS's* reformulation of the four noble truths, in which regarding *duḥkha* it is observed that many monks take possessions that are inappropriate. See e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,882c25-27: 不知實故，增其愛集、畜養奴婢諸非法物，非法爲法，而生妄取。

[194] In chapter 11 the *MPMS* reformulates the four truths. Regarding that of the cessation of suffering, it states that if the cultivation of emptiness were the end of suffering, then those who cultivate such emptiness (or lack of self) of the *tathāgata-dhātu* can be compared to moths lured to a flame (*MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,883a8-9: 若復修行於如來性作空無我相(相＝想＜三＞＜宮＞＜聖＞)，當知是輩如蛾投火。Compare *MPMS*^{T}: §369,14-16).
Curiously, we also find that the *tīrthika*-s (外道) would also then know this truth (of course denied by the *MPMS*), due to their also possessing a notion of emptiness (*MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,883a2-4; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,406c9-11); called by

opposition may relate to the much-discussed *icchantika*-s, whom Shimoda and others have identified as objectors to the *MPMS*, who very likely come from within the already established *saṅgha*.[195]

The *MPMS* seems to have wanted to assure its audience of the Buddha's permanence, despite the decline of the *saddharma* in the world (in stratum 2.1 employing language reminiscent of the *Lokānuvartana-Sūtra* to explain the transcendence of what is here called, among other names, the *dharmakāya*).[196] Adopting some form of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, the authors

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MPMS^{T} (§369,3-5) 'the counterproductive emptiness of the *pāṣaṇḍa*-s'. See also Lamotte (1949: 1071) for further evidence of this.
The *AMS* also refers to an emptiness teaching of the *nirgrantha*-s: *gcer bu pa yang thams cad stong par sgom ste / gcer bu pa'i sbrang ma khyod cang ma zer cig //* (e.g. *AMS*^{T}: D.213,160b2; Q.879,167b7; though in *AMS*^{C} these are again *tīrthika*-s (T.120,527c15: 外道亦修空 尼乾宜默然)): something not known of in any Jain sources. If *nirgrantha* does not refer to the Jains themselves, perhaps the sense is other *tīrthika*-s holding strongly annihilationist views, e.g. the Cārvāka-s: see p.330,ft.865.
This demonstrates that distinctions between doctrinal postions of Buddhists and those outside based are not necessarily as clear-cut as we might assume: something no doubt demonstrated by the very occurence of a Buddhist account of selfhood taught by the *MPMS* and others.

[195] Karashima identifies the clearest definition of the *icchantika* given by the *MPMS*, as those who reject the *dharma* (e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,892b19-20: 一闡提輩以何爲本？誹謗經法。), though it is very likely that the sense of the term developed with the maturity of *tathāgatagarbha* sources: see Karashima (2007: 74-76). For the place of this category in other texts, implying strongly their place within the *saṅgha*, see chapter 7.1.4.

[196] a) Shimoda (1997: 254-256 (E.21)); (1994: 25-27). Though similarities with the *Lokānuvartana-Sūtra* are apparent, Shimoda's proposed association between the *MPMS* and the *Mahāvastu* (in particular concerning the *anupūrvīkathā* instruction) has been challenged by Tournier (2012: 280-282). Moreover, the long-assumed origins of the very 'Mahāyānist' *Lokānuvartana-Sūtra* in the Mahāsāṃghika/Lokottaravāda (presumed by Shimoda, and indeed many others) remain unclear: see Radich (2007: 643-669). In short, similarities between the *Lokānuvartana-Sūtra* and *MPMS* cannot be taken as demonstracting association between the latter and any *nikāya* of Mahāsāṃghika heritage.
b) The *dharmakāya* is not much unpacked by the *MPMS*, though it appears to refer to a permanent body (akin to the Buddha's *vajrakāya*) not unlike that

further developed this idea into the presence of the Buddha in the very constitution of beings; i.e. the ability of all to (eventually) attain awakening. It appears then that the Buddha as *ātman* was inherited by the second stratum of the *MPMS* due to its appropriateness in describing the awakened Buddha. Why this designation remained appropriate as a designation for some reality amidst the constitution of sentient bengs is a central concern of this study.

The permanently abiding Buddha, along with the ability of all beings to attain awakening implied by the *tathāgatagarbha*, again puts us in mind of the *SPS*. Indeed the *MPMS* mentions this text by name, and in association with this second idea.[197] There is further connection between the *SPS* and *MPMS*-group in mention of the career of the *bodhisattva* Sarvalokapriyadarśana:

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found elsewhere in the *tathāgatagarbha* literature: see Radich (2011: 256-282). As a body defined by certain superlative qualities, this account is again in accord with one understanding of the *dharmakāya* as explored by Harrison (1992). See p.284,ft.758.

[197] *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376, 893c6; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,420a23-a24; *MPMS*^{T}: §495,17; also *MPMS*^{SF} 21 (Habata (2009: 580): *saddharmapauṇḍar[ī]k(a)[m]*).
This is in connection with that text's prediction of all beings to attain full awakening, relating it to the existence of the *buddha-dhātu* (e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: 893c5-c4) an association presumed by Zimmermann regarding the *TGS*, but not explicitly mentioned therein. The issue of distinctions between different followers (i.e. similar to the discussion of the three vehicles in the *SPS*), addressed via an analogy with various milk products all sharing an essential nature, is found at *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,895a20-27; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,422c20-423a4; *MPMS*^{T}: §520.
MPMS^{T} seems also to mention the *TGS* (*MPMS*^{T}: §495,13-14;
Present also in *MPMS*^{SF} 21, in which we find *tathā<gata>gar[bh]a[ma]hāsūtra*-): see Habata (2009: 579-580).
Hodge (2012: 36; 60) contends that this refers instead to a **Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* as a layer of the *MPMS*, i.e. describing material successive to what he deems the **Tathāgatanitya-Sūtra* that is the earlier content of the *MPMS*, however one wonders (among other things) why no clear mention of this text is made by any version of the *MPMS* (Hodge relying instead on a passage of the *MBhS*); and indeed why the Chinese translations of the *MPMS* lack mention of the *TGS* entirely.
It has been suggested also that this *TGS* in *MPMS*^{T} might refer to the *tathāgatagarbha sūtra*-s as a category: see Silk (forthcoming: 8-9,ft.36).

found also in the *SPS*, *MBhS* and *MMS*, and implied (according to Hodge) among the *dramatis personae* of both the *MPMS* and *AMS*.[198] We must pass over Hodge's longer argument about the possible historicity of this figure (which buttresses his hypothesis concerning the dating of the *MPMS*), but are assured that the *MPMS*-group can be considered aware of and influenced by the *SPS* and its milieu.[199]

It is then a premise of this study, following Zimmermann, that the *tathāgatagarbha* literature – including the *MPMS* – owes a great debt to the *SPS*. However the account of the Buddha's permanence in the *MPMS* is not simply that of the *SPS*: a distinction best dealt with by Shimoda's more thorough study.[200] We must focus on the value of the term *ātman*, and specifically its innovative use across the development of the *MPMS*.

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[198] See *SPS*, Kern and Nanjio (1970: 268-269; 404-422); also Blum (2013: xvii). For Hodge's argument in full (very much indebted to Suzuki (1999b)), see Hodge (2006: unpaginated).

[199] Sarvalokapriyadarśana appears also in the chapter on long life in the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-Sūtra*, in which he questions the value of relic worship (indeed those as 'small as a mustard seed': see p.104,ft.258), in favour of understanding the Buddha's indestructible *vajrakāya*, in a manner very reminiscent to the *MPMS*. See Bagchi (1967: 6.11-8, 20).
The development of this figure is best explored by Suzuki (1999b; 2003), though will be the subject of new attention by Radich (forthcoming).

[200] See Shimoda (1997: 237-251 (E.20)). Radich (2011: 234) also considers the *SPS* and its influential declaration of the Buddha Śākyamuni's longevity, as distinct from either a) that of other, distant Buddhas (as found in early Pure Land sources) or b) his strict permenance (as in the *MPMS*). It is then perhaps an innovation of the *MPMS* to declare the Buddha strictly permanent (*nitya*) as opposed to just incredibly long-living. See also Pye (2002).

3.3 *The Four Distortions*

A clear shift in the text, from the permanence of the Buddha towards that of the *tathāgatagarbha*, can be witnessed in two accounts of the four distortions (*viparyāsa*), or what can be called the four qualities (*guṇa*) of the supermundane.[201] These four qualities – permanence, selfhood, joy and purity – appear also in the *Mahāmegha-Sūtra* (*MMS*) and *ŚDS*, and following this are picked up by the *RGV(V)* (in a manner central to understanding that text's account of the *tathāgatagarbha* as *ātman*). Though the relationship between the *MMS* and *MPMS* is very much undetermined, the appearance of these qualities (in a somewhat unexpounded form) in just one version of the *MMS* might imply its adoption of them from the *MPMS*.[202]

Two portions of the *MPMS* concern themselves with the *viparyāsa*-s. The first, found in chapter 3 (in accord with Shimoda's model) concerns positive expressions of what is supermundane in a rather general sense.

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[201] Takasaki and Shimoda both refer to these four positive expressions as 德, i.e. **guṇa*, though this label only seems to arise in relation to these four qualities by the time of the *guṇapāramitā* in the *RGVV* (see p.285,ft.759). See Shimoda (1997: 202-205; E. 16-17); Takasaki (1975: 181); also Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 242).

[202] Takasaki (1974; 293-294) cautiously argues that an earlier account of the four qualites of the Buddha is found in the Chinese translation of the *Mahāmegha-Sūtra* (e.g. T.387,1082a18-a20), in which they are attributed to a Buddha. Suzuki (2001) considers this designation of the Buddha as *ātman* in the *MMS* (which makes only one mention of the *tathāgatagarbha*: T.387,1102b21) to have been inherited from the *MPMS*, but that the internalization of the *dhātu* as relic in Group 2 of the *MPMS* comes about through contact with the *MMS*. The relationship between these texts, especially considering the relative absence of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine from the *MMS*, remains unclear, but the above supports Shimoda's central thesis that the equation Buddha = *ātman* (*MPMS* stratum 1) predates *buddha-dhātu* = *ātman* (*MPMS* stratum 2): the latter coming about only after exchange between these texts.

Despite some problems in the text, we turn to the perhaps earliest form of this passage, found in *MPMS*^{C1}.[203]

餘人亦修無常、苦、空、非我之想。世尊，如人言日、月、星、宿、山、地轉，此非爲轉，但衆生眩惑，謂之[204]爲轉。

如是，人言無常、苦、空、非我。當知此等衆生亦是世俗眩惑。我等所修是平等修。

佛告比丘：如汝說喻，此譬喻中，說味說義，汝猶未解。我當[205]更說：

如人言日、月、山、地轉此非爲轉，但眩惑謂＊之爲轉。

如是，衆生[206]愚癡，顚倒計我、計常、計樂、計淨。然彼[207]佛者是我義。法身是常義；泥洹是樂義；假名諸法是淨義[208]。

MPMS^{C1}: T.376,862a5-a14.

[The monks said to the Buddha:] Other persons also continually cultivate the notions of impermanence, suffering, emptiness and lack of self. Lord, like a person saying that the sun, moon, stars, buildings, mountains and the earth are spinning, [but] they are not spinning, beings are confused, and consider them to be spinning.

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[203] See p.133,ft.332.
[204](之＝呼＜三＞＜宮＞＊＜聖＞)
[205] 更＝愛＜聖＞＊
[206] 衆生＋（心常）＜三＞＜宮＞,（常）＜聖＞
[207] 彼＝後＜聖＞. The sense of 彼 is unclear, though this must (as in our other versions) refer back to the positive expressions in the preceding lines.
[208]〔義〕－＜聖＞

> Like that, people say that there is impermanence, suffering, emptiness and non-self; it should be known that these beings are still worldly and confused. What we cultivate is the correct cultivation.
>
> The Buddha said to the monks: hence you teach in examples like this the flavour, and teach the meaning, [though] are not yet liberated. I shall explain: just as persons saying the sun, moon, mountains and earth spin when these are not in fact spinning, this is distortion of the unconditioned, which only the confused say is the distortion of the conditioned.
>
> Like this, beings foolishly distort and impute self, permanence, joy and purity. In these, the Buddha means 'self', *dharmakāya* means permanent, *nirvāṇa* means joy, what are conventionally designated as *dharma*-s mean purity.[209]

The monks here explain that as a person might see entities as moving, so those with distorted ideas (顛倒; *MPMS*^{T}: *phyin ci log*) who are confused consider there to be selfhood, permanence, joy and purity. These correspond to four *viparyāsa*-s; distorted views constituting the basic conceptual errors identified by earlier Buddhist tradition.[210] The qualification of the above

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[209] Compare *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,377b7-c12; *MPMS*^{T}: §100-101. Habata (2013) has also related this to *MPMS*^{SF} 8a.1-2, which, in a forthcoming article, she reconstructs to reflect '*(cat)[uv](i)[p](a)ryyā[s](ā)*', along with mention of '*(ni)[t]yam anityam*'; '*ātmā[n]*' and '*sukh[āt](m)[ā]*'. I am grateful to both Habata Hiromi, and Karashima Seishi (editor for a further volume on manuscripts from Central Asia), for making the content of this fragment available to me.

[210] For the more normative account of four *viparyāsa*-s, stressing the doctrines of non-self etc., see *AN*.II.52; *AKB*, in Pradhan (1975: 283,8-284,22); also *Śikṣasamuccaya*, Bendall (1957: 198,11-13): *anitye nitya iti*

distortions as pertaining to the 'conditioned' and 'unconditioned' is confusing, and not shared by our other two translations. The Buddha clarifies that there is another meaning to the monks' simile, referring instead to the 'distortion' of seeing what is properly 'real' as unreal. *MPMS*^{T} and *MPMS*^{C2} both clarify that the monks teach the words (of the simile), but not their meaning, i.e. the (correct) positive qualities.[211]

Constraints upon the length of this study force me to pass over the three equations in the above not concerned with the self.[212] Apart from the *dharmakāya*, *nirvāṇa*, and (the true state of) *dharma*-s, the term 'self' refers to the Buddha, perhaps as the more 'personal' expression of the above: i.e. he is the *real* self present in liberation, in contrast to what sentient beings lack. *MPMS*^{C1} goes on to state that the sense of these words is 'worldly', but the meaning is supermundane: a contrast which sets the 'Buddha as self' apart from any worldly, conventional person.[213] Hence the worldly signifier 'self' is here used to refer to that which transcends normal designation: i.e. the

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viparyāsabhayabhīto 'nātmany ātma iti viparyāsabhayabhīto 'śucau śucir iti viparyāsabhayabhīto duḥkhe sukham iti viparyāsabhayabhītaḥ.

[211] The relative lack of clarity in *MPMS*^{C1} may here reflect errors in Faxian's understanding: see p.133,ft.332.

[212] These equations are expanded further in *MPMS*^{C2} (T.374,377c9-c12), in a (no doubt later) form, as follows: *anātman*=*saṃsāra*; *atmān*=Tathāgata; anitya=*śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s; *nitya*=*tathāgata-dharmakāya*; *duḥkha*=all *tīrthika*-s; *sukha*=*nirvāṇa*; *aśubha*=*saṃskṛta*; *śubha*=the *saddharma* of Buddhas and *bodhisattva*-s.

[213] *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,862a24-25: 汝等當知名味者世間法。義者出世間法; *MPMS*^{T}: §101,39-40: *yi ge zhes bya ba ni 'jig rten pa zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go // don ces bya ba ni 'jig rten las 'das pa'i ye shes so //*
This is again reminiscent of the *Lokānuvartana-Sūtra*'s account of the supermundane Buddha: see T.807; also Harrison (1982, 214-219). See also *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374, 377c12-13.

supermundane person of the Buddha, which is one aspect of awakened reality conceived also as permanent, blissful and pure in character.

Hodge expresses doubt that the above equations were part of the earliest material of the text, being as they are something of a *non sequitur* in the direction of the passage in which they appear.[214] Surely though this accounts only for the very specific equations of the four *guṇa*-s with the Buddha, *dharmakāya*, *nirvāṇa* and *dharma*, and not the distortions themselves (which do not seem to jar at all). As the Buddha's permanence is the first concern of stratum 1, it might follow that adoption of the four *viparyāsa*-s to express this, an elegant use of existing Buddhist categories, would require a correct sense of selfhood. The authors of the *MPMS*, without expounding this at length, seem to have in mind the liberated 'person' that is the Buddha, who permanently abides in a state of blissful liberation.[215]

The above clearly set the stage for later developers of the *MPMS* to extend this designation of the Buddha to sentient beings. Chapter 12 of the text (by name concerned with the *viparyāsa*-s) belongs to what Shimoda sees as the second stratum of the text (i.e. after its adoption of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine), in which the four positive qualities are here explained in a manner distinguishable from that in chapter 3, and the 'true self' properly refers to the *tathāgatagarbha*.

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[214] Hodge (2012: 42).

[215] Radich (2011: 256-282) follows Shimoda's view that the oldest material of the *MPMS* is now present in chapter 5, concerning the Buddha's *vajrakāya* that is distinct from any corruptible, earthly body. For the central equation of *vajrakāya* with *dharmakāya*, see e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,866a16-18; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,382c27-c29; *MPMS*^{T}: §144.

In considering these we must again pass over three of the four *viparyāsa*-s. Concerning non-self and self, it is evident that the correct sense of self does not here refer to the Buddha *per se*:

> 非我我想顛倒，我非我想顛倒。言一切世間有我，是爲顛倒。佛説如來性是眞實我，而於此義作非我修，是名第三顛倒。
>
> *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,883b3-5.

> Thinking what is not self as self is a distortion; thinking what is self is not self is a distortion. Saying that in all worlds there is a self, this is a distortion. The Buddha taught that the nature of the *tathāgata* is the true self; with respect to this meaning cultivating not-self, this is called the third distortion.

> *bdag med pa la bdag tu 'du shes pa ni phyin ci log yin no //*
> *bdag yod pa la bdag med par 'du shes pa ni phyin ci log yin no //*
> *de la 'jig rten pa rnams la bdag yod ces te / 'jig rten pa bzhin du sangs rgyas kyi gsung la yang bdag yod pa ma yin te / de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po'i ming yang med do zhes bdag med pa sgom pa 'di ni phin ci log gsum pa'o //*
>
> *MPMS*^{T}: §373.

> Having the notion of self in regards to what is without self, this is a distortion; having the notion of absence of self in regards to what is

with self, this is a distortion. Worldly persons say that the self exists; in the words of the Buddha however there is not a self like that. Stating that 'the *tathāgatagarbha* doesn't even exist by name': that way cultivating non-self, this is the third distortion.

MPMS^{C1} here introduces what is most likely the *tathāgata-dhātu*, which is said to be the 'true self', in contrast to the erroneous self of worldly persons, called by *MPMS*^{T} the *tathāgatagarbha*. It is very clear that this distortion now refers not to the Buddha himself, but the nature of a Buddha in the constitution of beings. *MPMS*^{C2} adds that both worldly persons and the Buddha's teaching both have a notion of self, but that the former lacks a Buddha-nature that is the *true* self: what the worldly mistake, in a sense, is the correct referent for their designation.[216] This version then also states the following.

若言佛法必定無我，是故如來勅諸弟子，修習無我，名爲顛倒。

MPMS^{C2}: T.374,407a25-26.

…if it is said that the Buddha's *dharma* certainly has non-self, and because of this the Tathāgata warns his disciples to culviate non-self, this is a distortion [i.e. that of non-self for what is self]'.

Hence *MPMS*^{C2} clarifies that 1) wrong notions of self lack their correct referent (i.e. the *buddha-dhātu*), and 2) that the Buddha does *not* teach non-

[216] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,407a20-a26.

self because the expression 'self' has no referent: two nuances of this doctrine which we must keep in mind as we proceed.

Clearly the subject of the *MPMS* shifted from the Buddha to the *buddha-dhātu* that is an epithet for the *tathāgatagarbha*. As these two terms are certainly not perfectly equivalent, we should address the nuances of the former.

3.4 *The* Buddha-dhātu and Ātman

The *buddha/tathāgata-dhātu* takes centre stage not just in the *MPMS*, but features heavily in the *AMS* and *MBhS* that are inheritors of much of its doctrine. We have encountered this term already in the *TGS*, though in that text it certainly does not bear the same weight as in the *MPMS*.[217] An important distinction between this and the *tathāgatagarbha*, identified by Seyfort Ruegg, is that the *dhātu* is 'present not only on this level of ordinary sentient beings but also, evidently, on the level of buddhahood itself': i.e. it communicates nothing of a state of affliction suggested by the term *tathāgatagarbha*.[218]

To summarize the polyvalency of the term *dhātu*, we should consider denotations provided by Edgerton (who provides references for each).[219]
1) 'Physical element': a constitutent of the physical world. Sometimes a synonym for any of the four (or five, including *ākāśa*) *mahābhūta*-s or 'basic elements' of the world.

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[217] See p.61.
[218] Seyfort Ruegg (1989a: 19).
[219] See Edgerton (1953b: 282-283).

2) ‘Element’: in the sense of a bodily constituent. e.g. bodily humours.

3) ‘Psycho-physical constituents’ (seemingly not relevant here).[220]

4) ‘Element of the mind’. This could by extension refer to one’s nature or character.

5) ‘Sphere or region’.

6) ‘Abundance or world’: developed from the above sense of a ‘region’. These last two senses are not relevant here, but are worth keeping in mind as we address the rest of the *tathāgatagarbha* corpus (e.g. in the context of the *AAN*, addressed later).[221]

7) ‘Elemental bodily substance’: a relic or bodily remains, e.g. those held in a *stūpa*.[222]

We can add to this 1a) ‘a cause’, as identified in Monier-Williams.[223] Importantly, this is strictly in the sense of causal ground, i.e. some element that can be the basis for the generation of something else. As Takasaki writes, the term *dhātu* in the expression *buddha-dhātu* seems to signify two things: a) the nature (*dhātu* as *svabhāva*; *dharmatā*) of the Buddha (definition 3), and b) the cause (*dhātu* as *hetu*) of the Buddha, i.e. that reality which,

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[220] These being the six sense-bases, six sense-objects and six modes of perception that comprise any act of perception. Indeed the etymology of these may well be as ‘constitutent elements’ of sentient beings, which are of course composed of the *skandha*-s.

[221] See chapters 4.8; 5.5.

[222] For alternative accounts, see Takasaki (1975: 179-180); Habata (2014: 155-156).

[223] Monier-Williams cites this as a ‘primary cause’ (*hetu*), to be distinguished from any causal condition (*pratyaya*). Compare *RGVV* 1.149-152, Johnston (1950: 72,10): *atas tatprāpraye hetus tathāgatadhātur iti*. See also *MSA(B)* 3.2, Lévy (1907,10-11) for an account of multiple *dhātu*-s across beings; Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 145 ft.3). See also Monier-Williams (2005: 313c-314a).

upon full manifestation, results in a Buddha (definition 1a).[224] To these we might add Shimoda's vital contention that the term began its life in the *MPMS* in the context of definition 7: that the first stratum of the *MPMS* concerns the permanence of the Buddha, whose ostensible presence in the world is in his enshrined bodily remains.

It is possible that the *buddha-dhātu* also carries the sense of definition 2, which as we shall see later may drift close to the sense of self found in the upaniṣadic tradition.[225] Whatever the case, we must be aware that whenever some *dhātu*, compounded with *buddha-* or otherwise, appears in this literature it may evoke not just one of the above meanings at any time.

Modes of translating this term are of course also important. In Tibetan the term *dhātu* is most commonly rendered by *khams* or *dbyings*, both of which are standard modes of translating *dhātu* in the context of, for example, the eighteen *dhātu*-s (definition 3). However both have foremost the sense of a realm or expanse (definitions 5-7), and in translating the *buddha-dhātu* are expressed always in Tibetan in a gentive relation to the term Buddha (*sangs rgyas*).[226] As such we can be confident that translators read a *ṣaṣṭhī tatpuruṣa* compound: i.e. 'a *dhātu* of a/the Buddha' possessed by beings.

The distinct senses of *dhātu* are better captured by Chinese translators, which in translations corresponding to the Tibetan *khams* and *dbyings* employ either 界 or 性. The former has the sense of definitions 6 and

[224] Takasaki (1966b: 91). Elsewhere Takasaki (1974: 181) suggests that this sense of *dhātu* may have been picked up by the *MPMS* from the *AAN*, though he does not find conclusive evidence of this position. For the dating of the *AAN*, see p.372,ft.962.
[225] See chapter 4.4.2.
[226] See Candra (1961: 76; 571).

7, though again like the Tibetan expressions was sometimes adopted as a translation for *dhātu* in all senses. The latter (more common in the *MPMS*-group) has only the sense of a nature, i.e. definition 4. In so far as this translates *dhātu*, the translators have clearly understood there to be a 'nature of a Buddha'.[227]

The *MPMS* suggests this to be some permanent nature fundamental to the constitution of beings. As a *tathāgatagarbha* expression, the *MPMS* contrasts the *buddha-dhātu* with *kleśa*-s that, following the definition of the *sattva* found in the *TGS*, might be considered the additional, *accidental* constitutents of any *sattva*.[228] With *kleśa*-s removed, there exists only the *buddha-dhātu*, which presumably without these afflictions could simply be called a Buddha.[229] In accord with *TGS*^{C1}, the *tathāgatagarbha* of the *MPMS* appears to be some entity, or set of qualities, present in beings; however the term *tathāgatagarbha* is reflected sparingly in *MPMS*^{C1}, in favour of 如來性. Hodge considers this evidence that the term *tathāgatagarbha* postdates the use of some independent 'Buddha-nature' doctrine in the development of the *MPMS*, though this could instead reflect Faxian's standardization of different expressions as 如來性, which became an important touchstone of Chinese Buddhism in general.[230]

We have seen that the *MPMS* developed the equation 'Buddha = *ātman*' into '*buddha-dhātu* = *ātman*'. However another development is discernable, which sees this second *ātman* partially eclipsed by the 'safer'

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[227] See Nakamura (1980: 712c; 824b); also the entry for 佛性 (1193d).
[228] See p.32-33.
[229] See p.87.
[230] Hodge (2012: 42-43; 52-54).

language of the *tathāgatagarbha*: suggested by *MPMS*^{T} and its preference for the latter. We might then chart the development of the expression *ātman* in the *MPMS* as follows.

1) Buddha = *ātman*
2) *buddha-dhātu* = the *real ātman* (of beings)
3) *buddha-dhātu*/*ātman* glossed as *tathāgatagarbha*.

3.5 ***Acceptance of Non-Self***

Before addressing the material of the *MPMS* most concerned with the true self, we should again address chapter 3 of the text: the core content of which is recognized by Shimoda as belonging to the first stratum of the *MPMS*. This chapter, belonging to material that considers the term *ātman* a suitable designator for the Buddha, still espouses the doctrine of *anātman* as the means by which one attains awakening.

As relevant passages are considerably longer in both *MPMS*^{T} and *MPMS*^{C2}, we start with the concise, possibly earlier form found in *MPMS*^{C1}.

> 猶如蘆草，及伊蘭樹，無有堅實，此身如是。我、人、壽命等無有堅固。
>
> 佛告比丘：汝等如是修無我想耶。
>
> *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,862a2-a5.

> [The Buddha said] In the manner that reeds, grass [and similar] up to the castor tree have no substantial reality, this body is like that. The *ātman*, *puruṣa*, *jīva*, etc. have no concrete existence.
> The Buddha said to the monks: Like this should you cultivate the notion of non-self.

Castor beans are notable for having no odour or taste, which we must assume is what is meant when it is stated that they lack any substantial reality. The body, similarly, is said to not have an *ātman* (or any equivalent notion of self: see chapter 3.6.3.1) 'essential' to it. *MPMS*^{T} provides more.

> *gzhan yang e raṇḍa la ni snying po mchis mi srid pa de bzhin du / lus 'di la yang bdag dang / sems can dang / srog dang / gang zag dang / shed las skyes pa dag / shed bu dang / byed pa po mchis mi srid de / de lta bur bdag cag gis bdag ma mchis pa'i 'du shes bsgoms te mang du bgyis lags so //*
> *dper gsol na phub ma skon pa byed pa snyed bor ba ni cir yang mi gces pa de bzhin du / lus 'di la yang bdag ma mchis so //*
> *dper gsol na / kha sral gyi me tog la dri bda' ba ma mchis pa de bzhin du lus 'di la yang bdag ma mchis te / de ltar bdag cag gis bdag ma mchis pa'i 'du shes bsgoms te / mang du bgyis lags so /*
>
> *MPMS*^{T}: §98,1-§99,5.

> Furthermore, in castor there does not exist an essence; like that, in the body an *ātman*, *sattva*, *jīva*, *pudgala*, *manuja*, *mānava*, *kartṛ* do not exist. In this way we constantly cultivate the idea of non-existence of the self.
>
> For example, exterior chaff, no matter how much there is of it, is not valuable at all. Like that, this body has no self.
>
> For example, the *saptaparṇa* plant is without fragrance; like that, this body also lacks self. Hence we continuously cultivate the notion of there being no self.[231]

We find here a long list of synonyms for the empirical self, which as detailed later evokes older lists of such designators found in other Buddhist sources.[232] Of note also is the comparison to the *saptaparṇa* plant, which like the castor bean is without fragrance and hence, it is implied, without 'essence'.[233] *MPMS*^{C2} is very clear in stating that the physical body is without self or master (主), and that the abandoning of a sense of self (我慢) leads to *nirvāṇa*.[234] It also compares the absence of a self to the trail of a bird in the sky, which the monks of *MPMS*^{T} take further.[235]

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[231] Compare *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,377a25-b5.
[232] See chapter 4.4.1. Also Habata (1990: 177-178)
[233] The *saptaparṇa* is not mentioned in *MPMS*^{C1}, and is a somewhat odd addition bearing in mind that known varieties of this species (*alstonia scholaris*) are not lacking in fragrance: see Blum (2013: 58,ft.37).
[234] See *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,377b1-2. This absence of 'mastery' is explored further in regards to the doctrine of the *MBhS*: see chapter 5.3.
[235] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,377b5.

bcom ldan 'das kyis kyang dge slong dag chos thams cad ni bdag med pa ste / de ltar sgoms shig dang / de ltar bsgoms pa rnams kyis bdag tu 'dzin pa spang bar 'gyur ro // bdag tu 'dzin pa yongs su spangs na mya ngan las 'das pa thob par 'gyur ro zhes bka' stsal te /
bcom ldan 'das de ltar chos thams cad bdag ma mchis pa'i slad du bdag ma mchis pa'i 'du zhes bsgoms te / mang du bgyis lags so // gzhan yang ji ltar nam mkha' la bya'i rjes gda' ba mi srid pa de bzhin du / bdag ma mchis pa'i 'du shes bsgoms na lta ba'i rnam pa thams cad dag bral bar 'gyur lags so //

MPMS^{T}: §99,6-14.

The Bhagavan also said: Monks! All *dharma*-s are without self: cultivate that [idea]; who so cultivates will abandon attachment to the self. Having thoroughly abandoned attachment to self, [he] achieves *parinirvāṇa*.
[The monks responded:] Lord, in order to realize that all *dharma*-s lack self, we continually practice non-self. Furthermore, just as in the sky a bird leaves no trail, like that do we cultivate the idea of non-self, and then there arises freedom from all kinds of views.[236]

This demonstrates not only that the *MPMS* held firmly to some doctrine of *anātman* – indeed, one firmly within the tradition of Buddhist teaching – but also that it considered abandonment of a sense of self vital for approaching

[236] Compare *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,377b3-b6.

liberation. As so much of the above is not present in *MPMS*^{C1}, it is possible that the authors of later versions saw it necessary to stress that they accepted and valued still a doctrine of *anātman*, despite adopting a doctrine of a 'true' self, also.

However this last image – of the bird's trail in the sky – provides an exemplary contrast with material found in a later stratum of the text. In chapter 15 we encounter the following discussion of the *buddha-dhātu*, conceived very much as a self imperceptible to sentient beings.

> 如鳥飛空不見其跡，無有天眼，煩惱未斷，不自見身如來之性。是故我說[237]有法無我。爲煩惱故說微密教，其諸衆生，無有天眼而計吾我。
>
> *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,890a7-a10.

> Just as a bird flying in the sky has a trail that cannot be seen, [beings] lack the divine vision and, not yet rid of afflictions, cannot by their own eye see the nature of a *tathāgata* in their bodies: hence I say that [all] existing *dharma*-s are without self. For the sake of [clearing] afflictions, I give the hidden teaching, regarding which sentient beings, lacking divine vision, impute a [wrong notion of] self.[238]

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[237] 說有法＝爲彼說＜元＞＜明＞＜宮＞＜聖＞

[238] Compare *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,415c14-c17; *MPMS*^{T}: §99,12-14. Interestingly, the *MPMS* also states that the Buddha refers to those in the Mahāyāna as having 'Buddha-vision' (佛眼), due to their belonging to the *buddhayāna*. See *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,876b20-b25; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,397b22-397b27; *MPMS*^{T}: §301.

…dper na sa la 'dug pa'i mi lha'i mig med pas nam mkha' la bya 'phur ba'i rjes mi mthong ba de bzhin du / nyon mongs pa la gnas pa rnams kyis bdag nyid la snying po'i mchog yod pa bdag gis mi mthong ste / de bas na ngas dgongs pa'i tshig gis bdag med do zhes bstan to //
lha'i mig med pa'i mi rnams kyis ni bdag la bdag yod du zin kyang mi mthong ste / nyon mongs pa yin no zhes nga zer ro //

MPMS^{T}: §451,1-7.

…thus does [the Buddha] teach: for example, on the ground there are persons without the divine vision who cannot see the trail of a bird in the sky. Like that, due to abiding amid afflictions, they cannot see the existence of the supreme essence (*snying po'i mchog*) in themselves.[239] Therefore I have, by intentional speech, taught non-self.[240] Those lacking the divine vision, though they accept a self in themselves, do not see it, [due to] being afflicted.

Hence we see the text move from expressing the well-accepted doctrine of *anātman*, towards the caveat that what *cannot* be perceived by sentient beings is precisely the *buddha-dhātu*, which, misconceived, again appears to be the cause of wrong notions of the self.[241]

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[239] *bdag nyid* here seems to refer to the conventional person, i.e. the *sattva*, in contrast to their (proper) self (*bdag*): a distinction explored further in chapter 4.7. See also Habata (1993: 176).
[240] Regarding the hidden/intentional teachings reflected by *MPMS*^{C1}/^{T} respectively, see p.113,ft.283.
[241] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,417,c17: 無天眼者，不知眞我，横計我故。

It is this tension between adhereing to non-self and promoting a correct notion of selfhood that shall occupy the rest of this chapter. Having accepted that the authors of the *MPMS*, though deeming the Buddha to exhibit the character of a self, accept still the doctrine of *anātman* concerning sentient beings, we see in its later material the inclusion of a self that is certainly not confined to being an epithet for the Buddha. Rather this is the 'true' self of sentient beings, distinct from that which is to be abandoned.

3.6 *Parables Regarding the* Buddha-dhātu

As in the case of the similes of the *TGS*, we would be wrong to attribute to the extended parables of the *MPMS* any formalized doctrinal content: no one of these explains exhaustively the Buddha-nature, nor communicates significant import in every aspect of its story.[242] However we should address both explanations of these parables – clearly intended to communicate doctrinal content to its audience – and any implied presumptions regarding the *tathāgatagarbha*/*ātman* that we might discern beneath these.[243]

3.6.1 *Teaching the True Self*

The first parable we shall address concerns teaching the true self, but belongs to earlier content of the *MPMS* (again from chapter 3) concerned with this as a designation for the Buddha. It is preceded by our earlier account of the *viparyāsa*-s (see chapter 3.3), which culminates in what can be called 'the

[242] See pp.54-55.
[243] As attempted in regards to the *TGS*, in chapter 2.4.

parable of the divers': the only portion of the *MPMS* reproduced by the *RGVV*, to which we must return in a later chapter.[244] For now, it will suffice to know that this parable adds little to the account of the (eight) *viparyāsa*-s given above: affirming that a correct notion of selfhood, permanence etc. belongs to what is supermundane, i.e. one or other aspect of liberation.[245]

Our interest, however, is in the parable that follows this discussion and clearly concerns itself with how one should reconcile this Buddhist 'self' with the well-established teaching of *anātman*. This concerns precisely the 'true self', though not as yet explicitly called part of the constitution of sentient beings, or (accordingly) identified as the *buddha-dhātu*. However this passage defends use of this term from other notions of selfhood which clearly *do* take as their subject 'beings' as opposed to Buddhas: implying that this might be the earliest material of the *MPMS* to defend a correct usage of the language of selfhood from confusion with erroneous, worldly notions of the self.

This parable recounts the story of an unskilled physician to a naïve king, who prescribes a milk-based remedy for all kinds of ills.[246] He is replaced in his duties by a more skilled practitioner, who has the king outlaw that milk medicine, which was being taken both when it was appropriate and when not, (going so far as to have the king threaten with execution those in his kingdom who still imbibe it). However the king himself falls ill to a sickness, the cure for which is precisely this outlawed drink, which the good physician

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[244] See chapter 7.1.2.

[245] See *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,862b8-b21; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,377c22-37c28; *MPMS*^{T}: §104.

[246] *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,862b24-863a3; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,378a17-c18; *MPMS*^{T}: §106.

duly prescribes. The king questions his physician's judgement, who appears to have contradicted his earlier condemnation of the drink, warranting the following response.

> 譬如板木，有虫食跡，似王[247]名字。不善書者，謂是眞字；其善書者，乃知非眞[248]。先醫如是：雖合乳藥，不知分別時節所應。
>
> *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,862c15-c17.

> For example, a sheet of wood has the trail of an insect's bite marks, resembling his majesty's name. Those who are not skilled writers consider these to be real letters; those who are skilled writers know that they are not real. The former [unskilled] doctor was like this: even if [able to] concoct the milk-remedy, he did not discern the [right] time to prescribe it.[249]

The comparison is then made between the good physician and the Buddha, in which the bad physician is equated with the *tīrthika*-s (外道; *mu stegs pa*), who are subjugated by the Buddha. The clearest version of this explanation is that provided by *MPMS*^{T}.

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[247] 王＝生＜元＞＜明＞
[248] 書者乃知非眞＝別者知非書字本＜三＞＜宮＞, 別者乃知非書字本＜聖＞
[249] Compare *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,378b27-c2; *MPMS*^{T}: §106,69-74.

mu stegs pa rnams tshar gcad pa'i phyir bdag med do // sems can med do // srog med do // gang zag med do zhes gsung ngo //

mu stegs pa rnams kyis bdag bstan pa ni srin bus brkos pa'i yi ge dang 'dra ste / de'i phyir nga sems can thams cad la bdag med do zhes bstan pa ston par mdzad do //

MPMS^{T}: §107,7-12.

In order to subjugate the *tīrthika*-s, I said there was no *ātman*, no *sattva*, no *jīva*, no *pudgala*.

The *tīrthika*-s' teaching of an existing self is like the letters carved out by worms: hence I teach that in all beings there is no self.[250]

Again the *tīrthika*-s have taught unacceptable notions of selfhood, and required suppressing. However, the Buddha now sees that there *is* need for a teaching of self, akin to the good physician who must cure the ailment of the king. We draw two conclusions from this: first, that the Buddha employs a teachings of self or non-self for the purpose of leading one audience or another to awakening (an idea not unique to this text).[251] For the most part it must be taught that no self exists: the *MPMS* again lists designators for the empirical self which, as discussed earler, are still to be rejected.[252] But there

[250] Compare *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,863a7-a9; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,378c21-c23.
[251] See e.g. Jayatilleke (1963: 361-362). Regarding the range of teachings given by the Buddha's, see also chapters 5.6 and 6.2.2.
[252] A more extensive list of these designators appears in the *AMS*: see chapter 4.4.1.

remains a true sense of self, taught now to some audience in need of further correction.

Secondly, this parable tells us more about the relationship between the 'true' self and that of the *tīrthika*-s, or extraneous, *ātmavādin* teachers, as perceived by the *MPMS*.[253] Their *ātmavāda*, though wrong-minded, employs a designation that belongs properly in the *saddharma* in reference to the Buddha. Much like the worms' 'carved out' letters, the *tīrthika*-s do not understand what is signified when they say that there exists a self, but like them also produce something with the semblance of truth.[254] In short, the correct referent to the term '*ātman'*, unknown to but gestured at by the *tīrthika*-s, is what the audience is intended to draw from the *MPMS*.

The prevalence of wrong-minded *ātmavāda* teaching in the world, despite its verity when referring to the Buddha, is reason enough for the Buddha to teach what appears to be the opposite: the absolute non-existence of the self.

> 一切衆生，承如來言[255]，展轉相教，皆説無我。此是如來，知時方便，濟衆生故，説一切法，其性無我。
>
> 非如世間，所受吾我；故説一切法[256]，其性無我。時復説我，如彼良[257]醫，明乳藥法。

[253] See chapter 8.2.
[254] See Habata (1990: 183-184).
[255] 言＝教＜三＞＜宮＞＜聖＞
[256] 法其性＝諸法＜三＞＜宮＞＜聖＞
[257] 良＝善＜三＞＜宮＞＜聖＞

當知我者是實。 我者常住、非變易法、非磨滅法。我者是德。我者自在。如善乳藥醫，如來亦然：爲諸衆生，説眞實法。 一切四衆，當如是學。

MPMS^{C1}: T.376,863a9-a16.

All beings accepted the Tathāgata's teaching, then taught one another, all propounding [the idea of] 'non-self'. This is because the Tathāgata, knowing the time and the skill in means for rescuing sentient beings, taught that all phenomena are characterized by non-self.
This [real self] is not the self that is accepted by the worldly; hence [the Buddha] taught that all phenomena have the character of non-self.
When again [the Buddha] taught a self, he is like that good doctor understanding the workings of the milk-medicine.
You should know that the self is real. The self is eternally abiding, not subject to change, not subject to destruction. The self is a quality, the self is a master. Like the doctor skilled in the milk-medicine, the Tathāgata is just so: teaching the true *dharma* for the sake of sentient beings. All the four communities [monks, nuns etc.], they should study this!

bdag med pa ni sangs rgyas kyi tshig yin no zhes chos kyi bka' 'dogs par mdzad nas / yang gdul bar bya ba rnams kyi dbang dang sems can rnams la phan pa'i phyir dus mkhyen par mdzad nas / chos thams cad

bdag med par bstan pa'i skabs de nyid du sman pa bzang po bzhin du bdag yod do zhes yang dag par ston par mdzad de /
'jig rten pa rnams kyi bdag mthe bong tsam dang / khre rgod kyi 'bru tsam zhes bya ba de lta bu ni ma yin no // 'jig rten pa rnams kyi bdag tu lta ba gang yin pa de lta bu yang ma yin te / 'dir chos thams cad ni bdag med pa zhes bya'o //
chos thams cad ni bdag med pa yang ma yin te / bdag ni de kho na nyid do // bdag ni rtag pa nyid do // bdag ni yon tan nyid do // bdag ni ther zug pa nyid do // bdag ni brtan pa nyid do // bdag ni zhi ba nyid do zhes sman pa bzang po'i 'o ma bzhin du de bzhin gshegs pa yang de kho na nyid dang ldan pa ston par mdzad do // de sgom pa la 'khor bzhi po rnams kyis brtson par gyis shig /

MPMS^{T}: §107,13-27.

[The Buddha] has said that 'the absence of self is the Buddha's word', though that was made known for the initiation of those yet to be taught and for the benefit of sentient beings; knowing the right time, [but] upon the teaching of the lack of self in all *dharma*-s, in the manner of the good doctor, he taught correctly that there is a self.
The worldly persons say that the self is thumb-sized, or the size of a millet-grain, but it is not like that. Whatever is like the worldly persons' view of the self, it is not like that; in this [sense], it must be said that all *dharma*-s lack self.

> But it is not the case that all *dharma*-s are without self; there is a self that is true. The self is permanence; the self is [positive] character; the self is eternality; the self is stability; the self is peace: thus, like the good milk remedy of the physician, the Tathāgata also teaches in accord with reality. Such a cultivation should be practiced by the four communities [of the *saṅgha*].

MPMS^{C2} is very similar to *MPMS*^{T}: notably in its mention of the self imputed as being like a thumb (拇指), a mustard seed (芥子), or like a tiny particle (微塵).[258] We should note in the above a distinction between two types of self that are to be rejected: what we might call 1) the empirical self, represented by various designators for the person acting in the world, and 2) the 'sublime' self, compared poetically to one sized entity or another.[259]

Both are representative of different worldly notions of the self: the former being denied across a multitude of earlier Buddhist sources, while the latter strongly reminiscent of images found in upaniṣadic literature concerning the subliminal *ātman* within the body (e.g. the thumb-sized man of the *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad*).[260] The former demonstrates awareness by the authors of the *MPMS* of received Buddhist teaching about non-self, while the latter a

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[258] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,378c28-c29. Though chapter 4.4.2 examines these images as pertaining to discourse on selfhood, comparison with a mustard seed should be noted as a feature of wider Buddhist literature concerning relics (*dhātu*), which are of course integral to the *buddha-dhātu* as an internalized, permanent 'relic' of the Buddha. Two such accounts in texts sharing some similarities with the *MPMS* are found in the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-Sūtra* and *Mahāmegha-Sūtra*: see Skilling (2005: 288-292).

[259] See also p.11,ft.26.

[260] See e.g. *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* 4.12-13; 6.17 (Ollivell 394-395; 402-403). Again, see also chapter 4.4.2.

familiarity with the milieu of the *upaniṣad*-s (notably absent in the earlier recension represented by *MPMS*^{C1}).[261] More examples of both types of selfhood are presented by the *AMS*, and shall be discussed later.[262]

Let us instead focus on what the true self is here affirmed to be. All three versions testify to a true self possessing certain qualities. *MPMS*^{C2} clarifies that 'any *dharma* that is real, true, permanent, a master and a foundation that does not change is called a self', the implication being that these are all fitting descriptions of an awakened being.[263] We will revisit this 'mastery' (*MPMS*^{C1} 自在; *MPMS*^{C2} 主), shared by both Chinese versions, in the chapter on the *MBhS*.[264] *MPMS*^{C1} calls the self 'eternally abiding', or in *MPMS*^{T} both permanence (*rtag pa nyid*, **nityatva*) and eternality (*ther zug pa nyid*, **śāśvatatva*).[265] This is pertinent, as of course this material of the *MPMS* is concerned foremost with the Buddha's existence after his bodily death: that is precisely his permanent existence (construed in *MPMS*^{T}, perhaps, as also his eternality *prior* to manifesting in the world). Both of these, as discussed earlier, are attributes of the self denied by earlier Buddhist sources. Finally,

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[261] See Habata (1990: 183)

[262] Chapter 4.4.1.

[263] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,379a1-a3: 若法是實是、眞是、常是、主是、依性不變易(〔易〕－<宋>)者(〔者〕－<元><明><宮>)， 是名爲我。

[264] See chapter 5.3.

[265] It should be noted that these are not equivalent. Habata (2014: 152-155) addresses the sense of *nitya* as the (permanent) presence of the Buddha, rather than temporal 'eternality', which appears only a secondary concern of the *MPMS*, when the term *śāśvata* is clearly present. See also Hara (1959: 90-96).
I note that the *SPS*, though no doubt of infuence upon the *MPMS*, does not consider the lifetime of the Buddha in terms of permanence, so much as immeasurability: see Pye (2002).

both *MPMS*^{C1} and *MPMS*^{T} also deem the self to be a 'quality', perhaps translating the Sanskrit *guṇa* (or *MPMS*^{T}: *yon tan nyid*, **guṇatva*), lacking in *MPMS*^{C2}, which may reflect the self being 'of positive character', though the precise meaning of this attribution is unclear and does not appear in other discussions of the self that we shall address.[266]

This parable may represent a watershed in the development of this doctrine: used here as an epithet for the Buddha, but clearly contrasted with worldly notions of the self with which, importantly, it *can* (though should not) be confused. The Buddha of the *MPMS* is then stated to have the attributes denied to sentient beings (who lack a self), but crucially the subsequent introduction of the *buddha-dhātu* locates this self *back* into the constitution of those who are not awakened. Indeed an entire chapter of the *MPMS* is given over to understanding how this self is something attributable not just to a Buddha, but also to the proper character of sentient beings.

3.6.2 *The Nature of the True Self*

Chapter 13, as already mentioned, is concerned by name with the *tathāgata-dhātu*. It also follows that chapter which reconfigured the four *viparyāsa*-s to be concerned with the *tathāgatagarbha*, and as such is the heart of the 'later' *MPMS* (Shimoda's stratum 2.2) and its teaching of the true self present in all beings. We can do worse than follow the trajectory of this chapter, commencing with the monk Kāśyapa's opening question to the Buddha.

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[266] See p.285,ft.759.

迦葉菩薩復白佛言：世尊， 如來有我，二十五有，爲有爲無？

佛告迦葉：眞實我者，是如來性。當知一切衆生悉有，但彼衆生，無量煩惱覆蔽不現。

MPMS^{C1}: T.376,883b14-b17.

The *bodhisattva* Kāśyapa again asked the Buddha: Lord, the self of the Tathāgata, is this or is this not [among] the twenty-five existences?
The Buddha said to Kāśyapa: the true self is the nature of the *tathāgata*. You should know that all sentient beings have this, but as sentient beings are covered by immeasurable afflictions it is not manifested.

bcom ldan 'das ci lags / srid pa nyi shu rtsa lnga la bdag mchis zhes bgyi 'am / ma mchis zhes bgyi /
bka' stsal pa / bdag ces bya ba ni de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po'i don to // sangs rgyas kyi khams ni sems can thams cad la yod mod kyi / de yang nyon mongs pa'i rnam pa rnams kyis bsgribs te / bdag nyid la yod bzhin du sems can rnams kyis mthong bar mi nus so //

MPMS^{T}: §375,4-§376,5.

Lord, is there a self in the twenty-five existences, or is there not?
[The Buddha] replied: What is called the self refers to the *tathagatagarbha* in meaning. In every being there is the *buddha-dhatu*,

> however enshrouded by all kinds of afflictions, sentient beings cannot see it within themselves.[267]

These twenty-five existences mentioned here are referred to elsewhere in the *MPMS*-group, always without qualification by any text, but certainly designating the possible forms of birth in *saṃsāra*.[268] The Buddha ignores the form of Kāśyapa's question, which suggests that thinking there to be a self in these terms is misplaced. Rather, there is the *tathāgata-dhātu*, called the true self (眞實我), which in both *MPMS*^{T} and *MPMS*^{C2} is called also the *buddha-dhātu* (*sangs rgyas kyi khams*; 佛性) and *tathāgatagarbha*.[269]

Here Hodge perceives a key development of the *MPMS*: arguing that the earlier stratum of the text affirmed the existence of a 'true' self in response to Kāśyapa's question. According to Hodge, the Sanskrit text was subject to an interlinear gloss in terms of the *tathāgata-dhātu*, which became part of the text proper prior to the account reflected by *MPMS*^{C1}. This was in turn glossed again as denoting the *tathāgatagarbha*, which lead to the account of *MPMS*^{T}.[270] However this would be to propose a text espousing a self within sentient beings *prior* to the innovation of the *buddha-dhātu* doctrine: surely an unacceptable leap. Hence I find it more likely that Kāśyapa's ignorance

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[267] Compare also *MPMS*^{C1}: T.374,407b7-b10.
[268] See Nakamura (1980: 1045c); Blum (2013: 372). Chinese tradition takes these 25 as 14 existences in the *kāmadhātu*; 7 in the *rūpadhātu* and 4 in the *arūpyadhātu*. The *MPMS* states that these are detailed in the *Śūraṅgamasamādhi-Sūtra* (*MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,872a7; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,390a7-a8; *MPMS*^{T}: §215,1-6), though this does not appear to feature in either the extant Chinese translation of that text (T.642), nor that preserved in the *bka' 'gyur* (e.g. D.132; Q.800).
[269] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,407b9-10.
[270] Hodge (2012: 54).

regarding the correct notion self is here informed by the revelation of the *buddha-dhātu*, which admittedly may not have been so present in an earlier form of the text, but nevertheless is needed to close the conceptual gap between 1) the Buddha as a self and 2) sentient beings possessing the true self.

The Buddha of this chapter presents a further series of parables, the first of which bears a great similarity to the fifth simile of the *TGS*.[271] *MPMS*^{C1} is very clear, and recounts the story of a poor man ignorant of a treasure buried beneath his house. A kind visitor, who knows of the treasure, promises to reveal it to the poor man if he agrees to work for him. Having agreed to do as much the poor man is then given the fortune that was already beneath his feet.[272]

Curiously, both *MPMS*^{T} and *MPMS*^{C2} present a version of the story in which a poor woman, not knowing the treasure beneath her house, says she will only work for the stranger if he makes known the location of the treasure to her son.[273] We are left wondering what significance is to be read into the son who is the recipient: a seemingly redundant third party in an otherwise elegant parable. This is not made any clearer in the explanation of *MPMS*^{T} or *MPMS*^{C2}, and so we focus on *MPMS*^{C1}.

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[271] See chapter 2.3.
[272] *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,883b17-b24.
[273] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,407b12-b20, *MPMS*^{T}: §376,6-26.

一切衆生亦復如是：各各皆有如來之性。無量煩惱，覆蔽隱沒，不能自知。如來方便誘進開化，令知自身有如來性，歡喜信受。

MPMS^{C1}: T.376,883b24-b26.

All beings are also like this: each of them all has the nature of the *tathāgata*. Concealed by and sunken into immeasurable afflictions, they cannot know it themselves. The Tathāgata skillfully enlightening and maturing [beings], making known their own body to have the nature of the *tathāgata*, makes [those persons] delight and accept it through faith.[274]

This parable is a response to Kāśyapa's question about the presence of a self that transmigrates. The Buddha's answer is not direct, but the parable teaches that there exists a reality possessed by beings that has *always* been present 'in their body', made known only now by the Buddha.

Perhaps Kāśyapa's is an awkward question for our authors, better answered through stressing the promise of awakening rather than the existence of a transmigrating self. The parable in a sense avoids the question, or at least perhaps demonstrates that the authors of the *MPMS* wished to shift focus away from the repercussion that this *tathāgatagarbha* appears to be a self that is the subject of transmigration.[275]

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[274] Compare *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,407b24-b28; *MPMS*^{T}: §376,29-38.
For similarly corporeal imagery in the *AMS*, see chapter 4.5.
[275] This nuance of the *MPMS's* doctrine is advanced by both the *AMS* and *MBhS*: see chapters 4.8 and 5.5.

The next parable is more illuminating, as it deals not just with the *tathāgatagarbha* but also its reconcilation to the doctrine of *anātman*. A woman has a sick infant, and summons a doctor who applies a kind of medicinal butter on the face of the child, which must be allowed to melt. The doctor warns the mother that the child must not drink from her breast while the butter has not melted, and so she smears on her breast an ointment made of nimba leaf and informs the child that this is poisonous. When the time is right the mother cleans her breast and invites her child back, to whom it is then explained that the nimba was there only to allow the medicinal butter time to work.[276] The explanations of this parable runs as follows.

> 如是，善男子，如來誘進化衆生故，初爲衆生説一切法修無我行。修無我時，滅除我見。滅我見已，入於泥洹。
> 除世俗我故，説非我方便密教。然後爲説[277]如來之性。是名離世眞實之我。
>
> *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,883c3-6.

> Like this, good sons, the Tathāgata, for the sake of leading and converting sentient beings, first explained to [them] the practice of cultivating non-self in regards to all *dharma*-s. Then practicing non-self, they remove the view of self; annihilating the view of self, they enter *nirvāṇa*.

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[276] See *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,883b27-c2; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,407b29-c10; *MPMS*^{T}: §377.
[277] 説＋（經）＜聖＞

> For removing the worldly self, there is taught the skilful, hidden teaching of non-self. After that the Buddha taught the nature of the *tathāgata*. This is called the supermundane, true self.[278]

This explanation is paramount, as here the Buddha articulates that the teaching of non-self is employed for the renunciation of attachment to the self, by which is meant the worldly self that is certainly non-existent. However as there is eventually a return to the breast, so should monks having severed attachment to the worldly self 'return' to the notion of a self, which is supermundane (**lokottara*) and true, which is the *tathāgata-dhātu* (*MPMS*^{C1}) or *tathāgatagarbha* (*MPMS*^{T} and *MPMS*^{C2}).

A corresponding expression for 眞實之我 is missing from our other two translations. However Habata reconstructs a Sanskrit fragment (*MPMS*^{SF} 18.3: see Habata (2013, 443)) to express '*(māhāt)[m]ya*', corresponding to *MPMS*^{T} *'jig rten las 'das pa'i* <u>*che ba nyid*</u>.[279] Though *mahātmya* (as *bdag nyid che ba/bo*) is found elsewhere in *MPMS*^{T} it seems to be used in the honorific sense: hence this is the only evidence we have of a seemingly metaphysical 'great selfhood' in any version of the *MPMS*, and indeed preserved in an Indian fragment.[280] The expression *mahātman* shall be considered again in a later chapter, but this must be suspended in regards to the *MPMS* for want of further evidence of its place in the Indian text.[281]

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[278] Compare also *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,407c10-c19; *MPMS*^{T}: §378.
[279] Habata (2009: 570-572,ft.150); Chandra (1959: 238b).
[280] See also Habata (1990: 188,ft.7)
[281] See also chapters 7.1.5 and p.357.

Both *MPMS*^{T} and *MPMS*^{C2} also mention the fear monks have when confronted with their respective doctrines; implying that there was, by the point of these versions at least, a perceived hesitancy on the part of some audience(s) to accept the *MPMS*.[282] Furthermore, and unlike *MPMS*^{C1}, these versions do not call this final position that of a self, but simply the *tathāgatagarbha*. This suggests that by the point of these versions the doctrine of a true self had been redactively 'softened' into an expression of the *tathāgatagarbha*: perhaps even in response to such concerns from the text's audience as they precisely record.

Nevertheless, the *tathāgata-dhātu* is revealed as the true self, though for the sake of this not being confused with false notions it must necessarily follow a teaching of non-self: a dialectical model of the Buddha's teaching that culminates with this 'hidden teaching' (密教).[283] It seems that a challenge perceived by the authors of the *MPMS* was convincing their audiences that the doctrine of non-self was not absolute, and that with the development of more advanced faculties (i.e. those of a Buddha), one would indeed bear witness to a 'true' self.

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[282] See pp.260-261.

[283] Blum (2013: xxi) considers this to render **saṃdhāvacana*, following the manuscript fragment in Hoernle (1916: 95). The sense of this expression would be at once the hidden import of the Buddha's teaching, but also that which was intended by him: frequent when *MPMS*^{T} provides instead *dgongs pa'i tshig*, reflecting speech (**vacana*) that is *ābhiprāyika* or 'intentional'. Chinese translations appear to favour the mysterious or hidden dimension to these expressions: as such I generally translate foregrounding this aspect also. See p.152,ft.377; also Seyfort Ruegg (1989b).

3.6.3 *Clarifying the True Self.*

Perhaps predictably, chapter 13 goes on to present Kāśyapa questioning further what the Buddha means in teaching the *tathāgata-dhātu*. Again we address *MPMS*^{C1} first.

> 世尊，人初生時，智慧尚少，漸漸長大，智亦隨明。若有我者，始終應一：以彼智慧漸漸增故，當知無我。又復我者，應無生死，而有生死當知無我。
>
> 若使一切皆有如來性者，應無有異，而今現有長者、梵志、剎利、居士、旃陀羅等。諸衆生類種種異業受身不同。
>
> 若使衆生有如來性者，應當同等。而今不同，故知無有如來之性。
>
> 若復眞實有如來性，不應殺、盜、作諸種種不善惡業。
>
> 若當衆生有如來性，聾者應聽、盲者應視、唖者應言。若使各有如來性者爲住何所？彼和合身？青黃赤白於種種色？爲住一處？爲遍身中？
>
> *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376, 883c7-c18.

> Lord, a person when first born has little insight, [but] gradually grows, along with his insight.
>
> If there were a self, it should be the same throughout: [but] because one's insight gradually increases, there should be known to be no self.
>
> Furthermore, the self should be without birth and death, and having birth and death it should be known that [beings] are without self.
>
> If we all posses the nature of the *tathāgata*, we should be without differentiation, but actually there exist householders, *brāhmaṇa*-s,

> *kṣatriya*-s, *vaiśya*-s, *caṇḍāla*-s etc. The various types of all the sentient beings have differing karma and receive different bodily existences. If sentient beings had the nature of a *tathāgata*, they should be identical, but actually there is difference: hence we know that there is no nature of a *tathāgata*.
>
> If there truly were a nature of the *tathāgata*, there should not be killing, theft, and the creation of various unwholesome, bad actions. If indeed beings have the nature of the *tathāgata*, then the deaf should hear, the blind should see, the dumb should speak. If we all have the nature of the *tathāgata*, where would it abide? Is it combined with the body? In the blue, yellow, red, white, or in various colours [of the body]? Is it in one [particular] place, or does it permeate [the body]?[284]

The quarrels that Kāśyapa has are manifold, and presumably represent a range of objections that an audience may have had with the *tathāgata-dhātu* understood as a kind of self. We should summarize what Kāśyapa holds is contained within this idea.

1) Unchangeability: the self should have constantly the same qualities;
2) Exemption from death: it should not be subject to *saṃsāra*;
3) Undifferentiation: all possessing a self should be the same, i.e. there should be no different *varṇa*-s, nor different rebirths;
4) Virtue: beings should not carry out impure actions;

[284] Compare *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,407c20-c26; *MPMS*^{T}: §379.

5) ‘Able-bodied’: it should not be deficient, e.g. lacking in any sense faculty;
6) Location: it should be discernable somewhere amidst the constituent parts of the body.

For *MPMS*^{C1}, the latter four are named as assumptions made not of a self, but specifically the *tathāgata-dhātu*. *MPMS*^{C2} considers points 5) and 6) also in regards to a self, while *MPMS*^{T} makes the subject of 5) the permanent *sattva-dhātu* (*sems can gyi khams rtag pa*), and of 6) the self that is the *sattva-dhātu*, which is again called permanent.[285] These epithets may be further evidence of glosses that underly our later translations, though we can rest assured that each version has the same reality, the ‘true self’, in mind.

Variations in our later translations require some attention. In both *MPMS*^{C2} and *MPMS*^{T}, we find inserted point 4a), which enquires how it is that beings are able to become intoxicated or mad.[286] *MPMS*^{C2} also provides 5a): that if there existed a permanent self such perils as fire, flood, poison, swords etc. need not be avoided (a sentiment more in accord with point 2), though presented later in this list).[287] Furthermore, problem 5b) in *MPMS*^{C2} asks how beings can forget what has previously happened, and 5c) states how there

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[285] Hodge (2012: 53) here holds that *sattva-dhātu* in *MPMS*^{T} may be caused by a misreading of Prakrit *~m atta* as *satta*. Though plausible, I do not find this more likely than *sattva-dhātu*: an epithet of the *tathāgatagarbha* present several times in *MPMS*^{T} and elsewhere (e.g. in both the *TGS* and *AAN*). See also Hodge (2012: 82-84: especially regarding T.374,412b15-16); also Habata (1993: 180).

[286] *MPMS*^{T}: Habata ed. §380,5: *chang ’thungs pas ci’i slad du ra ro bar ’gyur lags*; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,407c29-408a1: 若我性常，何故酒後迷荒醉亂？

[287] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408a2-3: 若我性常，不應避於火坑、大水、毒藥、刀劍、惡人、禽獸。

should be no decline of strength with age, nor decline in fortune, vigour, power or memory.[288] Hence 5b/c) seem to consider the self a conscious entity which, being unchanging, should not fluctuate or diminish in its character.

MPMS^{T} shares point 1) in regards to the self, but adds (somewhat cryptically) 1a): that it should be discernable through reason.

gal te bdag mchis na ni shes pa dang blo gros dang yang ldan pa'i rigs lags so /
gal te shes pa zhan pa lags na ni gsal bar 'gyur ba'i yang mi rigs pas na bdag ni bdag ma mchis zhes mchis lags so //

MPMS^{T}: §379,4-7.

If there exists a self, this would be of the category of what is known and proved by reason.
If this knowledge is inferior, then it does not belong to the class of what becoms clear, therefore this self is not a self.

Next *MPMS*^{T} denies the immortality of the self (i.e. the issue underlying problem 2)): presented here as a counterfactual example of why the self of 1a) cannot demonstrably exist. Point 3) again switches focus to the permanent *tathāgata-dhātu* (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i khams rtag pa*), but in the same breath states that 'if there exists a self, this is a non-differentiated self,

[288] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408a3-6: 若我常者，本所更事不應忘失。若不忘失何緣復言：「我曾何處見是人耶(耶＝也＜宮＞)？」若我常者，則不應有少、壯、老等、衰、盛、力、勢、憶念往事。

which is a sameness of nature: hence [as this is not the case] there exists no *dhātu* in that*'*.[289] Point 4) then concerns the *dhātu* again, and 5) the permanent *sattva-dhātu*. Concerning 6), the text asks (of the *sattva-dhātu*) whether it resides in any part of the body 'at any moment'.[290] Finally, it is asked whether a self that permeates the body were to be affected if any part of the body were severed: 'would that self be damaged, or would that person become a cripple'?[291]

It is the case then that the authors of the *MPMS* either anticipated, or more likely encountered throughout the text's development (evidenced by the growth of Kāśyapa's concerns across versions), a plethora of objections to the existence of any kind of self. We witness the expansion of the *MPMS* to mention a wealth of *ātmavādin* images and themes, including those prevalent in upaniṣadic thought: a similarity to whose ideas must have concerned our authors, to be discussed more in the next chapter.[292]

The Buddha of the *MPMS* must then defend this doctrine from the very reasonable objections of Kāśyapa, based not simply on him having accepted the doctrine of *anātman*, but also his inability to perceive anything resembling the *buddha-dhātu* in his person. Predictably this is done through further parables, which we might distinguish by their leanings towards one problem presented by Kāśyapa or another.

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[289] *MPMS*^{T}: §380,1-2: *gal te bdag mchis na bye brag ma mchis pa'i bdag ni mnyam pa nyid lags te / de lta na de la khams ma mchis lags so //*
[290] *MPMS*^{T}: §380,11: *bdag de yang de rnams kyi go skabs gang na gnas lags*. This may have in mind the self of the the Vaiśeṣika-s, see p.329,ft.864.
[291] *MPMS*^{T}: §380,13-15: *gal te de la na ni mi g.yul du mchis pa'i rna ba dang sna chad na bdag de'i yang nying lag nyams par 'gyur ba'am / lag rdum du 'gyur ba'i rigs lags so //*
[292] See chapter 4.4.2.

3.6.3.1 *Locating the Self (problem 6).*

The first concerns some kind of courtly fighter who has secured to his forehead a precious jewel. A collision with his opponent mid-bout sees this jewel pushed under the skin of the fighter's head, with the result that he both falls ill and considers the jewel lost. A doctor recognizes what has happened, but the fighter is incredulous that his jewel could be amidst the fleshy stuff of his head. On drawing out the jewel, the doctor gains the trust of his patient.[293]The explanation is then as follows.

> 一切衆生亦復如是：各各皆有如來之性，習惡知識起婬、怒、癡、墮三惡道，乃至周遍二十五有種種受身。
>
> 如來之性摩尼寶珠，沒在煩惱、婬、怒、癡瘡，不知所在。於世俗我修無我想[294]，不解如來良醫方便密教；作無我想而不能知眞實之我。
>
> 於是如來復爲方便，令滅無量煩惱熾然，開示顯現，如來之性。
>
> *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,883c29-884a7.

> All sentient beings are just like this: each of them has the nature of the *tathāgata*, [but] keeping bad company, generating desire, anger and illusion, they fall into the three bad destinies, receiving various bodies through the twenty-five types of existence.

[293] *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,883c19-c29; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408a9-a24; *MPMS*^{T}: §381.
[294] 想＝修＜明＞

> The *maṇiratna* that is the nature of the *tathāgata* is sunk into the afflictions and abscesses of desire, anger and delusion, [so that] one does not know where it is.
> Cultivating the idea of non-self in regards to the worldly self, [one] does not know the skillful, hidden teaching of the good doctor that is the *tathāgata*; generating the idea of non-self, one is not able to comprehend the true self.
> Thus the Tathāgata again uses skill in means to extinguish the burning of immeasurable afflictions, manifesting and revealing the nature of the *tathāgata*.[295]

The *tathāgata-dhātu*, hidden amidst afflictions, cannot be discerned by beings still with afflictions. This echoes a common feature of the similes found in the *TGS*: that it is only with the aid of an omniscient Buddha that any being knows themselves to possess the *tathāgatagarbha*.[296] The corresponding passages of *MPMS*^{T} and *MPMS*^{C2} provide a more exhaustive list of poor rebirths, in terms both of worlds into which one can be born and various states of disability. There is also more said about the distinction between self and non-self, for which we return to *MPMS*^{T}.

> *bdag med pa mi sgom pa rnams ni 'jig rten pa'i bdag sgom par byed do //*

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[295] Compare *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408a26-b1; *MPMS*^{T}: §382,1-13.
[296] See p.51.

ji ltar 'jig rten pa'i bdag yod de zhes bdag gi de kho na nyid ma rtogs pa bzhin du 'jig rten las 'das pa'i yang de dang 'dra ste / mi dge ba'i grogs po la bsten pa dang / dgongs pa'i tshig gi mtha' mi shes pas bdag med do bdag med do zhes sgom bzhin du bdag med pa'i de kho na nyid mi shes te /

MPMS^{T}: §382,19-24.

Those not cultivating non-self, cultivate the worldly self.
Just as those ones say that there is a worldly self, not knowing the reality of the self, so also is it for the supermundane; relying on bad company and not knowing the final, intentional expression [of the Buddha], [beings] cultivate [the idea that] 'there is no self! there is no self!', and likewise do not know the reality of the self.[297]

The point is stressed that there is an error of the mundane, i.e. thinking the worldly self to exist, and one of the supermundane, i.e. not knowing the true self. This aligns nicely with the model of the eight *viparyāsa* discussed above. *MPMS*^{T} returns to the specific question of where this self might be: affirming that it is not like a lamp in a jar, nor like pervading moisture, nor – indeed – like the jewel between the eyes of the fighter.

[297] Compare *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408b3-7.

…de bzhin gshegs pas de dag la 'di skad du bdag ni thams cad du gnas pa ma yin la / rin po che rdo rje ltar 'od gsal zhing nyon mongs pa rnams pa'i rnam pas bsgribs pa yin no zhes bka' stsal te /

MPMS^{T}: §283,28-30.

The Tathāgata said this to those [monks]: the self does not dwell anywhere, but like the precious diamond [of the parable] is luminous, but concealed by various afflictions.

Notably, this explanation clarifies that the *upameya* of the parable should not 'locate' the self in the physical body: the significant import is rather its imperceptibility to beings. Of Kāśyapa's questions above, this simile seems to address where in the body the true self can be found (i.e. problem 6). The answer, as *MPMS*^{T} makes refreshingly clear, is precisely *nowhere*, so long as one looks a) with the faculties of an afflicted sentient being, and b) with the assumption that this is a corporeal entity at all (i.e. amidst the *skandha*-s).

For a Buddha, there is somewhere in the constitution of beings, some *dhātu* that is their awakened nature: not amidst their physical tissue, but rather underlying mental afflictions that generate the physical body. Here the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine of the *MPMS* distinguishes itself (albeit subtely) from the self *qua* physical element or homunculus found in some upaniṣadic literature (or indeed the roaming *ātman* of the Vaiśeṣika-s that conjoins with the various senses).[298] To state that this *dhātu* exists within beings is to say

that it underlies mental afflictions, themselves metaphysically prior to a material body that is a product of karma, itself generated by those afflictions.[299] The *dhātu* is then 'amidst' the *meta*-physical extraneity of afflictions: 'in' beings insofar as it underlies the afflictions that are accidental to them.

Though *MPMS*^{C2} agrees with the other two versions quite closely, there is one further elaboration that requires attention, which comes in clarifying the difference between cultivating non-self and self.[300]

> 喻如非聖雖説有我，亦復不知我之眞性。我諸弟子亦復如是：不知親近善知識故，修學無我亦復不知無我之處。尚自不知無我眞性，況復能知有我眞性？
>
> *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408b3-7.

> For example, an ignoble person, though saying that there exists a self, still does not know the true nature of the self. My disciples are like this also: because of not knowing and being acquainted with a good teacher, they cultivate the notion of non-self, and do not know the basis (**sthāna*) of non-self. [301] Not even knowing the real nature of non-self; how then can they possibly know the real nature of the existing self?

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[298] See Kumar (2013: 75-79); also p.329.
[299] See p.34.
[300] Notably this concerns purely the self, and hence – in Hodge's account – might perhaps be a quite early insertion into *MPMS*^{C2}.
[301] Nakamura (1980: 687c); Edgerton (1953b: 610).

These 'ignoble persons' (**anārya*) remind us of the *tīrthika*-s earlier compared to the seemingly literate woodworms. But as much as wrong-minded beings perceiving a self cannot know the true self, those who misconceive non-self are also in the dark. The final line implies that it is a *necessary* condition of knowing the true self that one first grasps non-self: i.e. one cannot have an 'original' knowledge of the true self without having passed through the dialectical model presented by the *MPMS*.

3.6.3.2 *Non-differentiation of the Self (problem 3).*

The next parable concerns a medicine, deemed 'sweet tasting', which is found only in the Himālayas and can be found only by a *cakravartin*. Sick persons use bamboo tubes to tap this liquid from the rock, and in doing so taste many different flavours: none of which true to the medicine. A *cakravartin* however, 'by the power of his merit' (福德力), is alone able to acquire its true, sweet taste.[302] Again this simile relies on the theme of a special individual being required for beings to realize the *tathāgatagarbha*: i.e. the essential character that underlies the experience of this or that birth. The different flavours found by beings correspond to one type or rebirth or another, but that which is tapped by the *cakravartin* is the flavour essential to the medicine. The explanation of the parable runs as follows.

[302] *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,884a7-a13. Compare also *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408b13-b22; *MPMS*^{T}: §383,1-12.

如是，善男子，如來性者，多[303]種之味。無量煩惱愚癡覆蔽，是故衆生不得上味如來之性[304]，種種行業處處受身。

彼如來性無可殺害。其諸死者名爲壽短[305]；如來之性名爲眞壽，不斷不壞乃至成佛。

如來之性無害無殺，唯長養身，有害有殺：如諸病人，作衆邪業，種種報應刹利、梵志乃至生死二十五有，不得眞實如來性故。

MPMS^{C1}: T.376,884a13-a21.

Like that, good sons, the nature of the *tathāgata* has many varied flavours. Due to enshrouding by immeasurable afflictions and ignorance, sentient beings do not attain the nature of the *tathāgata* that is of superior taste, act in a variety of ways, and are [consequently] variously [re-]born.

That nature of a *tathāgata* [in them] cannot be killed or harmed. Those who have died are called short-lived; the nature of the *tathāgata* is called real longevity, not ceasing or being destroyed until one attains Buddha[hood].[306]

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[303] 多＝雜種＜三＞＜宮＞, 雜＜聖＞

[304] 彼如來性＝若得如來眞實性者＜三＞＜宮＞＜聖＞

[305] 短＝斷＜三＞＜宮＞＜聖＞

[306] This longevity evokes the account of the lasting *bodhicitta* in the *Kāśyapa-Parivarta* (Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya (2002: 5, §4)), which the *bodhisattva* is able (though it seems not guaranteed) to retain from one birth to another. It could be argued that a presupposition of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature is that the continuity of this *bodhicitta* (though conspicuously absent in this literature) is explicable only through the permanence of the *tathāgatagarbha* across births. See also p.287,ft.764.

> The nature of the *tathāgata* cannot be harmed or killed, but the body subject to growth suffers injury and killing: like diseased people [beings] do many wicked actions, with various results [such as birth as a] *kṣatriya* or *brāhmaṇa* [etc.] throughout the twenty-five existences, because they do not attain the nature of the *tathāgata*.[307]

Hence the text confronts convincingly problem 3, detailed above (with some attempt also to deal with problem 4, concerning the lack of virtue in beings). In *MPMS*^{T} we find the *tathāgatagarbha* called the 'essential nature' (*bcud kyi khams*) of beings, also 'the cause of becoming a Buddha' (*sangs rgyas su 'gyur ba'i rgyur*) that is of one flavour, in contrast to the fruition of the actions of beings.[308] *MPMS*^{C2} here refers to the nature of the self (我性) as being the 'secret store of the *tathāgata* (如來祕密之藏)': a possible use of the expression *ātma-dhātu* in conjunction with the sense of a *tathāgatagarbha* as a 'store of qualities', as found in *TGS*^{C1}/^{C2}, above.[309]

Furthermore, *MPMS*^{T} makes it clear that the *tathāgata-dhātu* is the proper nature of beings, called their *svabhāva* (*skyes bu'i rang bzhin*): explaining that the killing of beings is not, despite appearances, the end of

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[307] Compare *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408b22-c15; *MPMS*^{T}: §383,12-21.
[308] *MPMS*^{T}: §383,17-18. This 'single [essential] flavour' of the parable may evoke the *ekarasa* doctrine of the *SPS*, which finds the many and varied teachings of the Buddha for different beings to have the same character, i.e. that of liberating beings. See e.g. Kern & Nanjio (1970: 122-123): …*sarvaḥ sa dharma ekaraso yaduta vimuktiraso virāgaraso nirodharasaḥ sarvajñajñānaparyavasānaḥ /*.
[309] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408b29-c1. See also p.60.
Habata (1993: 180-181) hypothesizes that 我性 may betray *jivātman*, 'the (true) self of a living being' underlying *MPMS*^{C2}.

what is proper to them.[310] This portion, as Habata has recognized, bears similarity not only to the *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* (1.2.18-19), but poignantly to the account of the self found in the *Bhagavad Gīta* (2.17-30): in which there appears a similar defence of killing, being as it is not the end of one's true self.[311]

MPMS^{T} provides clarification (very likely later material) that this does not mean that killing has no negative repercussions, and indeed still causes poor rebirth: however it is still *not* the destruction of what is proper to any being.[312]

> *yod do zhes brjod par bya ste / ji lta zhe na / phyi rol gyi bsags pa'i khams shing gel pa dang 'dra ba …*
>
> *MPMS*^{T}: §384,14-15.

> What is called a 'being': what is this? The *dhātu* of the collection that is outside, like the branch of a tree…

MPMS^{T} here seems confused: the comparison to a tree branch may reflect that the sense is that the *dhātu* is external to some 'collection', though

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[310] *MPMS*^{T}: §384,1.
[311] See Habata (1990: 186); for comparable materials see Olivelle (1998: 384-385); Sargeant (1994: 102-115). This passage may have also played a part in the *MPMS* justifying the defence of its doctrine by armed laity: a curious feature that betrays a greater sense of insecurity on the part of our authors. See Shimoda (1994).
[312] *MPMS*^{T}: §384,11-12.

bsags pa is not attested as a translation of *skandha*-s.[313] The equivalent passage in *MPMS*^{C2}, which otherwise agrees with the trajectory of *MPMS*^{T}*'s* exposition, states that the *dhātu* rests *within* the five *skandha*-s (衆生佛性住五陰中), though with the same consequence that their destruction is not that of the *dhātu*.[314] If we accept, with some caution, that *MPMS*^{T} wishes to communicate the existence of some *dhātu* external to the *skandha*-s, in contrast to *MPMS*^{C2}, then this might be evidence of some divergence in the opinion of recensions regarding how this *dhātu* is situated in relation to the *skandha*-s. This is not something with which the *MPMS* seems otherwise concerned, generally avoiding the model of beings as composed of *skandha*-s in favour of that found in the *TGS*.[315] Perhaps concern with the relationship between the *dhātu* and *skandha*-s was a difficult issue for later contributors: all of this being absent from *MPMS*^{C1}.

Both *MPMS*^{T} and *MPMS*^{C2} conclude this explanation by stressing the irrelevance of some worldly notions of a self: as being the size of a fruit's shell, a rice grain, or a thumb (*MPMS*^{C2} adds 'big or small, or like grass').[316] As *MPMS*^{C2} states, 'There is no truth in these deluded ideas. The character of the self that transcends the world, is called the *buddha-dhātu*: imputing a self in this way is deemed supremely good'.[317] If anything qualifies the true self,

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[313] Chandra (1959: 834b).
[314] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408c6-7.
[315] See pp.32-33.
[316] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408c10-c12; *MPMS*^{T}: §384,22-25. Again, we return to these in chapter 4.4.2.
[317] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408c12-14: 妄想之想(想＝相＜三＞＜宮＞)無有眞實；出世我相名爲佛性，如是計我是名最善。

then, it is precisely its being the cause of awakening rather than any 'physical' properties that cannot belong to it.

This passage has also stated that the *tathātagata-dhātu* cannot be killed or harmed, and that the death of beings is certainly not that of what is essential to them. The pivotal affirmation here is that the 'longevity' of the *tathāgata-dhātu* is its continued existence up to (and beyond) the attainment of awakening. This implies that the *tathāgata-dhātu* indeed survives transmigration: it is that aspect of beings which precisely does not die with the worldly body.[318] Such an implied concession is not confronted by the *MPMS*, but certainly it sees this *dhātu* provide one of the criteria for selfhood as conventionally conceived.

3.6.3.3 *Deathlessness of the Self (problem 2).*

The next parable is short enough to permit presentation in full.

> 復次善男子，如人穿地，求金剛寶：手執利鑿，鑿堅土石[319]，悉能令碎。唯[320]有金剛，莫能斷截[321]。
>
> 如來之性，亦復如是：天魔利劍所不能傷。唯長養身受，其傷壞非如來性。是故當知如來之性無害無殺。是爲如來決定之教，方等契經甘露毒藥。
>
> *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,884a21-a26.

[318] The *tathāgatagarbha* as the basis for rebirth is considered at greater length in the *ŚDS*: see chapter 6.1.5.
[319] 堅土石＝其土石堅塊剛石＜三＞＜宮＞＜聖＞
[320] 唯＝惟＜三＞＜宮＞下同
[321] 斷截＝截斷＜三＞＜宮＞＜聖＞

> Furthermore, good sons, it is like a person boring into the earth for diamond: holding in their hand a sharp implement, he drills into the hard earth and stone, smashing it to pieces. The only thing that cannot be cut is the diamond.
>
> The nature of the *tathāgata* is also like that: it is that which the sharp swords of Devaputra Māra cannot harm. Only the body subject to growth receives such; that which is wounded and damaged is not the nature of a *tathāgata*. Therefore you should know that the nature of the *tathāgata* cannot be harmed, cannot be killed. This is the definitive teaching of the Tathāgata: the ambrosial medicine of the *vaipulya sūtra*-s.[322]

In *MPMS*^{T} the *tathāgatagarbha* is called the self of living beings (*skye ba po'i bdag*).[323] *MPMS*^{C2} stresses the contrast between this nature and the *skandha*-s that are characterized by 'occurrences' (起作), and are hence (like the stone of the example) destructible, and in contrast to the *buddha-dhātu*.[324] This distinction is helpful for understanding all versions of the text. As stated earlier, the body of a sentient being can, and will, perish; it is also determined in accord with the actions of beings, themselves governed by afflictions. Hence the physical, destructible body is founded upon afflictions, which are to

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[322] Compare *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408c15-c29; *MPMS*^{T}: §385.
[323] *MPMS*^{T}: §385,6.
[324] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408c19-21: 五陰之相，即是起作：起作之相，喻如石沙可穿可壞。

be contrasted with the *tathāgata-dhātu*. This may constitute a response to another of Kāśyapa's objections, regarding the potency of the self (problem 5, in its several permutations). *MPMS*^{C2} clarifies that variety in actions is due precisely to the *skandha*-s that are separate from the true self: hence beings do not exhibit the power of an awakened being so long as they are thus burdened.[325]

It is important to distinguish this account of the *MPMS* from any crude dualism of *dhātu* and simple, corporeal matter.[326] Rather, the opposition is between *dhātu* and afflictions (i.e. the cause of a sentient being's body), which are not *physical* entities. These afflictions are understood as negative mental phenomena that can be removed: to do so would be to prevent rebirth in a physical body, and leave only the *dhātu* that pertains to a very different kind of existence or body. This, alluded to here though not mentioned, is very likely the *vajrakāya* of the Buddha discussed in what is called chapter 6 of *MPMS*^{C1}: equated therein with the *dharmakāya*, and distinguished from any transient, physical body.[327]

What we see is a continuing contrast between (adventitious) afflictions and the *buddha-dhātu*: the latter of which is the true self of beings. On the one hand this term continues to affirm the permanence of what is proper to beings: a notion just as important in the 'earlier' *MPMS* and its notion of a permanent Buddha. Here, however, this self is also perhaps the self that is the true identity of beings: i.e. what is proper to them, unlike afflictions.

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[325] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,408c21-22.
[326] Though arguably reintroduction of the *skandha*-s (the stuff of worldly conceptions of selfhood) in *MPMS*^{C2} threatens to do just this.
[327] See Radich (2011: especially 263-264); also p.131,ft.327.

We note two quarrels of Kāśyapa that are left unanswered: the initial query regarding the transmigration of the *buddha-dhātu*, and – perhaps more concerning for some 'educated' Buddhist audiences – the imperceptability of this self to reason. The latter remains a stumbling block to the *tathāgatagarbha* tradition addressed throughout this literature. These questions, along with their answers and awkward silences, nevertheless stress what is most essential to the *MPMS*: the permanent presence in all beings of that element that is the cause of awakening, hidden among afflictions and perceptible only to an awakened being.

3.6.4 ***Misconception of the True Self.***

We must consider one final parable of chapter 13: the final conclusion of which must be saved for the last chapter of this study.[328] However the bulk of this passage is significant for seeming to prefigure the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine of the *AMS*, to which we turn in the next chapter. Prior to this parable, the *MPMS* states through various brief examples that the *tathāgata-dhātu* is accessible also to the *bodhisattva* of the tenth stage, though importantly only indistinctly.[329] We cannot dwell on this here, but we shall see in the next chapter that the *AMS* certainly shared the view that the advanced *bodhisattva* was capable of some privileged, though limited, perception of the *buddha-dhātu*.[330]

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[328] See chapter 8.5.1.
[329] See e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,887a8-a16; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,412a1-4; *MPMS*^{T}: §406.
[330] See pp.173-177.

Kāśyapa asks once again what is meant by the existence of a self in all beings.[331] The response is a parable concerning two friends – a prince and a pauper – who travel to a neighboring kingdom. The prince is in possession of a magnificent sword, which after he departs from his poor friend the latter is heard to speak of in his sleep.[332] Summoned before the king, who desires the sword, the pauper confesses that though he has seen it, he does not know it well, nor can take the king to it. The king dismisses him and has his servants search for the sword, but dies without having found it, leaving only stories of the existence of the sword that are passed down to the next generation.[333] As ever, we should consider how the *sūtra* understands this parable.

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[331] *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,887b24-25. Compare the quite different *MPMS*^{T}: §416,1-3 ('also in worldly persons there is the *sattva-dhātu* that is an established person' (*gang zag*)), and *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374, 412b15-16 ('ignoble common folk having the *sattva-dhātu*, [they] all teach that there is a self').

[332] The form of the parable in *MPMS*^{C1} (perhaps indicative of flaws present in Faxian's translation) does not describe a sword – known in the other versions to be 'like the horn of a goat' – but rather a rhinoceros characterized by such a horn. This certainly reflects some confusion regarding the Sanskrit *khaḍga*, which has the sense of both sword and rhinoceros. Curiously *MPMS*^{C1} describes this rhinoceros as tame (*MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,887b27: 調伏), which if present in the corresponding Indian manuscript of that translation suggests an entertaining Indian variant, rather than an error in Faxian's translation. Due to the agreement of the other two translations and the similarity of the *upameya* in each version (plus the likelihood that the fictional prince would more easily conceal a weapon than a large pachyderm), I choose to here employ passages of *MPMS*^{C1} assuming their content to have at one time referred also to a lost sword. See also Schmithausen (2009: 135, ft. 369); Blum (2013: xx). For more regarding *khagga*, see Salomon (2000); Norman (2001: 33-41).

[333] *MPMS*^{C1}: 887b24-887c9; *MPMS*^{C2}: 412b15-412c14; *MPMS*^{T}: §416.

如是，菩薩摩訶薩，出於世時，爲衆生説眞實之我。其無知者，聞一切衆生皆有佛性，不知其眞，便妄想説：我如寸燈，在於心中[334]，種種衆生、我、人、壽命。

MPMS^{C1}: T.376,887c9-c12.

Like that [prince], the *bodhisattva mahāsattva* when emerging in the world explained for sentient beings the real self.[335] The ignorant, hearing that all beings have the nature of a Buddha, didn't understand its truth, and taught deluded imaginings: that the self is like a thumb-sized lamp in the heart, or various [notions such as] *sattva*, *ātman*, *pudgala*, or *jīva*.

Notably it is here the *bodhisattva* and not Buddha who taught the real self.[336] This teaching is correct, but received by beings who miscomprehend it and teach both a) a sublime 'upaniṣadic' self and b) the erroneous, empirical self. These are wrong views, though as the text continues, not without basis in truth. The form of this passage in *MPMS*^{T} provides a longer list of erroneous

[334] 我如･･･中〕八字－＜聖＞

[335] *MPMS*^{C2} (T.374c14-15) seems to concerns the *bodhisattva's* apparent entry into the world (出現於世). From *MPMS*^{T} §417,1-3 it is clear that the *bodhisattva mahāsattva* arises in the world, teaches regarding the self, and subsequently dies (*…'jig rten du 'byung ste / bdag gi de kho na nyid bstan nas 'chi bar byed do*): it remains unclear if the expression 出於世時 should refer either to the *bodhisattva*'s emergence before, or departure after, teaching the self.

[336] We have seen that the tenth-stage *bodhisattva* is able to perceive (though seemingly 'through a lens, darkly') the *buddha-dhātu* in their constitution, but the claim that they have *taught* this doctrine developed in the *AMS*, in which the *bodhisattva* seems defined precisely by both teaching and practicing 'that which is difficult in the world'. See pp.176-177.

views: including that of a thumb-sized man, of the shell of a fruit; or of the size of a grain of rice burning in the heart, while *MPMS*^{C2} provides only these examples (i.e. does not discuss the empirical self outlined in *MPMS*^{C1}).[337] Again, greater variety of such expressions is present in the *AMS*, in the context of which these images shall be considered in greater detail.[338]

The *MPMS* continues as follows.

如彼夢說，展轉相承，皆起邪見，計有吾我，求吾我性。不得實我，作無我說。而諸世間一切衆生常作妄想，計有吾我及無我想。如是，善男子，我說如來之性最爲眞實。

MPMS^{C1}: T.376,887c12-c16.

Hence, like what was said [by the pauper] in his dream, these [people] pass on [this teaching] and produce wrong views, imputing that there is a self, and searching for the nature of the self. Not obtaining the real self, [sentient beings] produce the teaching of non-self. Then all sentient beings in the world constantly produce deluded notions, imputing notions of an existent self and of non-self. Likewise, good son, I say that the nature of the *tathāgata* is the supreme truth.[339]

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[337] *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,412c14-c20; *MPMS*^{T}: §417,11: *skyes bu mthe bo tsam zhes bya ba dang / ldum bu sha ma ka'i 'bras bu tsam dang / 'bras kyi 'bru tsam zhig snying la gnas te 'bar ro shes log par rtog par byed de /*

[338] See 4.4.2.

[339] Compare *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,412c21-c26.

de nas blo chung ba gang yin pa de dag ni sems can thams cad la bdag 'di lta bu 'di 'dra ba zhig yod do snyam sde / log par mthong nas shes rab med pa rnams la rmi lam du rmis pa bzhin du ston par byed do //

'jig rten pa de dag gis kyang de skad du thos nas rang gi lus la <u>bdag gi khams</u> yod do snyam du rtog par byed la / de dag gis bdag de'i rang bzhin ni mi shes so //

MPMS^{T}: §417,4-9.

Hence, those of little intelligence think that the self is something like these [erroneous notions] existing in all beings; having seen erroneously, this is taught to those who lack knowledge to be like a dream [i.e. akin to that of the pauper].

Those worldly people also, having heard expressions like this, imagine that there is an <u>*ātma-dhātu*</u> in their body. These people do not know the nature of that self.

This passage implies that wrong notions of the self came into existence after some *bodhisattva* previously attempted to teach the true self: a doctrine only now revealed in full by the Buddha of the *MPMS*. Whatever is erroneous about other conceptions of the self, they have as their original referent the *buddha-dhātu*: the true self beyond the faculties of sentient beings. This passage also includes the only occurrence of the expression *bdag gi khams* (*ātma-dhātu*) in *MPMS*^{T}, and one of only two occurrences of its likely

equivalent (我性) in *MPMS*^{C1}: an expression that dominates the *AMS*, but perhaps finds its origin in this passage.[340]

Importantly, we shall see that the *AMS* also shares the view that wrong views of the self have their origin in the true self: known only in full by a Buddha.[341] This portion of the *MPMS* certainly implies once again that false notions of selfhood stem from miscomprehension of the *buddha-dhātu* conceived as the true self: a suggestion that will play a crucial part in understanding why some *tathāgatagarbha* authors promoted what may be considered a form of Buddhist *ātmavāda*.

3.7 *Conclusions*

Tracing the development of the *MPMS*, along with its doctrine of a true self, is an incredibly difficult task. Though there are merits to the models presented by both Shimoda and Hodge, the stratifications they propose are complicated by the further development of this text after its 'completion', prior to the production of the translations available to us. These clearly represent different recensions of the text, of which *MPMS*^{C1} allows us the occasional

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[340] In *MPMS*^{C2} this appears to be 'the characteristic of the self', considered by *bodhisattva*-s (T.374,412c21: 菩薩如是說於我法(相＜元＞＜明＞＜宮＞)). The expression *ātma-dhātu* is discussed in the next chapter. We note that its use in *MPMS*^{T}, however, is definitely pejorative and certainly *not* a designator for the true self. This is different to its use in the *AMS*, in which it seems to have been 'redeemed' as a designator for the *buddha-dhātu*. See Habata (1993: 180).
Regarding this expression, one might also compare *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,884c16 (我及諸衆生，同此如來性); *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,409c22 (我性及佛性　無二無差別); but oddly *MPMS*^{T}: §390,14-15 (*de phyir bdag kyang sangs rgyas rnams // lam mchog rgya chen 'dir ni mchi bar bgyi*). *MPMS*^{C2} may then reflect a development of this verse of *MPMS* in preference of the expression *ātma-dhātu*.

[341] See pp.180-181.

glimpse of a more succinct text without later glossing and interpolation. *MPMS*^{T}, the latest translation, exhibits developments such as the preference of the expression *tathāgatagarbha* over and above *buddha-dhātu*, or indeed (true) self. *MPMS*^{C2}, which may occasionally reflects content older than that underlying *MPMS*^{C1}, is however littered with interpolations similar to those of *MPMS*^{T}, which make it hard to distinguish what this older content may be.[342]

It is certain that earlier content of this text was concerned first with the permanence of the Buddha. This reality, in the account of the *viparyāsa*-s, could be described as *ātman*: it seems precisely because the Buddha had attained a permanent, unchanging state upon his awakening.[343] The *MPMS* then adopted a kind of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, derived from the internalization of a Buddha 'relic', *dhātu*, that is also the nature of a Buddha possessed by beings. This *dhātu* in a sense inherits the selfhood of the Buddha from stratum 1, though what concerns us most is why the authors of stratum 2 permitted the introduction of a self into the character of sentient beings, which clearly required much clarification from erroneous notions of worldly selfhood.

This is seen primarily in chapter 13, part of the second stratum of *MPMS* which has not only embraced *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, but by the emergence of *MPMS*^{C1} appears to have been confronted by some opposition. The challenges of Kāśyapa are no doubt those of the texts' audience, who wonder precisely what makes this self so different from that of the *tīrthika*-s,

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[342] Hodge (2012: 47-48).
[343] We shall see in regards to the *MBhS* how this idea developed following the *MPMS*: see pp.208-209.

who may espouse either the empirical self rejected by classical accounts of *anātman*, or the subliminal self of the upaniṣadic milieu.

Indeed the resemblance of this self to that of the upaniṣad-s – also a supermundane, 'passive' recipient of liberation – is striking. However two key (and related) distinctions should here be made. Firstly, the attribution of 'awakened' qualities to the Buddhist self (his knowledge, power etc.), differs to common upaniṣadic descriptions of the self defined as being (*sat*), or consciousness (*citta*) couched in terms of some transcendental ego.[344] This is because the self of the *MPMS* has, as Park writes, been 'retro-abstracted from its soteriological result': i.e. that the Buddhist self is necessitated by how our authors first understood awakening, rather than beginning with an investigation of the individual's self or ego.[345] The latter, as discussed in the first chapter, was an established element in Vedic thought prior to the *upaniṣad*-s: one very much rejected by the *anātmavāda* adoped by the earliest Buddha literature. In other words, the Buddhist self is one 'rediscovered' by authors first concerned with an account of (permanent) Buddhahood, rather than one assumed as the basis for an account of how one's 'self' might properly be of a higher order.[346]

Appropriately then, the *buddha-dhātu* is the correct name for that which can also be considered the 'true self'. But we note that one of Kāśyapa's

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[344] See, for example, *BĀU* 2.3.3: Olivelle (1998: 66-67); 3.4.2: Olivelle (1998: 82-83).
[345] Park (2012: 142).
[346] Radich writes how this doctrine of the nature of a Buddha continues to advance the doctrine of the Buddha's permanence: 'that the Buddha is eternal and indestructible; that there is a similarly eternal core of potential buddhahood in every sentient being; that the apparent demise of the Buddha is therefore merely a docetistic show'. Radich (2011: 264).

objections not dealt with at all was his very first: the question of whether or not this constitutes a self that transmigrates through the twenty-five existences. It seems that the *buddha-dhātu* is certainly that: constituting the numerical identity of one *sattva* with the next. Admission of this would perhaps highlight too great a similiarity with upaniṣadic thought: it is maybe telling then that the Buddha of the *MPMS* stresses that this *dhātu* is more importantly the identity between the forementioned *sattva* and an awakened Buddha. The *tathāgatagarbha* as explaining continuity across lives, as we shall see, was a common theme across all texts we shall consider, though not always couched in terms of a resident 'element' as presented by the *MPMS*.

What is most interesting is the manner in which the authors of the *MPMS* relate their correct doctrine of the self to that of the *tīrthika*-s. The *MPMS* certainly holds its doctrine of a true self to be 'final': as evidenced by the parable of the mother and her sick child in which the clearly provisional teaching of *anātman* gives way to explaining the *buddha-dhātu*.[347] This is certainly not a skillful teaching on the Buddha's part, so much as the 'hidden teaching' (密教) that is revealed as the end the *saddharma*. We witness an enthusiasm to differentiate this true self from erroneous, worldly conceptions; however some expressions of the Buddha in this text (notably the example of the woodworm, and parable of the lost sword) imply that the *tīrthika*-s unknowingly gesture towards truths above their status.

The perceived proximity between the *buddha-dhātu* and the non-Buddhist *ātmavāda* is, I shall suggest later, at the heart of why the *MPMS*

[347] See pp.110-113.

chose to employ this contextually dangerous epithet not simply for the Buddha, but also for the *tathāgatagarbha*. We must save consideration of this until later, and turn now to the two other texts of the *MPMS*-group that equate the *buddha-dhātu* with one's real self.

4. The *Aṅgulimālīya-Sūtra*

4.1 *The Text*

A key text in this study is the Mahāyāna *Aṅgulimālīya-Sūtra* (*AMS*), which has received little attention in modern scholarship, and with some qualification also employs the term *ātman* in designation of the *tathāgatagarbha*.[348] The text belongs to the *Mahāparinirvāṇa*-group of *sūtra-s*, and is heavily indebted to the doctrine of the *MPMS*: specifically what Shimoda identifies as that of the second stratum of that text.[349] As well as sharing the same prediction of the decline of the *saddharma* found in the *MPMS*, the *AMS* follows the *MPMS* in its condemnation of the consumption of meat; in a strong account of a need to defend the *saddharma* with an armed laity; and – for our purposes – in discussion of the *tathāgatagarbha* in terms of selfhood, and the distinction between this and erroneous notions of it.[350]

The Chinese *AMS* was translated c.435-453 by Guṇabhadra (*AMS*^{C}, T.120), while the Tibetan version (*AMS*^{T}: D.213; Go.25.04; L.58; N.198; Q.879; S.82; T.1.4.1.2) is attributed to Dharmatāśīla, Śākyaprabha, and one 'Tong *Ācārya'*, and dates to the late eighth or early ninth century.[351] *AMS*^{C} is shorter and more concise than *AMS*^{T}, and hence may reflect an earlier text,

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[348] For an account of older Japanese scholarship on the *AMS*, see Kano (2000), and Takasaki (1974: 191-233). For some passages of the *AMS* in English, translated from what appears to be the *AMS*^{T} by Tony Page (date unclear), see http://archive.today/RGwt2 (accessed 12/7/14).
[349] See Nakamura (1987: 192); Suzuki (2002: 20-24).
[350] See Schmithausen (2003: 21-46). Regarding these topics in the *MPMS*, see Shimoda (1994); also pp.101-105.
[351] Kano (2000: 58).

but appears to lack none of the themes present in the latter.[352] The *AMS* is mentioned in a handful of Mahāyāna sources (namely the *Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra* (*LAS*), *Mañjuśrīparipṛcchā-Sūtra*, and the śāstric *Jñānasārasamuccaya-Nibandhana*, *Tarkajvālā*, *Bodhimārgapradīpapañjikā*, and the *Mahāvyutpatti*), though in all but one of these the *AMS* is referenced in regards to its endorsement of vegetarianism, and never in the context of its *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine.[353]

As with the *MPMS*, the *AMS* constitutes a Mahāyānist reimagining of an earlier Buddhist narrative. The Aṅgulimāla story, found also in the Pāli *Aṅgulimāla-Sutta* (*MN*.II.97-106), recounts the Buddha converting the murderous bandit Aṅgulimāla in Prasenajit's kingdom of Kosala.[354] All the elements of that story find their way also into the Mahāyāna text, providing a framework for teachings delivered either by the Buddha or to those visiting the converted Aṅgulimāla, in a manner reminiscent of the lay *bodhisattva* in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*.

Undoubtedly the literary figure of Aṅgulimāla is the ideal candidate to demonstrate that all beings, no matter their past conduct, have the potential for awakening.[355] However Grosnick argues that the *AMS* does not make good its potential to expound the radical, perhaps antinomian implications of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, stressing as it does the role of *karman* in

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[352] For evidence of later contributions in *AMS*^{T}, see pp.194-196.
[353] See Kano (2000: 58). The exception is the mention of the *AMS* in the *Jñānasārasamuccayanibandhana*: see chapter 8.
[354] Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu (1995: 193-202).
[355] See Kano (2006: 3-4,ft.11); Schmithausen (2003: 22).

Aṅgulimāla's gradual approach to awakening.[356] Grosnick recognizes that by doing so – stressing the previous virtue of Aṅgulimāla – the *sūtra* softens the force of its central doctrine, i.e. the universality of the *tathāgatagarbha* for virtuous and immoral beings alike.[357]

Indian audiences would surely see the character of Aṅgulimāla as a seemingly irredeemable figure: hence one could easily assume that the central point of the *AMS* is the ubiquity of the *tathāgatagarbha* in all beings, no matter their past actions. However as Kano writes a closer reading reveals no clear expression of this idea. Rather, in so far as the *MPMS* is a text about the death of the Buddha in which the Buddha is instead revealed to exist permanently, the *AMS* concerns the killer Aṅgulimāla who, in accord with that *sūtra*'s doctrine, does not harm what is essential to beings, i.e. the *buddha-dhātu*.[358]

The text also holds that the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine is essential to the *bodhisattva* path.

> 菩薩道者謂：「一切衆生皆有如來藏。我次第斷諸煩惱得佛性、不動快樂、甚可愛樂。」
>
> *AMS*^{C}: T.120,539c6-c8.

[356] Grosnick (1990: 65).
[357] Grosnick (1990: 70-71): see e.g. *AMS*^{C}: T.120,573c19-21.
[358] Kano (2008: 3-4,ft.11) argues that Aṅgulimāla's role is reimagined as that of a protector of the *dharma*, which might be connected to the sections of the *MPMS* concerning that topic (e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,867a14-a19).

> One on the *bodhisattva* path declares: 'all beings have the *tathāgatagarbha*. I, first having gradually removed defilements, attain the *buddha-dhātu*, that is unshakable bliss and extremely joyous.

AMS^{T} differs slightly, defining the *bodhisattva* path by the thought that 'all beings have the *tathāgatagarbha*; just as I have attained what is unshaking (*mi g.yo ba*) in my own *dhātu*, I shall eliminate ten million afflctions in the manner intended by the Sugata'.[359] These lines in *AMS*^{T} have at their centre '[one's] own *dhātu*': clearly used in the sense of a nature possessed by beings, reminiscent of the *buddha-dhātu* of the *MPMS*, and equated throughout both texts with the *tathāgatagarbha*. Hence the *AMS* continues to use substantialist language, affirming some form of essential nature, to expound the *tathāgatagarbha*, though its use of the designation *ātman* constitutes a departure from the form this takes in the *MPMS*.

I shall here present portions of either *AMS*^{C} and/or *AMS*^{T} in accord with their clarity (or sometimes revealing lack thereof) in presenting the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine of this text. Our focus remains differences in language and imagery describing the *tathāgatagarbha*, *buddha-dhātu* or

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[359] D.213,194a1; Go.25.04,48a6-7; L.58,235a2-4; N.198,312b2-3; Q.879,201a7-8; S.82,249b5-6: *byang chub sems dpa'i lam zhes bya ba ni sems can thams cad la de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po yod de / nga'i* [a] *dbyings su ngas mi g.yo ba thob pa ltar / bde bar gshegs pas dgongs pa'i tshul gyis nyon mongs pa bye ba gcad* [b] *par bya'o //*
[a] DNQ. *nga'i* : SL. *nga yi* : Go. *de'i*
[b] DGoLNS. *gcad* : Q. *bcad*
AMS^{C} could clarify that this *mi g.yo ba* (Skt. *acala*) has nothing to do with the eight stage of the *bodhisattva* path, but perhaps says something of the bliss (*sukha*) that here characterizes awakening.

otherwise: in particular the frequent and polyvalent use of the term *dhātu* throughout this text.

4.2 *The* Ātma-dhātu

Like the *MPMS*, the *AMS* makes use of the expression *buddha-dhātu*, again identified with the *tathāgatagarbha*. However where the *MPMS* argues for this constituting some reality designated as *ātman*, the *AMS* prefers the expression *ātma-dhātu* to distinguish this reality from erroneous, worldly notions of the self: an expression which may reflect an important lexical development of the *ātman*-oriented *buddha-dhātu* doctrine inherited from the *MPMS*.

This compound appears in *AMS*^{T} in the forms *bdag gi dbyings*/*khams*, and in the Chinese recension as both 我性 and 我界. The form 我界 constitutes a rendering of *ātma-dhātu* which like the Tibetan terms above retains the sense of a realm or expanse.[360] As with the Tibetan, however, it remains possible that as a fixed means of translating *dhātu* this character might inherit the sense of an element or nature. The term 我性, meanwhile, lacks this sense, and is moreover found in the form 佛性 for *buddha-dhātu*, i.e. element or nature of a Buddha, so pivotal in the *MPMS* and its relocation of the nature of a Buddha within beings. In reading *AMS*^{C} we must keep in mind

[360] See chapter 3.4.

some possible significance behind the distribution of 性 and 界 that might clarify the sense of *dhātu* in any instance.[361]

The simplest understanding of the *ātma-dhātu* might be as a *karmadhāraya* compound; i.e. designating an essential nature that is properly described as 'a self', though alternatives should be considered. A problem is the polyvalency of the term *ātman*, where *ātma-dhātu* could be understood as one of several *tatpuruṣa* compounds depending on our understanding of the first term. There are three likely possibilities:

1) the *dhātu* that is of *ātman qua* metaphysical designation; i.e. 'the nature of a (supermundane) self';

2) the *dhātu* that is of *ātman qua* conventional designation, i.e. 'the nature of a conventional person';

3) the *dhātu* within *ātman qua* conventional designator, i.e. 'the nature within the worldly person'.

Option 1 is unlikely, as a genitive relation to something outside of the conventional being called *ātman* (otherwise virtually absent from the text) raises new questions about what this entity might be.[362] Option 2 holds that there is some essential (i.e. Buddha-)nature of persons. If the text were to hold that any person has some essential nature (*dhātu*), i.e. that also of the Buddha, this would sit well with the doctrine of the *MPMS* described earlier.

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[361] It would be valuable if some logic were observable in the distribution of either *dbyings* or *khams* in *AMS*^{T}, distinguishing one sense of *dhātu* from the other, though unfortunately I find none.

[362] A significant exception: i.e. usage of the term *ātman* in the sense of 'true self' found in the *MPMS*, shall be seen in chapter 8.5.2. However this is absent from every sustained discussion of the *tathāgatagarbha* in the *AMS*.

A tempting alternative is 3, *ātma-dhātu* as a locative *tatpuruṣa*. Like 2, this reading avoids any sense of the *ātman* in compound form designating anything supermundane. It is also attractive bearing in mind the frequent corporeal imagery used regarding this *dhātu* in the *AMS*, considered below.[363] However, by accepting this translation we are resisting the Tibetan rendering of the compound in a genitive sense, which confirms reading 2 as most reliable. Hence I take *ātma-dhātu* primarily in the sense of 'the (proper) nature belonging to a worldly person' (much as *buddha-dhātu* is that of a Buddha), meaning the valuable essence of a sentient being.

We should address also two other compounds found in the *AMS.* The first of these is *sattva-dhātu* (*sems can gyi dbyings*; 眾生界), which appears infrequently in the *MPMS*, and otherwise plays an important role in the *Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśa-Parivarta* (*AAN*).[364] The term *sattva-dhātu* makes a single appearance in three versions of the *Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (*TGS*), of which TGS^{T} clearly takes the sense of a realm of beings, whereas others (TGS^{C2} and TGS^{B}) instead read this as 'the (proper) nature or essence of sentient beings'.[365] The use of the form 有情界 in TGS^{C2} demonstrated that 界 can in that text designate *dhātu* in the sense of a inherent nature, and more importantly can do so in the context of a nature belonging to sentient

[363] See pp.172-176; also chapter 4.8.
[364] See pp.242-243.
[365] Zimmermann (2002: 127-129,ft.164.5-7): see also p.63,ft.151.

beings.[366] This is further corroborated by use of the term in the *Mahābherī-Sūtra* (*MBhS*) that shall be considered later.[367]

Nevertheless it is possible to confuse two usages of the term *sattva-dhātu* found in the *AMS*. In an account of erroneous notions of the self, both versions list the *sattva-dhātu* among designators of a worldly self that are to be rejected. Confusingly, *AMS*^{T} also affirms the existence of the *sattva-dhātu* as identifiable, like the *ātma-dhātu*, with the *tathāgatagarbha*: a problem we shall consider below.[368] *AMS*^{C} avoids this apparent contradiction, instead identifying the *tathāgatagarbha* with 'one's own nature' (自性).[369] These characters more commonly render the Sanskrit *svabhāva*, though due to the lack of this term's prevalence elsewhere in the *tathāgatagarbha* literature I take this as rendering a form such as **sva-dhātu*. In agreement, *AMS*^{T} provides also *rang gi dbyings* on two occasions, clearly designating 'one's own *dhātu'*.[370]

On occasion the *AMS* also employs the term *dhātu* in isolation from any apparent compound. The text provides comparisons between misconceived notions of the *tathāgatagarbha* and the *dhātu* that is discernable by Buddhas, equated in each instance with the *buddha-dhātu*. Each qualification of the *tathāgatagarbha*/*dhātu* follows a similar form, presented clearest by *AMS*^{T}.

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[366] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,463a20-21: 若能淨除無明煩惱是有情界。
[367] See p.210. Also *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,297a27-28: 如四種衆生界隱覆譬喻。
[368] See pp.160-162.
[369] E.g. *AMS*^{C}: T.120,525b4.
[370] See p.199,ft.543.

sangs rgyas thams cad kyis shin tu nan tan du btsal kyang de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po skyes pa ma brnyes te / sems can thams cad la sangs rgyas kyi dbyings ma skyes pa mtshan dang dpe byad bzang pos brgyan pa yod do //

sangs rgyas thams cad kyis shin tu nan tan du bdag nyid kyis btsal kyang dbyings byung ba[371] *ma brnyes te / sems can thams cad la ma byung ba'i dbyings sangs rgyas kyi dbyings mtshan dang / dpe byad bzang po mtha' yas pas brgyan pa'i dbyings yod do //*

AMS^{T}: D.213,157a3-157b6; Go.24.04,120a8-a9; L.58,187a1-188a1; N.198,256b3-257b5; Q.879,164b2-165a6; S.82,198a2-199a1.

All Buddhas, though searching diligently, did not discern a born (*skyes pa*) *tathāgatagarbha*.[372] In all beings there is an unborn (*ma skyes pa*) *buddha-dhātu*, adorned with the good major and minor marks [of a superior being].

All Buddhas, though themselves searching diligently, do not discern an originated (*byung ba*) *dhātu*. In all beings there is un-originated (*ma*

[371] LS *byung ba* : DGoNQ *ma byung ba*

[372] Various forms of the Tibetan verb *rnyes* I take to translate the Sanskrit *upa-√labh*. Given the context, that of the Buddha's inspection of sentient beings, I translate this as a process of discerning the existence of one object or another. See also pp.20-21; and below chapter 4.3-4.

byung ba) *dhātu*, a *buddha-dhātu*, a *dhātu* adorned with endless major and minor marks.[373]

We are then given a further eight comparisons, contrasting each time an erroneous understanding of the *tathāgatagarbha* with a correct conception of the *dhātu*.[374] Following the first of these shown above, both versions express what is discerned as both a) a *dhātu* qualified in some manner (e.g. unoriginated) that is also b) the *buddha-dhātu*. *AMS*^{C} closely resembles *AMS*^{T}, and employs in each of its contrasts the character 性 outside of its usually compounded forms, comparable to *AMS*^{T} text and its use of *dbyings*, reaffirming that 性 commonly reflects *dhātu* in that translation.[375]

We take from this passage as it is found in both versions that the most common use of the term *dhātu* in the *AMS* is precisely as some nature possessed by beings, and that it can be as such without being in compounded form with the terms *buddha* or *ātman*. However it is in compounded form that

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[373] Akin to *AMS*^{T}: LS., *AMS*^{C} more helpfully contrasts the undiscovered 'unreal' *dhātu* (不實) with the discoverable, 'real' *dhātu* (眞實性). See *AMS*^{C}: T.120,526b1.

[374] In full, the *dhātu* found by all Buddhas is deemed unborn (*ma skyes pa*); unoriginated (*ma byung ba*); permanent (*rtag pa*); unchanging (*ther zug*); everlasting (*g.yung drung ma yin pa*); without disease (*nad med*); without age and death (*rga shi med pa*); without fear (*mi 'jigs pa*); indestructible (*mi shigs pa*); without contamination (*dri ma med pa*). For full passage, see *AMS*^{T}: D.213,157a3-157b6; Go.25.04,120a8-121b8; L.58,187a1-188a1; N.198,256b3-257b5; Q.879,164b2-165a6; S.82,198a2-199a1.

[375] *AMS*^{C}: T.120,526a27-b22. The Chinese instead qualifies this *dhātu* as unborn (不生); true (眞實); permanent (常); constant (恒); unchanging (不變易); quiescent (寂靜); indestructible (不壞); unbreakable (不破); without sickness (無病); not ageing or dying (不老死) and without contamination (無垢). In the second and third of these the term *tathāgatagarbha* (如來之藏) is replaced by 自性 (T.120,526b01; 526b03): corresponding simply to *dbyings* in *AMS*^{T}.

the *AMS* frequently uses the term, and predominantly when elaborating its position on the *tathāgatagarbha*.

4.3 *Affirmation of the* Ātma-dhātu

Suzuki writes that a key distinction between the *MPMS* and *AMS* is that whereas the former merely expounds teachings such as the existence of the *tathāgatagarbha*/*buddha-dhātu* in all beings, the *AMS* attempts to promote this over other conceptions of *dharma*.[376] The *AMS*, again considers its content to reflect a hidden teaching (密教; *AMS*^{T}: *ldem po ngag*), though this is here more frequently presented as what the Buddha had already intended, rather than some new teaching revealed to a later audience.[377] This difference is subtle: as what both texts clearly attempt is a reformulation of previous Buddhist categories in terms of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine.

A pertinent example of this comes in Aṅgulimāla's discourse with the monk Pūrṇa, who is recognized by Aṅgulimāla as a skilled expounder of the *saddharma*.[378] Aṅgulimāla presents and proceeds to elaborate on a verse about that which is known only to those fully awakened, i.e. the *tathāgatagarbha*.

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[376] Suzuki (1999).

[377] Takasaki (1975: 213); Suzuki (1999). Unlike in *MPMS* (see p.113,ft.283) these expressions may reflect the Sanskrit **saṃdhāya* or **saṃdhābhāṣya* (Chandra (1959: 436b)): again a form of 'intentional speech', though notably one referred to throughout the *SPS* in its account of the Buddha's teaching through skill in means: see e.g. Kern & Nanjio (1970: 29,6-9: *durvijñeyaṃ śāriputra saṃdhābhāṣyaṃ tathāgatānāmarhatāṃ samyaksaṃbuddhānām*…). See also Seyfort Ruegg (1989b: 309-310).

[378] Pūrṇa is named as 'foremost of expounders of the doctrine' (*dharmakathikānām agraḥ*), perhaps exemplified by his teaching *pratītyasamutpāda* in the *Ānanda-Sutta* (*SN*.III.105). See Thurman (1976: 118,ft.28); also Lamotte (1944:196,ft.1; 1962: 160,ft.42).

諸佛及聲聞　聖所不得法

正覺善通達　廣爲衆生説

AMS^{C}: T.120,525a18-19.

That *dharma* that all Buddha-s and *śrāvaka*-s did not find, the fully awakened one comprehends [that], teaching it expansively for sentient beings.[379]

This verse, ostensibly concerning what the Buddhas deem to *not* exist, is integral to how the *AMS* presents the *tathāgatagarbha* as *ātma-dhātu*. Aṅgulimāla presents the hidden import of the verse, without which Pūrṇa has been 'regarding absence of self (*anātman*) as *dharma'*, such that he 'falls into the lamp of deluded teaching like a moth'.[380] Aṅgulimāla continues:

諸佛如來所不得者，謂過去一切諸佛世尊，於一切衆生所極方便[381]求，無如來藏不可得。

現在一切諸佛世尊，於一切衆生所極方便求，無我性不可得。

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[379] Compare *AMS*^{T}: D.213,150b6; Go.25.04,15b1-2; L.58,178b3; N.198,246b5-6; Q.879,157b8-158a1; S.82,189a3-189a4.

[380] D.213,151a5-151a6; Go.24.04,15b8-b9; L.58,179a4-a5; N.198,247b1-b2; Q.879,158a8; S.82,189b5-189b6: *gang po de bzhin gshegs pa'i ldem po ngag mi shes pas bdag med pa la chos su* [a] *sems pa* [b] *ni gti mug gi chos kyi mar me'i nang du phye ma leb ltar lhung ngo //.* Compare *AMS*^{C}: T.120,525a27-a28.

[a] L. omits *su*

[b] NQ. insert *de*

[381] See Zacchetti (2005b: 1262-1264).

未來一切諸佛世尊，於一切衆生所極方便求，無自性不可得。

三世一切聲聞緣覺，於一切衆生所極方便求，無如來藏亦不可得。

AMS^{C}: T.120,525a29-b6

Regarding that which the Buddha-Tathāgata-s did not find, it is the case that all past Lordly Buddhas, searching very diligently amidst all sentient beings, cound not find the absence of the *tathāgatagarbha*.
All Lordly Buddhas of the present, searching very diligently amidst all sentient beings, do not find the absence of the *ātma-dhātu*.
All future Lordly Buddhas, searching very diligently amidst all sentient beings, will not find the absence of a **sva-dhātu*.
The *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s of the three times, searching very skilfully amidst all sentient beings, also do not find the absence of the *tathāgatagarbha*.

gang de[382] *sangs rgyas kyis ma brnyes*[383] *zhes bya ba ni 'das pa'i sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyis sems can thams cad la*[384] *de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po med pa ma brnyes nas*[385] *'das so*[386] //
da ltar gyi[387] *sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyis kyang sems can thams cad la bdag gi khams med pa mi*[388] *brnyes so* //

[382] GoQN. *de* : LS. *te* : D. *der*
[383] DGoNQS. *brnyes* : L. *rnyes*
[384] Go. omits *la*
[385] DLNQS. *nas* : Go. *pas*
[386] L. omits *so*
[387] Go. omits *gyi*
[388] Go. omits *myi*

ma byon pa'i sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyis kyang sems can thams cad la sems can gyi khams med pa brnyes par mi 'gyur ro // rang sangs rgyas dang / nyan thos rnams kyis kyang[389] *dus gsum du sems can thams cad la de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po med pa ma brnyes*[390] *mi brnyes*[391] *par mi 'gyur te / tshigs su bcad pa de'i don ni* [392] *'di'o //*

AMS^{T}: D.213,151a6-151b1; Go.25.04,15b9-16a2; L.58,179a5-179b1; N.198,247b2-b6; Q.879,158a8-158b3; S.82,189b6-190a2.

'That which the Lordly Buddhas did not discern': regarding that phrase, the Lordly Buddhas of the past did not discern the absence of the *tathāgatagarbha* in all beings.

The Lordly Buddhas of the present do not discern the absence of the *ātma-dhātu* in all beings either.

Nor will the Lordly Buddhas of the future not discern the absence of the *sattva-dhātu* in all beings either.

The *pratyekabuddha*-s and *śrāvaka*-s in the three times did not, do not and will not discern the absence of the *tathāgatagarbhagarbha* in all beings either. Thus is the meaning of that verse.

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[389] N. omits *kyang*
[390] DGoLNQS. *brnyes* : L. *rnyes*
[391] Go. repeats *brnyes*
[392] Go. omits *ni*

Hence what should be understood as not discerned by the Buddhas of the three times is precisely the *absence* of the a) *tathāgatagarbha*, b) *ātma-dhātu*, or c) **sva-dhātu / sattva-dhātu*.

Our two versions are near identical, but *AMS*^{C} states that what are not found absent are (respectively) the a) *tathāgatagarbha*; b) *ātma-dhātu*; but c) **sva-dhātu* (自性). The last of these, and its relation to *sattva-dhātu* in *AMS*^{T}, is problematic: there seems to be some distance between the sense of a *dhātu* generalized across beings (*AMS*^{T}) and that which is one's own (*AMS*^{C}). This might be explained by some misreading of a translator between some form of *sattva-* and *sva-*. With this in mind, and despite the more common form *sattva-dhātu* across this literature, we must favour the reading of *AMS*^{C}, as 1) both versions testify also to an erroneous *sattva-dhātu* among worldly notions of the self, and 2) later, a affirmative occurrence of something approaching the *sattva-dhātu* in *AMS*^{T} concerns not as the nature of beings but rather as the realm (of rebirth) to which they belong.[393]

Returning to the 'hidden teaching' of the above, we might express our new understanding of the original verse as follows:

1) past Buddhas do not discover absence of the *tathāgatagarbha*;

2) present Buddhas do not discover absence of the *ātma-dhātu*;

3) future Buddhas do not discover absence of the *sattva-dhātu* (*AMS*^{T}) */ *sva-dhātu* (*AMS*^{C});

4) *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s (in all times) do not discover absence of the *tathāgatagarbha*.

[393] See p.200.

The central point is that Buddhas of all three times do *not* fail to discern the reality designated by these three terms. We have read that the *AMS* equates the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *buddha-dhātu*, and here that same *tathāgatagarbha* appears to be equated with the *ātma-dhātu* and (more likely) **sva-dhātu*. It is also made clear that *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s, though presumably not able to perceive the *tathāgatagarbha*, also do not discern its absence.

The *AMS* provides further elaboration of what was not found by Buddhas: stating that across all three times there is not found a created *tathāgatagarbha* (如來之藏，作不可得), but, by contrast, that the *tathāgata-dhātu* is in fact uncreated (如來性是無作), adorned with all of the major and minor marks of a superior being.[394] To summarize, the *AMS* thus affirms the equivalence of 1) the *tathāgatagarbha* with 2) the nature of a Buddha (*buddha-dhātu*), which is also 3) the essential nature of a person (*ātma-dhātu*), that is 4) the essential nature of oneself/ sentient beings (*sva-dhātu*/*sattva-dhātu*).

4.4 *What the* Ātma-dhātu *is not*

Just as important for the *AMS* is explaining what the *tathāgatagarbha*, or *ātma-dhātu*, is not: a concern identified also in the *MPMS* in defense of its account of a true self. The *AMS* goes further to distinguish its teaching from

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[394] *AMS*^{C}: T.120,525b16-b20.
AMS^{T} omits to discuss the Buddhas of the future: perhaps an oversight on the part of the translators (bearing in mind the mention of the three times in the passage above): see D.213,151b6; Go.25.04,16a7; L.58,179b8; N.198,48a6-7; Q.879,158b8; S.82,190b2.

erroneous notions of the self, and in so doing clearly exhibits both influence by the *MPMS* and significant development of its ideas.[395]

4.4.1 ***Rejecting Empirical Personhood***

Having considered Aṅgulimāla's reading of the above verse, we should return to Pūrṇa's apparently misguided understanding. His own view concerning what Buddhas do not discern is certainly not to be rejected outright by the audience of the *AMS*. Rather, Pūrṇa provides an account of notions of personhood rejected by the *dharma* prior to the exposition of this text. Though this meaning is clearly subordinated to what Aṅgulimāla presents as a 'hidden' doctrine, this still serves as a list of conceptions of personhood clearly rejected in other Buddhist sources, including the *MPMS*. Both versions present much the same account: I here present *AMS*^{T} in order to highlight a couple of oddities in this version.

> *'das pa'i sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyis kyang chos thams cad la sems can gyi dbyings dang / bdag dang / srog dang / gang zag dang / shed las skyes pa*[396] *dang / shed bu shin tu nan tan du btsal kyang ma rnyed nas / bdag med pa ni sangs rgyas kyi tshig go snyam ste 'das so //*
>
> *da ltar gyi sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyis kyang chos thams cad la*[397] *sems can gyi dbyings dang / srog dang / gang zag dang /*

[395] See pp.100-102.
[396] DLNQS. *shed las skyes pa* : Go. *bshed las skyed pa*
[397] Go. omits *la*

shed las skyes pa dang / shed bu shin tu nan tan du btsal kyang mi brnyes so[398] //

ma byon pa'i sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyis kyang chos thams cad la sems can gyi dbyings dang / srog dang gang zag dang / shed las skyes pa dang / shed bu dag nan tan du byas te btsal kyang rnyed[399] *par mi 'gyur ro //*

de bzhin du nyan thos dang // rang sangs rgyas thams cad kyis kyang[400] *dus gsum du chos thams cad la srog dang / gang zag dang shed can dang / shed bu dang / sems can gyi khams dang / bdag nan tan du btsal kyang ma rnyed mi rnyed rnyed par mi 'gyur te / de ltar srog dang / gang zag dang / shed can dang / shed bu dang / sems can dang*[401] */ bdag gi dbyings med par ston to // de ltar bdag med par ston / de ltar stong par ston te / de lta bu'i chos kyi gtam ston to*[402] //

AMS^{T}: D.213,150b7-151a4; Go.25.04,15b2-7; L.58,178b3-179a3; N.198,246b6-247a7; Q.879,158a1-158a6; S.82,189a4-189b3.

Even though the Lordly Buddhas of the past searched diligently among all *dharma*-s for a *sattva-dhātu* (*sems can gyi dbyings*), an *ātman* (*bdag*), a *jīva* (*srog*), a *pudgala* (*gang zag*), a *manuja* (*shed las skyes*

[398] DGoNQS. *brnyes so* : L. *brnyed do*
[399] N. omits *kyang rnyed*
[400] Go. omits *kyang*
[401] DLNQS. *dang* : Go. *gang*
[402] DLNQS. *ston to* : Go. *stond te*

> *pa*), a *mānava* (*shed bu*), they discerned none. They thought 'there is no *ātman*': so is the word of the Buddha', then passed away.
>
> The Lordly Buddhas of the present search diligently among all *dharma*-s for a *sattva-dhātu*, a *jīva*, a *pudgala*, a *manuja*, a *mānava*, but they do not discern one.
>
> The Lordly Buddhas of the future seek among all *dharma*-s for a *sattva-dhātu*, a *jīva*, a *pudgala*, a *manuja*, a *mānava*, but they will not discern one.
>
> Likewise also all the *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s in the three times search diligently in all *dharma*-s for a *jīva*, a *pudgala*, a *manuja*, a *mānava*, a *sattva-dhātu* (*sems can gyi khams*), an *ātman*, but they did not, do not, and will never discern one. Thus they teach that there is no *jīva*, *pudgala*, *manuja*, *mānava*, *sattva*, *ātma-dhātu* (*bdag gi dbyings*). Thus they teach there is no self [in *dharma*-s]. Thus they teach them to be empty. Such a *dharma*-discourse they teach.[403]

This passage echoes a structure reminiscent of the *prajñāpāramitā* literature, in which it is stated just as clearly that among *dharma*-s there can be discerned no notion of personhood: accordingly explaining each to be 'empty'.[404] Each version of the *AMS* is no doubt rendering some form of the verb *an-upa-√labh* (*AMS*^{C}: 不得), and an audience familiar with accounts of

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[403] Compare *AMS*^{C}: T.120,525a20-a25.

[404] e.g. *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Dutt (1934: 39,3-5): *tad yathā api nāma śāriputra ātma iti ca ucyate na ca ātmā upalabhyate na sattvo na jīvo na poṣo na puruṣo na pudgalo na manujo 'pi upalabhyante anupalambhaśūnyatām upādāya*. See also Zacchetti (2005a: 207; 327-329); also pp.24-26.

this kind of investigation, found in the *prajñāpāramitā* literature and elsewhere, would surely recognize both this structure, and its lists of terms designating a worldly kernel of personhood.

In the *AMS*^{C} there are fewer terms provided for the worldly self: (眾生界及我、人、壽命)[405] Of these we recognize the *sattva-dhātu* (眾生界) and *ātman* (我), and what I propose might have translated *pudgala* (人) and *jīva* (壽命), based on a similar passage found across versions of the *MPMS* which also employs these terms.[406] Suspending the precise meaning of each, the significance is that we are presented with a list of familiar designators for the empirical self that might be searched for among *dharma*-s, as found also in the *MPMS* (and many other sources besides, as discussed presently).

These lists in *AMS*^{C} remain the same for the Buddhas of each time. However *AMS*^{T} curiously omits the term *ātman* among those realities not discerned by present and future Buddhas: implying that they *do* indeed discover such an entity (contrary to the traditional doctrine of *anātman*). We might hypothesize that the version of the text upon which *AMS*^{T} is based understood that the existence of some *ātman*, among other notions of selfhood, is precisely the position of the *AMS*. However all of the above still appears in the teaching of Pūrṇa, who is clearly the mouthpiece for a

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[405] *AMS*^{C}: T.120,525a21.

[406] See e.g. *MPMS*^{T}: §107,7-9; Compare *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,863a7-a8: 無有吾衆生、壽命; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,378c22-c23: 無我無人衆生壽命。
See also Zacchetti (2005a: 327,ft.7-8). I find it appropriate to translate 人 as *pudgala*, due to its use in place of the Tibetan *gang zag* elsewhere in *AMS*^{C}, e.g. T.120,529a15 (e.g. D.213,163a5; Q.879,170b2). *AMS*^{C} elsewhere employs 衆生 in place of *AMS*^{T} *srog* (Skt. *jīva*), (*AMS*^{C}: T.120,530b13; e.g. *AMS*^{T}: D.213 165b7; Q.879,173a3), though in the above list it is clearer that this designates the *sems can* of the expression *sems can gyi dbyings*.

śrāvakayāna appreciation of the *saddharma*, which should surely accept *anātman* in all times and in all regards.[407] Furthermore, the implication that any worldly self is discernable when one comprehends the *tathāgatagarbha* jars with a distinction made between the (erroneous) *ātman* and (real) *ātma-dhātu*, upon which the *AMS* relies.[408]

To clarify, *AMS*^{T} states that:

1) past Buddhas fail to discover a *sattva-dhātu*, *ātman*, *jīva*, *pudgala*, *manuja*, *mānava* (teaching thereafter that there is no *ātman*, which is then taught as *dharma*);

2) present Buddhas fail to discover a *sattva-dhātu*, *jīva*, *pudgala*, *manuja*, *mānava*;

3) future Buddhas fail to discover a *sattva-dhātu*, *jīva*, *pudgala*, *manuja*, *mānava*;

4) *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s, of all times, fail to discover a *jīva pudgala*, *manuja*, *mānava*, *sattva-dhātu*, *ātman*, and teach the absence of a *jīva*, *pudgala*, *manuja*, *mānava, sattva* or *ātma-dhātu*.

However *AMS*^{C} states that Buddhas of all three times, along with *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s, fail to discover what is presented as a consistent list of designators for empirical personhood. These include both the terms *sattva-dhātu* and *ātman*, both of which designate worldly notions of personhood. Importantly the term *ātman* in regards to Buddhas of the present

[407] See chapter 1.3.
[408] A distinction made evident in chapter 4.7.

and future is also not omitted. As such, it can be said that the consistent list of terms for the empirical self found *AMS*^{C} makes better sense than that of *AMS*^{T}, but the latter may reflect a significant variation expressing some confusion over the value of the term *ātman* found here and elsewhere in the *AMS*. The irony of this, as we shall address later, is that it seems a major concern of the *AMS* to distinguish selfhood from the true self precisely through adoption of the expression *ātma-dhātu*.

Such lists certainly allude to the *prajñāpāramitā* literature, with which this passage shares a common register: that of discernment (or otherwise) of phenomena. It is very likely that the *AMS* is indeed referencing the *prajñāpāramitā* literature, with which at least some authors of the *MPMS* were also aware, though it is worth stressing that lists of erroneous synonyms for the empirical self are common across other Buddhist sources. An early example comes in a gloss of the *Mahāniddesa*, on the subject of worldly persons in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* of the *Suttanipāta* (4.6.5), which presents us with a list of ten such designators.[409] Furthermore, Skilling charts the appearance of a list of seventeen such terms in the *Bimbisārapratyudgamana-Mahāsūtra*, comparing this to lists found in a variety of other non-Mahāyāna sources. Among these we note a list in the *Mahāvyutpatti* that describes these terms as designators for the self employed by *tīrthika*-s (*mu stegs can gyi bdag tu brjod pa'i ming*): identified by the *MPMS* as advocates of erroneous notions of selfhood.[410]

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[409] La Vallée Poussin & Thomas (1916: 127); also Andersen & Smith (1913: 159).

These lists are then indicative of a range of terms used by teachers outside of the Buddhist fold to designate lasting selfhood. The common sequence of these terms, found across Skilling's sources and similar to that in the *AMS*, suggests that our text is drawing on an established arrangement of refuted entities, recognizable to its audience as belonging to the doctrines of extraneous teachers.[411] It is precisely these notions of the self that Pūrṇa opposes, and which are surely not accepted by Aṅgulimāla in his understanding of the *tathāgatagarbha* either.

4.4.2 *Rejecting Upaniṣadic Personhood*

Hence Aṅgulimāla's identification of the 'hidden teaching' behind the verse does not so much refute Pūrṇa's reading as supercede it: affirming what the Buddha does find (the *ātma-dhātu*) amidst that which he does not (empirical notions of the self). However Aṅgulimāla's own account concerns a different set of notions that are to be rejected, in preference for the *ātma-dhātu*.

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[410] Skilling (1997: 300-301; 331).

[411] This shall be returned to in a later chapter, addressing the importance of the relationship texts such as the *AMS* appear to have with so-called *tīrthika*-s. The presence of such a list in '*mahāsūtra*' material, hence bearing some nominal, and perhaps also functional, similarity to the *MPMS*, raises the question of whether such lists were particularly well known to lay devotees: perhaps hereby prepared for encounters with non-Buddhist teachers on a regular basis. See previous p.68,ft.159.

'das pa'i sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyis kyang chos thams cad la nan tan du[412] *btsal kyang 'jig rten pa'i bdag*[413] *the bo*[414] *tsam dang*[415] */ ci tshe'i 'bru dang / 'bras dang / yungs 'bru dang / til gyi ril bu tsam dmar po dang / sngon po dang / ser po dang / dkar po dang / thung du*[416] *dang / ring po dang / shin tu ring po la sogs pa snying kha na*[417] *'bar zhing 'dug ces bya ba dang / lte ba'i drung dang / mgo*[418] *dang / mig dang / rna ba la me mar gyi*[419] *snying po dmar po snum gyi rkyen gyis 'bar ba lta bu 'dug go zhes bya ba la sogs te / rtog pa rnam pa*[420] *mang po ni ji ltar*[421] *'jig rten pa rnams bdag la sgom pa / gang de dag gi*[422] *rtag pa brtan*[423] *pa ther zug ste / bdag*[424] *ni 'di 'dra'o zhes bya*[425] *sangs rgyas thams cad dang / nyan thos thams cad kyis ma brnyes nas mngon par*[426] *sangs rgyas nas srog chags rnams la bshad do zhes bya ste /*

AMS^{T}: D.213,151b1-b4; Go.25.04,16a2-5; L.58,179b1-179b6; N.198,247b6-248a4; Q.879,158b3-b7; S.82,190a2-a7.

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[412] DGoNQS. *du* : L. *tu*
[413] Go. omits *bdag*
[414] Q. omits *bo*
[415] DGoLQS. *bdag the bo tsam* : N. *the tshom*
[416] DLNQS. *thung du* : G. *thu tu*
[417] LNQ *kha na* : DS *ga na* : Go. *ka nas*
[418] DNQS. *mgo* : Go. *mgo'*
[419] DGoNQ. *me mar gyi* : SL. *mar me'i*
[420] Go. omits *rnam pa*
[421] Go. omits *ni ji ltar*
[422] DLNQS. *dag gi* : Go. *dang*
[423] GoLNQS. *brtan* : D. *brten*
[424] SLG. insert *de*
[425] LGo. insert *ba*
[426] Go. inserts *rdzogs par*

> The Lordly Buddhas of the past searched diligently among all *dharma*-s, yet what is called a worldly self that is the size of a thumb, of a millet grain, of a rice grain, a mustard seed, a sesame seed; red, blue, yellow, white, short, long, very long etc.; said to reside burning in the heart, said to be near the navel, in the head, in the eye, in the ear, like the red burning at the heart of a lamp from radiant oil, and so on; these conceptualizations, which are worldly notions of *ātman*, are said to be permanent (**nitya*), stable (**dṛḍha*), eternal (**śāśvata*); such an *ātman* (*bdag*), like all of these, all Lordly Buddhas, all *śrāvaka*-s, did not discern. Then, being fully awakened, they teach this [the absence of the above] to living beings.[427]

AMS^{C} clarifies that what is being searched for in all cases is a worldly self (世間之我).[428] This exposition of the earlier verse provides images found also in the *MPMS*, each very reminiscent of those found in the early *upaniṣad*-s concerning the *ātman* or another essential kernel of personhood.[429] A few of these were encountered in the previous chapter: the wealth of seemingly upaniṣadic imagery in the *AMS* is strong evidence of a connection between this text and the *tathāgata-dhātu* chapter of the *MPMS*.

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[427] Compare *AMS*^{C}: T.120,525b7-14.
[428] *AMS*^{C}: T.120,525b8.
[429] See previous chapter, on the appearance of similarly upaniṣadic designations of selfhood found in the *MPMS*.
Aside from upaniṣadic sources discussed here, a similar account of the self is found also in the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (10.6.3), in which the self is (among other things) called the size of a rice, barley, or millet grain; situated in the heart; a smokeless light (*jyotiradhūma*): Weber (1964: 806).

It is clear that the *AMS*, very likely following the *MPMS*, is aware of a stock of ideas employed by the authors of the *upaniṣad*-s, if indeed these texts are not referencing those sources themselves.[430] By means of a comparison, we might consider the thumb-sized man found in the *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* (*KU*, 4.12-13; 6.17) and *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣ*ad (*ŚU* 3.13; 6.1).

> A person (*puruṣa*) the size of a thumb (*aṅgusṭhamātra*) resides within the body (*ātman*); the lord of what was and what will be – from him [the agent] he does not hide himself.
> The person the size of a thumb is like a fire free of smoke; the lord of what was and what will be; the same today and tomorrow.
>
> *KU* 4.12-13, Olivelle (1998: 394-395).

> A person the size of a thumb in the body (*ātman*), always resides within the hearts of men.
>
> *KU* 6.17, Olivelle (1998: 402-403).

This *puruṣa* is the consistent experiencer of continuity from one moment to the next, and hence comparable to the self found elsewhere in the upaniṣadic literature. For size comparisons with various grains, and indeed location in the heart, we might consider the *Chāṇḍogya-Upaniṣad* (*ChU*).

[430] Such an awareness is found elsewhere also: see chapter 1, also Lamotte (1949: 744, regarding T.1509,149b9-b11).

> This self (*ātman*) of mine that lies deep within my heart – it is smaller than a grain of rice or barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller even than a millet grain or a millet kernel; but it is larger than the earth, larger than the intermediate region, larger than the sky, larger even than all these worlds put together.
>
> *ChU* 3.14.2-3, Olivelle (1998: 208-209).

The *upaniṣad*-s do not present any account of the colour of the self (if anything we find rejection of this language, e.g. *Muṇḍaka-Up*. 1.1.6), but at a stretch we might be reminded of the variously coloured veins (*hitā*) of the heart in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* (*BĀU* 4.3.20) and *ChU* (8.6.1).[431] Aside from the *upaniṣad*-s, this may also evoke the Jain categorization of different colourings (*leśyā*-s) of the self that correspond to its spiritual development, itself perhaps a response to the less sophisticated Ājīvika system of colourings (*abhijāti*-s) that prescribe the essential quality of a person in any birth.[432] As ever, we cannot assume that the *AMS* is here responding to any one tradition of understanding the self, and may well be grouping together all manner of false notions, regardless of their origins.

Contrasted with the location of the worldly self in the *AMS* (other than in the heart, as above), the *upaniṣad*-s state it can be situated sometimes in

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[431] Olivelle (1998: 208-209; 114-115).

[432] See Balcerowicz (1997: 208, ft.31); Basham (1951: 243-245). However both Balcerowicz and Dundas (2002: 43) draw attention to an early Jain source (*Āyāraṃga* 176) stating that the self lacks shape, various colours, odour, taste etc. It is likely that an account of the qualities of this clearly substantialised notion of selfhood was a point of dispute between the Jains and Ājīvika-s, and perhaps known to the *AMS*.

the head or eye (*BĀU* 2.3.5; 4.4.2; *ChU* 4.15.1; 8.7.3), but less so in the ear. Finally, the comparison to the essence of a lamp resembles an analogy found in the *ŚU* (2.15) between a lamp and the reality of the self (*ātma-tattva*).[433]

One image is present in only *AMS*^{C}, which is the self 'spread around the body like liquid' (遍身猶如津液), found also in the *MPMS*.[434] This might be compared to *ŚU* 1.15-16.[435]

> Like oil in sesame seeds and butter in curds, like water in the riverbed and fire in the fire-drills, so, when one seeks it with truth and austerity, one grasps the self (*ātman*) in the body (*ātman*) – that all-pervading self, which is contained [in the body], like butter in milk.
>
> *ŚU* 1.15-16, Olivelle (1998: 416-417).[436]

What is most significant is that the *AMS* decrees these to be worldly conceptualizations of the self (*'jig rten pa*; Skt. *laukika*), which in all likelihood we should contrast with the *ātma-dhātu* that is identifiable with the *tathāgatagarbha*. It is clear that the *AMS* is aware of a discourse on the nature of a self more essential than the being in which it resides, and, like the *MPMS*, wishes to distinguish its own doctrine from these. A possible advantage that this text has over the *MPMS*, however, is the designation *ātma-dhātu* which at once bespeaks of the (*buddha*-)*dhātu* and the true sense of one's self, though

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[433] Olivelle (1998: 418-419).
[434] *AMS*^{C}: T.120,525b11. See also *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,883c18.
[435] There is evidence also that the Jains viewed their *jīva* as a substance that filled the body. See Jain (1935).
[436] These images are reminiscent of those in the *MBhS*: see chapter 5.2.

without declaring the existence of an entity – '*ātman'* – negated so strongly throughout the wider *dharma*.

Aṅgulimāla's account of what the Buddhas do not discern is then not that of Pūrṇa, and indeed the former criticises the latter for possessing a distorted imagining (*phyin ci log tu rnam par brtags pa*) of the meaning of the original verse.[437] Here we find the term *phyin ci log*, which most likely translates the verb *vi-pari-√ās* as found in the *MPMS*, integral to that text's distancing of its doctrine from that of the *tīrthika-s*.[438] Although the *AMS* does not make mention of the four *viparyāsa*-s, it is entirely possible that the underlying Sanskrit sought to evoke the language of 'distorted' views confusing self and non-self discussed in the last chapter, and with it the doctrine of texts such as the *MPMS*.[439]

It is clear however that one portion of the *MPMS* stands out as bearing closest resemblance to the *AMS*: namely the parable of the lost sword that concluded the *tathāgata-dhātu* chapter of the former text. There also we find mention of an (erroneous) self like 'a thumb-sized light in the heart' (我如寸燈在於心中), and the same list of designators for the empirical self found in *AMS*^{C}, minus only the *-dhātu* of the expression *sattva-dhātu* (衆生、我、人、壽命).[440] Pertinently, this passage exhibits one of only two occurrences of the

[437] See *AMS*^{T}: D.213,151b5; Go.25.04,16a6; L.58,182b6; N.198,248a5; Q.879,158b8; S.82,190b1.
[438] *AMS*^{C} here has 妄想, more commonly translating *pari-√kalp*. See T.120,525b15.
[439] See chapter 3.3.
[440] *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,887c11-12; see p.134.

term *ātma-dhātu* (我性) in *MPMS*^{C1} (*MPMS*^{T}: *bdag gyi khams*).[441] It is possible then that this passage is a direct influence upon the *AMS*: a consideration to which we return when hypothesizing the motivation behind the language of these two texts.[442]

In summation, the *AMS* – much akin to the *MPMS* – attempts to distance itself from both a) empirical notions of the self, listed by Pūrṇa, and b) those reminiscent of the *upaniṣad*-s which, for all their profundity, remain worldly and erroneous. It is possible that an awareness of these similarities had the authors of the *AMS* favour the term *ātma-dhātu* over the *ātman* used more frequently by the *MPMS*.

If this term does exist in the *MPMS* – strongly implied by the existence of in *bdag gi khams* in *MPMS*^{T} – it was not therein employed in a positive sense, i.e. as a synonym for the *buddha-dhātu*. However if the authors of the *AMS* are, as it appears, strongly influenced by this content of the *MPMS*, it might have seemed a prudent innovation to adopt this term in order to distinguish 'the (correct) nature' of beings from erroneous notions of selfhood, comparison with which clearly concerned authors of both of these texts.

It is more than just this awareness of other non-Buddhist notions of selfhood that suggests a strong connection between these two texts. Indeed it seems that the *AMS*, no doubt the inheritor of the notion of a 'Buddhist self', goes further than the *MPMS* in addressing repercussions of that doctrine, not fully explored by its precursor.

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[441] *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,887c13; also pp.135-136.
[442] See chapter 8.5.

4.5 *Perceptibility of the* Tathāgatagarbha*: Two Parables*

As in the *TGS* and *MPMS*, the *AMS* employs short parables and similes to express its position on the *tathāgatagarbha*. It is worth remembering that we are not necessarily dealing with sophisticated and systematic presentations of a philosophical position. Rather, *sūtra* texts such as the *AMS* may well have addressed a wide, possibly uneducated audience little acquainted with sophisticated Buddhist categories.[443] These texts' intention, as such, may be to express their doctrine with a preference for clarity over detail.[444] Nevertheless we remain attentive to the import of each example: both as the texts themselves understand them, and alert to language that may betray important doctrinal suppositions of our authors.

With this in mind, we consider two parables of the *AMS* concerned with the perceptibility of the *tathāgatagarbha*. These are significant not just for their account of the *ātma-dhātu*, but also for further representations of erroneous, worldly accounts of the self. In the first of these, the Buddha's son Rāhula is described inspecting a pool of water inhabited by tiny creatures.[445]

> 如羅睺羅敬[446]重戒故，極視淨水見蟲，不了爲是蟲、爲非蟲、爲是微塵耶。

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[443] See p.6.
[444] See pp.54-55.
[445] This clearly echoes an example used in the *tathāgata-dhātu* chapter of the *MPMS* (see *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,887b6-9; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,412a12-a25; *MPMS*^{T}: §412), i.e. of a monk searching for living things in a pool. Other stories exist regarding Rāhula and his education using analogies with water, e.g. the *Ambalaṭṭhikarāhulovāda-Sutta* (*MN*.I.414). See also Lamotte (1949: 813,ft.2).
[446] 〔敬〕－＜明＞

久久諦觀，漸見細[447]蟲，十地菩薩亦復如是，於自身中，觀察自性，起如是如是無量諸性種種異見。

如來之藏如是難入。安慰説者，亦復甚難，謂於惡世，極熾然時，不惜身命，而爲衆生，説如來藏。

是故我説諸菩薩摩訶薩人中之雄，即是如來。

AMS^{C}: T.120, 525b24-c2.

Just as Rāhula, respecting discipline, looking closely into clear water, seeing insects, but not knowing if what is there are insects or not, or if they are tiny particles, at last, observing closely, gradually comes to see tiny insects; so is the tenth-stage *bodhisattva*: scrutinizing amidst themselves their own nature (**sva-dhātu*), generating various such differing views concerning innumerable natures.

The *tathāgatagarbha* is, like that, difficult to know. The teacher of what is beneficial, with great difficulty, when the wicked world is all aflame, [and] with disregard for their own life, teaches the *tathāgatagarbha* for the sake of all beings.

Hence do I say that the *bodhisattva mahāsattva*-s are heroes among people; [and] are precisely *tathāgata*-s.

thams cad[448] *ma yin no snyam pa las rim*[449] *gyis brtags na*[450] *srog chags phra mo yin par mthong ba de bzhin du sa bcu thob pa'i byang*

[447] 細＝知＜聖＞

[448] DLNQS. *thams cad* : Go. *sems can*

chub sems dpa' stag[451] *rnams kyis rang gi lus la bdag gi dbyings yod par bdag nyid kyis kyang*[452] *mthong ste / 'di 'dra ba de lta bu mtha' yas pa'i dbyings su mthong ngo // de ltar de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po la 'jug pa ni shin tu dka' ba byed pa yin te / gang dag kun tu 'bar ba dang / rab tu 'bar ba lta bu'i 'jig rten du rang gi srog kyang btang ste ston par*[453] *'gyur ba ni rab tu*[454] *dka' ba byed pa phan par ston pa yin no //*

AMS^{T}: D.213,152a1-152a4; G.25.04,16a10-16b4; L.58,180a4-a8; N.198,248b4-248b7; Q.879,159a4-a7; S.98,190b6-191a2.

[Rāhula] thinks them to be nothing at all. So thinking, gradually he examines them and sees them to be tiny creatures. In this way the tenth stage *bodhisattva-s* [who are like] tigers[455] themselves see the *ātma-dhātu* in their own body, and see it as a limitless *dhātu* (*mtha' yas pa'i dbyings su mthong*). Hence, the *tathāgatagarbha* being difficult to comprehend, whoever teaches what is beneficial (*phan par ston pa*) does what is most difficult: teaching while giving up their own life in the world that is burning and aflame [with suffering].

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[449] DNQS. *rim* : LGo. *rims*
[450] DLNQS. *na* : Go. *nas*
[451] DGoLNS. *stag* : Q. *rtag pa*
[452] Go. omits *kyang*
[453] Go. inserts *byed*
[454] DLNQS. *rab tu* : G. *kun tu*
[455] Most editions describe these *bodhisattva* as 'tigers' (*stag*): an image used several times in the *AMS*. Q.879 here calls them *rtag pa* (159a5), which makes little sense. Later Q.879 provides the variant *sha stag* (159a7), 'i.e. to the *bodhisattva*-s alone I teach…', which works well in this context, but is nevertheless likely erroneous. See p.176,ft.460.

The contrast in the parable is between Rāhula's perceiving lifeless things and realizing them to in fact be tiny creatures, equivalent to the *bodhisattva* investigating their own body for the *ātma-dhātu*. This in turn is seen as a limitless *dhātu*. *AMS*^{C} states that the tenth-stage *bodhisattva*-s investigate their own bodies for what is here called their 'own nature' (自性),

which results in many different views of it (a reading which may also underlie *AMS*^{T}, though this is not how its translators took it). These are presumably false views of the self as mentioned above, somehow being generated by the efforts of the *bodhisattva* to know, or perhaps teach, the *tathāgatagarbha*.

This bears a resemblance again to the lost sword parable of the *MPMS* mentioned above, in which we found this doctrine taught by a *bodhisattva*; mention of worldly notions of the self; and one of only two appearances of the term *ātma-dhātu* in that text.[456] Both imply that it is through misunderstanding the teaching of a *bodhisattva* that wrong ideas of the self arise: 'having heard the *bodhisattva's* word, they [the worldly persons] understand it wrongly'.[457] *AMS*^{C} similarly implies that the *bodhisattva's* vision is indirectly responsible for false notions of the self, which are wrong views. As this comes in the explanation of the parable, presumably clarifying its meaning for the *sūtra's* audience, we can take *AMS*^{C} to be suggesting that worldly, false views of the self could indeed originate in miscomprehension of the *tathāgatagarbha*: a view expressed already by the *MPMS*.

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[456] See pp.135-136.
[457] See e.g. *MPMS*^{T}: §417,10-11: *de ltar byang chub sems dpa'i tshig thos nas log par bzung ste /*. See also p.137.

Accordingly, the above example concludes by affirming the difficulty of teaching the *tathāgatagarbha*, and (as is common in the *AMS*) praise for the 'teacher of what is beneficial' (安慰説者; *phan par ston pa*).[458] It also praises the *bodhisattva* who promulgates the *tathāgatagarbha*:

> *byang chub sems dpa'*[459] *stag de dag la nga de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po ston gyi / gzhan la mi ston to // sems can de dag ni bdag nyid de bzhin gshegs pa yin no //*
>
> *AMS*^{T}: D.213,152a4-5; Go.25.04,16b3-b4; L.58,180a8-181a1; N.198,248b7-249a1; Q.879,159a7; S.82,191a2-191a3.
>
> To *bodhisattvas* [who are like] tigers I teach the *tathāgatagarbha*, but I teach it not to others. These beings are themselves *tathāgata*-s.

AMS^{C} refers to these *bodhisattva*-s teaching the *tathāgatagarbha* as 'heroes among men' (人中之雄), themselves Tathāgata-s.[460] This is demonstrated by their identification with the **hitopadeṣṭṛ*, whose bravery might be lauded for 'teaching while giving up their own life': evidence perhaps

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[458] This 'teacher of what is beneficial [for beings]' (**hitopadeṣṭṛ*) identified by Suzuki as an expression shared by both the *AMS* and *MBhS*. Throughout the *AMS* this person is foremost associated with teaching the *tathāgatagarbha*: see e.g. *AMS*^{T}: D.213,150b1-2; Q.879,157b4-5. See Suzuki (2000b: 157-158).

[459] Q. inserts *sha*

[460] *AMS*^{C}: T.120,525c1-2. This expression may betray influence of the *MPMS*, in which we find 人中雄 (*MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,853b16). The line is preserved in *MPMS*^{SF} 1.5, discussed by Habata (2007: 8), and is shown to reflect *narakuñjara*. In their place *MPMS*^{T} provides *mi mchog*: as such use of *stag* in *AMS*^{T} remains somewhat idiosyncratic.

of the austerity expected of *bodhisattva*-s by the *AMS*.[461] These beings are furthermore those who perpetuate the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, and in doing so can recognize themselves as, in a sense, Tathāgata-s already.[462]

This segues well into the second parable that is of value to us, concerning the role of faith in the acceptance of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine. This concerns the monk Aniruddha, who is gifted with the divine eye (*divyacakṣus*).[463] Both versions share similar content, though *AMS*^{T} provides a form easier to follow.

> *ma 'gags pa dang*[464] *lhan cig tu byis pa sha'i mig can song nas nam mkha' la bya song ba'i rjes la bltas na*[465] */ byas*[466] *pa sha'i mig can gyis ci*[467] *nam mkha'i bya*[468] *rjes mthong ngam / gnas brtan*[469] *ma 'gags pas ni gsal bar mthong ste /*
>
> *skyes bu sha'i mig can yang*[470] *gnas brtan*[471] *gyi dring la rab tu yid ches nas 'gro ba de bzhin du / byis pa sha'i mig can dang 'dra ba nyan*

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[461] This may be evidence of challenging expectations made of the *bodhisattva*: indeed affirming that all beings *can* attain awakening does not mean that it is easily attained. See Nattier (2003 : 84-89; 193-197), in regards to the early Mahāyāna being a very exclusive path indeed. See also a central theme of the *AMS* discussed in chapter 4.6, below.
[462] See also p.95,ft.238.
[463] The Arhat Aniruddha is elsewhere considered 'first of those with the divine eye' (*agro divyacakṣukānām*), an epithet confirmed by this passage in the *AMS*^{C} (T.120 p.525c02: 如阿那律天眼第一); also Thurman (1976: 118,ft.34); Lamotte (1944: 527).
[464] Go. omits *ma 'gags pa dang*
[465] DLNQS. *na* : G. *nas*
[466] GoLQ. *byis* : DNS. *byas*
[467] Go. omits *ci*
[468] DQNS. *mkha'i bya* : GoL. *mkha' bya'i*
[469] DLNQS. *brtan* : Go. *grtan*
[470] DLNQS. *yang* : Go. *gyis kyang*

thos dang / rang sangs rgyas thams cad[472] *kyis mdo sde thams cad kyi tshul la yid ches nas de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po yod par shes kyi*[473] */ de bzhin gshegs pa'i yul gyi dbyings lta yang dag par ga la mthong / de ste nyan thos dang / rang sangs rgyas gzhan gyi dring la 'jog na / mi dmus long tsam lta ga la yid*[474] *ches /*

AMS^{T}: D.213,152a4-152a7; Go.25.04,16b4-b7; L.58,181a1-181b5; N.198,249a1-6; Q.879,159a7-159b3; S.82,191a3-191a7.

An ignorant person who has [only the vision of] the physical eye went with Aniruddha and looked for the trail of a bird in the sky.[475] That ignorant person asked: 'did you see the trail of the bird in the sky?' The elder Aniruddha replies: 'I saw it clearly'.

A person with [vision of] the physical eye had trust in the reliability of the elder. Similarly, all the *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s, who are beings like the ignorant one with [only the vision of] the physical eye, have trust in the system of all *sūtras* and know that the *tathāgatagarbha* exists. However, how can they see clearly the nature that is the object of the [faculties of the] Tathāgata?

If the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha* rest upon the reliability of another, then [similarly] why trust those who are blind?[476]

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[471] DLNQS. *brtan* : Go. *grtan*
[472] GoNQ. omit *thams cad*
[473] *kyi* : Go. *kyis*
[474] Go. inserts *ga la*
[475] See also pp.93-96, for similarity with the *MPMS*.
[476] Compare *AMS*^{C}: T.120,525c2-c5.

The parable contrasts those with divine vision and those with only the vision of the physical eye (*maṃsacakṣus*). Both are listed among the five visions possessed by beings of one level of attainment or other, among which the former is vision of things in the world attainable by *deva*-s or *yogin*-s.[477] The import of the parable is that as much as Aniruddha's companions rely on his superior (worldly) vision, so do beings rely on the *tathāgatagarbha sūtra*-s for knowledge of the (*buddha*-)*dhātu*. In *AMS*^{C}, this is precisely 'the nature [within] the range of the Buddha' (T.120, 525c5-6: 佛境界性): a phrasing which again stresses that the *dhātu*, despite sounding as such, is no physical entity: being a constituent of sentient beings as they are perceived only by an awakened Buddha.

Taking these two parables as complementary, we see how and by whom the *tathāgatagarbha* of the *AMS* can be perceived. Both communicate that the *tathāgatagarbha* is difficult to comprehend: in the case of the Aniruddha parable this reality is accessible only to Buddhas. However the Rāhula parable – sharing the perspective of both the *MPMS* and *ŚDS* – holds that advanced *bodhisattva*-s can also discern this reality (albeit not as well as a Buddha): a position not shared by all of our texts (e.g. the *TGS* and *RGV(V)*) which make perception of this reality available only to fully awakened Buddhas.[478]

We read above that the tenth stage (therefore very advanced) *bodhisattva* can indeed perceive the *ātma-dhātu* (*AMS*^{C}: **sva-dhātu*) by investigating his own body. What is perhaps troublesome is that that this

[477] See Lamotte (1944: 439-440).
[478] See this notion throughout chapter 2.3.

entity is at once said to be within the constitution of beings, but that it should not be confused for erroneous notions of the self that are, as detailed above, similarly corporeal. Here the distinction between some upaniṣadic self and the *tathāgatagarbha* seems faint indeed. It appears, following the Aniruddha parable, that the distinction lies rather in the beholder: i.e. that investigation of the 'body' of beings will indeed reveal the *dhātu*, but only if properly perceived by a Buddha or advanced *bodhisattva*.

This, to reintroduce the *TGS*, may well be the perception that correctly sees beings as precisely *tathāgata*-s, though hidden beneath afflictions. Perhaps the model of beings composed as such – distinct from that oriented towards the *skandha*-s – is for our authors the manner in which a Buddha perceives beings: hence not how the *śrāvaka*, inspecting the *skandha*-s, is expected to discern that there is no kind of (worldly) self therein. Therefore it was said above that no beings see the *absence* of the *ātma-dhātu*: precisely because 1) for Buddhas and advanced *bodhisattva*-s it *is* visible, while 2) all others have limited faculties not attuned to investigate beings in terms of this supermundane, bipartite model accessible only to the former.[479]

However the *bodhisattva*, according to the *AMS* (and related content of the *MPMS*), cannot prevent sentient beings distorting what is taught into false conceptions of the self. The impication, once again, is that worldly notions of the self can be considered to find their origin in miscomprehension of the true, Buddhist notion of the self (called in the *AMS* the *ātma-dhātu*). In short,

[479] See again chapter 1.4.2.

certain *ātmavāda* expressions – precisely those that resemble the accounts of the *upaniṣad*-s – stem from miscomprehension of the true, Buddhist self.

4.6 *Function of the* Tathāgatagarbha

Above we have addressed both what the *tathāgatagarbha*, designated as *ātma-dhātu*, both is not and is not. The *AMS* attempts to clarify the difference between worldly notions of the self and the *ātma-dhātu*: as such the text expands on the significance of what the *MPMS* presents as the *buddha-dhātu* present in all beings, affirming both the necessity of this *dhātu* if a being is to attain awakening, and the need still for beings to bring about its manifestation as a Buddha in the world. This continues where the *AMS* moves into a discussion between the Buddha and Mañjuśrī: we again focus on *AMS*^{T}, for reasons that shall become clear below.

> *gzhan yang 'jam dpal mi gser 'dod pa rtog pa dang ldan pa brag la rko la*[480] */ ci'i phyir shing la mi rko / rdo ba gser gyi dbyings yod pa la ni*[481] *rko'i / shing gser med pa la mi rko'o // de bzhin du 'jam dpal dbyings*[482] *yod pa la rtog pa'i mi rnams bdag sangs rgyas su 'gyur ro snyam ste / tshul khrims srung*[483] *zhing tshangs par spyod do // gzhan yang 'jam dpal dbyings med na ni tshangs par spyod pa*[484] *don med par 'gyur ro /*

[480] DGoLNS. *rko la* : Q. *rko ba*
[481] L omits *ni*
[482] DLNQS. *de bzhin du 'jam dpal dbyings* : Go. *de bzhin gshegs pa la dbyings*
[483] DLNQS. *srung* : Go. *bsrung*
[484] Ta. *par*

lo bya bar chu la bsrubs[485] *kyang snum mi 'byung ba de bzhin du / gal te bdag gi dbyings med na / bdag la chags pas*[486] *tshangs pa dang / tshul khrims spyod pa rnams don med par 'gyur ro //*

AMS^{T}: D.213,195a5-195b1; Go.25.04,49a9-b1; L.58,236b5-b8; N.198 314b1-b4;Q.879 202b4-202b6; S.82,251b4-251b6; Ta.1.4.1.2,*kha*,10b7-10.

Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, discerning men desiring gold dig in rock, but why do they not dig in wood? They are able to dig out the gold-ore present in the rock, but do not dig in wood because there is no gold present. Likewise, Mañjuśrī, since they possess the *dhātu*, discerning men think: 'I will become a Buddha!' and keep moral precepts and practice pure conduct.[487] Moreover, Mañjuśrī, if there were no *dhātu*, then pure conduct would be futile. As oil does not come from water even if churned for ten million years; likewise if there existed no *ātma-dhātu*, due to attachment to self, pure conduct and keeping moral precepts would be futile.[488]

The sense of the above is that without an awakened nature there can be no cause of awakening, i.e. there would exist no reality which, once rid of

[485] DLNQS. *bsrubs* : Go. *srubs*
[486] DGoLNS. *pas* : Q. *pa'i*
[487] This reflects **brahmacarya*, most likely meaning strict adherence to the precepts (and practices such as vegetarianism) as outlined by this text. Notably this expression is used throughout *MPMS* also: e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,881b22; *MPMS*^{C2}, T.374,404b28; *MPMS*^{T}: §350,25 (*tshangs par spyod pa*).
[488] Compare *AMS*^{C}: T.120,540a20-a25.

afflictions, constitutes Buddhahood. On the other hand, without cultivations that clean away these afflictions, this reality remains concealed.

Interestingly, here *AMS*^{C} avoids any form of the term *dhātu*, in preference always for the expression *tathāgatagarbha.* Generally we have considered *AMS*^{C} to reflect a form of the text perhaps redacted prior to the translation of *AMS*^{T}, though it would be a curious move of any editor (or translator) to remove the clear play on the term *dhātu* used above: in which the notion of gold ore (*ser gyi dbyings*) clearly reflected some form of Sanskrit *dhātu* to be compared to the 'true nature' of the self.[489] As ever, conclusive evidence of one translation being in all cases 'earlier' in form than another remains elusive.

AMS^{C} also omits mention of an attachment to self, which in *AMS*^{T} seems opposed to right practice in the world, especially if the *dhātu* were to not exist. This *bdag la chags* may reflect 1) a grasping to the notion of self (*ātma-grāha*; the more common rendering of this expression as *bdag 'dzin* being absent from *AMS*^{T}), or 2) affection for one's self (*ātma-sneha*) which might also make sense in opposition to the austerity of pure conduct herein expected of the *bodhisattva*. Whatever the case, this contrast is between the true nature of oneself to be pursued, and that which obscures this – false notions of the self – still to be removed.[490]

The above draws attention to the model of awakening implicit in the *AMS*: one in which awakening is the making manifest of some nature present

[489] See chapter 3.4, regarding the meanings of *dhātu*.
[490] We shall see in following chapters that one manner of explaining the 'true self' is to consider this a position arrived at having removed all wrong notions: expression of this *par excellence* being found in the *RGVV* (chapter 7.5.1).

in all beings, without which there can be no attainment. In short, the *ātma-dhātu* (along with correct practice) is a necessary criterion for the attainment of Buddhahood, though this requires also the alleviation of attachment to the worldly self, in accord with the doctrine of *anātman*. This distinction between the active self and the underlying *ātma-dhātu* is another key concern of this text that we should consider further.

4.7 *The* Ātma-dhātu *vis-à-vis Conventional Selfhood*

The *AMS* addresses a perceived contradiction between the affirmation of the *tathāgatagarbha's* existence, and the requirement still for right conduct in the pursuit of this. In considering the relationship between *karman* and the *tathāgatagarbha*, the *AMS* betrays a useful distinction between the conventional self that transmigrates, and the supermundane *nature* of one's self, the *ātma-dhātu*, that is identifiable with the nature of a Buddha. Like Kāśyapa in the *MPMS*, Mañjuśrī here asks probing questions about the *tathāgatagarbha*, and again I choose to present *AMS*^{T} in order to explore a significant feature of this version.[491]

> *gal te sems can thams cad la de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po yod na / sems can thams cad sangs rgyas su 'gyur te / sems can thams cad kyis srog gcod pa dang / brdzun*[492] *smra ba dang / chad 'thung ba*[493]

[491] The first excerpt, in particular, shows no clear difference in meaning to that of *AMS*^{C}.
[492] DGoQ. *brdzun* : L: *brdzun du* : N. *rdzun* : S. *rdzyun du*
[493] DNQ. 'thung ba : S. bgung ba : L. btung ba : Go. thung ba

dang / 'khrig pa dang / ma byin par len pa dang / mi dge ba'i las kyi lam thams cad byar rung ngam /

gal te sangs rgyas kyi dbyings sems can thams cad la yod na gang gi tshe[494] *bsgral*[495] *zhing rab tu 'jug par*[496] *'gyur /*

gal te sangs rgyas kyi dbyings yod na / thams cad kyis kyang mtshams[497] *med pa dang / 'dod chen pa'i las bya bar 'gyur ro //*

AMS^{T}: D.213,192a7-192b2; Go.25.04,47a2-a5; L.58,233a3-a6; N.198,310a4-a7; Q.879,199b7-200a1; S.82,247b2-b5.

If in all beings there exists the *tathāgatagarbha*, all beings will become Buddhas. For all beings would taking life, telling lies, drinking alcohol, engaging in sex, stealing, and all kinds of unwholesome paths of activity be acceptable?

If the *buddha-dhātu* exists in all sentient beings, when then will they become liberated, and enter [that state]?

If the *buddha-dhātu* exists, then all beings would still commit the great crimes and the acts of an *icchantika*.[498]

Here Mañjuśrī's concern (again, perhaps that of some audience alarmed at this doctrine) is a lack of repercussion for immoral beings declared to have the *tathāgatagarbha*: i.e. bound to attain, regardless of their conduct.

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[494] Go. inserts *nas*
[495] DLNQS. *bsgral* : Go. *sgral*
[496] DLNQS. *'jug par* : Go. *'jog par*
[497] DLNSQ. *mtshams* : Go. *tshad*
[498] Compare *AMS*^{C}: T.120,539a15-a19.

As an extreme, Mañjuśrī sees that beings could fall into the behaviour of the *icchantika*, which as outlined in the previous chapter remains a category open to longer discussion.[499] In this passage, we simply need accept them as embodying the nadir of improper conduct.

Mañjuśrī continues to question this doctrine. Here what is expressed succinctly by *AMS*^{C} is expanded by *AMS*^{T} in an illuminating manner.

> 若有我者我界，當度一切有。是故，世間無有我、無有界： 一切法無我，是諸佛教。
>
> *AMS*^{C}: T.120,539a19-a20.

> If a person has the *ātma-dhātu*, then all [persons] would be liberated [regardless of action]; hence [the latter not being so], in the world there is neither self nor *dhātu*: [accordingly] the teaching of the Buddhas is the absence of a self in all phenomena.

> *gal te sems can thams cad la bdag gi dbyings yod na / bdag nyid sgrol par 'gyur*[500] *te / las kyi rnam par smin pa la bdag gi dbyings med pas na / de'i phyir 'jig rten dang bdag la dbyings med de / thams cad la bdag med pa de ni sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa'o //*

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[499] Elsewhere in the *AMS* the *icchantika-s* are associated with having lustful minds, and as a result commiting all kinds of unwholesome behaviour: not much in accord with Karashima's (2007) account of the sense this term may have had in the *MPMS* (see, e.g. *AMS*^{C}: T.120,529c11-530a4). Nor is this much in accord with the understanding of these beings found in the *RGV(V)*, to which we return later (throughout chapter 7.1).

[500] DLNQS. *'gyur* : Go. *gyur*

AMS^{T}: D.213,192b2-192b3; Go.25.04,47a5-6; L.58,233a6-a7; N.198,310a7-310b1; Q.879,200a1-200a2; S.82, 247b2-247b6.

> If in all beings there exists an *ātma-dhātu* (*bdag gyi dbyings*), then they themselves (*bdag nyid*) will be liberated; [but] there being no *ātma-dhātu* in the [mechanics of the] fruition of actions, then in neither world nor oneself (*bdag*) is there a *dhātu*. 'In all [of these] there is no self (*bdag med*)': so did the Buddha teach.

In *AMS*^{C} it is clear that Mañjuśrī holds the Buddha to have taught *anātman* to avoid the view that a real self exists. What is implied is that in so far as a self (or *dhātu*) exists there would necessarily be an account of liberation to be enjoyed by just this worldly entity. Hence, the Buddha taught *anātman* to prevent subscription to the *ātmavāda* account of liberation. *AMS*^{T} however spells out that what was meant was that there is no self in the mechanics of *karman*: i.e. the sphere in which beings can be discussed as constituted by *skandha*-s, transmigrating precisely because of their actions in the world. What *does* exist is the *ātma-dhātu* apart from all this activity: what we might consider the cause of (*hetu*), but not condition for (*pratyāya*), liberation.[501]

The significant premise in Mañjuśrī's thinking, shown clearest by *AMS*^{T}, is that the existence of an *ātma-dhātu* means its involvement in the mechanics of *karman*. We might relate this to worldly notions of the self so far

[501] See pp.88-89.

discussed: this is certainly no empirical self, due to its absence in the performance of actions, but – despite first appearance – is no sublime, 'upaniṣadic' self precisely because it requires (pure) action in the world to liberate it. Significantly, the agent of this action, as shall be discussed more below, is expressed in *AMS*^{T} as *bdag nyid*: 'oneself' conventionally imputed, in contrast to the *bdag gyi dbyings* that is the 'recipient' of awakening.

The Buddha's response to the above begins with the image of the *tathāgatagarbha* compared to a lamp kept in a jar (an image found also in the *MBhS*).[502] More significantly, we are provided with another parable, this time concerning the career of a young ascetic boy. We again stay with *AMS*^{T}: the form of which helps us to unpack this example.

> *bcom ldan 'das 'od srung de bzhin gshegs pa dgra bcom pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyis de ring*[503] *nas lo bdun na*[504] */ 'khor los sgyur ba'i rgyal po chos dang ldan pa / chos kyi rgyal por 'gyur ro // nga*[505] *yang zhag bdun na yongs su mya ngan las 'da'o zhes lung bstan nas /*
>
> *'dul sbyong byed pa'i bu de rab tu dga' ba skyes nas / bdag ni thams cad mkhyen pas*[506] *'khor los sgyur ba'i rgyal por*[507] *lung bstan te / gdon mi za bar 'gyur snyam nas dga' ches te / rang gi ma la smras pa / ma nya dang / sha dang / 'o ma dang / til gyi la du dang / zho dang / do ba*

[502] See e.g. *AMS*^{C}: T.120,539a21-22; also chapter 5.2.
[503] DNQS. *de ring* : Go. *de'i ring* : L. *de rings*
[504] na (G. *nas*)
[505] Q. inserts *de*
[506] DLNQS. *mkhyen pas* : Go. *mkhyen par*
[507] DGoNQS. *por* : L. *po*

dang / khu ba dang / 'bru drus pa dag stsol cig / stobs chen por bya'o zhes thams cad bsres te zos[508] *nas / dus ma yin pa tsam gyis shi nas bdag nyid shi ba*[509] /

AMS^{T}: D.213,192b3-192b6; Go.25.04,47a7-9; L.58,233a6-233b4; N.198,310b1-310b7; Q.879,200a2-200a6; S.82,247b7-248a5.

The Lord Kāśyapa, a Tathāgata, an Arhat, a pure and fully-awakened Buddha, said to that boy: 'In seven years [you] will become a *cakravartin*, a *dharma*-king, and having become that, seven days later I will pass into *nirvāṇa*.'[510]

Then that boy-*yogin* felt much joy, thinking: 'the All-Knowing One has said I will become a *cakravartin*, this is then certain!' Thinking that, he said to his mother: 'Mother! Bring fish, meat, milk, sesame cake, curds, potatoes, broth and cereals! I must increase my strength!' Mixing these up and eating them, he promptly died an untimely death: hence killing himself.[511]

Again, *bdag nyid* appears to designate the conventional self that is the agent of activity, i.e. the boy responsible for consuming an unhealthy

[508] DGoNQS. *zos* : L. *thos*
[509] G. omits *bdag nyid shi ba.*
[510] Predictions of future rewards made by Buddhas are a popular literary trope, and perhaps reflect one of the perceived negative repercussions of not knowing the influence of a Buddha in the world, as felt by Mahāyānists. See also p.47.
[511] Compare *AMS*^{C}: T.120,539a23-a29.

concoction of foods. It is this conventional self, ultimately denied under the teaching of *anātman*, that is both responsible for, and suffers through, recurring death and transmigration. This is then not the *bdag gi dbyings* (*ātma-dhātu*), which Mañjuśrī considers in his opening question as the recipient of liberation.

This nature, however, is not capable of attainment simply through self-knowledge. The Buddha continues as follows.

> *bdag nyid kyis nyams par byas na*[512] */ ci*[513] *bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa brdzun gsung ngam / de*[514] *ste thams cad mkhyen pa ma yin / 'on tam*[515] *de la 'khor los sgyur pa'i dge ba'i rtsa ba dang / bsod nams rnam par smin pa med dam /*
>
> *gsol pa / de sngon las ngan pa / bgyis bas gum mo*[516] *//*
>
> *bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa / 'jam dpal de skad ma zer cig / de ni*[517] *dus ma yin pa tsam bab pa*[518] *ste / sngon las ngan pa byas pa ma yin no*[519] *// bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa lung ston pa na*[520] */*
>
> *des*[521] *sngon las byas*[522] *pa mi mkhyen par lung bstan re*[523] *skan / de ni*

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[512] DGoLNQ. *na* : S. *nas*
[513] DLNQS. *ci* : G. *ji*
[514] DLNQS. *de* : G. *ji*
[515] DLNQS. *tam* : Go. *kyang*
[516] L. omits *mo*
[517] DGoNQS. *ni* : L. *nis*
[518] DNQS. *bab ba* : Go. *babs*
[519] L. omits *no*
[520] DLNQS. *ston pa na* : Go. *stond pa ma yin no*
[521] DGoLNS. *des* : Q. *ngas*
[522] Go. inserts *ngan*
[523] DLNQS. *re* : Go. *de*

sngon las ngan pa[524] *byas pas shi ba ma yin gyi / bdag nyid kyis nyes te / bdag gis bsad*[525] *do //*

AMS^{T}: D.213,192b6-193a2; G.25.04,47a9-b2; L.58,233b4-b8; N.198,310b7-311a4; Q.879,200a6-200b1; S.82,248a5-248b1.

If he has injured himself, was what the Lordly Tathāgata said a lie, or was he not all-knowing? Or had the meritorious roots and merit of the *cakravartin* not ripened?

The reply [of Mañjuśrī]: He died by evil acts done prior to this.

The Lord proclaimed: Mañjuśrī, do not say as such! His death was merely untimely, not due to evil actions done previously. When a Lordly Tathāgata declares something, by no means does he not know events of the past. [The boy] died not because of evil acts done long ago, but he himself was at fault: he killed himself.[526]

The Buddha provides Mañjuśrī with several possibilities which we are to reject: 1) the dishonesty of the Buddha; 2) his lack of knowledge; 3) there not having been a ripening of the merit that would result in the boy becoming a *cakravartin*. Of these the third is most in accord with *dharma*, which Mañjuśrī effectively chooses when he answers that the death of the ascetic boy is due to the mechanics of *karman*. Foolish actions lead to the boy's

[524] Q. omits *ngan pa*
[525] DGoLNQ. *bsad* : S. *gsad*
[526] Compare *AMS*^{C}: T.120,539a29-b3.

death, while the actions that will result in his becoming a *cakravartin* had yet to bear fruit.

The Buddha repeats that the boy's death was untimely (*dus ma yin pa*). *AMS*^{C} clarifies that it not longstanding *karman* that causes his death: indeed while knowing his good fortune, the boy was still able to transgress.

無先惡業，今自作過以致失命耳。

AMS^{C}: T.120,539b4-b5.

…without any previous evil action, it is simply that [the boy] himself made a transgression now, and hence lost his life.'

The *AMS* seems to confirm that this nature of the self cannot attain liberation simply by the conventional being knowing of its existence: what may be a distinction from upaniṣadic notions of liberation through a kind of self-knowledge.

The text returns to Mañjuśrī's original concern, and we again infer some contrast between 1) the worldly person doing deeds and 2) the essence of that person that might receive awakening.

'jam dpal de bzhin du skyes pa'am bud med kyang rung ste / gal te de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po bdag la yod pas de nyid sgrol bar 'gyur

gyis sdig pa bya'o snyam ste sdig pa byas na[527] *de ci bdag gi dbyings sgrol bar 'gyur ram /*

AMS^{T}: D.213,193a2-193a3; Go.25.04,47b2-b3; L.58,233b8-234a1; N.198,311a4-a5; Q.879,200b1-200b2; S.82,228b1-228b3.[528]

Mañjuśrī, likewise, if there is a man or a woman thinking 'If the *tathāgatagarbha* is in me, that itself will be liberated, therefore I shall do evil deeds'; then doing evil deeds, will their *ātma-dhātu* be liberated?

In *AMS*^{C}, the final question is whether or not a being's *buddha-dhātu* will attain itself liberation if an individual commits evil deeds.[529] Despite this difference, both versions imply a distinction between 1) the conventional agent and 2) their true nature. It may go too far to claim that we observe a considered dichotomy between the worldly individual and their *dhātu*, but the text (especially *AMS*^{T}) may still wish its audience to distinguish between the acts of a conventional agent and their underlying nature that attains awakening.

The Buddha concludes his exposition by declaring what it is that causes beings, despite their possession of the *buddha-dhātu*, to behave contrary to their true nature. For the sake of continuity, we remain with *AMS*^{T}.

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[527] DLNQS. *na* : Go. *nas*
[528] Compare *AMS*^{C}: T.120,539b5-b8.
[529] *AMS*^{C}: T.120,539b7-8: 若如是作惡者, 爲佛性得度耶, 不得度耶?

sngar bshad pa bzhin te / 'dul sbyong byed pa'i bu ltar dbyings yod kyang mi sgrol lo // de ci'i phyir zhe na / de nyid bag med pa mang pa dag bag med pa'i phyir chos kyi dbyings kyis mi sgrol lo // ci sems can rnams la sangs rgyas kyi dbyings med dam / sangs rgyas kyi dbyings ni rgyal thabs kyi rnam par smin pa bzhin du sems can thams cad la yod do // sangs rgyas brdzun gsung ba yin nam / sangs rgyas ni brdzun gsung ba ma yin te / sems can brdzun smra ba rnams bag med par myos[530] *shing bstan pa thos nas kyang de dag rang gi nyes pas sangs rgyas thob par mi 'gyur ro*[531] *//*

AMS^{T}: D.213,193a3-193a5; G.25.04,b3-b6; L.58,234a1-a5; N.198,311a5-311b2; Q.879,200b2-200b5; S.82,248b3-248b6.[532]

As explained earlier, like the ascetic boy they will not be liberated, though having the *dhātu*. Why is this? Due to negligence; many, being negligent, are not liberated by the *dharmadhātu*. How can beings not have the *buddha-dhātu*? The *buddha-dhātu* is like the maturation of kingship [in the ascetic boy]; it is present in all beings.
Does the Buddha tell lies? No, the Buddha does not tell lies.
However, deceitful beings that are negligent, though they listen to teachings, still will not attain Buddhahood due to their own faults.

[530] DLNQS. *myos* : Go. *myod*
[531] L. omits *ro*
[532] Compare *AMS*^{C}: T.120,539b8-b13.

Despite possession of the (*buddha-*)*dhātu*, beings frequently do not attain liberation due to negligence (*bag med pa*, **pramāda*), stressing the need for attention to conduct *despite* the presence of the *dhātu.*[533]

Moreover, *AMS*^{T} states that due to this negligence many are not liberated '*by* the *dharmadhātu*' (*chos kyi dbyings kyis mi sgrol*). The term *dharmadhātu* does not otherwise play a part in this text's articulation of the *tathāgatagarbha*, and is totally absent in this passage as presented by *AMS*^{C}.[534] This may betray a later gloss in *AMS*^{T} that some contributor may have used to align the doctrine of the *AMS* with wider Mahāyāna categories.[535] It is certainly clear that the term *dhātu* employed in the *AMS* refers usually to a nature possessed by beings, whereas the term *dharmadhātu* has nuances that certainly exceed this.[536] Either way, the sense of these lines remains that the agent is liberated by the presence of that which is proper to them, i.e. some *dhātu* that constitutes their true nature.

The language of this parable remains that of different notions of selfhood: in both texts we discern a tension between the conventional person and their *ātma-dhātu*. Hence the *AMS* takes the line that the *ātma*-[*buddha-*]*dhātu* is indeed possessed by all beings, though unlike the conventional, active self plays no part in the mechanics of *karman*. Furthermore, this *dhātu*

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[533] See also p.222,ft.609.
[534] In *AMS*^{C} the term 法界 appears only at T.120,517c19, prior to any exposition of the *tathāgatagarbha*.
[535] A possibility also in regards to the *ŚDS*, which features this expression only once (e.g. *ŚDS*^{C1}: T.353: 222b22; *ŚDS*^{T}:275a3). The *dharmadhātu* is meanwhile a more prominent feature of the *AAN* (e.g. T.668; 467c10-14; see also Silk (forthcoming: 29; 123)) and of the *RGV(V)* (pp.241-242): the latter of which certainly represents a broadening of Mahāyānist vocabulary in expounding the *tathāgatagarbha*.
[536] See Takasaki (1966b: 83-83).

cannot attain liberation by promise of it alone, but must be alleviated by pure conduct on the part of the conventionally imputed agent. Hence we see distinction not just between the *ātma-dhātu* and the empirical self, but also the sublimely 'passive' self of the *upaniṣad*-s with which otherwise this doctrine could easily be confused.

4.8 *Regarding the 'Single Nature'*

We have seen that for the most part the *AMS* shares the sense of *dhātu* found throughout the *MPMS*, and indeed that found also in the *TGS*. However the *AMS* exhibits another use of that term, demonstrated in a passage known (at least in outline) to texts including the *LAS*.[537] We find this where the text makes a statement against killing:

> 文殊師利白佛言：世尊，以一切衆生界是界故，諸佛離殺生耶？
>
> 佛言：如是世間殺生如人自殺，殺[538]自界故。
>
> *AMS*^{C}: T.120,540c2-4.

> Mañjuśrī addressed the Buddha, saying: Lord, because the *dhātu* of all beings is this *dhātu*, is this why Buddhas abstain from taking life?
>
> The Buddha replied: it is so. Taking life in the world is just like taking one's own life, because it is killing one's own *dhātu*.

[537] See Nanjio (1923: 258,4-5); also chapter 6.2.1.
[538]〔殺〕－＜聖＞

'jam dpal sems can thams cad kyi dbyings yin pas na / srog gcod pa spangs pa ni sangs rgyas so // rigs kyi bu ji ltar bdag gsod pa ltar 'jig rten na srog gcod pa yang de bzhin te / bdag nyid kyi dbyings 'joms pa'o //

AMS^{T}: D.213,196b2-3; Go.25.04,149b7-b8; L.58,238a7-a8; N.198,316a6-316b1; Q.879,203b7-203b8; S.82,253a7-253b1

Mañjuśrī, since this [*dhātu*] is a *dhātu* of all beings, a Buddha is one who abstains from killing. Good son, killing another in the world is like killing oneself: it is destroying one's own *dhātu*.

Here *AMS*^{C} employs 自界 to designate one's own *dhātu*, which in both versions is identified with that *dhātu* pertaining to all beings.[539] Here however we notice the use of 界 over 性: the sense of the former as a 'realm' or 'expanse' to which beings belong serves our understanding better, but it is surely the case that the Sanskrit form underlying both texts simply referred to *dhātu*, despite (and perhaps because of) how this expression has been used elsewhere in the text.

This condemnation of killing prefigures a justification of the Buddha's vegetarianism.[540] We find this later in the same discussion (more concise in *AMS*^{C}).

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[539] *AMS*^{C}: T.120,540c2-c6. See also Schmithausen (2003: 24).
[540] A key principle of the *MPMS*, also: see e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,868c19-869a8; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,386a9-386a28; *MPMS*^{T}: §173-174. See also Schmithausen (2003: 21-46).

文殊師利白佛言：世尊，因如來藏故，諸佛不食肉耶？

佛言：如是一切衆生，無始生死生生輪轉，無非父、母、兄弟、姊妹，猶如＊伎兒，變易無常。

自肉他肉則是一肉：是故諸佛悉不食肉。

AMS^{C}: T.120,540c22-26.

Mañjuśrī said to the Buddha: Lord, is the *tathāgatagarbha* the reason that the Buddhas do not eat meat?

The Buddha said: it is so. The birth of all sentient beings, transmigrating [through] being born again and again in birth and death without beginning, none having not been father, mother, brother or sister [to each other]: just like an actor, is changing without permanence.

One's own flesh and another's flesh are then one flesh: hence all the Buddhas do not eat meat.[541]

In the above we have a not uncommon argument for showing compassion to other beings, i.e. that all have at some stage existed as one's own family.[542] Importantly, both versions state that beings share the same flesh (一肉; *sha gcig*), i.e. from one rebirth to another, which justifies the

[541] Compare *AMS*^{T}: D.213,197a3-a5; Go.25.04,51a6-a9; L.58,239a3-a6; N.198,317a4-317b1; Q.879,204b1-204b3; S.82,254a4-254a7.
[542] See e.g. Lamotte (1944: 500).

vegetarianism of Buddhas.[543] This is supported by transmigration envisaged as a dancer: a single expanse of beings constantly shifting with each rebirth.[544] What is revealing is that this passage seems to wish to preserve the impermanence of beings through transmigration, though supposing still the existence of some aspect (the *tathāgatagarbha*) that persists.[545]

In what follows, this passage seems very reminiscent of the *Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśa-Parivarta* (*AAN*) and its account of the fixed number of beings occupying what that text calls 'the realm of sentient beings (*sattva-dhātu*)'.[546] The *AMS* similarly holds that all beings having the *buddha-dhātu* must equate these beings across a single expanse (*dhātu*) of transmigration. It is worth comparing the next thought of both AMS^C and AMS^T in full.

一切衆生界我界即是一界。所食[547]之肉即是一肉，是故諸佛悉不食肉。

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[543] The text goes on to qualify that the Buddha does not even use substances (namely honey, conch, leather or silk) which Mañjuśrī holds to be 'not flesh that constitutes [a creature's] own *dhātu'*. This implies that the *AMS* distinguishes what is essential to beings from what it calls their 'fleshy matter' (*zang zing med*; *āmiṣa*). This passage sees one of only two occurrences in AMS^T of *sva-dhātu* (*rang gi dbyings*), more prevalent in AMS^C (as 自性). See e.g. AMS^T: D.213,197a6-197b1; Q.876,204b3-6; AMS^C: T.120,540c28-541a2. See also Schmithausen (2005: 190-191).

[544] AMS^C: T.120,540c24-c25: 猶如＊伎兒變易無常. Here 伎兒 seems to correspond to Skt. *naṭa*, which could well have the sense of a dancer communicated by AMS^T (*bro mkhan*). This image is not common in Buddhist literature, though does feature in the *LAS*: see p.299,ft.794.
For a non-Buddhist example of this image see *Sāṃkhyā-kārikā* 42; 59: Mainkar (1964: 113-114;149-150): a possible connection, bearing in mind the clear awareness the *AMS* has of various *tīrthika* doctrines.

[545] A position perhaps reminiscent of Jain accounts of transmigration: see Jacobi (1908: 60).

[546] See Silk (forthcoming: 14-51; 90-91) for more on this sense of *sattva-dhātu*, as well as possible precursors to the ideas of the *AAN*, and regarding similarities to this portion of the *AMS*. See chapter 5.5, also.

[547] 宅＝食＜三＞＜聖＞

AMS^{C}: T.120,540c26-c27.

The *dhātu* of all beings and the *ātma-dhātu* are one *dhātu*. That flesh that is eaten is one flesh; hence all the Buddhas do not eat meat.

gzhan yang 'jam dpal sems can thams cad kyi dbyings ni chos kyi dbyings te / dbyings gcig tu gyur pa'i sha za bar 'gyur pas / sangs rgyas rnams sha mi gsol lo //

AMS^{T}: D.213,197a5-a6; Go.25.04,51a9; L.58,239a6-a7; N.198,317b1-b2; Q.879 204b3-204b4; S.82,254a7.

Furthermore, Mañjuśrī, the *dhātu* of all beings is the *dharmadhātu*; since this would be eating flesh that is a single *dhātu*, the Buddhas do not eat meat.

In *AMS*^{C} the *dhātu* of one's self is identified with that of all beings, implying that in essence they are the same. Elsewhere in *AMS*^{C} it has made sense to read 界 as denoting the *dhātu* of the *MPMS*: that is as an element or nature, rather than with sense of a 'realm'.[548] Hence this passage appears to be exceptional, but illuminates what may have been an association between 'oneself' and the expanse of transmigration as a whole made by our authors.

AMS^{T}, though otherwise consistent with *AMS*^{C}, equates the *dhātu* of all beings with the *dharmadhātu*, stating that since all flesh belongs to a single

[548] E.g. p.186.

dhātu, the Buddhas do not eat meat. This is only the second occurrence of the term *dharmadhātu* in *AMS*^{T}, the nuances of which, as mentioned above, exceed the translation of *dhātu* as element or nature (and may reflect a later contribution to the text).[549] *AMS*^{T} also states that the flesh of beings constitutes a single *dhātu*, i.e. is part of a fixed expanse of existence, in which the sense of 'realm' over that of 'nature' denoted by *dbyings* makes better sense.

It is clear that the *AMS* is engaging in a similar discourse to that of the *AAN*, regarding the unchanging number of beings transmigrating through *saṃsāra*. This appears to be a recurring point of concern for the *tathāgatagarbha* authors, demonstrated by the presence of passages like the above also in the *MBhS*, and quoted (from the *AAN*) in the *RGVV*.[550] Recourse to the term *dhātu* in the *AMS*, however, seems to convey a unity between the particular and the expansive reminiscent, once again, of upaniṣadic discourse equating the self with something greater than it.[551] Clearly however this was employed to defend a practice (vegetarianism) present also in the *MPMS*: as such the apparent proximity of this account to a model of rebirth in terms of a common nature of beings must be kept in mind as we assess the position of this text.

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[549] See p.195,ft.535 on the term *dharmadhātu*, and chapter 7 (especially p.345) regarding its place in the *RGVV*.
[550] More is said of the *AAN* later, especially chapter 5.5.
[551] This is perhaps the closest the *tathāgatagarbha* tradition comes to espousing a true monism in the mould of the Vedānta, or perhaps what Matsumoto (1997) coined a '*dhātuvāda*' that he perceived underlying key Mahāyāna texts. As far as I can tell Matsumoto's construction of this idea – unconvincing as applied to other *tathāgatagarbha* and Yogācāra sources – did not make mention of the *AMS*: one might wonder how this text would have played into his account of this literature.

4.9 *Conclusions*

Although the *AMS* may have inherited the term *dhātu* from the *MPMS*, and with it perhaps the sense of beings possessing the valuable 'relic-like' nature of a Buddha, the *AMS* clearly develops this term. We find this, for example, where the text discusses the *dhātu* as the realm that pertains to all beings as well as to one's self: a play on this term that may prefigure its usage in the *AAN*.[552] Remaining aware of the propensity this word has to span a variety of meanings, we focus again on the *tathāgatagarbha* found presented in the *AMS* as *ātma-dhātu*, i.e. the (real) nature of a (worldly) self or person.

This expression appears far more frequently in both versions of the *AMS* than does the term *ātman*, which is central to the doctrine of the *MPMS*.[553] It has been demonstrated that in the *AMS* this *dhātu* designates the same reality called *buddha-dhātu*, which in the *MPMS* was identified as the true self. In the *MPMS* there is indeed a strong sense of this *dhātu* constituting the presence of the Buddha in all beings, but the prevalence of the term *ātma-dhātu* in the *AMS* may have another purpose.

It is key that the focus of the *AMS* is not the term *ātman* in isolation, though the compound *ātma-dhātu* occupies the same position in this *sūtra's* doctrine as the (true) self of the *MPMS*. The *AMS* is keen to not have its audience confuse this *dhātu* with a notion of selfhood reminiscent of either a)

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[552] Regarding the dating of the *AAN*, see p.371,ft.962.

[553] We shall see in the concluding chapter one usage of the term *ātman* in the *AMS* that indeed confirms that this *ātma-dhātu* is to be seen still as the 'true self', despite the care our authors took otherwise to concentrate on a form of *dhātu* rather than a notion of selfhood *per se*.

empirical accounts of the self, or b) accounts of the *ātman* as found in the *upaniṣadic* literature. Nevertheless, and in perhaps dangerous proximity to the *upaniṣad*-s, the *AMS* employs corporeal language to explain the presence of this entity somehow 'in' the body: it is here that the advanced *bodhisattva* is said to have perceived a nature (that of the Buddha) that is proper to all beings. We also find, surrounding the parable of the ascetic boy, denial of a passive self that realizes liberation in spite of worldly activity: an account that may again have in mind the objection from some audiences perceiving similarities with the upaniṣadic milieu. For our authors, comparison with extraneous *ātmavāda* teachings was clearly never far from mind.

The *AMS* clarifies that the *ātma-dhātu* is the reality that makes possible liberation, and never the worldly, ultimately unreal agent that acts and suffers in *saṃsāra*. This betrays a model of awakening in which there is clearly required some recipient of liberation, found also in the *MPMS*, but clarified by the *AMS* as somehow detached from the world of actions and results. Again it seems that the *AMS* seeks to clarify for its audience the sense of *ātman* found in the *MPMS*: by contrasting the real *ātma-dhātu* with the (ultimately unreal) worldly self. But it is still the case, amidst the *AMS's* account of a 'hidden teaching' underlying older expressions of the *dharma,* that the audience is taught not to confuse this *ātma-dhātu* with the ideas of *tīrthika-s*.[554]It is also implied, once again, that the error of these *tīrthika*-s stems precisely from searching for the self with limited faculties: their doctrines being born of

[554] A more thorough account of the role played by *tīrthika*-s – mentioned elsewhere in the *AMS* and throughout other *tathāgatagarbha* sources – is considered in chapter 8.2-7.

various ideas originating in the attempts of *bodhisattva*-s to teach the *tathāgatagarbha*.

We have seen that much content of the *AMS*, including the expansive range of *dramatis personae* visiting Aṅgulimāla, or those featured in parables, or reference to establish discourses on the absence of self, would have been familiar to its audience. As Suzuki has argued a key concern of the *AMS* appears to be hermeneutic: contrasting throughout the 'hidden meaning' of the *tathāgatagarbha* to what has been received of the *saddharma* elsewhere.[555] Close ties between this text and the *MPMS* have been established: hence by association the *AMS* may respond to concerns of some audience of the *MPMS* who found difficult the revelation of the Buddhist self therein. Most obviously, the reformulation of this 'self' into a 'nature of one's self' may be an attempt to distinguish this Buddhist doctrine from extraneous *ātmavāda*-s: though the value of this *dhātu* is still very clearly that of the 'true self' found in the *MPMS*.

Reference to images reminiscent of the *upaniṣad*-s, alongside familiar designators for the empirical self (more expansive here than in the *MPMS*), suggests that the *AMS* responded to confusion of this teaching for that of other systems, with which these authors were clearly familiar. Furthermore, the *AMS* again implies that it is in the failure of beings to understand the *tathāgatagarbha* that *ātmavāda* teachings might find both their origin and, by implication, a distorted seed of truth. We shall return later to one final section of the *AMS* concerning the relationship between its own doctrine and those of

[555] Suzuki (1999). See also p.38,ft.92.

the *tīrthika*-s: it is in this perceived indebtedness of *ātmavādin*-s to the *tathāgatagarbha* (rather than a somewhat 'heretical' inversion of this relationship) that we might discern why this literature employs the language of selfhood as it does.[556]

The *AMS* has not unreasonably been considered the main inheritor of the doctrine of the *MPMS*. However another closely related text makes fewer attempts to defend its equation of the *buddha-dhātu* with such an reality, and presents a different, equally challenging development of the *tathātgatagarbha* conceived as such.

[556] Chapter 8.4.

5. *The Mahābherī-Sūtra*

5.1 *The Text*

We turn to the third *MPMS*-group text to espouses the *tathāgatagarbha* in terms of selfhood. The *Mahābherī-Sūtra* (*MBhS*) exists in two translations, which exhibit some profound differences.[557] The Chinese *MBhS* is a C5th translation of Guṇabhadra (*MBhS*^{C}: T.270), while the Tibetan translation was made in the C9th by Vidyākaraprabha and the Tibetan dPal gyi lhun po (*MBhS*^{T} : D.222; Go.27.08; L.70; N.207; Q.888; S.94; Ta.1.4.2.1). Due to the not insignificant gap between the production of these two translations, and the presence of material exclusive to *MBhS*^{T} (which seems to omit nothing found in *MBhS*^{C}), it is safe to assume that the latter reflects a later form of the Indian text. Where both versions agree I shall present material only from *MBhS*^{C}, though variations in *MBhS*^{T} are frequent and will often be presented in full.

Little has been written about the content of the *MBhS*, with the notable exception of an account by Takasaki and subsequent studies undertaken by Suzuki Takayasu.[558] Suzuki accepts Shimoda's account of the earliest strata of the *MPMS* – a text clearly of influence upon the *MBhS* – as concerned with the permanence of the Buddha, which constitutes his 'selfhood'. [559] Arguably it is the later material of the *MPMS* which was of greater significance for the *AMS*, though the *MBhS* (still clearly a *tathāgatagarbha*-oriented text)

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[557] For example in even the name of the text: *MBhS*^{T} reflecting in its title *Mahābherīhāraka-Parivarta* (*'phags pa rnga bo che chen po'i le'u zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*), though in the text calling itself the *Mahābherīhāraka-Sūtra* (*rna bo ch chen po'i mdo*).
[558] See Takasaki (1974: 234-253).
[559] Suzuki (1997: 51).

considers selfhood as once again something ascribable foremost to an awakened being.[560] As Suzuki recognizes, the *MBhS* seems to distinguish the Tathāgata from the notion of *tathāgatagarbha*, opening the gap between beings and Buddhas that was perhaps narrowed by other texts espousing this doctrine.[561]

The *MBhS* is heavily influenced by the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtra* (*SPS*): well evidenced by the wealth of material from the latter (in particular parables, such as those of the lost son and of the magically conjured city) present in the former.[562] Suzuki argues that this influence runs deeper: contending that the *MBhS* presents 'an orthodox successor of the Buddhology of the [*SPS*]'.[563] He appeals to a passage of the *MBhS* regarding the function of a *dharmabhāṇaka* ('preacher of *dharma*'), which appears to share the account of the *Dharmabhāṇaka-Parivarta* of the *SPS*, in which the presence of the Buddha is equated with any instance of someone teaching the

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[560] Takasaki (1977: 249).
The relative dating of the *AMS* and *MBhS* is undetermined. Suzuki (2000b) suggests that the *MBhS* may be later: both texts frequently employ the term 安慰説者 (**hitopadeṣṭṛ*), though argues that in the *AMS* this seems less developed than in its 'sister text', in which this seems always to refer to one who 'protects' the teaching of the *tathāgatagarbha*. Other factors including preference of the term *tathāgatagarbha* over *buddha-dhātu* in this text (contrasted to the *AMS* still very much concerned with an account of some *dhātu* resident in beings) certainly betray greater conceptual distance between the *MBhS* and the doctrine of the *MPMS*. Light may be shed on the relative dating of these texts by Radich (forthcoming).
[561] Suzuki (2002: 22-23).
[562] For the former, see chapter 8.6; the latter: *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,296a7-b7; *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,106b1-107b6; Go.27.08,88a8-89b5; L.70,331a2-333a2; N.207,177b5-179a1; Q.888;111a2-112b1; S.94,369a2-371a4; Ta.1.4.2.1,44a9(incomplete).
[563] Suzuki (2002: 24).

dharma.[564] In the *MBhS*, this 'actualizes' the Buddha as *dharmakāya*: understood by Suzuki as a kind of speech act that constitutes the continuing presence of the Buddha.[565]

Most prominent is however an account Buddha's permanence, and a docetic understanding (as in the *SPS* and *MPMS*) of his physical life and death. In a manner reminiscent of the *AMS* and its account of the *ātma-dhātu*, *MBhS*^{C} presents this as a 'secret' teaching (隱覆説).[566]

> 隱覆説者，謂言如來畢竟涅槃，而實如來常、住、不滅；般涅槃者非毀壞法。
>
> *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,291a29-b1.

> The secret teaching [of this *sūtra*] is that when it is said that the Tathāgata has completely passed over into *nirvāṇa*, in reality the Tathāgata is permanent, abiding and without destruction: *parinirvāṇa* is not characterized by destruction.[567]

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[564] Chapter 10 of Kern and Nanjio (1970: 224-238).

[565] The expression *chos kyi sku* appears only once in *MBhS*^{T} (see Suzuki (2002)) though 法身 appears more frequently in *MBhS*^{C}. In one instance the permanently abiding *dharmakāya* being called also the *buddha-garbha*, that is a 'great self' (T.270,292a8-9: 佛藏大我常住法身). If we accept Suzuki's account, this is certainly a different sense of *dharmakāya* to that which dominates in the *ŚDS* and *RGV(V)*. See chapters 6.1.4 and 7.1.3.

[566] *MBhS*^{T} provides instead *dgongs pa'i tshig*, i.e. the intended (Sanskrit *ābhiprāyika*) meaning of the text. See D.222,88a2-4; Go.27.08,71b10; L.70,306b3; N.207,147b7; Q.888,92a6; S.94,342a6-7. See p.113,ft.283.

[567] Compare *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,88a3-4; Go.27.08,71b10-72a2; L.70,306b3-5; N.207,148a1-3; Q.888,92a6-7; S.94,342a6-7. This clarifies that the expressions '常、住、不滅' in *MBhS*^{C} must here refer to a list of qualities, though this is not so clear in other instances of 常住 found throughout *MBhS*^{C}.

It is well-established by earlier Buddhist literature that *nirvāṇa* is indeed not a kind of annihilation, but it is apparent that the *MBhS* objects to any audience holding *nirvāṇa* to be less than some apparently god-like existence.[568] The text affirms *nirvāṇa* to be a blissful state attained by those who are fully awakened: epitomized, perhaps, by the quasi-theistic picture of the Buddha painted by the *SPS*.[569] Though this account of the Buddha certainly underlies the *tathāgatagarbha* material of both the *MPMS* and *AMS* – in which the *buddha-dhātu* seems to prefigure manifestation of a Buddha conceived very much as a divinely attributed 'person' – the *MBhS* could be seen to bring this doctrine full circle by again drawing upon the *SPS* directly.

For the authors of the *MBhS* it is evident that this position requires the existence of selfhood in regards to sentient beings also: if the Buddha enjoys *nirvāṇa* permanently, then there must be some existent that will serve as its enjoyer. Hence some lasting kernel of their character is required, i.e. the recipient of awaking, or *tathāgatagarbha* conceived as a permanently existing self.

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[568] In contrast to the *MBhS*^{C}'s use of 涅槃 (Sanskrit *nirvāṇa*), *MBhS*^{T} generally refers to the *yongs su mya ngan las 'das*, i.e. *parinirvāṇa*, throughout: we can tell from context that both, for the most part, refer to the Buddha's 'final *nirvāṇa*' at bodily death (which might generate the illusion of his demise). For the respective meanings of (*pari/)nibbāna* see Norman (1997: 216).

[569] For earlier accounts of *nirvāṇa* as a blissful existence, see Collins (1998: 207-213); Gethin (1998: 27-30). See also p.6,ft.14.

5.2 *Similes Concerning the Self.*

The *MBhS* presents its *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine through a series of concise similes, very reminiscent of those found in the *Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (*TGS*), and less of the longer parables found in the *MPMS* and *AMS*.[570] In *MBhS*^{C}, these examples are introduced as explaining 'coverings' of the *sattva-dhātu* (衆生界), a synonym for the *tathāgatagarbha* that we have encountered also in the *TGS* and *AMS*.[571] *MBhS*^{C} introduces the referent entity in these examples as 佛藏 (**buddha-garbha*), while *MBhS*^{T} simply refers to an 'essence' (*snying po*): in all likelihood confirming that some form of the Sanskrit *garbha* was present in both Indian originals.[572]

These example are, in order: 1) an eye with vitreous floaters; 2) the moon concealed by cloud; 3) water in a well and 4) a lamp in a jar. We suspend the first of these until last, as it exhibits features deserving further attention. As these examples are quite straightforward I feel it only necessary to summarize their content, taking *MBhS*^{C} as the basis of each account.

2) The moon concealed by cloud.[573]

In this example, the moon is said to not shine so long as it is concealed by cloud. In a similar fashion, the store of *kleśa*-s cover the *tathāgata-dhātu* (如來性), so that the *dhātu* (simply 性) is not pure. The meaning is very clear,

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[570] Takasaki (1974: 245).
[571] See e.g. *AMS*^{C}: T.270,297a27-28. We shall see however that it is possible the *MBhS* inherited this expression from the milieu of the *AAN*.
[572] *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,297a29; *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,110b2; Go.27.08,92a7; L.70,336b8; N.207, 183b3; Q.888,115a7; S.94,375a7-375b1.
[573] *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,297b7-9; *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,110b5-6; Go.27.08,92b2-b3; L.70,337a6-8; N.207,183b3-4; Q.888,115b4-115b6; S.94,375b7-376a2; Ta.1.4.2.1,48a5-6.
This example is found also in the *AMS*: e.g. *AMS*^{C}: T.120,526b29-c3.

and exemplifies both how the defilements are distinct from that which is concealed, and are in some sense ephemeral in contrast to that which they hide.

3) Water in a well.[574]

The next example emphasizes practice more than most examples for the *tathāgatagarbha* that across this literature. Here a person digging for water continues to dig until the hard earth gives way to mud and eventually water. Similarly, one digs out 'the earth of defilements' to find the *tathāgata-dhātu* (*MBhS*^{C}: 如來性; though *MBhS*^{T}: *de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po*). In both, this entails effort on the part of sentient beings: in *MBhS*^{C} they should also meet Buddha-s, *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s, whereas in *MBhS*^{T} it appears that the latter two categories are among those who should honour the Tathāgata. Either way, the focus seems to be the requirement to cultivate good practices in order to remove defilements. This is a rarity in the *tathāgatagarbha* literature: which tends to focus not on the pursuit of awakening so much as one's capacity for it.[575] As such this may reflect emphasis of the *MBhS* on the distance between beings and a realized Buddha: one surmounted only by diligence in practice.

4) A lamp in a jar.[576]

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[574] *AMS*^{C}: T.270,297b9-12; *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,110b6-111a2; Go.27.08,92b3-b6; L.70,337a8-b3; N.207,183b4-7; Q.888,115b6-8; S.94,376a2-5; Ta.1.4.2.1,48a6-9.
[575] See chapter 5.4.
[576] *MBhS*^{C}: T.270, 297b12-17; *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,111a2-4; Go.27.08,92b6-b10; L.70,337b3-8; N.207,183b7-184a4; Q.888,115b8-116a4; S.94,376a5-b1; Ta.1.4.2.1,48a9-11(incomplete).

More conventionally reminiscent of the examples found in the *TGS* is that of a lamp kept in a jar, wherein it is unable to shine.[577] In both versions of the *MBhS* this lamp is deemed to be of no benefit to beings. Herein the jar represents the defilements, which once broken allows the lamp, representing the *tathāgatagarbha* (*MBhS*^{C}: both 如來藏 and 如來性), to be manifested. In *MBhS*^{C} the *tathāgatagarbha* is explained as having the qualities of a Buddha, and upon their manifestation does the activities of a Buddha, which are for the benefit of beings. Here the focus is on the unmanifested radiance of all who possess the *tathāgatagarbha*: once defilements are cleared, there is in the world another Buddha working for the benefit of all. This emphasizes a Buddha's ongoing presence and influence (reminiscent of the *SPS*): the focus being not realization of the qualities of a Buddha so much as the resultant activities that define awakened beings.

1) The eye with vitreous floaters.[578]

In this, the first example of the four, a patient suffers poor vision as a result of 'floaters', and does so as long as a doctor is not found to treat him. When a doctor is found, their sight is improved. Herein the doctor represents the Buddha teaching the *buddha-dhātu*, though what is most telling is that the *MBhS* makes this example not simply about the 佛性 (*MBhS*^{C}) or *de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po* (*MBhS*^{T}), but also the true self (眞我).

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[577] An example found also in the *AMS*: see p.188.
[578] *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,297b2-b7; *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,110b1-5; Go.27.08,92a6-b2; L.70,337a2-6; N.107,183a5-b3; Q.888,115b1-4; S.94,375b2-b7; Ta.1.4.2.1,48a1-5.

如是無量煩惱藏翳障如來性。乃至未遇諸佛、聲聞、緣覺，計我、非我、我所爲我。若遇諸佛、聲聞、緣覺，乃知眞我。如治病愈，其目開明。翳者[579]，謂諸煩惱；眼者謂如來性。

MBhS^{C}: T.270,297b4-b7.

Like that [example above], immeasurable afflictions conceal the *tathāgata-dhātu*. So long as one does not meet Buddhas, *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddha-s*, one imputes 1) self, 2) [what is] not self, and 3) mine as self. [Only] if one meets Buddhas, *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s will one then know the true self; just as when one treats his illness, his eye opens clearly. The floaters refer to all defilements; the eye refers to the *tathāgata-dhātu*.

…de bzhin du nyon mongs pa byed[580] *ba'i spubs kyis khebs pa'i khams 'di ji*[581] *srid du nyan thos dang / rang sangs rgyas rnams la dga' bar byed pa de srid du*[582] *bdag ni bdag ma yin par 'gyur zhing bdag gi bdag tu 'gyur ro // gang gi tshe sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams la dga' bar gyur pa de'i tshe bdag tu 'gyur zhing de'i 'og tu bsgrub tu rung ba'i mir 'gyur ro //*

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[579] 翳者＝不翳＜宮＞
[580] DGoLSTa. *byed* : NQ. *bye*
[581] DLNQSTa. *ci* : Go. *ci*
[582] DLNQSTa. *de srid du* : Go. *de bzhin du*

mi de'i mig nad[583] *ling tog ser po dang*[584] *sngon po'i*[585] *rab rib gang yin pa ltar nyon mongs pa rnams blta bar bya'o // de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po ni mig bzhin du nges par yod do //*

MBhS^{T}: D.222,110b3-5; Go.27.08,92a10-b2; L.70,337a3-6; N.207,183a7-b3; Q.888,115b2-4; S.94,375b4-7; Ta.1.4.2.1,48a3-5.

…like that [eye], this *dhātu* is concealed by a sheath of ten million afflictions.

As long as [beings] delight in *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddhas*, that long is their [notion of] self not the [true] self, and [for them] there are [the erroneous notions of] 'mine' and 'I'. When one delights[586] in the Lordly Buddhas, then [beings] become the [true] self, and after that become persons fit for attainment.

Defilements should be seen as being like the cloudy vision of the yellow and blue floaters of that person's diseased eye; the *tathāgatagarbha* is like the eye that continues to exist.

Despite differences between these versions, it is apparent that both testify to the existence of a 'true' self not to be confused with the worldly self that acts or possesses. We note also the end of *MBhS*^{T}, in which the

[583] DGoLQTa. *nad* : NS. *nas*
[584] L. inserts *sngon po dang*
[585] DGoLNQTa. *sngon po'i* : S. *sngon pos*
[586] *dga' bar 'gyur* pa perhaps reflecting **āttamanas*: 'gladdened at heart' by an encounter with a discourse of the Buddha. See Chandra (1959: 135); Edgerton (1953: 92).

tathāgatagarbha is like that which 'continues to exist': an entity both before and after attainment of awakening.

If we follow *MBhS*^{C}, three things are here thought of in terms of selfhood: 1) the self, 2) what is not the self, and 3) possession (which implies a false self as possessor).[587] The idea that one might impute 'the self as the (true) self', presumably erroneously, is problematic (and absent in *MBhS*^{T}): perhaps the sense being that the first of these are erroneous *ātmadṛṣṭi*-s (as listed in the *MPMS* and *AMS*). *MBhS*^{C} also implies that coming into contact with Buddhas, *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s (as in example 3 regarding the water/well) can lead to attainment of the true self: a position which seems problematic bearing in mind the distain shown for the lowly *śrāvaka-/pratyekabuddha-yāna*-s elsewhere in the *MBhS*, the *MPMS*-group, and of course the wider Mahāyāna.[588] *MBhS*^{T} perhaps makes more sense, as the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha* are associated with an erroneous position: i.e. attachment to the non-existence of a real self. Consistent with the rest of the text, *MBhS*^{T} states that only when one delights in the Buddha can one know the true self, and becomes then 'fit for attainment (of Buddhahood)'.[589]

Consistent now with the example of both versions, *MBhS*^{T} communicates that contact with a Buddha's teaching results in knowing the true self, akin to the curing of the eye. The two different recensions of the text

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[587] See pp.18-19.
[588] Expressed by the *MBhS* in terms of the one vehicle doctrine: see e.g. *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,291b5-c13.
[589] The expression *bsgrub tu rung ba* is troublesome, and suggests no obvious Sanskritic expression. In concluding discussion of the four similes, *MBhS*^{T} also provides *bsgrub tu rung ba'i khams* (e.g. *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,111a5; Q.888,114a4) which has no correspondence in *MBhS*^{C}, and clearly reflects a gloss on the *sattva-dhātu* mentioned in each version.

explore this illustration differently, though in both what is called the *tathāgatagarbha* / *dhātu* is clearly meant to reflect a real notion of selfhood. The *MBhS* certainly understands the *tathāgatagarbha* as a true self, but its understanding of what this term denotes requires further investigation.

5.3 *The Self as 'Master'*

We must try to account for the value of the self taught by the *MBhS*: specifically, those aspects of such a designator deemed important or desirable by its authors. As Suzuki has recognized, the central doctrine of the *MBhS* is not so much the *tathāgatagarbha*, but rather the status of the Buddha as a permanent and, importantly, potent being: a far cry from the sentient being riddled with afflictions.[590]

The Buddha's power is described throughout the text in terms of what I translate as 'mastery' (*MBhS*^{C}: 自在; *MBhS*^{T}: *dbang phyug*), reflecting the Sanskrit *aiśvarya* (or perhaps simply 'master': *īśvara*). This is reliably the case where these two expressions match across both translations, though elsewhere the breadth of the Chinese 自在 means we can only conclude that something with the sense of 'power' (e.g. **vaśitā*) was present in the underlying Sanskrit.[591] This 'mastery' pertaining to selfhood is found also in

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[590] Suzuki (1997: 46-49).

[591] The use of *dbang phyug* in *MBhS*^{T} is narrower, and leads me to suggest *aiśvarya* to be a quality central to the *MBhS*. A relevant Sanskrit parallel to this usage is found in *RGVV*^{S} 1.36, Johnston (1950: 32,11-12): *sarvatra paramadharmaiśvaryavibhūtvasaṃdarśanād ākāśadhātuparyavasānaḥ*, corresponding to *RGVV*^{C}: T.1611,830a25-26: 於一切處一切法中皆得自在，是故説言，究竟如虚空: See also Nakamura (1974: 551c).

the *MPMS*, but is more present in the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine of the *MBhS*, and hence requires special attention here.[592]

This term reflects the association that wider Buddhist tradition made between the self and the ability to control one's being in the world, discussed back in the first chapter. It is precisely our inability to exist in whatever fashion we please that describes our bondage to *saṃsāra*, as epitomized by the *Anattalakkhaṇa-Sutta*.[593] From early in the development of the Buddhist *anātmavāda*, a key problem for establishing any worldly self was the sense that the conventional person is purely epiphenomenal, with no control over the constituent branches (*skandha*-s) that constitute its existence.[594] To have such power, though not stating explicitly, is to invite the notion of selfhood: an

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[592] See e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,883a16-17; also p.105.
We find one occurrence of 自在 in *TGS*^{C2} (T.667,460c3) in which is it listed as an attainment of those hearing the *sūtra*, and corresponds to the Tibetan *dbang* in *TGS*^{T} and *TGS*^{B} (here most likely some form of **vaśin*): see Zimmermann (2002: 222-223).
In the Chinese and Tibetan versions of the *RGVV* we find the declaration that the eighth stage *bodhisattva* is equipped with ten powers (十自在), including those over his existence, as found also in the *Daśabhūmika-Sūtra* (Vaidya (1967: 45,7-15); also T.1611, 821b25-27). This however appears a more sophisticated account of what is attained by those approaching awakening to that found in the *MBhS*; see also Nakamura (19756: 54b).
We shall revisit this term in chapter 7.1.5 (and 7.2), as it is found in *RGVV*^{C}, in material strongly reminiscent of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (*RGVV*^{C}: T.1611,829c25-830a11).
[593] See pp.18-19.
[594] The extent to which beings are at all free when bound to *karman* is perhaps a stumbling block for Buddhist thought in general. We might keep in mind here the fatalist *niyata* doctrine of the Ājīvaka-s, who may have denied beings any ability to affect their karmic fortunes. See Basham (1981: 224-239); see also p.15-16,ft.35.

association clearly made by the *MBhS* when the true self of the Buddha, and indeed of beings housing the Buddha-nature, is under discussion.[595]

This association is present where the *MBhS* confronts a central problem of its doctrine: the reconcilation of a kind of liberation that is not annihilation with the teaching of non-self. Due to closeness between each account presentation of *MBhS*^{C} will here suffice.

> 迦葉白佛言：世尊，得解脫自在者，當知衆生必應有常。
>
> 譬如見煙，必知有火。若有我者，必有解脫。若説有我，則爲已説解脫有色。非世俗身見，亦非説斷常。
>
> *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,296c8-c11.

> Kāśyapa said to the Buddha: Lord, [as beings] attain liberation and mastery, one should know that sentient beings are certainly permanent.
>
> For example, when one sees smoke one knows there is necessarily fire. If there exists a self, there must be liberation. If it is taught that there is a self, this is in the sense of explaining that liberation is with a

[595] For an account of 自在 positively attributed to the *bodhisattva* (specifically, what seems to be a 'power regarding the *dharmakāya*': 法身自在), which permits them freedom from age, sickness and death, see T.1509,106b22-24, translated in Lamotte (1944: 392). Herein Lamotte goes so far as to suggest that this may reflect **dharmakāyaiśvarya*, though this remains inconclusive.

form; this is not the worldly view of a self, nor is it expounding annihilation or permanence.[596]

It appears that all of the above comes from the mouth of Kāśyapa, though as he is not corrected by the Buddha we can presumably consider this an authoritative declaration. The existence of Buddhas after liberation implies that sentient beings must in some sense exist prior to this also. This liberation 'with form' is mentioned elsewhere in the *MBhS* as that taught already by the Buddha, and indeed the *MPMS* holds this liberation to be that of Buddhas (as opposed to *śrāvaka*-s or *pratyekabuddha*-s).[597]

The *MBhS* then considers that which *appears* to be the end of the Buddha's existence.

迦葉復白佛言：世尊，云何如來　不般涅槃示般涅槃，不生示生？

佛告迦葉：爲壞衆生計常想故，如來不般涅槃示般涅槃，不生示生。

所以者何？衆生謂：「佛尚有終沒[598]不得自在，何況我等有我我所」？

MBhs^{C}: T.270,296c12-c16.

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[596] Compare *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,108b7-109a1; Go.27.08,90b5-7; L.70,334b3-5; N.207,180b4-7; Q.888,113b3-5; S.94,372b6-373a2; Ta.1.4.2.1,46b2-3.

[597] *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,872c27-873a2; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,392a1-a4; *MPMS*^{T}: §229-230. See p.72,ft.177.
MBhS^{T} sees Kāśyapa enquire if the liberation that requires a self is 'the *ātmavāda* together with a form?' However he receives no answer, and I can only understand this version to have misunderstood what is clear in *MBhS*^{C}.

[598] 沒＝歿＜三＞＜宮＞＊

Kāśyapa said to the Buddha: why is it that while the Tathāgata does not attain *nirvāṇa*, he shows *nirvāṇa*? Not being born, he shows [his] birth?

The Buddha replied to Kāśyapa: For [the purpose of] destroying the notion of permanence on the part of beings, the Tathāgata teaches *nirvāṇa* without reaching it; shows birth while not being born.

Why is this? [Because] beings say: 'even the Buddha had a demise, and does not attain mastery: how much more so we who have [the notions of] 'I' and 'mine'?'

'od srung gis yang gsol pa / bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa rnams la yang[599] *yongs su mya ngan las 'da' ba mi mnga'*[600] *na / ci'i slad du de ltar yongs su mya ngan las 'da' ba ston cing 'byung ba ma mchis na ci'i slad du skye ba ston pa lags /*

sems can rnams kyis[601] *re zhig sangs rgyas kyang nongs par 'gyur na / bdag cag lta ci smos / re zhig sangs rgyas kyis kyang bdag gi*[602] *dbang ma thob na bdag cag ngar 'dzin pa dang / nga yir 'dzin pas*[603] *jin pa rnams lta smos kyang ci dgos zher shes par 'gyur bas so //*

MBhS^{T}: D.222,109a1-3; Go.27.08,90b7-10; L.70,334b5-8; N.207,180b7-181a3; Q.888,113b5-8; S.94,373a1-4; Ta.1.4.2.1,46b3-5.

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[599] Go. omits *la yang*
[600] DGoLQSTa. *mnga'* : N. *'da'*
[601] DLQSTa. *kyis* : Go. omits *kyis* : N. *kyi*
[602] DGoLQNTa: *gi* : S. *gis*
[603] DGoLNSTa. *'dzin pas* : Q.*'dzin pa rnams*

> Kāśyapa asked: Lord, if even the Tathāgata-s do not attain *parinirvāṇa*, why do they show a *parinirvāṇa* [i.e. as a kind of demise]? And if there is no origination [of a Buddha], why do they show their birth?
> This is because beings think: 'if at some time even the Buddha dies, how much more so us? If at some time even the Buddha does not have mastery; how much more so us who grasp to the notions of 'I' and 'mine'?'

Both texts present mastery as what the Buddha is perceived to lack upon his death.[604] However it is precisely this power that allows him to make a show of both his being in, and departing from, *saṃsāra*.[605] Whereas other texts in the *tathāgatagarbha* literature do not dwell on the meaning of this power, the *MBhS* provides examples that seem to illuminate just this.

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[604] The 'show' of the *parinirvāṇa* is certainly at the centre of the *SPS*: see chapter 8.6; also Kern & Nanjio (1912: 319-320), as well as the *Lokānuvartana-Sūtra* that Shimoda recognized as a significant influence upon the *MPMS*. See p.77.
Such an idea occurs also in the *RGVV*, in which high-level *bodhisattva*-s (in accord with the understanding that those of the eighth *bhūmi* equipped with ten powers (*vaśitā*; corresponding to *RGVV*^{C} 自在) are able to control their birth), know that there is no such thing as birth or death, 'perceiving that the nature of the [Buddha] has neither' (*RGVV* 68: *tad asyaiva dhātor yathābhūtam ajatyanutpattidarśanāt*: Johnson 1950: 47,5-6).

[605] This *dbang* in *MBhS*^{T} may, again reflect *vaśitā*, though the sense of the Buddha's 'power' is clear in both versions.

譬如有王，爲隣國所執繫縛枷鎖，作是思惟：「我今復是王是主耶，我今非王非主。何緣乃致如是諸難？由放逸故。」如是衆生，乃至生死輪迴，我不自在。不自在故，説無我義。

MBhS^{C}: T.270,296c16-c20.

For example, just as if a king is captured by a neighbouring kingdom, [and] is bound up in chains, thinks: 'Am I still a king, a lord? I am not either. What caused me this trouble? It is [surely] due to negligence.'; like this, as long as living beings wander in *saṃsāra*, their self is lacking in mastery; due to lacking mastery, there is taught the doctrine of non-self.

dper na nyi 'og gi rgyal pos rgyal po zhig bzung ste / lcags su bcug nas btson[606] *rar bcug pa dang / de nas des bsams pa / bdag ni rgyal po yin / bdag ni jo bo yin no snyam pa las yang smras pa / bdag ni ma yin te / bag med pa ma gtogs pa 'di ni sdug bsngal las ci zhig yod snam*[607] *pa de bzhin du / ji srid du 'khor ba na 'khyam pa de srid du nga ni bdag go zhes bdag tu lta ste / bdag med par lta ba'i don yin no*[608] //

MBhS^{T}: D.222,109a3-5; Go.27.08,90b10-91a2; L.70,334b8-335a2; N.207,181a3-a5; Q.888,113b8-114a1; S.94,373a4-7; Ta.1.4.2.1,46b5-8.

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[606] DGoLNSTa. *nas bston* : Q. *nas btson* : *brtson*
[607] DGoLNQS. *snam* : Ta. *snya* + small superscript mark (without clarification in margins).
[608] Go omits *yin no*.

> For example, the king of the West captured another king, binding him in chains and imprisoning him. Then he [the imprisoned] thought: 'I am a king, a lord!' and so thinking says: 'I am [now] not so! How else came this suffering, apart from by negligence?'[609]
>
> Just so, as long as one wanders in *saṃsāra*, that long also does one say 'I', having the view of self: this is the purpose of [teaching] the view of non-self.

The king is clearly meant to represent the true self of beings, which though by nature 'lordly' (**aiśvarya*) has been rendered impotent due to accidental circumstances (i.e. *kleśa*-s). In *MBhS*^{C}, the Buddha teaches non-self for the sake of this 'imprisoned', true self, while in *MBhS*^{T} it is to dispel erroneous notions of selfhood. The latter may reflect a slightly 'softer' account of Buddhist *ātmavāda*, but the common element is the Buddha teaching to 'release' beings from bondage.

As long as beings are in *saṃsāra*, holding to the illusion of having a self that is characterized by mastery, such control over one's existence is, ironically, impossible. The truth is that an absolutely autonomous self such as this *does* exist (hence the Buddha's teaching of the liberated self that is just so), but like the king this is utterly bound in *saṃsāra* by, primarily, the illusion that he should have any power therein.

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[609] See also p.195. For more on *apramāda* as a kingly virtue, see Zimmermann (2000: 187-191).

The *MBhS* provides a second relevant example involving a man similarly powerless, though in this instance pursued by a robber.

譬如有人爲賊所逐。擧刀欲害，作是思惟：我今無力當得免[610]此死難。以不如是生老病死種種衆苦成就衆生思想：願作帝釋梵王。如來爲壞彼思想故示現有死。

MBhS^{C}: T.270,296c20-c23.

It is like a man pursued by a robber. [The robber] raises his blade and wants to harm [him], and doing so [the man] thinks 'I am powerless to avoid this death!' To avoid [suffering] like this, beings experiencing the various sufferings of birth, old age, sickness and death think: 'I resolve to become Indra or Brahma'. In order to demolish that thought, the Tathāgata shows [his own] death.

dper na chom rkun pa gsod pa[611] *por la gri gdengs pa*[612] *de'i tshe rjes bzhin rjes bzhin chas pa dang / de nas des bsams pa / ci bdag chom*[613] *rkun pa 'di'i lag nas 'chor bar 'gyur ram snyam pa las bdag la lus kyi dbang med do snyam du rtogs par*[614] *byed pa de bzhin du*[615] *skye pa dang / rga pa dang / na pa dang / 'chi pa'i sdug bsngal rnam pa du ma*

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[610] 免＝勉＜宮＞
[611] DGoNQSTa. *gsod pa* : L. *bsod pa*
[612] DLNQS: *gri gdengs pa* : Go. *ral gi gdangs pa* : Ta. *gyi gdangs pa*
[613] DLNQSTa. *mcho* : Go. *mcho*
[614] DGoNQSTa. *rtogs par* : L. *rtog par*
[615] DNQSTa. *bzhin du* : Go. *de dag*

dang ldan pa'i sems can rnams bdag ni dbang po'am / tshangs par gyur cig snyam du rtogs par byed pa de dag[616] *gi rtog pa gzhig pa'i phyir de bzhin gshegs pa grongs par ston pa mdzad do //*

MBhS^{T}: D.222,109a5-7; Go.27.08,91a2-a4; L.70,335a2-6; N.207,181a5-b1; Q.888,114a1-4; S.94,373a7-b3; Ta.1.4.2.1,46b8-10.

For example, a murderous robber raises his blade, and upon that follows after [someone], then [the victim] thinks: 'what if I were to die at the hands of this robber?' and then thinks: 'there is no power in my body [to avoid this]!'

Likewise, being connected with the sufferings of birth, age, sickness and death in many forms, beings think 'May I become Indra, or Brahma!' In order to demolish that thought of those who think as much, the Tathāgata showed his own death.

Confronted with lives plagued by suffering, sentient beings have the desire to become gods, under the illusion that this would escape age, death etc.[617] This again might play on the notion of *aiśvarya* which pertains, at least by name, to those 'sovereign' divinities (*īśvara*) occupying positions of great influence in *saṃsāra*.[618] However, these deities are still subject to death,

[616] DGoLNQTa. *dag* : S. *bdag*
[617] Comparison of the *skandha*-s to murderers, communicating the lack of autonomy of the self, is found also in the Pāli literature: see *SN*.III.87,114-142. See also earlier footnote.
[618] See Norman (1991: 1-8).

rebirth and the suffering that these entail. The desire to be reborn as such is then misguided: the misconception being that these (admittedly powerful) deities are outside of suffering, which they are surely not.

No doubt it was the case that its audience would have a desire for liberation already, but the *MBhS* has taken care to present this liberation as a positive state enjoyed by some enduring, permanent entity. The *nirvāṇa* of the Buddha, then, is certainly no kind of annihilation, but rather constitutes the freedom from suffering for which all beings want.[619]

5.4 Tathāgatagarbha *vis-à-vis Practice.*

We have seen already that the two versions of the *MBhS* diverge in curious ways, possibly betraying differences between the Sanskrit manuscripts which each must reflect. Another similar divergence sees Kāśyapa ask the Buddha two different, though not unrelated, questions concerning the self.

世尊，若有我者，云何生彼煩惱諸垢？

佛告迦葉：善哉善哉，應以是問。

MBhS^{C}: T.270,297a3-a5.

Lord, if there is a self, how are there defilements caused by afflictions?

[619] It is hence implied that the desire for freedom in sentient beings is precisely that for awakening. We shall see that the *ŚDS* affirms just this, when identifying the *tathāgatagarbha* as the cause for the desire for awakening. See pp.277-281.

The Buddha said to Kāśyapa: Well done, well done! You should ask this question.

bcom ldan 'das bdag[620] *mchis par ji ltar rig par bgyi lags / bka' stsal pa / 'od srung legs so legs so // zhu ba de lta bu zhu bar mi bya'o //*

MBhS^{T}: D.222,109b4-5; Go.27.08,91a9-10; L.70,335b4-5, N.207,181b7; Q.888,114b1; S.94,374a2-3.

Lord, that a self exists, how is this to be known?
[The Buddha] proclaimed:
Kāśyapa, well done, well done! That question is one you should refrain from [asking].

These two questions reflect what can be considered two central mysteries of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature, identified elsewhere by the *ŚDS*: namely 1) the *tathāgatagarbha* as a somehow *originally* pure mind (in *MBhS*^{T}, though concerned more with the self); and 2) its defilement in spite of its purity (in *MBhS*^{C}).[621] Curiously, in *MBhS*^{C}, the Buddha deems Kāśyapa's question about affliction fitting, while in *MBhS*^{T}, responding to a question about the self, this is deemed not so: perhaps betraying a sense in the latter that this is not within the scope of what can be known by sentient beings.

In each version however the Buddha gives the same response, in the form of another example: this time of a goldsmith observing impurity in gold.

[620] Q. omits *bdag*
[621] See chapter on the *ŚDS*, later.

The text states that even searching for his whole life the goldsmith would not find the origin of the gold's impurity. Enquiring so, he would find neither the impurity, nor would he purify the gold; rather, he should diligently attempt to remove its impurities.[622] This example is unpacked in terms of the pursuit of the real self. Due to its greater clarity, we focus on *MBhS*^{C}.

> 佛告迦葉：如是我者，生客煩惱。欲見我者，作是思惟：今當推尋我及垢本，彼人云何爲得本不?
>
> 迦葉白佛言：不也世尊。
>
> 佛告迦葉：若勤方便除煩惱垢，爾乃得我。謂聞如是比[623]經，深心信樂，不緩不急，善巧方便，專精三業，以是因緣爾乃得我。
>
> *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,297a10-a16.

> The Buddha said to Kāśyapa: Likewise, regarding the self, there are produced adventitious defilements. If one wishes to see the self, and thinks like this: 'now I should look for the self, and the root of defilement': would that person find the origin [of defilement] or not?
>
> Kāśyapa said to the Buddha: No, Lord!
>
> The Buddha said to Kāśyapa: If by effort one removes the dirt of afflictions, then one attains the self. Just so, hearing *sūtra*-s such as this, believing and rejoicing deeply [in them], being neither sluggish nor

[622] This is reminiscent of the *Cūḷamāluṅkyovāda-Sutta* (*MN*.I.426-432) and its story of a man shot with an arrow: the moral in both being that speculation on metaphysical problems can all too frequently distract from practical pursuit of liberation.

[623] 比＝此＜明＞

hurried, well skilled in means, focusing on the three forms of action: because of these, [beings] then attain the self.[624]

Hence investigation in pursuit of the true self is foolish, and will not lead to its realization: one should instead work diligently for the removal of afflictions. As in the earlier cited example of the man digging for water, the *MBhS* stresses not just the adventitious nature of afflictions, so much as the need to make efforts for their removal.

This emphasis is developed in the next example, pertaining to a teacher of language working with impetuous students. The text speaks for itself: affirming that the doctrine of a true self must be taken on faith now, to be understood fully only upon awakening.

迦葉復白佛言：世尊，若有我者，何故不見。

佛告迦葉：今當說譬：譬如初學，學五字句界成句偈，欲先知義，然後乃學，當得知不？要當先學。然後乃知。

彼善學已，然後師教界成句義，引譬示之。彼能聽受，緣師得解界成句義故，則能信樂。如是我今。爲煩惱藏所覆衆生說言善男子，如來藏如是如是，彼便欲見。當得見不？

迦葉白言：不也世尊。

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[624] Compare *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,109b7-110a2; Go.27.08,91b4-8; L.70,336a3-5; N.207,182a3-b1; Q.888,114b4-7; S.94,374a7-b4.

佛告迦葉：如彼不知界成句義，當緣師信。如是迦葉，當知如來是誠實語者，以誠實語說有衆生。汝後當知，如彼學成。

MBhS^{C}: T.270,297a17-27.

Kāśyapa asked the Buddha: Lord, if there is a self, why is it not seen?

The Buddha said to Kāśyapa: Now I use an example. For example, it is like novices who have learnt the five syllables, at first want to know the meaning of the linguistic roots (字句界), and only after that [would] study. Will they know [the meaning], or not? One has to first study, only then will one know.

This person, once he has studied well, only then does the teacher tell him the meaning of the linguistic roots explaining them using examples; then do those students listen and accept them.

Due to the teacher being able to explain the meaning of linguistic roots, those [students] are able to accept [them].

Just so, I say for the benefit of beings who are covered by defilements: 'Good sons! The *tathāgatagarbha* is such-and-such.' Those ones desire to see. Would they see, or not?

Kāśyapa replied: No, Lord!

The Buddha said to Kāśyapa: just as one does not understand the meaning of the linguistic roots, and should rely upon the teacher. Like that, Kāśyapa, know that the Tathāgata is one who speaks truly, by true speech saying that there are sentient beings. You will understand later, just as one accomplishes their studies.

Again this example is reminiscent of one found also in the *MPMS*.[625] Here the *MBhS* uses the term *dhātu* (界) in a manner that presumably plays on that term's centrality to the doctrine of a (*buddha-*)*dhātu* in all beings, referring as it does to something like the 'essence of expressions' (界成句). In *MBhS*^{T} this is rendered as *skad kyi dbyings*, i.e. the *dhātu* of Sanskrit verbs (most likely simply translating *dhātu* in the sense of verbal root, which the translators here intended to clarify).[626]

A significant contribution of this passage, present in the explanation of the example in both *MBhS*^{C} and *MBhS*^{T}, is the apparent affirmation of the existence of sentient beings. The same concluding lines in *MBhS*^{T} read as follows.

> …*de bzhin du 'od srung khyod kyis kyang de bzhin gshegs pa ni bden pa gsungs*[627] *pa / bden pa'i tshig gsung bar gyur pa yin pas <u>sems can yod pa nyid</u> do zhes gsung na yang rig par byos shig dang / slob ma grub pa bzhin phyis khyod kyis shes par 'gyur ro //*
>
> *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,110a6-7; Go.20.87,92a4-5; L.70 336b4-6; N.207,182b7-183a2; Q.888,115a5-6; S.94 375a4-5.

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[625] *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,872a28-b7; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,390c15-c24; *MPMS*^{T}: §221-222. Notably in the *MPMS* it is grammar (**vyākaraṇa*) that follows the learning of characters, though the sense of the example remains the same.
[626] Chandra (1959: 39c); see also Scharfe (1977: 83-85).
[627] DLNQSTa. *gsungs* : Go. *gsung*

> …likewise, Kāśyapa, you also should understand that the Tathāgata spoke the truth, spoke true words; and you should understand that he said that sentient beings exist. Like the accomplished student, later will you understand.

This is slightly different to declaring, as most of our sources do, that all beings 'possess' the *tathāgatagarbha*. The *MBhS* seems to affirm the existence of *sattva*-s *themselves* rather than any nature essential to them (e.g. a *sattva-dhātu*). Our translators may have misread a form like *sattva-dhātu* in their original Sanskrit manuscripts, though as we find such a misreading in both versions it is more likely that the term *sattva* was indeed present in both Indian recensions.

Though this precise phrasing is somewhat enigmatic, this introduces another concern of the *MBhS* that is shared by both the *AMS* and, again (more famously), the *Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśa-Parivarta* (*AAN*): the expanse (*dhātu*) of beings existing in *saṃsāra*. The constancy of a given number of beings in *saṃsāra* is a central concern of the *AAN* in particular, along with the affirmation that there is a *tathāgatagarbha* (identified therein with the *sattva-dhātu*) that is identical to the *dharmakāya*. We deduce that in order for the *AAN* to accept a consistent expanse of beings, each transmigrating, that its authors must indeed accept, in some sense, the existence of a quantity of discrete, transmigrating entities: though the *MBhS* goes so far as to deem

these in each case a self that continues through births and into the state of *nirvāṇa*.[628]

5.5 *Beings in the Expanse of* Saṃsāra

As we have seen, the *MBhS* presents the view that the Buddha makes a show of his death: having a self qualified by 'mastery' that might be considered freedom from the mechanics of *karman*.[629] This language certainly sits well with the *SPS* and its account of a permanent, divine Buddha that continues to influence the world. The *MBhS*, as already stated, takes this enduring existence of the Buddha to be its primary focus.

> 如來是天中之天。若般涅槃悉磨滅者，世間應滅。若不滅者，則常住安樂。常住安樂，則必有我。
>
> *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,296c23-25.

> The Tathāgata is a god among gods. If *parinirvāṇa* is complete annihilation, the world would diminish [in occupants]. If [*parinirvāṇa*] is not annihilation, then it is permanent abiding and joyful. Being permanent abiding and joyful, then certainly there exists a self.

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[628] Nevertheless, the *AAN* stops short of affirming these to be 'selves' in the manner of the *MPMS*-group: hence its relative absence in this study.

[629] King (1989: 163-164) considers how actions done in the pursuit of awakening are then the only ones authentically 'free': expressive as they are of the Buddha-Nature and its activities, which are the only ones not brought about by the mechanics of *karma*.

re zhig de bzhin gshegs pa ni lha'i yang lha yin na gal te de bzhin gshegs pa ni[630] *de ltar yongs su mya ngan las 'das te med par gyur na de'i tshe 'jig rten 'grib pa nyid snang bar 'gyur ro //*

MBhS^{T}: D.222,109a7; Go.27.08,92a4-5; L.70,335a6-7; N.207,181b1-2; Q.888,114a4-5; S.94,373b3-4; Ta. 1.4.2.1,46b10-11.

If at one time the Tathāgata was a god among gods, and if he performed the *parinirvāṇa* and did not then exist; then at that time it would be apparent that the world had decreased [in occupants, which is an unacceptable position].

This Buddha is certainly a divinely powerful figure, though superior to any transmigrating, 'mortal' deities.[631] If his *parinirvāṇa* were to be a kind of annihilation then the number of beings in the world would diminish. If *parinirvāṇa* is *not* such annihilation, then it must be a state that is enjoyed by some entity: i.e. requires a recipient able to enjoy it. Here we see the *MBhS's* shared position with the *AAN* (to which we shall return in a moment), contending that there is a constant number of beings in the transmigration which, notably, includes those who have attained the status of a Buddha.

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[630] GoLSTa omit *ni*.

[631] The expression 天中之天 reflects the Sanskrit *devātideva*, and is found also in the verses of the *SPS* (e.g v.1.89; 7.31: Nanjio & Kern (1970: 27,l.5; 169,l.12). Its presence here (and frequently through the *MPMS*: e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376, 859b23-c6; 869c11-12) implies a model of Buddhahood as divine status, worthy of devotion, assumed across these sources.

The *MBhS* considers further the existence of beings, which although apparently systematic requires careful attention.

若復無我，而有我者，世間應滿。

實有我，非無我亦不壞。

若實無我，我則不成。

MBhS^{C}: T.270,296c26-c27.

If, moreover, there were no self, and [then] there was a self, the world would be filled up.

[If] there really is a self, it is not [anything which is] without-self, and also does not diminish.

If there were truly no self, the self would not be established [as it is, here].

gal te yang bdag med pa[632] *bdag tu gyur na de'i tshe 'jig rten 'phel ba nyid du rig par bya'o //*

bdag bden yang bdag kyang[633] *ma yin la 'jig par yang mi 'gyur ro //*

bdag med pa bden na bdag 'thad par[634] *mi 'gyur ro //*

MBhS^{T}: D.222,109b1-2; Go.27.08,91a6-7; L.70,335a7-335b1; N.207,181b3-4; Q.888,114a5-6; S.94,373b5-6.

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[632] Go. omits pa

[633] Each edition agrees on *kyang*, though amending this to *med* would bring this line into agreement with the *MBhS*^{C} (i.e. 'it is not absence of self'). Lacking this, I qualify that this *bdag* must refer to an erroneous, worldly self.

[634] DGoLNS. '*thad par* : Q. '*thar par*

> Moreover, if what is without a self becomes a self, then one must understand there to be an increase of the world.
> Though the self is real, it is also not the [false] self, so would also not be destroyed.
> If in truth there were no self, the self would not be established.

To make sense of this, we must remember that the above passages are explanations by the Buddha, and in the structure of the *MBhS* follow clarification of 1) why the Buddha makes a show of his *parinirvāṇa* (though never, in truth, leaving the world), and 2) the examples of the imprisoned king and of the man attacked by the robber, which consider, respectively, a) the true self 'trapped' in *saṃsāra* and b) saṃsāric beings who do not know to seek real relief from suffering (i.e. *nirvāṇa*). The above must be some affirmation of a real self that transmigrates in *saṃsāra*, which (as we shall see) then leads to the consequence of there being an established number of beings in existence.

The first thought in the above passage is clear: that non-sentient beings do not *become* sentient beings, as this would allow there to be an increase of the number of the latter in *saṃsāra*. This is presented as an undesirable position (in accord also with the position of the *AAN*).[635] The Buddha then affirms the existence of a true self, which (following *MBhS*^{C}) not being 'without a self', does not diminish, i.e. is not denied and hence

[635] See *AAN*: T.668,466a29-b7; also Silk (forthcoming: 63).

'destroyed' as any worldly self can be said to be. *MBhS*^{T} differs, but seems to state that this 'true' self is no *false* self, which would necessarily suffer destruction.

Hence, I take this passage to be stressing the distinction between that which truly constitutes a self and that which does not. The important premise underlying this is that the constancy of beings in existence (including upon attainment of *nirvāṇa*) relies upon the existence of lasting entities, which transmigrate and, ultimately, attain liberation. In the existence of a true self, there is an entity distinct from the negation a worldly self, which attains *nirvāṇa* that is a kind of transformation.[636] This appears to mirror the example of the king above: one's own powerlessness in *saṃsāra* can be contrasted with one's dormant 'mastery', realized only in *nirvāṇa*.[637]

Like the *MPMS*, the *MBhS* mentions twenty-five forms of existence within which beings might be born.[638] It is birth within these that defines a 'being' (有; *yod pa*), whereas our text defines non-being in terms of absence of thought (無思之物), or of mind (*sems pa med pa*).[639] This distinction leads

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[636] A notion of *nirvāṇa* perhaps shared by Yogācāra authors, concerned as they are with *nirvāṇa* as *āśrayaparāvṛtti*.

[637] It could be said, in accord with the *RGV(V)* to which we turn later, that to comprehend worldly non-self is to realize that which can actually be called the true self.

[638] T.270, 296c28-297a1. See also, e.g., *MPMS*^{C1} (T.376,875a15-16). *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,109b2-3; Go.27.08,91a7-8; L.70,225b1-2; N.207,181b4; Q.888,114a6-7; S.92,373b7-374a1: *yod pa zhes bya ba ni / sems can gyi spyod pa srid pa nyi shu rtsa lnga pa yin no // med pa zhes bya ba ni sems pa med pa'i mngos po yin no // gal te med pa sems can du gyur na des na gzhan nas 'ong bar 'gyur ro //*
See also p.108,ft.268.

[639] For a possible germ of this in earlier Buddhist thought, see p.19,ft.45.

to an account of the difference between the two, which once again seems to echo the *AAN*.

若[640]非有是衆生者，應從他來。

設有思之物壞者，衆生當滅。

若非有是衆生者，則應充滿。

以衆生不生不壞故。不滅不滿。

MBhS^{C}: T.270,296c29-297a3.

If a non-being were [to become] a sentient being, then that [sentient being] would come [into being] from elsewhere.

If thinking things were destroyed, then sentient beings would decrease [in the world].

If non-existents were [to become] sentient beings, they would fill up [the world by increase].

Because sentient beings do not come into existence, nor are [absolutely] destroyed, they neither decrease not increase [in number].

gal te med pa sems can du gyur na des na gzhan nas 'ong bar 'gyur ro //

gal te sems pa zhig par gyur na des na 'grib pa nyid du 'gyur ro //

gal te med pa sems can du gyur na des na 'phel pa nyid du 'gyur ro //

640 若＋（不壞）＜元＞＜明＞

de lta bas na de gnyis mi skye zhing nyams par mi 'gyur te / de'i phyir 'grib pa[641] *med cing 'phel ba med pa nyid yin no //*

MBhS^{T}: D.222,109b2-4; Go.27.08,91a7-9; L.70,335b2-3; N.207, 181b5-7; Q.888,114a7-b1; S.94,373b7-374a2.

If a non-being were to become a sentient being, then it would come from something else.

If a mind perishes, then this would mean decrease [in the world].

If a non-being were to become a sentient being, then there would be increase [in the world].

Therefore, these two [i.e. beings and non-beings] do not begin or end.

Hence, there is no diminishing and no increase.

The conclusion to these thoughts, in accord with the very title of the *AAN*, is that *sattva*-s are (at least in some aspect) eternal, and that there cannot be either increase or decrease of their number. This occupation of the *MBhS* (the germ of which might be identified in the *AMS*) with a concern of the *AAN*, another *tathāgatagarbha* text, is interesting. The latter does not designate the *tathāgatagarbha* as a self, and yet in the *MBhS* in particular we encounter this discourse on the expanse of *saṃsāra* precisely in the context of whether or not a self can be said to exist. In the *MBhS* the *sattva*, defined very much by possession of a mind, appears to designate beings that do, ultimately, exist. Elsewhere in the *MBhS* we find the construction *sattva-dhātu*

[641] DLNQS. *'grib pa* : Go. *'pri pa*

designating the *tathāgatagarbha*, which presumably clarifies that it is not the *sattva* in any worldly sense that transmigrates, but rather its essential nature, called also a self. This designation appears also in the *AAN*, which we should address further to understand the relationship between 1) the notion of this *dhātu* as a form of self, and 2) the affirmation of a consistent expanse of entities in existence.

In a vein similar to that of the *MBhS*, the *AAN* also relates the view of the increase and decrease of existence with those who resort to *sūtra*-s of provisional meaning (**neyārtha*), who are also called those not properly comprehending emptiness.[642] The *AAN* shares the view of the *MBhS* that these beings fail to understand the reality of the Tathāgata's 'great *nirvāṇa'*: misconceiving it as a kind of annihilation.

> 舍利弗，愚癡凡夫無聞慧故，聞如來涅槃起斷見滅見。
>
> *AAN*: T.668,466b25-26.

> Śāriputra, because foolish, common persons are without the insight from hearing [the teachings], hearing of the Tathāgata's *nirvāṇa*, they generate the view of annihilation, of cessation.

The *AAN* further identifies six wrong views that concern *nirvāṇa* seen as a kind of non-existence. The first two are that 1) the world has a beginning, and 2) the world has an end: both positions rejected in earlier Buddhist *sutta*

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[642] *AAN*: T.668,466b16-17: see Silk (forthcoming: 69-71).

literature.[643] However, as Silk observes the remaining four are perhaps acceptable from some, at least hypothetical, *śūnyatāvāda* perspective: 3) that beings are illusory creations; 4) there is neither suffering nor pleasure; 5) beings produce no *karman*; 6) there are no noble truths.[644] The identification of these views as erroneous demonstrates that the *AAN*, as much as the *MPMS*-group, opposed the views of some Buddhist audiences whom it perceived as unhelpfully influenced by the *prajñāpāramitā* literature.[645]

Furthermore, I hold that the third of these wrong views displays clearest the reason for the *AAN* and *MBhS's* shared concern for the consistency of beings in existence. The *AAN*, though not considering at length the *tathāgatagarbha* as constituting a true self, affirms elsewhere that there exists an essential nature of beings. We see this in a fragment of the *AAN* that survives in the *Ratnagotravibhāga-Śāstra(-Vyākhyā)* (*RGVV*):

> *paramārtha iti śāriputra sattvadhātor etad adhivacanam /*
> *sattvadhātur iti śāriputra tathāgatagarbhasya etad adhivacanam /*
> *tathāgatagarbha iti śāriputra dharmakāyasya etad adhivacanam /*
>
> *RGVV* 1.2, Johnston (1950: 2,11-13).

> 'The ultimate truth', Śāriputra, is an epithet of the *dhātu* of sentient beings; 'the *dhātu* of sentient beings', Śāriputra, is an epithet of the

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[643] Found among the unresolved (*avyākṛta*) issues about which the Buddha did not speak, in (for example) the *Pāsādika-Sutta* (*DN*.I.137-138). See also Lamotte (1944: 154, ft.1).
[644] *AAN*: T.668,466c10-c14; see Silk (forthcoming: 80-81).
[645] See chapter 5.7.

tathāgatagarbha; 'the *tathāgatagarbha*', Śāriputra, is an epithet of the *dharmakāya*.[646]

This demonstrates that the *AAN*, though not focused on the affirmation of the *buddha-dhātu*, accepts some *dhātu* 'of beings', and, appropriately, equates this with the *tathāgatagarbha* and *dharmakāya*.[647] It is this *dharmakāya* that is the focus of the *AAN*: called therein 'unborn and unperishing', due to being free from both birth and death.[648] In the above equations of the *AAN*, we find that the immutable, limitless *dharmakāya* is the same reality as the *sattva-dhātu.* Indeed the text states that the *dharmakāya* while enshrouded in defilements, and existing in *saṃsāra*, is precisely sentient beings (or, according to quotation of this passage in the *RGVV*^{S}, the *sattva-dhātu*).[649]

Again, the *AAN* does not consider the *tathāgatagarbha* to be a lasting self *per se*, despite employing the term *sattva-dhātu* to designate the nature of beings that underlies their transmigration. The *MBhS*, meanwhile, considers the dynamics of this process in the midst of understanding the

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[646] See also *AAN*: T.668,467a16-a9; also Silk (forthcoming: 94-95).
[647] This *dhātu* is difficult to reduce either to the sense of 'realm' or 'nature'. I find it most likely however that *sattva-dhātu* – being equated with the *tathāgatagarbha* – must primarily refer to the nature of beings, and only secondly to the realm common to them all.
[648] See Grosnick (1981).
I disagree with Silk's reading of 二邊 as here designating the two extremes of *uccheda*- and *śāśvatavāda*, as the text seems to explicitly identify these two 'limits' as those of birth and death, from which the *dharmakāya* is said to be free: 舍利弗，非過去際者離生時故。非未來際者，離滅時故。(*AAN*: T.668,467a28-a29). See Silk (forthcoming: 100).
[649] *AAN*: T.668,467b7-b8; *RGVV 1.48*: *dharmakāyo…anavarāgrasaṃsāragaticyutyupapattiṣu saṃcaran sattvadhātur ity ucyate /* See also Silk (forthcoming: 103-105).

tathāgatagarbha precisely as a kind of self. In the *MBhS*, the *sattva-dhātu* is that which becomes a Buddha that persists in existence: experiencing *nirvāṇa* defined by permanent abiding and joy.[650]

In summary, it is affirmed in both of these texts that there is a constant number of beings, both the transmigrating and liberated, sharing the same, exhaustive expanse of existence. A key difference is the manner that the *MBhS* describes *nirvāṇa* in terms of an experience for some 'personal' reality, lacking the notion of an impersonal *dharmakāya*, and favouring instead an account of a god-like Buddha more reminiscent of the *SPS*.[651] Aligning this with its account of the *tathāgatagarbha* discussed above, we find in the *MBhS* also a willingness to speak of those who would attain in terms of lasting 'selves'.

5.6 *Reconciling* Anātman *and* Ātman

Perhaps unsurprisingly, and in accord with texts dealt with in the previous chapters, the *MBhS* suggests to us that its content was not universally well received. The *MBhS* reminds its audience that there are some who reject the *tathāgatagarbha sūtra*-s, and instead focus on so-called **śūnyatā sūtra*-s and their account of emptiness. The *MBhS* appeals to the Buddha's pedagogical skill in order to make sense of these.

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[650] The *AAN*, by contrast, exhibits what we might call a more abstract Buddhological model, similar to that found in the *ŚDS*.
[651] See p.5,ft.14; also chapter 8.6.

世尊。諸摩訶衍經多説空義。

佛告迦葉：一切空經是有餘説，唯有此經是無上説，非有餘説。

MBhS^{C}: T.270,296b8-b10.

[Kāśyapa said:] Lord, Mahāyāna *sūtra*-s frequently teach the meaning of emptiness.

The Lord said to Kāśyapa: all the emptiness[-oriented] *sūtra*-s are provisional, while this *sūtra* has the higher teaching, which is not a provisional teaching.[652]

bcom ldan 'das theg pa chen po la yang stong pa nyid kyi don ston pa'i mdo[653] *mang du mchis lags so //*

bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa / stong pa nyid ston pa gang ci yang rung ba de thams cad ni dgongs pa can du rig par[654] *bya la / bla na med pa'i mdo*[655] *'di lta bu 'di dag ni dgongs pa can ma yin par rig par bya'o //*

MBhS^{T}: D.222,107b6-108a1; Go.27.08,89b6-8; L.70,333a3-5; N.207,179a2-4; S.94,371a4-6; Q.888,112b2-3.

[Kāśyapa said:] Lord, the Mahāyāna also has many *sūtra*-s that teach the meaning of emptiness.

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[652] For 有餘(説), see Nakamura (1975: 88c; 1292c).
[653] Go. *mdo' sde*
[654] DGoNQS. *rigs par* : L. *rigs par*
[655] DLNQS. *mdo* : Go. *mdo' sde*

> The Buddha replied: all those [*sūtra*-s] teaching emptiness should be known to be a provisional teaching; then there are *sūtra*-s like this supreme *sūtra*, which should be understood as not provisional.[656]

It is clear that the *MBhS* holds its doctrine to be superior to what we might call '*śūnyatāvāda*' *sūtra*-s. We find, reminiscent of both the *MPMS* and *RGV(V)*, the assertion that it provides a 'supreme' teaching (無上説; *bla na med pa'i mdo*); calling this a *sūtra* of final meaning (非有餘説; *dgongs pa can*) contrasted with the provisional (有餘説; *dgongs pa can ma yin pa*) *śūnyatāvāda sūtra*-s.[657] Hence the *MBhS* does not consider the *śūnyatāvāda* literature as erroneous, but rather as requiring further elaboration.

Indeed, the *MBhS*^{C} make clear that the *śūnyatāvāda* literature is still of value for educating some beings. This is explained through a story of King Prasenajit offering different foods in an annual feast: each guest in accord with their wants.[658] *MBhS*^{C} explains this as follows.

> 諸佛世尊亦復如是。隨順衆生種種欲樂，而爲演説種種經法。
>
> *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,296b12-b14.

[656] Seeing as *dgongs pa can ma yin* cannot refer to a teaching that 'is not intentional', I take *dgongs pa can* to convey, in proximity to the Chinese, a provisional teaching. See Chandra (1959: 141c-142a).
[657] *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,296b8-b10. See also pp.135-137; chapter 7.1.4.
[658] *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,296b10-12.

> The Lordly Buddhas do the same: in accord with the various inclinations of beings, they expound for them various teachings.[659]

The *MBhS* understands the Buddha as teaching one notion or other in accord with the dispositions of different audiences. This again puts us in mind of the pedagogical emphasis of the *SPS* and its account of the three vehicles: one or other being taught precisely to lead beings into what is, ultimately, the one vehicle of the Mahāyāna.[660] In much the same fashion, the *MBhS* appears to take a pragmatic approach to the Buddha's teaching one doctrine or another, adjusting what is taught to remedy erroneous interpretations as they arise.

However the *MBhS* also presents a version of the parable of the lost son, again more famously found in the *SPS*, using the language of the three vehicles subsumed into one: in so doing affirming the finality of the latter over the former.[661] This recounts the story of a wealthy householder who loses his child in a crowd of people. Years later, the child – now a beggar – arrives at the doorstep of the ailing father, unaware of their relationship. The father, who recognizes his son, employs him to perform unpleasant tasks (in accord with his son's lowly aspirations), and only when the son begins to desire his

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[659] Compare *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,108a4-5; Go.27.08,90a2-3; L.70,333b3-4; N.207,179b3-4; Q.888,112b8; S.94,371b5.

[660] Notably, the Prasenajit story follows the *MBhS's* reproduction of the parable of the conjured city: drawn from the *SPS*, and concerned very much with the Buddha's skill in teaching. See p.207.

[661] See *SPS* (Kern & Nanjio 1970: 101,11-110,10). *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,297b22-c21; *MBhS*^{T}: D.111a6-112a3; Go.27.08,88a8-89b5; L.70,331a2-333a2; N.207,176b5-179a1; Q.888,116a6-117a4; S.94,369a2-371a4; Ta.1.4.2.1,44a9(incomplete).

father's lifestyle reveals to him their real relationship. In the *MBhS*, a very similar parable constitutes a response to Kāśyapa's inquiry into the teaching of a single vehicle, which is therein identified with the *tathāgatagarbha*.

> 若一切衆生有如來藏一性一乘者，如來何故説有三乘聲聞乘、緣覺乘、佛乘？
>
> *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,297b20-22.

> If all beings have the *tathāgatagarbha*, that is one [common] nature, one [shared] vehicle; why then does the Tathāgata say there are three vehicles: *śrāvakayāna*; *pratyekabuddhayāna* and *buddhayāna*?[662]

The answer, in short, is that the *triyāna* is for the benefit of those not ready to embark upon the Mahāyāna. This is the same position as that of the *SPS*: affirming that all beings, even those in the lesser vehicles, are ultimately sons of the Buddha.[663] Most significantly, what we see here is the *MBhS* express the very logical association of the *ekayāna* doctrine as it appears in

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[662] Compare D.222,106a7-106b1; Go.20.87,88a7-8; L.70,331a1-2; N.207,176b4; S.94,369a1-2; Q.888,111a1.
MBhS^{T} does not here mention the *ekayāna*, but this is still implied by the denial of the three vehicles (*theg pa gsum*).

[663] See e.g. *MBhS*^{C}: 270, 297c17-21. Compare *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,112a2-3; Go.27.08,93b7-8; L.70,339a2-3; N.207,185a7-b1; Q.888,117a4-5; S.94,377b7-378a2.
This is reminiscent also of the notion of the (single) *gotra* of the Buddha discussed in the *RGVV*. See p.315,ft.827.

the *SPS* with the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine as found in texts such as the *MPMS*.[664]

In declaring the finality of its own doctrine, the *MBhS* also puts this in some kind of chronological context, explaining how the doctrines of *ātman* and *anātman* have circulated in the world one after the other. I present here *MBhS*^{C}, before considering variations in *MBhS*^{T}.

世尊，再[665]轉無我轉我久矣。

佛告迦葉：爲破世間我故説無我義。若不如是説者，云何令彼受大師法？

佛説無我，彼諸衆生生奇特想，聞所未聞，來詣佛所然後以百千因緣令入佛法。

入佛法已，信心增長，勤修精進，善學空法，然後爲説常住安樂有色解脱。

MBhS^{C}: T.270,296b24-c2.

[Kāśyapa said:] Lord, occurrence of [the notions of] non-self and self has been the case for a long time.

The Buddha said to Kāśyapa: in order to refute the worldly [notion of] self, I taught the principle of non-self. If I did not teach so, how could I have [beings] accept the teaching of the great teacher?

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[664] See Takasaki (1975: 249).

[665] 再＝甫＜宮＞

> When the Buddha teaches non-self beings are amazed, and upon hearing what has not before been heard, come to the Buddha and are then by a hundred thousand methods led into the Buddha's *dharma*. Having entered into the Buddha's *dharma*, their faith increases, they become more diligent, they become skilled in training in the *dharma* of emptiness; only then [do I] expound for them the permanently abiding, joyful liberation that has a form.[666]

The *MBhS* states that the Buddha has taught both *ātman* and *anātman*, teaching always in response to the needs of his audience.[667] *MBhS*^{C} states that preaching non-self is so that beings might follow the Buddha: presumably the sense is that only by opposing the worldly sense of self do beings begin to enter the Buddha's *dharma*.[668] Indeed, *anātman* is taught precisely to contradict belief in a worldly self (considered in *MBhS*^{T} to be the self that perishes: *gzhig pa*), and that by many methods are beings led into the *dharma*.[669] Beings then have increased faith in the Buddha, and also contemplate emptiness (in accord, presumably, with the doctrine of *anātman*),

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[666] Compare *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,108b2-5; Go.27.08,90a9-b2; L.70,334a3-7; N.207,180a5-b1; Q.888,113a6-b1; S.94,372a5-b3; Ta.1.4.2.1,46a6-10.

[667] In *MBhS*^{T}, the notion of a self 'has not arisen for a long time' (*bdag ni yun ring po nas byung ba ma lags so*), though the implication is that it resurfaces precisely in the *MBhS*.

[668] *MBhS*^{T} instead affirms that teaching *anātman* can only lead us to conclude that the Buddha has died, i.e. must not represent the whole story (*gal te de ltar spyod pa'i bstan pa las ma gsungs na ji lta na grongs pa yin par mi 'gyur*)

[669] These *hetu* and *pratyaya* (*MBhS*^{C}: 因緣; *MBhS*^{T}: *rgyu dang gtan tshigs*) signify causes and conditions, normally in the context of *dharma*-s and their (dependent) arising. Here however these appear to be the many methods the Buddha might use to teach beings, and though this precise terminology is not found in the *SPS* it nevertheless embodies the character of that text's account of different vehicles as taught for the benefit of different beings.

but following this there is expounded a liberation qualified by permanence (*nitya*), and joy (*MBhS*^{C}: 安樂) or peace (*MBhS*^{T}: *zhi ba*) and, once again, as being 'with a form' (*MBhS*^{T}: *gzugs dang bcas pa*).

This curious qualification makes more sense when taken in conjunction with what follows. Here the Buddha is said to teach what appears to be a remedial position in response to the doctrines of other teachers.

> 復次或有世俗説有是解脱。爲壞彼故，説言解脱悉無所有。
>
> 若不如是説，云何令彼受大師法？
>
> 是故百千因緣爲説解脱滅盡無我。然後，我復見彼衆生，見畢竟滅以爲解脱，彼無慧人趣向滅盡。然後，我復百千因緣，説解脱是有。
>
> *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,296c2-7.

> Furthermore, there are some worldly theories of just such a liberation [i.e. with a form]. In order to refute them, I taught that liberation is non-existence.
>
> If I did not teach in this way, how could I have them accept the *dharma* of the great teacher?
>
> By a hundred thousand methods I explain for them that liberation is annihilation [and] without a self. After that, I see those beings that regard absolute annihilation to be liberation; those ones lacking insight propend to annihilation. Consequently, I expound by means of a

hundred thousand methods the teaching that liberation is [a kind of] existence.[670]

This seems to repeat the progression above, though now expressed in terms of the two extremes of annihilationism and eternalism.[671] We can express this succession of the Buddha's teaching more concisely.

1) A liberation together with a form (i.e. a recipient of liberation), for the sake of those attached to the worldly self.
2) A liberation akin to annihilation, to distinguish the *dharma* from other teachings.
3) A liberation that is (again) a kind existence, to remedy the false view of annihilation generated by the above.

MBhS^{T}, though less clear, presents much the same progression as *MBhS*^{C}. Notably it qualifies 2) by stating that it is 'not at all similar to the view of annihilationism'.[672] This may constitute an insertion into the text of *MBhS*^{T}, which wants to qualify that the Buddha did *not* teach the extreme view of annihilationism which, clearly, *is* how the *MBhS*^{C} held some audiences to have understood at least one earlier expression of the *dharma*.

This presents the Buddha's teaching on liberation up to and including the doctrine of the *MBhS*. This clearly shows a dialectical model, in which an

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[670] Compare *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,108b5-7; Go.27.08,90b2-5; L.70,334a7-b3; N.207,180b1-3; Q.888,113b1-3; S.94,372b3-6; Ta.1.4.2.1,46a10-11.
[671] See p.11,ft.26.
[672] *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,108b5; Go.27.08,90b3; L.70,334a7-b1; N.207,180b2; Q.888,113b2; S.94,372b4; Ta.1.4.2.1,46a11: *gal te de ltar ston pas lta ba chud gzon par byed pa dang 'dra bar* [a] *ma bstan na /*
[a] DLNQSTa. *bar* : GoTa. *ba*

original account of the self – perhaps simply as the agent desiring liberation – is denied via the teaching of *anātman*, but an account of the self returns to describe the proper recipient of awakening.[673] Interestingly, it is in order to distinguish the *saddharma* from other accounts of liberation that the Buddha taught non-self, which is then again overcome by the correct account of a self that is the awakened being.

Hence the Buddha's final position, which we witness in the *MBhS*, is the teaching of a liberation that is a kind of existence. Here the *MBhS* makes the bold step, in accord with its account of the real presence of the Buddha in the world, of correcting the position of non-self to affirm *nirvāṇa* as a kind of abiding existence.

As already mentioned, *MBhS*^{T} is noticeably longer than its Chinese counterpart, containing some examples and expositions not featured in its equivalent, and one such passage concerns precisely the Buddha's skill in means (*upāyakauśalya*) when teaching. We have seen that the *MBhS* holds the Buddha to have taught different doctrines for the education of different audiences. Specifically, it appears that he taught *anātman* for 1) the purpose of ending attachment to worldly notions of self, and 2) to distinguish his teaching from that of other teachers. Though clearly favouring an account of a true self, *MBhS*^{T} makes it clear that this does not undermine non-self as a central teaching.

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[673] Interestingly, this presupposes a notion of Buddhist liberation prior to that which leans towards annihilationism: what might be the *MBhS* understanding the Buddha's earliest understanding of *nirvāṇa* as indeed achieved by 'some agent'. However, in order to acquire the attention of the world, and to distinguish himself as the 'great teacher' (大師), the account of non-self was introduced. For similar in the *MPMS*, see pp.99-102.

bka' stsal pa / thabs mkhas pa zhes bya ba ni snga ma dang phyi mar 'gal ba dang / phyi ma dang snga mar 'gal ba smra ba'i don te / don gyis ni ma yin no // de ci'i phyir zhe na / sangs rgyas rnams ni thabs gang dang gang gis don 'grub par 'gyur ba'i thabs de dang des nges pa'i don gyis sam / drang ba'i don gyis gsung ba yin no //

gsol pa /[674] *don grub pa zhes bgyi ba gsung ba ci lags / bka' stsal pa / don grub pa zhes bya ba ni*[675] *chos grub pa zhes bya'o //*

MBhS^{T}: D.222,115a3-4; Go.27.08,95b6-8; L.70,443b4-7; N.207,190a5-7; Q.888,120b3-5; S.94,383a1-3.

[The Buddha] proclaimed that which is called skill in means is taken to mean contradiction between what is said before and after, and contradiction between what is later and earlier: [but that] this is not the meaning. Why is this? The Buddhas employ whatever method for accomplishing [their] goal, said to be either of final meaning (*nges pa'i don*; Skt. *nītārtha*) or of provisional meaning (*drang ba'i don*; Skt. *neyārtha*).

[Kāśyapa] replied: that which is called 'accomplishing [their] goal', what is that?

[The Buddha] proclaimed: what is called accomplishing [their] goal is accomplishing *dharma*.

[674] Q. adds *bcom ldan 'das*.
[675] LQN. *ni* : DGoS. *na* :

Here *MBhS*^{T} employs the *neyārtha*/*nītārtha* distinction in order to at once validate other positions (e.g. those holding to *śūnyatāvāda sūtra*-s) and subordinate them to its own doctrine. We have seen in both versions the *MBhS* deems its own doctrine to constitute a supreme (*bla na med pa*) teaching, making clear that its doctrine affirming a self is not provisional.[676] For our purposes, the concern to explain why the Buddha has taught one idea (*anātman*) and now teaches another (*ātman*), confirms contact with some audiences that opposed the seemingly *ātmavādin* language of the *tathāgatagarbha*: opposition which the *MBhS*, as with other texts we are addressing, seems to have confronted.

5.7 *Opposition to the True Self*

As much as the *MBhS* wishes to reconcile its teaching with the that of *anātman* – calling the latter both a) provisional and b) pertaining only to what is worldly – its authors go further to address audiences who do not accept its *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine. The *MBhS* associates these audiences with idleness, transgressive behaviour and acting without restraint, but also feels the need to address how negativistic expressions of the *dharma*, foremost that of non-self, should be confronted.[677]

We have seen that the *śūnyatā sūtra*-s are not rejected outright by the *MBhS*, but in *MBhS*^{C} its followers are said to expound (隨) or augment (增異) them, while in *MBhS*^{T} they are said to interpret (*'dren pa*; presumably *wrongly*

[676] See p.245.
[677] *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,108a5; Go.27.08,90a3; L.70,333b4; N.207,179b3-4; Q.888,112b7-113a1; S.94,371b6: …*de la snyom las can tshul khrims 'chal ba / lus dang / ngag dang / yid ma bsdams pa rnams…*

interpret) or reject (*spong bar byed*) their content.[678] Such recipients of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine are then of deficient character, misunderstanding the provisional nature of their favoured *sūtra*-s in such a way that they then cannot accept the *tathāgatagarbha*.

> 彼如是言：一切佛經皆説無我，而彼不知空無我義。彼無慧人趣向滅盡。然空、無我説亦是佛語。所以者何？ 無量塵垢諸煩惱藏　常空涅槃。如是涅槃[679]是一切句。彼常住安樂是佛所得大般涅槃句[680]。
>
> *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,296b16-b20.

> [The Buddha said that] they [i.e. the *śūnyatā*-oriented practitioners] say this: 'all Buddha *sūtra*-s expound *anātman'*. They say this not understanding the meaning of *śūnyatā* and *anātman*. Those foolish ones propend to annihilation.[681]
>
> Yet the doctrines of *śūnyatā* and *anatman* are also *buddhavacana*.
>
> Why is this? All afflictions caused by immeasurable defilements conceal the permanently empty *nirvāṇa*.
>
> Just such a *nirvāṇa* is all expressions [of *nirvāṇa*]. This permanent abiding and joy is the expression 'the *mahānirvana* that is attained by the Buddha'.

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[678] *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,296b15-16; *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,108a5-6; Go.27.08,90a4-5; L.70,334b5-5; N.207,179b5-6; Q.888,113a1-2; S.94,371b6-7.

[679] 槃＋（句）＜三＞＜宮＞

[680]〔句〕－＜宮＞

[681] In comparison with *MBhS*^{T}, it is most likely that this expression means that these beings propend to *actual* destruction rather than simply the conception of it.

Though both Chinese and Tibetan versions of this passage are problematic, what they seem to share is the idea that underlying all expressions of *nirvāṇa* (including that of the *śūnyatā sūtra-s*) is a *nirvāṇa* that is empty (of afflictions) but still a permanent abiding.[682] In *MBhS*^{C} it is stated that immeasurable defilements conceal *nirvāṇa*, seemingly equating *nirvāṇa* with the *tathāgatagarbha*. The same passage in *MBhS*^{T} is slippery.

> *gzhan yang stong pa nyid dang bdag med pa nyid ni sangs rgyas kyi gsung la*[683] *nyon mongs pa phrag bye*[684] *bas rtag tu stong pa mya ngan las 'das pa yin la mya ngan las 'das pa nyid kyi tshig gi gzhi rnams ni / de dag thams cad kyi gzhi yin te / sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das / de dag ni zhi ba ther zug pa'i mya ngan las 'das pa thob pa yin no //*
>
> *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,108a7-b1; Go.27.08,89a6-7; L.70,333b6-8; N.207,179b7-180a2; Q.888,113a3-4; S.94,372a1-a4.

> Furthermore, regarding emptiness and non-self, in the teaching of the Buddha is the permanent, empty *nirvāṇa* concealed by afflictions; but the basis of the expression '*nirvāṇa*', is the basis of all [others]. The Lordly Buddhas attain peace, [which is] the eternal *nirvāṇa*.

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[682] Again evoking the image of liberation as an empty pot, present in the *MPMS*: see p.72.
[683] Go. *srang la*
[684] Go. omits *bye*; S. *byed*

It appears here that all teachings of *nirvāṇa* have as their basis (*gzhi*: **vastu*), or referent, *nirvāṇa* as taught by the *MBhS*. Again, liberation is conceived as a state of permanent, joyful abiding: hence exhibits key characteristics of selfhood.[685]

As we have seen, the *MBhS* is most interested in establishing the correct position on liberation: both its character and cause. It is apparent that the authors of the text saw themselves as affirming a doctrine between two undesirable positions on *nirvāṇa*.

> 乃至衆生輪迴生死，我[686]不自在。是故我爲説無我義。然諸佛所得大般涅槃常住安樂。以是義故，壞彼斷常。
>
> *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,296b22-b24.

> So long as beings transmigrate in *saṃsāra*, the self is without mastery. Therefore, for [those beings] I teach *anātman*. Yet the *mahānirvāṇa* attained by Buddhas is constantly abiding and pleasant. By that meaning does one eliminate those [notions of] annihilation and eternality.

> *ji srid du sems can 'khor ba na 'khyam pa de srid du bdag 'jug pa yin te / bdag med pa'i lta ba'i don ni ther zug pa dang / rtag pa yin no //*
>
> *gal te rtag pa de bkag na ther zug nyams par 'gyur ro //*

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[685] See pp.233-234. Regarding this sense of *nirvāṇa* as referent, see Seyfort Ruegg (1989b: 317).

[686] 我不＝不得＜元＞＜明＞

MBhS^{T}: D.222,108b1-2; Go.27.08,90a8; L.70,334a2-3; N.207,180a3-4; Q.888,113a5-6; S.94,372a4-5.

> So long as beings wander in *saṃsāra*, that long is there preoccupation with the self (*bdag 'jug pa*). The intention of the view of *anātman* is [the negation of] eternal[-ism], [or what is] permanent.
> If what is permanent is negated, then eternal[-ism] deteriorates.

MBhS^{T} is again less clear than *MBhS*^{C}, but equates transmigration in *saṃsāra* with interest in the (worldly) self.[687] The meaning of this is more easily read in *MBhS*^{C}, in which *anātman* is taught to relieve beings of *saṃsāra*, in which they are again said to lack mastery.

Hence, this account subordinates the teaching of *anātman* in order to stress that liberation must constitute a continued existence, and hence some permanent nature to sentient beings. We have already seen (in the example of the eye and floaters) that this can designate the *tathātgatagarbha*, and examples such as that of the imprisoned king demonstrate this secretly 'powerful' self is at once the concealed nature of beings and the proper character of an awakened Buddha.

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[687] Aside from using expressions such as *rtag pa* rather than the more appropriate *rtag pa'i lta ba*, the Tibetan translation uses the unusual term *bdag 'jug pa*. This appears in the Tibetan *Ugraparipṛcchā Sūtra* (e.g. D.63,266b5; Q.760.19,308a8) in which it appears to mean interest in what is proper to one's self, which corresponds to 護 in the earlier of two Chinese translations of that text (T.322,18b4-5), with the sense of 'hankering after' or desiring (Nakamura 385a). Hence, *MBhS*^{T} may have the sense of a persisting attachment to the (worldly) self.

We here consider two final examples of the *MBhS*, used to explain how its authors considered the doctrine of the existence of a self should be taught to those not yet able to accept it. Curiously, one account of the *MBhS* suggests to us that it should not at all be taught under such conditions. The text categorizes beings into three types: 'those who cannot be treated, [and] shall fall into hell'; those who believe [this *sūtra*]; and those who by the four modes of persuasions (*saṃgraha-vastuni*) can be led to liberation.[688] In one example, it is stated that a patient with a fever should not be treated with medicine immediately. Instead, one should wait until the correct time, i.e. 'once the illness is fully manifested', to cure them.[689]

如是衆生謗此經者，過患熟時深自悔責「嗚呼，苦哉！我之所作，今始覺知！」至於爾時，應以攝事而救攝之。

MBhS^{C}: T.270,298a3-6.

Like this, beings slandering this *sūtra*, upon the ripening of their suffering, profoundly reflect: 'Alas! Oh pain! [Only] now am I aware of

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[688] See *MBhS*^{C}: T.270,297c27-28; *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,112a6-7; Go.27.08,93a3; L.70,339b3; N.207,186a1-2; Q.888,117b1; S.94,378a8-b2.
These four are *saṃgraha-vastuni*: generosity (*dāna*); kind speech (*priyavadyatā*); good acts (*arthakriyā*); and sympathy (*samānārtha*), which aim to persuade those outside the *dharma* to take up its prescriptions: for an earlier usage, see *AN*.IV.218; also Nakamura (1974, 738d).
'Those who cannot be treated' puts us in mind of the *icchāntika*-s, who are otherwise absent from this text.

[689] A similar attitude appears in the *MPMS*, e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,885c22-886a5. See also Demiéville (1985).

what I've done! At this time, one should by the [four] modes of persuasions save and attract them.[690]

This suggests some prudence on the part of the authors: accepting that some beings are simply not ready to accept the *tathāgatagarbha*, and as such can only be persuaded by acts of generosity etc. Elsewhere the text expresses clearly that it has doubts about the acceptance of its content. We find the example of a man in the wilderness scared by the cries of birds, thinking these to be the sound of thieves. He flees from his path into the territory of a tiger, which promptly devours him. Similarly, monks, nuns and lay followers…

於有我無我聲，畏有我聲，入於大空斷見，修習無我。
於如是如來藏諸、佛常住甚深經典，不生信樂。

MBhS^{C}: T.270,298a10-a12.

…hearing *ātman* and *anātman*, fear the expression 'there is a self', and entering the annihilationist view of great emptiness, cultivating non-self. In this way, they do not produce faith in the very profound *sūtra*-s of the *tathāgatagarbha*, and of the permanent abiding of the Buddhas.

…bdag dang bdag gi zhes bya ba'i sgra tsam gyis 'jig rten pa'i[691] *'jig tshogs la lta ba ni*[692] *bdag med pa sems shing stong pa nyid chen po*

[690] Compare *MBhS*^{T}: D.222,112b1-2; Go.27.08,93a6-7; L.70,339b6-7; N.207,186a4-5; Q.888,117b3-4; S.94, 378b4-5.

chad pa'i lta ba smra ba'i[693] *bdag nyid du 'gyur bas de bzhin gshegs pa rtag pa sangs rgyas rtag pa'i*[694] *bdag nyid dang ldan pa'i mdo sde 'di lta bu 'di dag la dad par mi 'gyur ro //*

MBhS^{T}: D.222,115b4-5; Go.27.08,96a9-b1; L.70,344b3-5; N.207,191a5-6; Q.888,121a7-8; S.94,384a1-2.

…due to 'me' and 'mine' being only speech, they have the thought of the non-self of the worldly view of the self; and due to the self of annihilationism that is great emptiness they do not have faith in texts like this which [contain] the notion of a permanent Tathāgata, that is a permanent self of the Buddha.

Clearly our two translations were based on different accounts of what would become of the future *saṅgha*. In *MBhS*^{C}, the *saṅgha* responds to the teaching of *ātman* by retreating into an *ucchedavāda* denial of any self, cultivating instead emptiness, and so rejecting the *tathāgatagarbha*. In *MBhS*^{T} there are implied two notions of *anātman*: 1) the denial of the worldly view of the self (Skt. *satkāyadṛṣṭi*) associated with the worldly notions of 'I' and 'mine', presumably the *anātman* doctrine of the *śrāvakayāna*; and 2) the denial of any self arrived at through 'great emptiness' (*mahāśūnyatā*), presumably the

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[691] This may be a corruption of some form of *'jigs*, which would correspond closer to the *MBhS*^{C} and its account of monks fearing a teaching of the self.
[692] DLNQS. *ba ni* : Go. *ba'i*
[693] DLNQS. *ba'i* : Go. *ba*
[694] DLQS. *ba'i* : NGo. *ba*

position of wrong-minded, '*śūnyatāvādin*' Mahāyānists.[695] In each version, we are told that all facets of the *saṅgha* remain attached to the idea of *anātman*, and struggle to accept the import of the *MBhS* and its notion of a real self.

This is clear evidence that the authors of the *MBhS* imagined their doctrine to be not only difficult, but likely to be rejected by some audiences (monastic or lay). As such, although the *MBhS* takes time to account for the relationship between its teaching and those of other texts, it shares the pessimism of the wider *tathāgatagarbha* literature, and predicts a situation in which the lack of faith in this doctrine results in the decline of the *saddharma* in the world.[696]

5.8 *Conclusions*

Whereas the *TGS*, *MPMS* and *AMS* all seem interested in closing the conceptual chasm between sentient beings and Buddhas, the *MBhS* stresses the high metaphysical pedestal upon which the Mahāyāna places those who are awakened. Perhaps fittingly, its examples and analogies make more mention of practice and conduct than the simple realization of one's shared nature with the Buddha. Like the earlier content of the *MPMS* (and, with some qualification, the *SPS*) its first concern is the permanence of the Buddha, and secondly that of any sentient being up to and beyond the attainment of liberation.[697] The Buddhist *ātmavāda* position of the *MBhS* is all the more

[695] See pp.332-333.
[696] Remembering that the *MBhS* shares the same account of the decline of the *saddharma* found in the *MPMS* and *AMS*: see chapter 3.2.
[697] See p.79,ft.200.

interesting for an account of the expanse of existence reminiscent of that found in the *AAN*: a similarity which wants for further study.

As the *nirvāṇa* of the Buddha is no annihilation, it must entail the continuity of some entity that both wants for, and receives, liberation. This is the *sattva-dhātu*: called otherwise the true self that is manifested upon awakening. Once again, as a *tathāgatagarbha* source the *MBhS* must distinguish the real self from worldly conceptions that are misleading. The *MBhS* has a very strong reason to make this clear: it is ironically the case that one's desire for freedom in *saṃsāra*, i.e. for an 'autonomous' self, is precisely that which obstructs its realization. We might say that the Buddha alone constitutes a self, realized by all beings only when what is not the self is totally abandoned.[698]

We might say that in regards to the *tathāgatagarbha*, the *MBhS* focuses more on '*tathāgata-'* as self, in the sense of a potent, permanent reality, than the '*-garbha'* (i.e. *snying po*, or an essence) as self, in the sense of a constituent element of beings. The latter is of more concern to the *AMS*, following (as it seems to) the later material of the *MPMS*; and hence the *MBhS* may be seen to be in greater accord with the earlier material of the same text.

It is interesting also that the *MBhS* does not feel compelled to defend the idea of a self amidst beings (fully manifested in a realized Buddha), nor does it mention the *tīrthika*-s as those who miscomprehend the true self:

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[698] Considered again in chapter 7.1.5.
No doubt this account of the Buddha's realization of a self outside of *saṃsāra* might conform with some Western scholars' understanding of the wider tradition: see p.16,ft.41.

perhaps evidence that its authors felt this to have been proven elsewhere (e.g. in the previously discussed *sūtra*-s). However what we are left with is a text that does not apologize for its frequent use of the notion of a self, going so far so to suggest it as a discrete, transmigrating entity.[699]

It is worth remembering Zimmermann's thesis that the *TGS* (if not the earliest then certainly still a foundational *tathāgatagarbha* source) may constitute a philosophical development of ideas present in the *SPS*.[700] Though the *SPS* does not discuss its Buddhology in such terms, the sense of power or mastery discussed by the *MBhS*, i.e. that which qualifies the Buddha's selfhood, sits well with the account of the Buddha in that text. The *MBhS*, as we have seen, is clearly much influenced by the *SPS*: both in explicit affirmation of the *ekayāna* doctrine and, like the *MPMS* before it, an account of the permanent and ongoing influence of the Buddha.

The significance of the *SPS* as a precursor to the *tathāgatagarbha* literature shall be returned to in due time, but we are seeing that there may not be just one reason why this literature finds it useful to affirm the existence of a self. For the *MBhS*, this is so that we might understand the nature of a Buddha as an abiding and powerful entity active in the world, whose nature is dormant in the constitution of every being. Though qualitatively very distinct from sentient beings, every (hypothetical) Buddha appears numerically identical with some element of a sentient being transmigrating through *saṃsāra*: an identity that constitutes 'selfhood' in all beings.

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[699] We remember this to be a concession that the *MPMS* did not seem prepared to make: see pp.139-140.
[700] See chapter 2.2.

6. The *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda-Sūtra & Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra*

6.1 *The Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda-Sūtra*

We move to the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda-Sūtra* (*ŚDS*).[701] This text has certainly received more scholarly attention than the last two that we have addressed, yet, as with much Mahāyāna literature, little is resolved regarding its origins or the intent of its authors.

6.1.1 *The Text*

As with the *MPMS*, we have extant several Sanskrit fragments of the *ŚDS*, preserved in the Schøyen collection (*ŚDS*^{SF}), and three complete translations: one in Tibetan and two in Chinese.[702] The Chinese versions are as follows.

1) T.353 (勝鬘師子吼一乘大方便方廣經): translated by Guṇabhadra in 436CE (*ŚDS*^{C1}).
2) T.310 (672c14-678c4): as *sūtra* no.48 of the *Ratnakūṭa* Collection (大寶積經), translated by Bodhiruci in 710CE (*ŚDS*^{C2}).

[701] Matsuda (2000) finds a Sanskrit fragment of the text to suggest the title *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanādanirdeśa*, though this is not repeated in the colophon of that text, nor does any other translation or quotation of the text suggest elsewhere: hence I stick to the more conventionally reproduced title.
[702] Matsuda (2000: 65-76).

Lost to us is a translation by Dharmakṣema, which would have been composed in the early C5th.[703] The Tibetan *bka' 'gyur* edition (*ŚDS*^{T}: D.92; Go.09.13; L.643.48; N.79; Q.760,48; S.11,48; Ta.1.3.1.21/1.3.5.6) was produced in the early C9th by Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi and Bande Ye shes sde, and is very close in content to that version found in the Chinese *Ratnakūṭa*.[704]

An English translation of Guṇabhadra's text (*SDS*^{C1}) has been produced by Diana Paul (2004), while that of Bodhiruci can be found in the translation of various *Ratnakūṭa* texts by Garma Chang (1991).[705] An English translation based on the Tibetan (*SDS*^{T}) was produced by Alex and Hideko Wayman (1974), though this has been criticized for amalgamating readings of each version, and employing commentarial material relevant only to *SDS*^{C1}.[706] Furthermore, some of the technical language in this translation is poorly contextualized, and their suggestions regarding the background of the text (allegedly a product of a Mahāsāṃghika community) received with skepticism.[707] As ever, the text's place in the *tathāgatagarbha* tradition as a whole was addressed also by Takasaki (1974).[708]

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[703] Wayman & Wayman (1974: 9).
[704] See previous page. The Tabo edition of the *ŚDS* is very much incomplete (lacking most of the material discussed here), and split over two catalogue entries.
[705] Paul (2004); Chang (1991: 363-386).
[706] Wayman & Wayman (1974).
[707] See Paul (1976a); Wayman & Wayman (1976); Paul (1976b). Wayman (1978) constitutes that author's comprehensive list of reasons to suppose a Mahāsāṃghika influence upon the *ŚDS*: most of which are unconvincing. Most recently, Tournier (2012: 280-282) has challenged Wayman's suggested doctrinal affiliations between the *ŚDS* and *Mahāvastu*, upon which much of his argument rests. Wayman relies also on the inclusion of the *ŚDS* (and with it the *MPMS*) in Paramārtha's account of the acceptance of Mahāyāna texts

I shall discuss below that several features of the text display an indebtedness of the *ŚDS* to the *MPMS*: a relation integral to understanding the use of language of selfhood in the former.[709] With some similarity in content established, it is worth cautiously entertaining the possibility that the dating and locating of these two texts proposed by Hodge and Shimoda (regarding the *MPMS*) and the Waymans may present a not incoherent picture of where and how these *tathāgatagarbha* texts may have developed.[710]

Wayman and Wayman's own hypothesis regarding the origins of the *ŚDS* situates it (like Hodge, in regards to the *MPMS*) in the Andhra region, in the period following the fall of the Śātavāhana empire (c.220CE) in which the Buddhist tradition was patronized by the queens of the otherwise brāhmaṇically-oriented Īkṣvāku court.[711] The narrative of the text, which extols the virtues of the Queen Śrīmālā (daughter of Prasenajit), her understanding of the Mahāyāna and strict devotion to the Buddha, may well have been composed with such socio-political relevance, even tribute, in mind. As discussed earlier, Hodge's own hypothesis regarding the *MPMS*

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by this school, but importantly this is 1) true only of some branches (namely the Pūrvaśaila-s and Aparaśaila-s), and 2) proof only that these texts had been accepted as authoritative by some Mahāsāṃghika traditions, perhaps (though not conclusively) still in the Andhra region.
See also Barber (2008: 152-156), though the author's account of *tathāgatagarbha* sources (very much reliant of Wayman and Wayman's hypotheses) does not account for any of the *MPMS*-group of texts.

[708] Takasaki (1974: 97-126).

[709] Shimoda (1997: 314-319). Additionally, both Chinese versions of the *MPMS* mention a Mahāyānist *upāsikā* named Śrīmālā (勝鬘) in attendance at the Buddha's deathbed. See *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,854c1; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,367a25 (德鬘).

[710] See Paul (1976).

[711] Wayman & Wayman (1974: 1-2); Nilakanta Sastri (1958: 96).

situates this text not just in that region, but also in the latter period of the Śātavāhana, which may explain a perceived decline in the *saddharma* on the part of its authors.[712]

The *ŚDS* however lacks the prophecy of an imminent decline in the *saddharma*, along with the millennialist tone of the *MPMS*-group that perceives it to be in need of protection. If we follow Wayman and Wayman's hypothetical localization of the text's authors, the *ŚDS* might be seen to exhibit a development of *tathāgatagarbha* thought after the succession of the Īkṣvāku dynasty, who remained partial to the support of Buddhism: perhaps relieving a fear for the future of the *saddharma* felt by earlier authors.[713] Such attempts at pinpointing the location and political environment of these texts' origins remain speculative and cannot be convincingly proved, but are at least not disproved by a clear awareness of, and departure from, the *MPMS* (or at least some of its ideas) by the authors of the *ŚDS.*[714]

As a *tathāgatagarbha* text, the *ŚDS* certainly departs from the *MPMS*-group in serious ways, lacking any mention of the *buddha-dhātu* that is a central expression of those *sūtra*-s. Rather, it considers the *tathāgatagarbha* from a meta-psychological angle: as the imperceptible, intrinsically pure mind that is both the cause of awakening and that which is manifested upon attainment. It is this account of the *tathāgatagarbha* as the basis of awakening (and indeed transmigration) that is taken in different directions by the *Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra* (detailed later in this chapter) and the *Ratnagotravibhāga-*

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[712] See pp.75-76.
[713] Lamotte, (1958: 381-382).
[714] See p.420.

Śāstra (in the next). The *ŚDS* also attempts to reconcile some notion of *śūnyatā* with the *tathāgatagarbha*: not simply opposing those who miscomprehend emptiness, but clarifying its correct meaning in regards to the *tathāgatagarbha* (though it can be observed that such a reconcilation was attempted also in the *MPMS*).[715]

It is the similarities and differences between the *MPMS* and *ŚDS* that are of most interest to us, and indicate how each text thought of the *tathāgatagarbha qua* selfhood. Most importantly, the latter very consciously avoids designating the *tathāgatagarbha* as a kind of self, though does find some value to this expression in describing the *dharmakāya*, which is the *tathāgatagarbha* rid of afflictions.[716]

Undoubtedly these texts represent the interests of two different sets of authors, though following Shimoda I find it likely that the *ŚDS* was aware of the kind of reconfiguration of wider Buddhist notions apparent in the *MPMS*. For example, both redefine the four noble truths in a manner that suits their broader interests. In the *MPMS*, the four truths are explained in such a way that the truth of suffering is equated with not knowing the *tathāgatagarbha*; the arising of suffering with following the wrong *dharma*; and its cessation with the realization of its truth.[717] Similarly the *ŚDS* reconfigures the four truths, concluding that only one can be considered ultimately true: the cessation of

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[715] See p.72.
[716] Importantly, this chapter disagrees with King (1991: 12; 1997: 177), who suggests that the *ŚDS* holds the *tathāgatagarbha* to possess the four (*guṇa*)*pāramitā* (a view King ascribes also to Matsumoto (1997b), though I cannot find this explicitly stated); it is instead a pivotal distinction of this text that these superlative qualities can be attributed only to the *dharmakāya*, which is the *tathāgatagarbha* rid of afflictions.
[717] See p.76,ft.193.

suffering.[718] Following its own account of the noble truths the *MPMS* then outlines the four *viparyāsa*-s, which are found otherwise in the *ŚDS* though, as we shall see, in a different form.[719] It can be argued that the treatment of the *tathāgatagarbha* by the *ŚDS* is very knowingly navigated away from the position of the *MPMS*, i.e. one that would equate this with a 'true' notion of selfhood.

Suspending these differences, we should turn to a familiar doctrinal element discernable through all of our *tathāgatagarbha* sources.[720]

6.1.2 *The One Vehicle*

An emerging theme in this study is the relationship between proponents of the *tathāgatagarbha* and their perceived interlocutors both within and outside of the *saṅgha*. Similar to the *MBhS*, the *ŚDS* devotes much time to the doctrine of the *ekayāna*, exhibiting a likely debt to the *SPS* that we continue to see throughout this literature.[721] Though this expression is not absent from the *MPMS*-group, it is certainly truer to say that it is more central to the *ŚDS*.

> 聲聞、緣覺乘皆入大乘，大乘者即是佛乘，是故三乘即是一乘。
>
> *ŚDS*^{C1}: T.353,220c19-c21.

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[718] See e.g. *ŚDS*^{C1}: T.353,221a20-b7; 221c25-222a3; also King (1995: 7).
[719] Takasaki (1974: 181).
[720] Once again, to distinguish these from those influenced by Yogācāra categories, such as the *LAS*.
[721] See, foremost, chapter 2.2; also Seyfort Ruegg (1973: 142).

> The vehicles of the *śrāvaka* and *pratyeka*[-*buddha*] are included in the Mahāyāna. The Mahāyāna is the vehicle of the Buddha; hence the three vehicles are one vehicle.[722]

As in the *SPS*, the followers of the *śrāvaka* - and *pratyekabuddha-yāna*-s find their vehicles subsumed within the greater, ultimately 'truer' vehicle of the Mahāyāna.[723] Unlike the *SPS*, the *ŚDS* does not focus on the lesser vehicles as products of the skill in means of the Buddha, but rather seems to stress the inferiority of those vehicles that cannot, by themselves, lead to awakening: perhaps evidence of a different, more inclusive approach of the *SPS* towards those not in the Mahāyāna, to which we must later return.[724]

The mode of transmigration proper to beings of the lesser vehicles deserves some attention, as it highlights the understanding of Buddhahood supposed by the authors of the *ŚDS*. *Arhat*-s, *pratyekabuddha*-s and *bodhisattva*-s 'of (great) power' (大力菩薩; *dbang thob pa*; **vaśitāprāpta*) – the first two at the culmination of the lesser vehicles – are said to be reborn via mind-made bodies (意生身; *yid kyi lus*; *manomayakāya*), realized through the

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[722] Compare *ŚDST*: D.92,268b6-7; Go.09.13,72a9-10; L.643.48,296a7; N.79,442a5-6; Q.760.48,274b2-4; S.11.48,422a4-5; Ta.1.3.5.6,357b5-6.
[723] e.g. *SPS* v.2.68, Kern & Nanjio (1970: 48,11-12).
[724] See Kunst (1977: 316-317). This is epitomized in the *SPS* by the parable of the burning house (Kern & Nanjio (1970: 80,4-.81,6)) and of the magically emanated city (Kern & Nanjio (1970: 88,11-89,11)). In each the inferior vehicles are clearly conceived as expedient means deemed necessary by the Buddha. The *ŚDS*, by contrast, stresses only the reliance of the lesser vehicles upon the Mahāyāna (e.g. *ŚDS*^{C1}: T.353,219b9-10): an angle which is of course implicit in how one should understand the polemical 'inclusion' of the lesser vehicles in the *SPS*. See chapter 8.4-6.

'death consisting in inconceivable transformation' (不思議變易死; *bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i 'chi 'pha*; **acintyapāriṇāmikīcyuti*).[725] These beings have all eliminated the four kinds of mental 'entrenchment' (which hinder all sentient beings, but have not eliminated all afflictions due to 'entrenchment in nescience' (無明住地; *ma rig pa'i gnas*; *avidyāvāsabhūmi*) which appears to be the original cause of all other defilements.[726]

Paul (1979) considered these mind-made bodies to be a prevalent feature of the *Mahāvastu*, and argued for their possible roots in Mahāsāṃghika scholastics.[727] However, Lee (2014) has recently considered the uses of this term in other *nikāya* Buddhist sources; in particular the Sarvāstivādin *Mahāvibhāṣā*.[728] Herein, four senses of the term include the transformative body (變化身) **pariṇāmakāya*) which, though not unpacked by

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[725] See e.g. *ŚDS*^{C1}: T.353,219c20-c23, in which is made clear a distinction between 1) the death of ordinary beings and 2) that of *arhats*, *pratyekabuddha*-s and *bodhisattva*-s prior to attainment of awakening: see Lee (2014: 75-79). Reconstructions of these terms from Chinese are derived from quotation of the *ŚDS* in *RGVV*^{S}.
A lengthy account of the *manomayakāya* appears in Radich (2007: 224-284), drawing upon Pāli *sutta* material (e.g. *AN* 5.17.166), in which this term takes the sense (among others) of celestial forms attained by accomplished *bhikṣu*-s that can be the object of continued attachment to a notion of selfhood (2007: 255). He addresses also the account of the *ŚDS* (280-281) in which the *manomayakāya* is born of continued 'entrenchment' in ignorance, and hence necessarily pejorative.

[726] The Sanskrit expression is known through a quotation in *RGV(V)* 1.35, Johnston (1950: 33,5-34,4).
The other four being entrenchment in 1) views of monism; 2) desiring sense pleasure; 3) desiring form; 4) desiring existence. See *ŚDS*^{C1}: T.353,220a3-a5.

[727] See e.g. Senart (1882: 218,15-16): *manomayena rūpeṇa prādurbhonti tathāgatā*). The term refers also to a quality of all beings existing at the (re-)birth of a cosmos, e.g. Senart (1882: 339,17-18: *manomayakāyatā*). This last sense is discernable also in the Pāli *sutta*-s, e.g. the *Brahmajāla-Sutta* (*DN*.I.17) see Radich (2007: 241); also Lamotte (1958: 690-692).

[728] Lee (2014: 65-75, especially ft.24 regarding **pariṇāmakāya*).

the text, is 1) distinguished from other senses of mind-made birth discussed in wider Buddhist sources; and 2) bears a lexical similarity to the *acintyapāriṇāmikīcyuti* of the *ŚDS*.[729] In short, use of this term does not strongly support Paul's (nor Wayman and Wayman's) hypothesis of Mahāsāṃghika influence in this text.[730]

The distinction between bondage to these mind-made bodies and an awakened Buddha rests on a familiar concept. What beings have not attained at this stage is 'masterful power (自在力) and attainment [of awakening] (作證)'.[731] The equivalent passage in *ŚDS*^{T} provides *dbang ba'i stobs*, which is unusual and may betray something akin to the Sanskrit **vaśibala*, in the sense of these beings lacking mastery in regards to their own existence, as attained by a Buddha.[732] Hence the *ŚDS* paints the 'saints' of the lesser vehicles as still traversing *saṃsāra* (albeit without base, physical forms) until they have advanced further down the path of the *bodhisattva*. The *ekayāna*

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[729] See T.1545,363a20-21.

[730] In contrast, Kubota (1999) argues (based on *AKB* 3.40) that the *ŚDS* and its account of the *manomāyakāya* betrays Sarvāstivāda influence.

[731] *ŚDS*^{C1}*:* T.353,220a23-a24: 阿羅漢、辟支佛，斷四種住地，無漏不盡，不得自在力，亦不作證。*ŚDS*^{C2}: T.310 provides simply 自在 and 現證 (675c9-10).

[732] a) See D.92,266a5; Go.09.13,70a6; L.643.48,293b2-3; N.97,437a6; Q.760.48,271b2; S.11.48,418a5.
The expression *dbang ba'i stobs* is rare, but appears also in the Tibetan *Avataṃsaka-Sūtra*: e.g. D.45,12b5; Q.761,14a7. This may still have the sense of 'the power of [one] masterful' in accord with the sense of *vaśin* as 'controller' or 'master': see Edgerton (1954: 474a).
b) The expression *dbang phyug* does occur in *ŚDS*^{T} (e.g. concerning 'unobstructed mastery (*dbang phyug*) among phenomena'), which may reflect the sense of masterful autonomy in awakening discussed in the previous chapter. See *ŚDS*^{C1}: T.353,220c4; 220c10-11; *ŚDS*^{T}*:* D.92,268a5; 268b1; Go.09.13,71b9; 72a3; L.643.48,295b4; 295b8; N.97,441a6; 441b4; Q.760.48,273b7; 274a4; S.11.48,421a5; 421b3; Ta.1.3.5.6,357a6; 357a9.

vehicle is then central to the *ŚDS* as a Mahāyāna text: interested in lauding that vehicle and the potency of its idealized passengers.

However in these last chapters we have begun to see how authors of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature were as much concerned with their relationship to non-Buddhists as to those already within the *saṅgha*. In regards to the *MPMS*-group, the *tathāgatagarbha* as the real self cannot be considered without reference to the *tīrthika*-s: those who teach what is extraneous to the *dharma*, through erroneous forms of *ātmavāda*. This reveals an interesting point of departure for the *ŚDS* from the texts discussed above: there is only a single mention of the *tīrthika* in this text, one far from forgiving, which we are lucky to have available in a Sanskrit fragment.

> *suvāte(*sic*) ahaṃ bhagavaṃ sa<d>dharmavimukhe anyatīrthike pūtibījike*[733] *ārājakam api gatvā nāśayitum vademi / sannigṛhyās te bhagavan pūtibījikā<ḥ> sadevamānuṣāsure(na) lokeneti //*
>
> *ŚDS*^{SF} §26 (MS fol.389v1-v2): Matsuda (2000: 68).

> I decree, Lord, that those turned away from the *saddharma*; who are *tīrthika*-s who are other [to ourselves]; who have rotten seeds [in them], even if having gone to the King [for protection], are to be eradicated.

[733] *ŚDS*^{T} confirms these to be three discrete groups, which in this fragment should be understood in the accusative plural: see Edgerton (1953a: 57b (8.95)).

Lord, whoever have rotten seeds should be corrected by the world with its gods, humans, and *asura*-s.'[734]

As we shall address later, this attitude to the *tīrthika* is somewhat different to that found in the *MPMS*-group (in which such harsh language might be more befitting of the *icchantika*-s, perhaps).[735] The *ŚDS* is then at once an advocate of the Mahāyāna as the dominant vehicle, yet fiercely opposed to the followers of 'other teachers' and their doctrines: signs, perhaps, of greater confidence our authors had in the perceived authority of their tradition.

6.1.3 *An Implied Self.*

Some engagement with the *tīrthika*-s is however still implied where the *ŚDS* accounts for some perceived confusion between the *tathāgatagarbha* and worldly notions of selfhood. Poignantly, the *ŚDS* does not affirm the *tathāgatagarbha* to be a 'real self', despite exhibiting a familiar clarification of the dangers of such a comparison.

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[734] Compare *ŚDS*^{T}: D.92,276a7-b2; Go.09.13,78b7-8; L. 643.48,304a3-4; N.97,493a4-6; Q.760.48,283a8-283b2; S.11.48,433a7-b2.
ŚDS^{C1}: T.353,222c29-a1 is different, implying that these beings can be subdued 'by the power of kings, as well as the magic power of gods, *nāga*-s and *asura*-s': 當以王力及天龍鬼神力，而調伏之。
ŚDS^{C2}*:* T.310 (678a22-a24) differs again, stating that wherever beings 1) take selectively from the *dharma*, 2) cling to [wrong] interpretations, 3) defy the *dharma* or 4) learn extraneous doctrines, the audience of the Queen should go there and eradicate them (i.e. making no mention of any kings, gods etc.). The common theme is certainly an intolerance for those not adhering to the *dharma*: significant for where we might place the *ŚDS* in relation to the attitude of the *MPMS*-group. See chapter 8.1.
[735] Regarding the *icchantika* in earlier sources, see p.77,ft.195.

世尊，如來藏者，非我，非衆生，非命，非人。

如來藏者，墮身見衆生、顛倒衆生、空[736]亂意衆生，非其境界。

ŚDS^{C1}: T.353,222b19-b21.

Lord, the *tathāgatagarbha* is not an *ātman*, *sattva*, *jīva*, or *pudgala*. The *tathāgatagarbha* is not [within] the range of beings who are fallen into the view of a worldly self; with distorted [views]; or bewildered by emptiness.

bcom ldan 'das / de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po yang bdag ma lags / sems can ma lags / srog ma lags / gang zag ma lags te / bcom ldan 'das / de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po ni sems can 'jig tshogs la lta bar lhung ba dag dang / phyin ci log gis nyams par gyur pa dag dang / stong pa nyid las sems g.yengs[737] *pa rnams kyi spyod yul ma lags so //*

ŚDS^{T}: D.92,275a1-a3; Go.09.13,77b3-4; L.643.48,302b3-4; N.97,451a3-5; Q.760.48,281b4-6; S.11.48,431a4-7.

Lord, the *tathāgatagarbha* is neither an *ātman*, *sattva*, *jīva*, nor *pudgala*; Lord, the *tathāgatagarbha* is not [within] the range of beings fallen into the view of a worldly self, nor those who transgress due to distorted [views], nor those who are distracted by emptiness.

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[736] 空＝立＜知＞

[737] DGoQS *g.yengs pa* : L. *g.yeng ba* : N *g.yeng pa*

Again we are witness to a list of erroneous notions of the self, and emphasis also that the *tathāgatagarbha* cannot be known by certain beings. These are 1) those possessing erroneous views of the self (in both versions clearly reflecting *satkāyadṛṣṭi*); 2) those of distorted views (perhaps an allusion to the *viparyāsa*-s mentioned elsewhere in the text: see p.288) and 3) what we might identify as the *śūnyatāvādin* Mahāyānist criticized by other *tathāgatagarbha* authors. These are those sentient beings unable to grasp the *tathāgatagarbha* identified by the *MPMS*-group also, though pertinently the *ŚDS* stops short of establishing that the term 'self' is, nonetheless, a fitting designator for the *tathāgatagarbha*.

Whereas the *MPMS*-group has been seen to clarify that the *buddha-dhātu* is not a worldly self, this was always done in the context of affirming that it was, nonetheless, the *true* self. It is clear though that the authors of the *ŚDS* still had good reason to supply the above caveats regarding their own doctrine: while not explicitly employing the term *ātman* for the *tathāgatagarbha*, they nonetheless present an account of this notion highly reminiscent of a permanently enduring reality underlying sentient beings.

世尊，生死者，依如來藏。以如來藏故，説本際[738]不可知[739]。世尊，有如來藏故説生死，是名善説。

[738] See Sharf (2002: 229-238). This particular usage of 本際 seems to reflect the lack of 'prior limit' (**pūrvakoṭi*) or origin for *saṃsāra*, due to its being founded upon the *tathāgatagarbha*: found in both the *AAN* (T.668,467b27) and *RGVV* (Johnston 1950: 72,15-16): see Silk (forthcoming: 116). For contrast with different usage in the *LAS*, see p.303,ft.81.

[739] 知＝如＜知＞

世尊，生死，生死者，諸受根沒，次第{不}[740]受根起：是名生死。世尊，死生[741]者，此二法是如來藏。

世間言說故有死有生：死者，謂根壞；生者，新諸根起。

非如來藏有生有死。如來藏者[742]，離有爲相。如來藏常住不變：是故如來藏是依、是持、是建立。

世尊，不離、不斷、不脫、不異不思議佛法。

世尊，斷、脫、異外有爲法，依、持、建、立者：是如來藏。

世尊，若無如來藏者，不得厭苦、樂求涅槃。何以故？於此六識及心法智，此七法刹那不住，不種衆苦，不得厭苦、樂求涅槃。世尊，如來藏者，無前際，不起、不滅法、種諸苦，得厭苦樂求涅槃。

ŚDS^{C1}: T.353,222b5-b19.

Lord, *saṃsāra*[743] rests upon the *tathāgatagarbha*; because of the *tathāgatagarbha* it is taught that the original limit is unknowable. Lord, because of the existence of the *tathāgatagarbha*, there is taught *saṃsāra*: this is called the correct teaching.

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[740] The removal of 不 (not reflect in either *ŚDS*^{C2} and *ŚDS*^{T}) is here justified by its exclusion in a quotation of this passage in Zongmi's (宗密) *Yuanjue jing da shu chao* (圓覺經大疏鈔, 823/823CE), preserved in the *Zoku zōkyō*: Z.245,9,578a9-10, accessed via CBETA 2014. See Gregory (2002: 231).

[741] 死生＝生死＜三＞＜宮＞

[742]〔者〕－＜三＞＜宮＞＜知＞

[743] This reading suggested by *ŚDS*^{T} (*'khor ba*), which distinguishes this from specific reference to 'birth and death' (*'chi 'pho ba dang skye ba*).

Lord, *saṃsāra* is the end of the sense faculties and the successive arising of new sense faculties[744]: this is called *saṃsāra*. Lord, birth and death: these two phenomena are the *tathāgatagarbha*.

It is because of worldly saying that there is birth and there is death: death being the destruction of the faculties [and] birth the arising of new faculties.

It is not the case that the *tathāgatagarbha* has either birth or death. The *tathāgatagarbha* is apart from the characteristics of the conditioned.

The *tathāgatagarbha* is permanent and unchanging: hence the *tathāgatagarbha* is the basis, support and foundation.

Lord, [the *tathāgatagarbha*] is not separate, not severed from, not free from, not different to the inconceivable Buddha-qualities.

Lord, the refuge, basis, support and foundation that is not severed from, different to, outside of conditioned phenomena: that is the *tathāgatagarbha*.

Lord, if there were no *tathāgatagarbha*, one could not feel revulsion for suffering, and nor propensity *nirvāṇa*. Why so? Because the six consciousnesses, as well as consciousness of mental phenomena, those seven [kinds of] phenomena do not abide for even an instant, do not nurture various [types of] suffering; they are without the revulsion for suffering and the aspiration for *nirvāṇa*.

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[744] *ŚDS*^{C2} clarifies that birth is continuity in sense faculties 'without interval': T.310,677c9-10.

> Lord, the *tathāgatagarbha* has no prior limit; has the quality of lacking [any] origin or end; fosters all [types of] suffering; having revulsion for suffering and aspiration for *nirvāṇa*.[745]

The above was clearly of significance for the *RGV(V)*, but is also cited by the *LAS* in equating the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *ālayavijñāna*: the substrate consciousness that is the basis both of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* in its system.[746] Though the *ŚDS* does not itself use Yogācāra categories, the above does seem to equate the *tathāgatagarbha* with some substrate basis of saṃsāric transmigration: a function performed elsewhere by the *ālayavijñāna*.[747] The *tathāgatagarbha* of the *ŚDS* is again said to be permanent and unchanging, and in possession of a Buddha's qualities. It is also without limit either in the past or future: as such it is precisely that which continues to exist across successive births. As such, though not called a 'self', this *tathāgatagarbha* certainly constitutes an unchanging continuity of identity between births: a recognizable criterion for selfhood.[748]

Most important though is the content of this identity: the *tathāgatagarbha* is not just in possession of the qualities of a Buddha (unmanifested because of the presence of afflictions), but also 1) the

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[745] Compare *ŚDS*^{T}: D.92,274a6-b5; Go.09.13,77a1-9; L.643.48,301b7-a8; N.97,450a3-450b6; Q.760.48,280b8-281b1; S.11.48,430a5-431a1.
[746] See eg. *RGV 1.35*, Johnston (1950, 30,4-5), regarding the function that is 'aversion to suffering'; also the *LAS*, Nanjio (1923: 222-223).
[747] There is also no clear way of understanding this enigmatic seventh consciousness (*ŚDS*^{T}: *rnam par shes pa gang lags so*), which appears to take as its object the content of the sixth consciousness (*manovijñāna*). Wayman & Wayman supply examples of how this has been understood by East Asian scholars: (1975: 105,ft.97).
[748] See chapter 1.2.

revulsion for suffering and 2) the aspiration for *nirvāṇa*. The line of the *ŚDS* (in accord with most Buddhist accounts of the mind) seems to be that each conditioned sense-faculty has no lasting content, and is in a constant state of flux. However revulsion at suffering and aspiration for *nirvāṇa* are lasting: if anything can be recognized as defining sentient beings across (human) births, it is this experience of suffering and want for its cessation, which are here properties of the *tathāgatagarbha*.[749]

Hence this *tathāgatagarbha* underpins various types of consciousness, receiving impressions of suffering that produce the desire for *nirvāṇa* (more specifically, the full awakening of a Buddha). It also lacks beginning or end: reminiscent of both the *MBhS* and *AAN* concerning the permanent *sattva-dhātu* that exists both 1) through transmigration and 2) after the attainment of awakening. The repercussions of such a *sattva-dhātu* are clearly a lingering concern of the *ŚDS*: cautious as it is not to affirm anything that could be called a self (or indeed a *dhātu* as some unchanging nature to beings) discernable in consciousness, but nevertheless evoking some reality that underpins experience of both *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.

We saw above that this *tathāgatagarbha* is not apart from the Buddha-qualities (which may well have in mind what are couched in the *RGV(V)* as the four *guṇapāramitā*, encountered first in the *MPMS*).[750] The *ŚDS* further affirms the positively characterized nature of sentient beings with criticism of

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[749] The *MPMS*, in its definition of the noble truth of suffering, makes clear that no truth of suffering can be said to exist in regards to beings not aware of their own suffering; i.e. neither animals nor, one supposes, *deva*-s. See e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,882c16-17.

[750] See chapter 3.3.

some perceived followers of a *śūnyatāvāda* doctrine: those 'distracted by emptiness'.[751] In the *MPMS*, there is frequent criticism of those who have misunderstood or are attached to teachings of such notions, though the *ŚDS* succinctly presents its own acceptance of at once the emptiness and 'non-emptiness' of the *tathāgatagarbha*.

> 世尊，有二種如來藏空智。世尊，空如來藏若離、若脫、若異，一切煩惱藏。世尊，不空如來藏過於[752]恒沙不離、不脫、不異、不思議佛法。
>
> *ŚDS*^{C1}: T.353,221c16-c18.

> Lord, there are two kinds of knowledge of the emptiness of the *tathāgatagarbha*.
>
> Lord, the empty *tathāgatagarbha* is separation from, free from, or different to the store of all afflictions. Lord, the not-empty *tathāgatagarbha* is not separation from, free from, or different to the inconceivable Buddha-qualities that surpass the sands of the Ganges.[753]

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[751] Footnote to earlier chapters.

[752]〔於〕－＜知＞

[753] Compare *ŚDS*^{T}: D.92,272a6-b1; Go.09.13,75a6-8; L.643.48,299b3-8; N.97,447a5-447b1; Q.760.48,278b4-6; S.11.48,427a5-b1.
Also *ŚDS*^{C2}: T.310,677a23-25, which clarifies that 過恒沙 must qualify 佛法.

A full discussion of the empty/non-empty teaching of the *ŚDS* cannot be pursued here.[754] This 'non-emptiness' clearly refers to the presence of something extant in sentient beings, though clearly here a collection of qualities (the *dharmakāya*) rather than any seemingly substantial *dhātu* (as affirmed by the *MPMS*-group). For the *ŚDS*, emptiness teaching refers to the absence of mental afflictions from this nature: making the subject of emptiness the proper character of sentient beings *qua* afflictions, rather than the metaphysical status of phenomena. There is then validity in teaching emptiness as the ultimate non-reality of afflictions, but this must recognize also the reality of the *tathāgatagarbha* that has as its content the qualities of a Buddha.[755]

It should be noted that a similar account of the empty-while-non-empty nature of liberation is found also in the *MPMS*. Here the subject is clearly the state of the liberated Tathāgata rather than the *tathāgatagarbha* – 'empty' of afflictions, but *not* empty due to being a permanent abiding entity – though this opposition may be further evidence of awareness of the *MPMS* by the *ŚDS*.[756]

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[754] This verse certainly articulates the central disagreement between the *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* interpretations of ultimate reality found in Tibetan tradition: the latter having been the position of the Jo nang school, which certainly appears to be the position of the *ŚDS* and Indian *tathāgatagarbha* literature in general. See Hookham (1991: 119-121).

[755] As Nagao (1991: 58-59) writes (supporting the *gzhan stong* interpretation of this passage) it is clear that 'emptiness' here means 'absence of some other': i.e. holding that there remains the *tathāgatagarbha* as a collection of qualities after afflictions are negated. Use of this passage in the *RGV(V)* (see below) seems to contradict the attempt by that text to explain the *tathāgatagarbha* in terms of emptiness understood as *niḥsvabhāva*.

[756] See p.72,ft.177.

We must remember what was observed in the *TGS* and its many accounts of the permanent reality present in beings. Some of these, we recall, emphasized the presence of qualities, or a collection of qualities, in beings without stipulating an entity to which these belong. In other words the non-emptiness of the *tathāgatagarbha* might refer to the presence of the qualities of a Buddha without emphasizing a lasting kernel of selfhood to which these belong. Such an attitude avoids the positive identification of any 'substance' in the constitution of beings: focusing as it does on attributes manifested upon awakening that are to be 'unveiled' rather than generated.

6.1.4 *Qualities of the* Dharmakāya

This metaphysically abstract understanding of the *tathāgatagarbha* as a collection of qualities, without designating anything like the *buddha-dhātu* of the *MPMS*-group, accords with how we might understand the *dharmakāya* with which it is equated in this text. As in the *AAN* already discussed, the *ŚDS* considers the *tathāgatagarbha* and *dharmakāya* to refer to the same reality.[757] An insightful account of the *dharmakāya* is provided by Harrison (1992), who concludes that a common usage of the term across Mahāyāna sources refers to the Buddha as possessing 'a body of qualities', in which the Sanskrit *kāya* has the sense of a collection or assembly (similar to the Latin *corpus*).[758] Such

[757] See pp.241-242.
[758] Harrison (1992). Harrison's warning is that in many contexts the term has a more adjectival sense, and we should not then commit the Buddhist 'cardinal sin' that is 'reification of the nonexistent'. Surely the same could be said of the *tathāgatagarbha* (= *dharmakāya*), at least as portrayed in the *ŚDS*, in which neither of these entities should be considered substantial entities. See also Kajiyama (1984).

a reading of the *dharmakāya* is not contradicted by the *ŚDS*, which gives no account of this reality apart from in terms of the *tathāgatagarbha* and the (four) perfect qualities.[759] In so far as this is the same reality as the *tathāgatagarbha*, beings can be said to possess a collection of qualities not manifested precisely because of the presence of afflictions. These qualities, which once manifested constitute a Buddha realized in the world, are then dormant in the character of beings: a claim that does not necessarily contradict statements about the nature of *saṃsāra* as featuring nothing that might be deemed a self.

At this stage in our understanding of the text, it appears that the authors of the *ŚDS* are certainly not advocates of the *tathāgatagarbha* as warranting designation as a self, even though characteristics such as its permanence and foundational nature underlying rebirth suggest that it might be thought of as such. Furthermore, its non-emptiness (i.e. possession) of qualities need not mark this entity as a concrete self: at least, we presume, not in the eyes of its authors who contend that the *tathāgatagarbha* is no such thing. Rather, it signifies the latent *dharmakāya* that is an abstract collection of

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More recently Radich (2007: 442-445) has challenged the generalization of Harrison's conclusions, and noted the plurality of *dharmakāya*-s that developed throughout the Mahāyāna. It is still likely though that the *dharmakāya* of the *ŚDS* is in opposition to its sense found in the *prajñāpāramitā* literature; therein, as Lai (1981: 453) writes, 'a 'colorless' absolute fit for philosophers more than for pietists'. What understanding that we have of the *dharmakāya* in the *ŚDS* is precisely in terms of the positive expressions of that reality, the *guṇapāramitā*-s, which our authors are unfortunately not generous enough to unpack.

[759] Though the *ŚDS* does refer to the *dharmakāya* as possessing innumerable qualities (*ŚDS*^{C1}: T.353,219a3: 功德), likely rendering *guṇa*, supporting this body being understood as a 'corpus' of superlative qualities, even if this is never stated explicitly.

superlative qualities. However the situation is complicated, we shall see, in that the qualities of this *dharmakāya* reintroduce the language of selfhood back into the *ŚDS*: in designation of what pertains, without doubt, to the Buddha.

Before discussion of these qualities, the *ŚDS* reminds its audience of two erroneous positions – the extremes of annihilationism and eternalism – that come from miscomprehension of consciousness.[760] The crux of these appears not unconventional. It is evident that the *ŚDS* conceives of its doctrine as the true middle way between two extreme positions, though its definition of these extreme positions is not as its audience might first expect.

> 邊見者，凡夫於五受陰我見，妄想計著，生二見。是名邊見，所謂常見、斷見。
>
> 見諸行無常，是斷見，非正見。見涅槃常，是常見，非正見。妄想見故，作如是見。
>
> *ŚDS*^{C1}: T.353,222a10-a14.

> Regarding the extreme views, common people [imputing] a view of self among the five *upadāna skandha*-s, [due to] wrong imagination and attachment [born of] imputation produce two views. These are called the extreme views, which are the view of eternalism and the view of annihilationism.

[760] See p.11,ft.26.

> The view of conditioned states as impermanent: this is the annihilationist view and is not the correct view; the view of *nirvāṇa* as permanent, this is the eternalist view and is not the correct view. Due to misconceived views, [beings] produce such views [as these].[761]

We would expect the definition of (wrong) annihilationism to be the view that what is *unconditioned* is impermanent, while (wrong) eternalism is the view that the *conditioned* (i.e. *dharma*-s excluding *nirvāṇa*) is permanent. The above however exists in all three versions, and is cited by the *RGV(V)* in explanation of the correct perspective on permanence, and as such can be considered another example of the *tathāgatagarbha* authors inverting categories presumably familiar to their audiences.[762] The sense seems to be that what is conditioned should be thought to carry on existing without end, while *nirvāṇa* cannot be thought of as divorced from conditioned existence (as the *RGV(V)* clarifies, leading to the position of the 'unfixed' *nirvāṇa* that is the Buddha's continued influence in *saṃsāra*: *āpratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*).[763]

These lines seem to express the singularity of *saṃsāra*/*nirvāṇa*, which in both this text and the *AAN* is reflected in the identity of the *tathāgatagarbha* and *dharmakāya*. Hence, though the *ŚDS* denies the existence of a self in the world, it affirms a common ground to successive rebirths that wants for

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[761] Compare *ŚDS*^{C2}: T.310,677b14-b16; *ŚDS*$^{T:}$ D.92,273a4-7; Go.09.13,76a3-6; L.643.48; 300b4-8; N.97,448b1-5; Q.760.48,279b5-7; S.11.48,428b3-6.
[762] See. *RGVV* 1.38: Johnson (1950: 34,20-35,2).
[763] *RGVV* 1.38: Johnston (1950: 35,3-4); see also Nagao (1991: 23-34).

awakening.[764] It is not hard to see how this account was significant for the authors of the *LAS*, who developed the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine to advance their doctrine of the *ālayavijñāna*, that is, precisely, an imperceptible substrate underlying any consciousness within which *dharma*-s might be scrutinized.[765] As a substrate that exists between successive births in *saṃsāra*, this *ālayavijñāna* itself has some of the character of a lasting self, though as we shall see below the authors of the *LAS* take steps to avoid such a position.

The two extreme views identified by the *ŚDS* give way to the four distorted views (*viparyāsa*-s), encountered previously in the *MPMS*. It was stated in the *MPMS* that beings are just as mistaken to consider (for example) that the expression 'non-self' was applicable to the *tathāgatagarbha* as they are to consider 'self' applicable to worldly phenomena. We do well, however, to remember that if we follow Shimoda's stratification of the *MPMS* and its development said text seemed to introduce these *viparyāsa* first in regards to liberation, and apparently only later to the *buddha-dhātu* later in its development.[766]

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[764] Wangchuk (2007: 157) has noted the lack of interest texts such as the *ŚDS* show in the notion of *bodhicitta*. For the *tathāgatagarbha* authors, this mental event and resultant state, required to transmigrate from one birth to the next, is eclipsed by a permanent nature that explains the desire for liberation across lives. The relationship between these two notions requires further study.

[765] Regarding the development of the *ālayavijñāna* prior to its more mature form in texts such as the *LAS*, see Schmithausen (1987).

[766] E.g. Shimoda (1997: 315-317).

顛倒衆生，於五受陰無常常[767]想、苦有樂想、無我我想、不淨淨想。一切阿羅漢、辟支佛淨智者，於一切智境界及如來法身，本所不見。

或有衆生，信[768]佛語故，起常想、樂想、我想、淨想。非顛倒見，是名正見。何以故？　如來法身，是常波羅蜜、樂波羅蜜、我波羅蜜、淨波羅蜜。於佛法身，作是見者，是名正見。正見者，是佛眞子：從佛口生，從正法生，從法化生，得法餘財。

ŚDS^{C1}: T.353,222a18-a26.

Distorted sentient beings [have] in regards to the five *skandha*-s the idea of permanence in impermanence, happiness in suffering, self in non-self, purity in the impure. The pure knowledge of all *arhats* and *pratyekabuddha*-s does not perceive originally the sphere of omniscience and the Tathāgata's *dharmakāya*.

Some sentient beings, as they believe the Buddha's words, have thoughts of permanence, bliss, self and purity: these are not distortions, [but] are correct views. Why so? The Tathāgata's *dharmakāya* is the perfection of permanence, the perfection of bliss, the perfection of self, the perfection of purity. Who sees the Buddha's *dharmakāya*, generating the correct view, sees rightly. Who sees rightly are the Buddha's true sons: arisen from the Buddha's mouth,

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[767] 〔常〕－＜知＞

[768] 信＋（於）＜知＞

> arisen from the true *dharma*, emanated by the *dharma*, they attain the remaining benefits of the *dharma*.[769]

An opposition is drawn between the *skandha*-s (as we have noticed, not a common feature in other *tathāgatagarbha* texts so far discussed), which cannot be considered to exhibit selfhood etc., and the *dharmakāya*, which can.[770] As in the case of the *MPMS*, there is a correct notion of selfhood, which must here refer to the *dharmakāya*. Again, this *dharmakāya* can be thought of as a body of qualities: precisely those realized in 'perfect' form upon awakening. Again, in the *MPMS* the earlier form of the *viparyāsa*-s referred more to the Buddha understood as a true self rather than to the *buddha-dhātu*, while the later account (of the *tathāgata-dhātu* chapter) refers more to the latter.[771] In the *ŚDS* it is certainly the *dharmakāya* that is said to exhibit the perfection of self, though we keep in mind that for this text the *dharmakāya* is also the *tathāgatagarbha* once cleared of afflictions. As such, though sentient beings might not possess something deemed a self, it is the case that the 'dormant' Buddha-qualities that they might later express

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[769] Compare *ŚDS*^{C2}: T.310,677b21-c29; *ŚDS*^{T}*:* D.92,273b3-274a2; Go.09.13,76a10-b7; L.643.48,301a4-b2; N.97,449a4-b5; Q.760.48,280a4-280b3; S.11.48,429a5-b6.

[770] See King (1995: 8-9).

[771] Takasaki tentatively suggested that the source of this list for both texts may have been the *MMS*, which employs this set of four as a designation for the Buddha and *dharmadhātu* (e.g. T.387,1082a17-18; 1083a14-15; 1085a2-3).
However the *MMS* is otherwise difficult to establish as pre-dating the *MPMS*, and the appearance of this list in just one version of the text can suggest it was itself influenced by their appearance in the *MPMS*. I find it most likely that the *ŚDS* is also responding to the four qualities as they appear in the *MPMS*. See Takasaki (1974: 293-295).

certainly does. The correct manner of discussing this Buddha, however, should be in terms of as an abstract collection of qualities: one of which being this 'perfection of self'.

Returning to the above passage, *ŚDS*^{C2} (and *ŚDS*^{T} with it) presents the final line as 'performing their share of the *dharma'*. *ŚDS*^{T} also clarifies that the expression 從法化生 found in both Chinese translations refers to 'emanations of the *dharma'* (*chos kyi sprul pa*): an expression which, as we shall see later, may provide insight into how these authors understand the *saddharma* to influence the world.[772]

> *bcom ldan 'das kyi sras thugs las skyes pa dang / zhal nas skyes pa dang / chos las skyes pa dang / chos kyi*[773] *sprul pa dang / chos kyi bgo skal*[774] *la spyod pa zhes bgyi'o //*
>
> *ŚDS*^{T}: D.92,274a1-a2; Go.09.13,76b6-7; L.643.48,301b2; N.97,449b4-5; Q.760.48,280b2-3; S.11,48,429b5-6.[775]

> They are called sons of the lord: born from [his] mind; born from [his] mouth; born from the *dharma*; emanations of the *dharma*; [who] perform their share of the *dharma*.

The *dharma* of both versions appears to be the teachings of the Buddha, synonymous with the Buddha himself imagined as the *dharmakāya*

[772] See chapter 8.5.
[773] DGoLNS. *kyi* : Q. *kyis*
[774] DGoLNQ. *bgo skal* : S. *sgo skal*
[775] Compare *ŚDS*^{C2}: T.310,677b29.

(here in the sense of the 'body of teaching').[776] The value of *sprul pa* is something to which we must return later, but this model of *bodhisattva*-s as emanations of a seemingly transcendent reality expresses the docetic character of this text, again in the vein of the *Lokānuvartana-Sūtra*.[777] Whatever the wider associations of this term, it is certainly the case that the *bodhisattva*-s with correct views are considered manifestations of the Buddha and his *dharma*. One who knows the *dharmakāya*, along with its being the perfection of self, in some sense receives this from a Buddha understood as a transcendent source of authority and truth.

We must address the sense of *pāramitā* in the expression *ātmapāramitā*, above. Generally in Mahāyāna literature this refers to virtues of the *bodhisattva* that should govern their conduct.[778] In the *ŚDS* these are certainly qualities predicated of the *dharmakāya*, in precisely the manner that in the (early material of the) *MPMS* what is supermundane is described as permanent, self, pure and blissful. These correspond to two tradition understandings of *pāramitā* identified by Hikata: as 1) 'the conduct by which one has attained to the other side' (*pāram-ita-tā*, becoming *pāramitā*), and 2) the 'highest' form of some quality (*parama* > *pārami* > *pāramitā*).[779] Sense 1) is certainly that found in regards to the *bodhisattvacaryā*, i.e. as a virtue towards which one aspires, while 2) seems a more likely explanation of terms

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[776] Bringing to mind the equation of perceiving the Buddha with perceiving the *dhamma*, found in the *Vakkali-Sutta* (*SN*.III.119).
[777] See p.77.
[778] Mentioned earlier in the *ŚDS*: see e.g. *ŚDS*^{C1}: T.353,217c17-c18; otherwise articulated well in, for example, the *Śūraṃgamasamādhi Sūtra*; see T.642,632a9-633a28.
[779] Hikata (1958: x-xii).

such as *ātmapāramitā*: i.e. a superlative quality attributable only to the *dharmakāya*.[780] These two senses meet in Dayal's understanding of the *bodhisattva pāramitā*-s as 'the quality or condition of a person…who possesses the *pārami* or highest point of [a given virtue]', i.e. ideal categories towards which the *bodhisattva* should aspire.[781]

With this meaning in mind, the *dharmakāya* can be described as exhibiting the 'perfection' of selfhood. What is important is that this distinguishes *ātmapāramitā* (etc.) from erroneous notions of self (etc.) that are *not* found correctly attributed to anything in *saṃsāra*. In other words there is nothing to be designated as a self, though the *perfection* of self – presumably of a different nature to this – correctly describes the *dharmakāya*. How this might be possible is suggested by the interpretation of the *ŚDS* in the *RGV(V)*, to which we turn in the next chapter.

It appears that like the earlier material of the *MPMS*, the *ŚDS* is prepared to discuss the Buddha as a kind of (perfect) self, though unlike the later content of the *MPMS* (and the rest of the *MPMS*-group) stops short of affirming that this constitutes a self present in unawakened beings also. However the Buddhology of the *ŚDS* has moved away from that of the earlier content of the *MPMS*, taking as its centre the abstract concept of the *dharmakāya* which, though present in the *MPMS*, is not unpacked as anything

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[780] This is supported by *RGVV* 1.36: Johnson (1950: 31,l.11), which discusses the 'perfection of self that *is highest'* (*paramātmapāramitā*): clarifying that this 'perfection' is a qualitatively different, superior sense of selfhood. See chapter 7.1.5.

[781] Dayal (1932: 165-166); for further discussion, see also Hotori (2010).

but a contrast to the Buddha's physical form.[782] The authors of the *ŚDS* are certainly more cautious in their use of the expression *ātman* than those of the later stratum of the *MPMS*: expressing the positive attributions of awakening through their own presentation of the eight *viparyāsa*-s (i.e. four pertaining to the *skandha*-s; four to the *dharmakāya*), very likely developed from the *MPMS*.[783]

The centre of the *ŚDS* is the affirmation that the *dharmakāya* is precisely the same as the *tathāgatagarbha* (only in conjunction with afflictions): a position that is at the heart of the *RGV(V)*, and that is the backdrop to all discussion of the 'true self' in both of these texts.

> 於説如來藏，如來法身、不思議佛境界、及方便説[784]。
>
> *ŚDS*^{C1}: T.353,221b18-b19.

> In explaining the *tathāgatagarbha*, there is the explanation of the *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata, the inconceivable sphere [of activity] of the Buddha[785], and of skill in means.[786]

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[782] Shimoda (1997: 317-318). See also pp.77-78,ft.196.
[783] What this might say about the authors and audiences of these respective texts shall be returned to in chapter 8.
[784] 説心＝心説＜知＞
[785] We shall return to discussion of the Buddha's sphere of influence in chapter 8.6.
[786] Compare a slightly different account (lacking mention of skill in means), in *ŚDS*^{C2}: T.310, 676c28-29; *ŚDS*^{T}: D.92,271a5-6; Go.09.13,74a8-9; L.643.48,298b4-5; N.97,445b3-5; Q.760.48,277a6-7; S.11.48,425b3-4

Hence, when the *ŚDS* attributes the four perfected qualities (including that of self) to the *dharmakāya*, this means that the same qualities must be somehow present, albeit unmanifested, in the *tathāgatagarbha*. The authors of the *ŚDS* perhaps felt that this language was 'safer' when applied to the end result of the realized *dharmakāya* than to the only 'latent' *tathāgatagarbha*: their point of departure from the ideas of the *MPMS*, of which they seem aware. The perfection of self, a fitting designation for the *dharmakāya*, cannot be attributed to the *tathāgatagarbha* that is an aspect of sentient beings: yet removed of afflictions, the *tathāgatagarbha* precisely *is* the *dharmakāya* exhibiting just this.

6.1.5 *An Account of Selfhood*

As detailed above, the *ŚDS* differs from other texts we have addressed precisely through its interest in the *tathāgatagarbha* as 1) a mental category, underlying mundane consciousness and 2) the latent *dharmakāya*: a category more abstract than the state of a divinely permanent Buddha found in the *MPMS*-group.[787]

I hold then that the *ŚDS* must post-date the *MPMS* (at least its earlier material), or at any rate a source for the *viparyāsa*-s as they appear in that text, and that its authors very deliberately presented these categories in a different form. In the *MPMS*, there is emphasis on both the incorrect conception of (e.g.) self and of non-self, and subsequent clarification of correct conceptions: i.e. denial of the worldly self, but affirmation of the

[787] Prefigured, no doubt, by the *SPS*: see p.5,ft.14.

buddha-dhātu that is the 'true' self. The tone of the *ŚDS* is different. Certainly there are eight distorted views, but the correct sense of self is qualified as a) pertaining to the realized *dharmakāya*, rather than the *buddha-dhātu* that is the awakened nature not-yet-realized, but also b) precisely a *perfection* of the notion self, that is both supermundane and proper to the Mahāyāna constituted by 'ideal' categories, i.e. in terms of a *pāramitā*.

This might express an agenda that the *ŚDS* has to bring *tathāgatagarbha* thought in alignment with other Mahāyāna categories. The *ŚDS* exhibits a different kind of Mahāyāna metaphysics to that of the *MPMS*-group: more favourably discussing emptiness as a complement to the *tathāgatagarbha*; the inherently pure mind; and, importantly, the *dharmakāya* as an abstract, seemingly impersonal body (distinct from the more god-like Buddha prominent in both the *SPS* and *MPMS*).[788] In common with the *MPMS*-group, the *ŚDS* frames the career of the *bodhisattva* in terms of purification of the *tathāgatagarbha* (preceded, importantly, by faith in its existence and purity), but perhaps means to evoke the conspicuously absent *virtues* (*pāramitā*) of the *bodhisattva* where discussing the superlative *qualities* (*pāramitā*, also) of the *dharmakāya*.

With this in mind, the expression *ātmapāramitā* denotes a supermundane understanding of selfhood in accord with 1) the career of the *bodhisattva* (a process of realizing one's Buddha-nature); and 2) the absolute perspective on Buddhahood expressed as the *dharmakāya*. The language of the *pāramitā*-s – superlative virtues or qualities associated always with the

[788] See Park (2012: 143).

bodhisattva and the pursuit of full awakening – associate this form of self with the Mahāyāna rather than the mistaken notions of worldly beings, or indeed those of the superseded *śrāvakayāna*. Hence the *ātmapāramitā* is removed from a sense of self wrongly attributed to anything in the world.

This corrective of the 'true' self fits also with rejection of any confusion of the *tathāgatagarbha* for a worldly self. We witness, as in the *MPMS*-group, a list of false notions of selfhood: advocates of which are not capable of understanding the *tathāgatagarbha* (along with those of distorted views, or who misunderstand emptiness). But the *ŚDS* is so far distinctive for *not* then explaining how the term self is nevertheless, with qualification, appropriate in regards to a *buddha-dhātu*. Though the account of the *tathāgatagarbha* as the basis of both transmigration and liberation leads us to infer something reminiscent of a lasting self, the authors of the *ŚDS* stopped short of affirming this themselves: indeed, they actively opposed it.

Much like what we are considering to be the early material of the *MPMS*, and to some extent the *MBhS* that seems to advance some of this content, the *ŚDS* finds reason to attribute selfhood to the Buddha (or here the *dharmakāya*) but not to the *buddha-dhātu*/*tathāgatagarbha* that is, in effect, a Buddha not yet manifested in the world. The authors of the *ŚDS* were likely aware of this development in the *MPMS* towards affirming a self in sentient beings rather than simply in the character of an awakened Buddha, which might explain its disapproval of considering the *tathāgatagarbha*, rather than simply the *dharmakāya*, as a kind of self. The 'perfect' qualities of the *dharmakāya*, including the perfection of self, are not to be confused with the

qualities of any entity within *saṃsāra*: it is as much a perfection (*pāramitā*) as the virtue of a *bodhisattva* similarly 'perfected' in the attainment of Buddhahood.

As such the *ŚDS*, representative of a later *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine to that of the *MPMS*-group, is clearly aware of that other tradition and, importantly, critical of it: most notably its account of the *buddha-dhātu* that risks confusion with extraneous notions of selfhood. Nevertheless, the *ŚDS* continues to affirm some value in the term: in a 'perfected' form, it serves as a quality of that which *has been* liberated. It is this feature of the *sūtra* which will be our concern in the next chapter, when considering the *RGV(V)* and its formalized account of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine.

Prior to this, we must address one last piece of *sūtra* literature relevant to our study, which like the *ŚDS* exhibits reservations regarding the form of this doctrine as it appears in the *MPMS*-group.

6.2 *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*

The *Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra* (*LAS*) is clearly both a successor to the *ŚDS* and also representative of a new period in the development of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine. It is likely the earliest text to equate the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *ālayavijñāna*: the substrate consciousness of the Yogācāra school.[789] As such it does not belong to what was earlier identified as the 'pure' *tathāgatagarbha* literature, which develops said doctrine without

[789] Takasaki (1966: 93) clarifies a key distinction here, in that the *ālayavijñāna* of the latter allows for *saṃkleśa*-s to originate in that substratum, whereas in the *tathāgatagarbha* tradition that is our concern they are always extraneous (*āgantuka*) to a mind that is intrinsically pure.

considering it an epithet for an aspect of any other system.[790] What is most significant for us, however, is that the *LAS* seems to respond to earlier *tathāgatagarbha* literature, and the issue of whether the Buddha revealed therein a form of Buddhist *ātmavāda*.

6.2.1 *The Text*

The text remains extant in Sanskrit, three Chinese translations (T.670-672), and two Tibetan translations (the first being e.g. D.107; Q.775); the second of which is a translation of Gunabhadra's Chinese version (T.670). We consider here the Sanskrit edition of Nanjio (1923): the relevant portion of which (concerning the *tathāgatagarbha*) does not significantly differ across extant versions. Western reading of the text has for many years been dominated by the work of D.T. Suzuki, and with that often seen through the lens of its reception by the Japanese Buddhist tradition.[791]

The *LAS* mentions not just the *ŚDS* (some ideas of which it summarizes at some length), but also the *MMS*, *MPMS* and *AMS* (though all as authorities on the subject of vegetarianism).[792] This proves that the authors

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[790] See e.g. Nanjio (1923: 222,6-8): *…mahāmate tathāgatagarbhaḥ ālayavijñānasaṃśabdito viśodhayitavyo viśeṣārthibhir bodhisattvair mahāsattvaiḥ* - 'Mahāmati, the *tathāgatagarbha* that is called *ālayavijñāna* should be purified by the *bodhisattva mahāsattva*-s who are desiring excellence.'

[791] Another significant study is that of Sutton (1947). Regarding the date of the text, see Takasaki (1982: 545-568).

[792] See Nanjio (1923: 222.19-223,13; 258,4-5). Takasaki (1974: 294) proposes that the order of texts presented here might represent a lineage perceived by the authors of the *LAS*, which supports the claim that the *MMS* is in some sense a doctrinal (if not chronological also) precursor to the *MPMS* and *AMS*.

of the *LAS* were aware of this *MPMS*-group, and we can safely assume had them in mind when it assessed teaching the *tathāgatagarbha* as a kind of self.

From the *ŚDS*, the *LAS* inherits the idea that the *tathāgatagarbha* is the basis for continual transmigration in *saṃsāra*, and for the eventual attainment of *nirvāṇa*. Importantly, this is once again said not to be understood by those who have not understood emptiness.[793] Despite this assertion, it is evident that the *LAS* sees the doctrine of the *tathāgatagarbha* primarily as a response to those outside of the *saṅgha* rather than the *bodhisattva* therein who has misunderstood emptiness: presumably holding that those within the *saddharma* are better taught with reference to the *ālayavijñāna* than the apparently 'self-like' *tathāgatagarbha*. Indeed the *LAS* associates the *tathāgatagarbha* with the cause of erroneous ideas held by the *tīrthya* (*tīrthika*): who mistakes its being a ground (*hetu*) for good or ill births for a cause (*kāraṇa*) in the sense of an agency, i.e. a lasting self.[794] This confusion is confronted head-on where the *bodhisattva* Mahāmati, the primary

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For more on the *LAS* and its position on vegetarianism, see Schmithausen (2005: 191-193).

[793] Nanjio (1926: 242,4-6): *tathāgatagarbhaḥ punar mahāmate saṃsarati nirvāṇasukhaduḥkhahetukaḥ / na ca bālapṛthagjanā avabudhyante śūnyatāvikṣiptamatayaḥ /* - 'Mahāmati, the *tathāgatagarbha* transmigrates, being the cause of *nirvāṇa*, happiness and suffering; this is not understood by foolish, common folk whose minds are agitated by [the idea of] emptiness.'

[794] Nanjio (1926: 220,l.9-13): *tathāgatagarbho mahāmate kuśalākuśalahetukaḥ sarvajanmagatikartā pravartate naṭavadgatisaṃkaṭa ātmātmīyavarjitas…na ca tīrthyā avabudhyante kāraṇābhiniveśābhiniviṣṭāḥ /* - 'Mahāmati, the *tathāgatagarbha* is the cause of all good and bad [actions], generating all kinds of [re-]birth, taking on many forms, like an actor, [but] lacking any self or what is of the self…not understanding [how this works], the *tīrthya* is fixed to attachment to a [single] cause' Notably this repeats the image of the *tathāgatagarbha* as being like a dancer (*naṭa*), found also in the *AMS* (see p.200,ft.544).

interlocutor in this *sūtra*, asks of the Buddha how this error relates to the correct understanding of the *tathāgatagarbha*.

6.2.2 Tathāgatagarbha *as an Expedient Teaching*

The *LAS* contains one significant passage concerning the *tathāgatagarbha*, very much preoccupied with its resemblance to what it refers to as the *ātmavāda* of the *anyatīrthika*: i.e. the self-oriented teachings of thinkers outside of the Buddhist fold.[795]

> *tathāgatagarbhaḥ punar bhagavatā sūtrāntapāṭhe 'nuvarṇitaḥ / sa ca kila tvayā prakṛtiprabhāsvaraviśuddhyā adiviśuddha eva varṇyate dvātriṃśallakṣaṇadharaḥ sarvasattvadehāntargato , mahārghamūlyaratnaṃ[796] malinavastupariveṣṭitam iva skandhadhātvāyatanavastuveṣṭito rāgadveṣamohābhūtaparikalpamalamalino nityo dhruvaḥ śivaḥ śāśvataś ca bhagavatā varṇitaḥ / tat katham ayaṃ bhagavaṃs tīrthakarātmavādatulyas tathāgatagarbhavādo na bhavati? tīrthakarā api bhagavan nityaḥ kartā nirguṇo vibhūr avyaya ity ātmavādopadeśaṃ kurvanti //*
>
> *LAS*, Nanjio (1923: 77,13-78,4).

[795] See chapter 8.2.
[796] Insertion here of *ṃ* reflects Nanjio's amendation, based on the Chinese and Tibetan versions of the text (1923: 77).

> In the text of the *sūtra*-s, the Lord has expounded the *tathāgatagarbha*: indeed you have explained this as being intrinsically pure due to the purity of it intrinsic luminosity; endowed with the thirty-two characteristics; concealed in the body of every being; concealed in the garment of the *skandha*-s, *dhātu*-s and *āyatana*-s, like a very valuable jewel wrapped in a dirty garment; soiled in the dirt of desire, aversion, ignorance and false imagination; permanent; stable; peaceful; eternal. Lord, how is this doctrine of the *tathāgatagarbha* not similar to the doctrine of a self of the *tīrthakara*-s [/*tīrthika*-s]? Lord, the *tīrthakara*-s produce the doctrine of a self as being permanent, an agent[797], without qualities, omnipresent, imperishable.

We recognize in the above familiar language describing the *tathāgatagarbha*: amongst which is a simile of a jewel in a dirty garment, reminiscent of an image found in the *TGS*.[798] The *tathāgatagarbha* is here said to be amidst the *skandha*-s, *dhātu*-s and *āyatana*-s, which is not a common claim in the *tathāgatagarbha* literature so far considered: generally eschewing talk of the *skandha*-s in preference of more vague designations pertaining to 'the body' of sentient beings.[799] Mahāmati asks how this

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[797] The Chinese forms of the *LAS* (T.670,489b2; T.671,524b24-25; T.672,599b13) all translate *kartṛ* as 作者, which may still have the sense of an 'agent' rather than creator. Seeing as the above seems to concern the self rather than any 'great' self, or deity, this is most likely the denial of any 'agent'.

[798] See chapter 2.3.

[799] Mention of the *dhātu*-s and *āyatana*-s – respectively the 'elements' of sensory perception and the sense bases – is also unusual for the *tathāgatagarbha* literature (though see pp.127-128). Their appearance here perhaps marks the interest of the *LAS*, a Yogācāra text, in the categories of

compares to the self of the *tīrthikāra* that is permanent, but also an active entity, lacking in qualities, 'omnipresent' and imperishable. Interestingly, this again seems to have in mind a notion of the self reminiscent of one found across the *upaniṣad*-s.[800]

So the authors of the *LAS* certainly perceived the same possibility for confusion regarding the *tathāgatagarbha* and the self of the *tīrthika* as identified by the *MPMS*, *AMS* and *ŚDS*. The Buddha clarifies to Mahāmati that the *tathāgatagarbha* should be understood in the sense of 'emptiness, the limit of reality, *nirvāṇa*, being unborn, without marks, without intention etc.'[801] Like the *ŚDS* before it, the *LAS* wishes to qualify the *tathāgatagarbha* by reconciling it with other Buddhist categories: including that of emptiness. What is most interesting, however, is the purpose for which the *LAS* holds the *tathāgatagarbha* to have been taught.

> *…tathāgatā arhantaḥ samyaksaṃbuddhā bālānāṃ*
>
> *nairātmyasaṃtrāsapadavivarjanārthaṃ nirvikalpanirābhāsagocaraṃ*
>
> *tathāgatagarbhamukhopadeśena deśayanti /*

---

consciousness and perception that do not appear to be of such interest to the authors of the *MPMS*-group.

[800] E.g. *ŚU* 6.11, Olivelle (1998: 430-431): 'The one God hidden in all beings, pervading the universe, the inner self of all beings (*sarvabhūtāntarātman*), the overseer of the work, dwelling in all beings, the witness, the avenger, alone, devoid of qualities (*nirguṇa*).'

[801] *LAS*, Nanjio (1923: 78,6-8): *śūnyatābhūtakoṭinirvāṇānutpādānimittāpraṇihitādyānāṃ mahāmate padārthānāṃ tathāgatagarbhopadeśaṃ kṛtvā*. This is most likely *bhūtakoṭi* in a different form than that found in the *ŚDS* (see p.277,ft.738). It is this passage drawn upon by Candrakīrti to align the *tathāgatagarbha* (as a provisional teaching: see p.309) with the categories of the Madhyamaka: see Kano (2008: 4,ft.14-16).

na ca atra mahāmate anāgatapratyutpannaiḥ bodhisattvair mahāsattvair ātmābhiniveśaḥ kartavyaḥ /

LAS, Nanjio (1923: 78,8-12).

The Tathāgata, *Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha*-s, by means of the entry [into the *dharma*] that is the *tathāgatagarbha*, teach the sphere of neither [false] appearance nor conceptualization, for the purpose of the removal of fear regarding lack of self among the ignorant.
Regarding this, Mahāmati, the *bodhisattva mahāsattva*-s of the present and future should not make any adherence to [a notion of] self.

This is definitely not the purpose of the *tathāgatagarbha* outlined by the *MPMS*: in which the primary concern is informing its audience of what properly exists, i.e. the *buddha-dhātu*. The *LAS* goes on to compare the Buddha to a potter producing different vessels by means of different tools. This is comparable to the Buddha using either the doctrines of *tathāgatagarbha*, or that of emptiness: 'by means of various terms, expressions and synonyms.'[802] This model of the Buddha's teaching suggests that either the doctrines of the *tathāgatagarbha* or emptiness are applicable for one audience or another, but that *both* are in the end expediencies determined by the needs of the listener.[803] The *LAS* considers its own account of the *ālayavijñāna-tathāgatagarbha* (that is the *nirvikalpanirābhāsagocara*

[802] Nanjio (1923: 78,17).
[803] For similar in the *MBhS*, see pp.245-246.

above) to be final (*nītārtha*), and is clearly concerned that some *bodhisattva*-s mistakenly understand the *tathāgatagarbha* to be something akin to a self.

We address the conclusion to the Buddha's response to Mahāmati, which opens up a dimension of the *tathāgatagarbha* that will come to be crucial for how we understand the notion of a true self in this literature.

> *evaṃ hi mahāmate tathāgatagarbhopadeśam ātmavādābhiniviṣṭānāṃ tīrthakarāṇām ākarṣaṇārthaṃ tathāgatagarbhopadeśena nirdiśanti / kathaṃ batābhūtātmavikalpadṛṣṭipatitāśayā vimokṣatrayagocarapatitāśayopetāḥ kṣipram anuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisaṃbudhyerann iti / etadarthaṃ mahāmate tathāgatā arhantaḥ samyaksaṃbuddhās tathāgatagarbhopadeśaṃ kurvanti / ata etan na bhavati tīrthakarātmavādatulyam / tasmāt tarhi mahāmate tīrthakaradṛṣṭivinivṛttyarthaṃ tathāgatanairātmyagarbhānusāriṇā ca te bhavitavyam //*
>
> *LAS* Nanjio (1923: 79,1-9).

> Mahāmati, the Tathāgatas teach the *tathāgatagarbha* for the purpose of attracting the *tīrthakara*-s, who are attached to the view of a self. Mahāmati, the Tathāgata, *Arhat*, *Samyaksaṃbuddha*-s teach the doctrine of the *tathāgatagarbha* so that the fools who have fallen into the false view of an unreal self, [and] those who have fallen into the range [of experience] of the triple [gates of] liberation, might quickly

awaken to the highest awakening: hence that [teaching] is not similar to the *tīrthakara*-s' view of a self.

Therefore, Mahāmati, for the purpose of defeating the view of the *tīrthakara*-s you should conform to the [teaching of] the embryo (*garbha*) of the Tathāgata that is without [any] self.

Interesting is the expression *tathāgatanairātmyagarbha*, which contains what the Tibetan translation certainly implies was a qualification of the term *tathāgatagarbha* (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po bdag med pa*).[804] The sense of this compound in the Sanskrit is presumably that the *tathāgatagarbha* is properly an 'absence a self': a concise expression of the line taken by the *LAS* in regards to this doctrine, and its ultimate reduction to that of *nairātmya*.[805]

The passage mentions those who are fixed upon the triple gates of liberation, i.e. the three gates of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), signlessness (*animitta*) and lack of intention (*apraṇihita*) which the audience would associate if not with the *prajñāpāramitā* literature, then certainly with 'negativistic' Buddhist expressions that express the practice of the *bodhisattva* as one of radical negation, rather than reverence for the *tathāgatagarbha*.[806] However this

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[804] See the Tibetan translation of the *LAS*: e.g. D.108,86b5; Q.775,95a5-6.
[805] All of the above must be considered with one caveat: that early in its text the *LAS* still equates the *tathāgatagarbha* with 'the ground of awakening; the innermost self' (*buddhabhūmy-adhyātma*). However such an expression is attributed to the King of Laṅka (the Buddha's audience in the *sūtra*), and could still be understood as a provisional expression of the meaning of the *tathāgatagarbha*, as employed by one who has only just realized the truth of the *dharma*. See Nanjio (1923:10,1).
[806] These three as a set of complementary *samādhi*-s featured prominently in non-Mahāyāna literature also (e.g. *DN*.III.219,22), but seem to become a focus of the practice of the *bodhisattva* in early Mahāyāna texts such as the

appears little more than a footnote in a passage otherwise concerned with the *tathāgatagarbha* as a doctrine taught precisely with the *tīrthika* (or at least beings attached to a view of selfhood) in mind: i.e. as an expression which is not final, and employed only with a view to later developing in those beings a correct understanding of the *saddharma* (presumably in accord with Yogācāra categories).

6.3 ***Conclusions***

We have here addressed two texts that clearly depart from the *MPMS*-group and their affirmation of the *buddha-dhātu* as a true self. According to the *ŚDS*, no such designation can be used regarding sentient beings: rather there is the presence of the latent *dharmakāya* (deemed *tathāgatagarbha*), which once manifested can be said to exhibit the perfection of self. Perceived similarities between a worldly self and the *tathāgatagarbha*, the basis for continuing desire for awakening, are superficial and display a failure to properly comprehend the *tathāgatagarbha*.

For the *LAS*, the *tathāgatagarbha* still does not resemble a kind of worldly self, and insofar as it is taught to be anything befitting that name can only ever be an expedient teaching, for the purpose of educating those (i.e. *tīrthika*-s) who are attached to the language of the *ātmavādin*-s.[807] This account is in stark contrast to some passages of the *MPMS*-group, which argue that the *tathāgatagarbha* is not for the purposes of educating those who

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Kāśyapa-Parivarta: see Vorobova-Desyatovskaya (2002: 94.4-95.1; 125.2-3). For more, see Lamotte (1944: 321-322,ft.2).

[807] See Sutton (1990: 76-78).

hold to a permanent self, but rather just those who have departed from any notion of the Buddha's permanence.[808] Their cultivation of emptiness has led them to a annihilationist position in which there exists nothing that could attain awakening: a position counteracted by affirmation of the *tathāgatagarbha* (that for the *LAS* is better understood as the *ālayavijñāna*).

It is therefore likely that the *LAS* does not authentically represent the interests of the authors of the *MPMS*-group, ignoring as it does responses made by those texts to opponents *within* the *saṅgha* (e.g. those who appear to have misunderstood the *prajñāpāramitā* literature). Perhaps this is because for the *LAS* this had already been superseded by what it considers its own 'third turning' of the *dharma* wheel: employing Yogācāra categories that constitute a different interpretation of *prajñāpāramitā*.[809] This understanding of the Yogācāra, like that of the *tathāgatagarbha*, sees itself as a response and clarification of this '*śūnyatāvāda'* literature: the difference being that the Yogācāra response seems to have succeeded in generating a greater wealth of commentary and debate in India than did the *tathāgatagarbha*.

What is clear is that the *LAS* does not belong to the subcategory of the *MPMS*-group, nor does it belong in the same lineage that clearly connects the *TGS*, *ŚDS*, *AAN* and *RGV(V)* as a coherent development of the *tathāgatagarbha*/*dharmakāya* equation. Hence, the perspective of the *LAS* might well be that of some authors extraneous to these two interrelated lines. Its authors clearly respond to the apparent *ātmavāda* leaning of texts such as

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[808] Epitomized by the account of the four distortions: see chapter 3.3.
[809] This model of three 'turnings' to the *dharma* wheel appearing, most famously, in the *Saṃdhinirmocana-Sūtra*: see T.676,697a23-697b9.

the *MPMS*, perhaps with a view to clarifying their own understanding of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine for their own audience.

This position adopted by the *LAS*, interpreting such *tathāgatagarbha* expressions as a means to convert *tīrthika*-s, was picked up by other Buddhist authors: notably the C7th Mādhyamika Candrakīrti in his *Mūlamadhyamakāvatāra-Bhāṣya*, who quotes the above dialogue with Mahāmati to demonstrate that the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine should be considered only provisional in meaning (*neyārtha*).[810] A similar reference to the *LAS* was made by Bhāviveka, which we shall consider in the next chapter.

We cannot disregard the account of the *LAS*: indeed it is certainly the case that audiences of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature so far addressed were perceived by our authors as capable of confusing the idea of a lasting *buddha-dhātu* with a self as taught by *tīrthika*-s. Criticism of a doctrine aimed at the *tīrthika* may be a half-truth: a response by Yogācāra authors to a doctrine they perceived to exhibit dangerous proximity to non-Buddhist *ātmavādin* systems. However, evidence from within the *MPMS*-group suggested that any perceived relationship to the *tīrthika* is not so straightforward: while the 'true self' of the *tathāgatagarbha* certainly bears a resemblance to expressions of the extraneous *ātmavāda*, the *MPMS*-group authors considered any similarities to be at the expense of the *tīrthika*'s own, deficient understanding.

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[810] Notably, Candrakīrti's position is that all *vijñānavāda* teachig (*rnam par shes pa smra ba*), including the *tathāgatagarbha*, is demonstrated to be provisional (*drang don*: Skt. *neyārtha*); commenting on *Madhyamakavatāra* 4.95: see La Vallée Poussin (1912: 198,13-15). Regarding Candrakīrti in general, see Seyfort Ruegg (1981: 71).

We must suspend this thought, and turn to a text that marks the culmination of 'pure' *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine: the one known *śāstric* elaboration of this tradition to have been composed in India.

7. Śāstric Treatments of the *Tathāgatagarbha* as Self

The final sources that require our attention in this tradition differ from all of those above by virtue of being commentarial, i.e. śāstric, works that attempt to make sense of prior *sūtra* material. First we consider the most studied of such texts, which holds an important place in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and, we infer, must (though apparently not always) have been widely read in India: the *Ratnagotravibhāga-Śāstra* (*RGV*), accompanied by its commentary (*vyākhyā*: *RGVV*).[811]

7.1 *The Ratnagotravibhāga-Śāstra(-Vyākhyā)*

7.1.1 *The Text*

The *RGV(V)* constitutes something of a compendium of *tathāgatagarbha*-oriented material, and much other Mahāyāna thought besides. The text has received much attention: most notably in Takasaki's (1966) translation of Johnston's (1950) edition of the Sanskrit text (compared throughout with extant translations in Tibetan and Chinese), and Seyfort Ruegg's (1969) major study of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine that focuses on the *RGV(V)* as embodying its culmination in the Indian Buddhist tradition.[812]

As well as being available in Sanskrit (*RGV(V)*^{S}), the text exists in both Tibetan and Chinese translation. In the Tibetan *bstan 'gyur* we have a version

[811] A recent treatment of the *RGVV*'s attention in India, and its transmission into Tibet, is found in Kano (2008: 22-88).
[812] Johnston (1950); Takasaki (1966); Seyfort Ruegg (1969): all of which preceded by Obermiller (1931), a translation of the Tibetan text.

of the *RGV* by itself (D.4024; Q.5525; N.*tsa*,49a-69b; gS.3528) and one in which it is accompanied by its commentary (*RGV(V)*^{T}: D.4025; Q.5526; N.*tsa*,69b-129a; gS.3529), both of which translated by Blo ldan zhes rab, with the *paṇḍita*-s Ratnavajra and Sajjana, in the late eleventh century. The Chinese translation of the text (*RGV(V)*^{C}: T.1611: 究竟一乘寶性論) is meanwhile attributed to Ratnamati, produced in 511CE, while a translation attributed to Bodhiruci is now lost to us.[813]

Authorship of the original text remains debatable. Tibetan tradition considers the *RGV* to be one of the five treatises attributed to Maitreya-nātha, and the commentary to be that of his disciple Asaṅga.[814] A Khotanese Saka fragment, dated to the late C8th, attributes all of the *RGV* (i.e. minus prose commentary) to Maitreya: an attribution reflected in works by Indian authors after the eleventh century also.[815] Chinese tradition, however, relies on the claim of the Huayan patriarch Fazang (C7-8th) that it was the *bodhisattva* Jian hui (堅慧) – which might reflect Sanskrit *Sāramati – who composed the text.[816] The implication is that prior to attribution of the text to Maitreya in India, earlier Chinese scholars had recognized the author as Sāramati, whose distinction from the Yogācāra author Sthiramati (with whom he has sometimes been equated) has most recently been treated by Silk.[817]

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[813] See Takasaki (1966: 7-8).
[814] See Takasaki (1966: 6-9); Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 46-55).
[815] Bailey & Johnston (1935: 87), Takasaki (1966: 7); also Kano (2008: 19). For more on these fragments, see Bailey (1963: 237-242).
[816] A thorough record of attributions of the text to one author or another can be found in Kano (2008: 21).
[817] Silk (forthcoming: 149-158).

The *RGV* is composed of root verses (designated in Takasaki's treatment of the text as *kārikā* verses), commentarial verses of presumably later origin, and a prose commentary (the *RGVV*): the first of which are discernable through reference to the shorter, Chinese verse-only form of the text (*RGV*^{C}: T.1611,813a8-820c20). Differences between the Chinese *kārikā* text and the later Tibetan versions suggest that at least two authors were responsible for the *RGVV* as a whole, and perhaps more if we follow Schmithausen's assessment that the content of the commentarial verses and prose are unlikely to have had the same author.[818] Discernment of strata in the text is further complicated by the addition of Chinese-only verses at the beginning and end of the verse-only text in *RGVV*^{C}: hence all that can be said with certainty is that verses omitted from this version cannot belong to the earliest material of the text. [819]

It is not so important for this study that the very earliest content of the *śāstra* be identified: however the text is stratified (and in contrast to the *MPMS*), the *RGV(V)* presents a coherent account of how it understands the *tathāgatagarbha qua* selfhood.[820] Our focus is rather how the *RGV(V)*, as a set of verses and complementary prose, makes sense of *tathāgatagarbha* material inherited from the authors of *sūtra* material that we have discussed above, and how this contributes to its own, original position.

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[818] Schmithausen (1971: 127-130). For more on different modern accounts of the text's authorship, see Kano (2008: 20-22).
[819] Takasaki (1966: 11).
[820] Critique of Takasaki's stratification of the text can be found in Schmithausen (1971: 123-130) and Seyfort Ruegg (1976: 349-350; 356).

Other, non-*tathāgatagarbha* influences upon the *RGV(V)* should be noted. The most important of these is in all likelihood the *Tathāgatotpattisaṃbhavanirdeśa-Sūtra* (e.g. T.279; T.291), which circulated both independently and as a constituent chapter of the compendious *Avataṃsaka-Sūtra* (e.g. T.278).[821] The significant import of this text is the presence in all beings of the *buddhajñāna*, which permeates all beings in a manner very much reminiscent of the *tathāgatagarbha*.[822] Other significant contributors are texts belonging to *the Mahāsaṃnipāta-Sūtra* collection (T.397).[823] All of these focus on the purification of the intrinsically luminous mind (*cittaprakṛti*) by removal of accidental afflictions (*āgantukakleśa*).[824] This

[821] For a passage reminiscent of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, see e.g. T.291, 607c21-608a5. Notably the form this passage takes in the complete *Avataṃsaka-Sūtra* (T.278, a translation of a relevant passage is provided by Gomez, (1995)) is more reminiscent of *tathāgatagarbha* thought.

[822] The expression 如来蔵 appears once in T.291, in a manner that adds nothing to our understanding of the concept, and may well reflect a later addition to the text (T.291,605c12). While the *Avataṃsaka-Sūtra* (or parts thereof) may well have played a part in the development of the *RGV(V)*, I am not convinced that any part of this text influenced the other *sūtra*-s under discussion in this study. Where *TGS* cites the *buddhajñāna* to be present in beings, this appears not to be the permeating *jñāna* which seems to define awakening in the *Tathāgatotpattisaṃbhavanirdeśa-Sūtra*, but rather one among many qualities that belong to a Buddha as a being possessing superlative qualities. See Zimmermann (2002: 54), who holds this to be in the sense of an essential quality of latent Buddhahood rather than a faculty of his that pervades all phenomena. For more on this literature, see Takasaki (1974: 507-602). For more on the *Avatamsaka* literature, see articles in Hamar (2007).

[823] Namely, the *sūtra*-s called *Sagaramatiparipṛcchā*; *Ratnadārikāparipṛcchā*; *Ratnacūḍaparipṛcchā*; *Gaganagañjāparipṛcchā*, and *Akṣayamatiparipṛcchā*. See Takasaki (1966: 34-35); or, more thoroughly, Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 417-424).

[824] See pp.34-35.

account of the pure mind was perhaps also an influence upon the *ŚDS*: similarly oriented to a meta-psychological account of the *tathāgatagarbha*.[825]

Furthermore, the *RGV(V)* is not exclusively concerned with the *tathāgatagarbha*. As made clear in its opening verses, the text has as its focus seven *vajrapada*-s that delineate its content: four of which (*dhātu*; *bodhi*; (*buddha*-)*guṇa*; (*buddha*)-*karma*) are aspects of the *gotra* that produce the three jewels (*ratna*) of the text's title.[826] Another sense of *gotra*, central to the text, is the lineage for awakening (belonging to which are, by definition, the *bodhisattva*-s) and – especially in the aspects of the *tathāgatagarbha* – the germ, or perhaps better 'gene' for awakening possessed by all beings.[827] The greatest portion of the text is given over to explaining this *gotra* in terms of the

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[825] Takasaki (1975: 673-742). Another issue is the adoption of Yogācāra terminology by the *RGV*, possibly from the *MSA*, or plausibly other Yogācāra sources also, which definitely constitutes later material in the construction of the text: see Schmithausen (1971: 124-126).

[826] Here the term *vajrapada* clearly designates the contents of the text: see Pagel (2007: 90-96).

[827] Seyfort Ruegg (1976: 344-348) recognizes the distinction between the *gotra* of the text's title (part of a mineral metaphor, aptly relating to the three jewels), and that with a biological sense, identifiable with the *tathāgatagarbha*, later in the text. This latter sense of *gotra* can refer to discrete lineages/spiritual genes, as found in texts such as the *MSA*, *Mādhyantavibhāgabhāṣya* and literature surrounding the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*: all of which are rooted firmly in the Yogācāra tradition. This can be seen to be in opposition to the *ekayāna* paradigm reflected in the 'pure' *tathāgatagarbha* literature, including the *RGV(V)*, in which the universal *gotra* is the *tathāgatagarbha*. See Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 73-78; 123f; 177f); (1976: 341); also Schmithausen (2009: 107-109).
The *RGV(V)* does not mention the *ekayāna* itself (though mentioning the *SPS*: *RGV* 2.58, Johnston (1950: 88,8): favouring instead to discuss the ubiquity of the (*buddha*-)*gotra* (e.g. *RGV* v.1.28). Perhaps this reflects its character as a śātric work wishing to unpack a tenet of *sūtra*-s such as the *SPS* and *ŚDS* using different vocabulary. Nevertheless its content (including reference to, but clearly not condemnation of, the *icchantika*-s), inclined towards the non-dual nature of beings and the qualities of a Buddha, situates this text clearly in the *ekayāna* tradition.

tathāgatagarbha, in which the latter is said to explain the former by reference to five of the nine examples used in the *TGS*.

> *svabhāvo dharmakāyo 'sya tathatā gotram ity api /*
> *tribhirekena sa jñeyaḥ pañcabhiś ca nidarśanaiḥ //*
> *RGV* 144, Johnston (1950: 69,19-20).

> The nature [of the *tathāgatagarbha*] is 1) *dharmakāya*, 2) reality and 3) the gene, is known by three, one and five examples [respectively].[828]

As Seyfort Ruegg writes, the *gotra* and (*tathāgata-*)*garbha* are not absolutely interchangeable, though certainly both possess the dual senses of 'locus/content' (as lineage/germ; womb/embryo respectively) that are employed throughout the text.[829] The central position of the *RGV(V)* is that all beings possess(/belong to) the *gotra* of the Tathāgata, by virtue of the *tathāgatagarbha*, the nature of which is reality itself (*tathatā*; *dharmadhātu*). This equation, we shall see, at once provides an account of a distinctive '*tathāgatagarbha* metaphysics' introduced (but not unpacked) by the *ŚDS* and *AAN*, and marries the positive expressions for reality found in the sources we have addressed with more abstract expressions drawn from the *prajñāpāramitā* literature.

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[828] This is unpacked in terms of the nine similes of the *TGS*: i.e. that the examples of the Buddha image, honey and kernel explain the *dharmakāya*; that of the gold explains *tathatā*; and those of the treasure, tree, icon, *cakravartin* embryo and statue explain the *gotra*. See *RGVV* 1.144, Johnston (1950: 69,21-70,1).
[829] Seyfort Ruegg (1976: 341-363).

Among its many influences, it is still those of the *tathāgatagarbha* texts – namely the *ŚDS*, *TGS* and *AAN* – that are most visible in the *RGV(V)*.[830] The first of these constitutes the doctrinal backbone of the *RGV(V)*, as we shall address below. The second provides the nine similes that Zimmermann identifies as being related to those found in *TGS*[2].[831] The *AAN*, which we addressed in the context of the *MBhS*, provides further material in support of the *tathāgatagarbha*/*dharmakāya* equation at the centre of both the *ŚDS* and *RGV(V)*.[832] The text also features one quotation from the *MPMS*, which is conspicuous by virtue of the absence of any other material clearly from the *buddha-dhātu* tradition of the *MPMS*-group.

7.1.2 *The Distortions of the* MPMS

The *RGV(V)* does not provide any warning that the *tathāgatagarbha* can be confused for a kind of self: as we shall see its position is that the *tathāgatagarbha* is precisely the absence of any self (affirmed also, though in a different manner, by the *LAS*).[833] The *RGV(V)* for the most part ignores the *MPMS*-group that is responsible for using this designation, but was clearly

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[830] Takasaki (1966: 32-33, 36-39).
[831] See Zimmerman (2002: 22-23); Johnston (1950: 59,9-67,3). Schmithausen (1971: 123-130) argues for these being early material within the structure of the text.
[832] The distinction is that the common element between these two is for the *AAN* the *sattva-dhātu* or 'nature/expanse of beings' that is at once accompanied by afflictions yet intrinsically pure. For the *RGV(V)*, focus is on this common nature expressed as *tathatā*: that is a reality characterized by emptiness, which is the nature of sentient beings properly understood, or 'purified', when manifested as the *dharmakāya*. Silk (forthcoming: 113) suggests that the category *tathatā* may well be present in the *AAN* (e.g. T.668,467b21: 皆眞實如不異不差), though this does not seem conclusive.
[833] See chapter 6.2.2.

aware of at least some material of the *MPMS*. This raises questions about the relationship between the authors of this, the one Indian śāstric exposition of the *tathāgatagarbha*, and those of the *MPMS* who were so influential for the authors of the *AMS* and *MBhS*; and very plausibly raised concerns for those of the *ŚDS* and *LAS*, who clearly disapproved of a perceived proximity to non-Buddhist *ātmavāda* discourse.

As addressed in the last chapter, it is likely that the *ŚDS* inherits several themes from the *MPMS*: e.g. the 'non-emptiness' of the Buddha; four *viparyāsa*-s; and distinction of the *tathāgatagarbha* from false notions of selfhood.[834] The *ŚDS* similarly uses the framework of the eight *viparyāsa*-s to describe the *dharmakāya* as the *tathāgatagarbha* cleared of afflictions: reformulating the self of the Buddha into the 'perfection of self' exhibited by the *dharmakāya*. The *RGV(V)* follows this movement by the *ŚDS*, but in outlining the *viparyāsa*-s returns to their usage in the *MPMS* as, in all likelihood, an earlier source of this eight-fold form.[835]

Here the *RGVV* corrects the perspective of those 'attached to distortion' (*viparyāsābhirata*): i.e. possessing a distorted view of, e.g. non-self in regards to what is properly self, as outlined in both the *MPMS* and *ŚDS*.[836] The text states that this concerns both the *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s due to their being 'attached to the path opposite to attainment of the *dharmakāya'* (*dharmakāyaprāptividhuramārgābhiratatva*).[837] This may not have in mind specifically those who are confused by the notion of emptiness,

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[834] See chapter 6.1.1.
[835] See chapter 3.3.
[836] *RGVV* 153, Johnston (1950: 74,19).
[837] *RGVV* 153, Johnston (1950: 74,18).

as witnessed in the *MPMS*: rather those not yet entered into the Mahāyāna who have yet to encounter the *tathāgatagarbha* that is its central teaching.[838] The significance of this distinction between *bodhisattva*-s and those not yet in the Mahāyāna will be returned to below.[839]

The quotation from the *MPMS* is the earlier mentioned parable of the divers: concerning bathers seeking to rescue a precious *vaiḍūrya* stone that has been dropped in water.[840] Many of the divers pick up worthless debris from the bed of the pool, but one skilled individual rescues the radiant stone.

> *evam eva bhikṣavo yuṣmābhiḥ sarvam anityaṃ sarvaṃ duḥkhaṃ sarvam anātmakaṃ sarvam aśubham iti sarvagrahaṇena bhāvitabhāvitaṃ bahulīkṛtabahulīkṛtaṃ dharmatattvam ajānadbhis tat sarvaṃ ghaṭitaṃ nirarthakam /*
> *tasmād bhikṣavo vāpīśarkarakaṭhalyavyavasthitā iva mā bhūta /*
> *upāyakuśalā yūyaṃ bhavata /*
> *yad yad bhikṣavo yuṣmābhiḥ sarvam anityaṃ sarvaṃ duḥkhaṃ sarvam anātmakaṃ sarvam aśubham iti sarvagrahaṇena bhāvitabhāvitaṃ bahulīkṛtabahulīkṛtaṃ tatra tatra eva nityasukhaśubhātmakāni santi iti vistareṇa paramadharmatattvavyavasthānam ārabhya viparyāsābhibhūtanirdeśo yathāsūtram anugantavyaḥ /*
>
> *RGVV* 1.153, Johnston (1950: 75,6-12).

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[838] See p.72,ft.177.
[839] See p.332.
[840] See chapter 3.3.

> Like this, monks, you who are ignorant cultivate repeatedly and increasingly, with full acceptance, the truth of *dharma*-s, that is that all is impermanent, suffering, without self and impure: all of that which you have produced is worthless.
> Therefore, monks, do not be like those fixed upon the pebbles and gravel in the pond, but be skilled in means.
> Monks, whatever you cultivate repeatedly and increasingly, with full acceptance, that is that all is impermanent, suffering, without self and impure; regarding that, there is [still] permanence, bliss, purity and selfhood: to be understood in full, according to the *sūtra*, the real teaching of distortions that concerns establishment of the reality of supreme *dharma*-s.

The above explanation is important for how the authors of the *RGV(V)* understand the content of the *MPMS* in regards to the *viparyāsa*-s: the only material of that text, and its most closely related works, which they chose to quote. Clearly the *RGV(V)* also knew the account of the *viparyāsa*-s and resultant *pāramitā*-s from the *ŚDS*, which are employed to explain how what is supermundane (the *dharmakāya*) differs to all that is mundane (hence covered by the Buddha's earlier proclamations that all things are *anitya*, *anātman* etc).[841] The object in the above is called the reality of supreme

[841] For these in the *ŚDS*, see pp.288-290.

qualities (*paramadharmatattva*), in which *dharma* surely refers to what can be attributed to the *dharmakāya* (in the *MPMS*, the 'qualities of liberation').[842]

In its original context this parable belongs to what Shimoda considers the earlier stratum of the *MPMS*, and hence concerns the correct understanding of liberation rather than the *buddha-dhātu*. In *MPMS*^{C1} the object is the true *dharma*(-s) (眞實法), which could well also refer to *dharma*-s as qualities of the Buddha, and indeed it is this more concise version of the parable that bears the closest resemblance to that found in *RGV(V)*^{S}.[843] Hence what was most likely received by the authors of the *RGV(V)* (whether in the midst of a text concerned also with the *buddha-dhātu* or not) was an example that affirmed the real qualities of the Buddha having attained awakening, which – in the language favoured by the *ŚDS* and *RGV(V)* – describes the *dharmakāya*.

The authors of the *RGV(V)* bypass the four qualities being attributed to the *buddha-dhātu* exhibited by the later content of the *MPMS*.[844] Rather these authors (like those of the *ŚDS*) consider this appropriate only in regards to what is manifestly awakened, i.e. the *dharmakāya*, which appears accordingly to be a 'body of qualities'. However whereas the *ŚDS* leaves these ('perfected') qualities without further elaboration, the *RGV(V)* unpacks them in

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[842] See p.80.

[843] *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,862b21. In *RGVV*^{C} this passage matches the text as it appears in *MPMS*^{C2}: hence the object is here 'what is true' (眞實): see T.1611,839c29; T.374,378a11-a12.
RGV(V)^{T} makes the object *chos kyi de kho na nyid*, omitting any form of *parama* which identifies these as 'supreme *dharma*-s'. The line of the *RGV(V)* cannot surely be that all *dharma*-s (i.e. phenomena) exhibit the four supreme qualities which are proper to the *dharmakāya*. See e.g. *RGVV*^{T}: e.g. D.4025,113b3; Q.5526,118a3.

[844] See pp.84-87.

regards to a correct understanding of the *dharmakāya*: constituting the final development across this literature of the eight *viparyāsa*-s found in the *MPMS*.[845]

Before turning away again from the *MPMS*-group, we note that the *RGV* indeed employs the expression *buddha-dhātu*: considering it one of its seven *vajrapada*, and herein clearly denoting the *tathāgatagarbha*.[846] Though the term *tathāgatagarbha* is far more frequently used, *buddha-dhātu* is employed by the text to refer to 1) the cause of aversion to suffering and for the desire for *nirvāṇa* and 2) that which relieves the 'five defects' that occupy the minds of sentient beings.[847] Poignantly, it is also used when the *RGV(V)* explains the *tathāgatagarbha* as a 'higher' or 'subsequent' teaching to that of the *prajñāpāramitā*: described as remedial to defects found in audiences of that literature.

śūnyaṃ sarvaṃ sarvathā tatra tatra jñeyaṃ
meghasvapnamāyākṛtābham /
ity uktvaivaṃ buddhadhātuḥ punaḥ kiṃ sattve sattve 'stīti buddhair ihoktam //
līnaṃ cittaṃ hīnasattveṣv avajñā abhūtagrāho bhūtadharmāpavādaḥ /
ātmasnehaś cādhikaḥ pañca doṣā yeṣāṃ teṣāṃ tat prahāṇārtham uktam /

RGV 1.156-157, Johnston (1950: 77,12-19)

[845] These are however inherited by non-Indian texts like the *Buddhanature-Śāstra*, considered at length by King (1991).
[846] *RGV* 1.1; 5.1, Johnston (1950: 69,2; 183,3).
[847] *RGV* 1.40; 1.156-157; Johnston (1950: 103,18; 138,12-15).

> Throughout [the *sūtra*-s] it has been said that all things everywhere are to be known as like clouds, dreams, illusions; why then have the Buddhas said here that there exists in all sentient beings the nature of a Buddha?
> The depressed mind; contempt for inferior beings; attachment to what is unreal; criticizing the real *dharma*; and affection for one's self also are [together] five defects: for the abandoning of those [the *buddha-dhātu*] has been taught.

The term *buddha-dhātu* is here cited with particular functions in mind. It comes with none of the *ātmavādin* associations with which it appears in the *MPMS*-group, but it is still very possible that the *RGV(V)* has these texts in mind. This particular expression has been employed to counteract negative repercussions of *śūnyatāvāda* teaching: a common theme in the *MPMS*-group, which is perhaps how the authors of the *RGV(V)* – more at home with the position of the *ŚDS*, and a concern with emptiness-teaching as a complement to this doctrine – would couch the tone of these texts and their account of a permanent nature in beings.[848]

As such the *RGV(V)*, like the *ŚDS* before it, avoids use of the *buddha-dhātu* angle on the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, despite clearly being aware of its existence in the *MPMS*, and here seems to recognize the language of the

[848] The ill-fate of those attached to emptiness considered most critically in the *MBhS*: see chapter 5.7.

latter as concerned with remedying misconceptions about emptiness.[849] Its primary concern, however, remains the *tathāgatagarbha/dharmakāya* equation drawn from the *ŚDS* and *AAN*.

7.1.3 *Elaboration of the* Dharmakāya

The *RGV(V)* does not dwell on the *viparyāsa*-s as erroneous perspectives: rather it celebrates what it calls the fourfold *guṇapāramitā*: 'perfect qualities', exhibited by the *dharmakāya*. These are detailed in the section of the text pertaining to the result (*phala*) and function (*karman*) of the *gotra*.[850] Herein we find the text's discussion both of the *viparyāsa*-s, and of what it deems the *guṇapāramitā*: positive expressions that are the responses to these distortions. The section opens with *RGV* 1.35: *kārikā* verse 7 (K7).

> *śubhātmasukhanityatvaguṇapāramitā phalam /*
>
> *duḥkhanirvicchamaprāpticchandapranidhikarmakaḥ //.*
>
> *RGV* 1.35, Johnston (1950: 30,4-5).

> [The *tathāgatagarbha*] has the results that are the perfection of purity, self, bliss, and permanence.

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[849] Of course this attitude is found also in the *ŚDS*, though I find it more likely that the use of the term *buddha-dhātu* - absent from the *ŚDS* – constitutes some nod in the direction of the *MPMS*-group.

[850] Johnston (1950: 30,3); also Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 364-370); Takasaki (1966: 207-224).

> It has the functions that are the appetite and aspiration for the riddance of suffering and the attainment of peace.[851]

These *guṇapāramitā* are the framework within which the *RGV(V)* orders the four *pāramitā* inherited from the *ŚDS*. Despite this being the introduction to the text's discussion of the *guṇapāramitā*, we turn to what precedes these lines to identify four causes that lead to these 'results'. The section on the analysis of the *gotra* begins with *RGV* 1.30, which considers first the undefiled nature of the *tathāgatagarbha*, and then introduces four causes that bring about its realization.

> *sadā prakṛtyasaṃkliṣṭaḥ śuddharatnāmvarāmbuvat /*
> *dharmādhimuktyadhiprajñāsamādhikaruṇānvayaḥ //*
>
> *RGV* 1.30, Johnston (1950: 26,20-21)

> Always [the *tathāgatagarbha*] is naturally undefiled, like a pure jewel, the sky, or water.
> It follows from inclination towards the *dharma*, higher insight, concentration, and compassion.[852]

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[851] *RGV*^{C} alone qualifies this peace (*śama*, Tib. *shi*) as *nirvāṇa* (涅槃); T.1611,829b09-b10.

[852] For more on nuances of *adhmukti* see Vetter (1993: 72,ft.93). For the role of *adhimukti* in the *SPS*, as an inclination of the mind towards one goal or another, see Kubo (2002: 27-30). Such an attitude, i.e. that the *bodhisattva* is one with their mind inclined towards awakening in spite of its remoteness or other conditions, could be seen to prefigure the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine.

The first half of the verse testifies to the undefiled character of the *tathāgatagarbha*, i.e. the absence of any afflictions in its nature.[853] The second half is unpacked in *RGV* 1.32, which presents for the commentary a means of categorizing beings, particular obstacles between them and awakening, and the results of various practices in terms of attaining the *guṇapāramitā*.

caturdhāvaraṇaṃ dharmapratibho 'py ātmadarśanam /
saṃsāraduḥkhabhīrūtvaṃ sattvārthaṃ nirapekṣatā //
icchantikānāṃ tīrthyānāṃ śrāvakāṇāṃ svayaṃbhuvām /
adhimuktyātayo dharmāś catvāraḥ śuddhihetavaḥ //

RGV 1.32-33, Johnston (1950: 27,13-16)

> Obstruction [to awakening] is fourfold: 1) hostility towards the *dharma*; 2) perception of a self; 3) fear of suffering in *saṃsāra*; and 4) indifference to beings.
>
> These are the four causes of purification, beginning with faith in the [true] *dharma*, which are of the 1) *icchantika*-s, 2) *tīrthya*-s, 3) *śrāvaka*-s, and 4) *pratyekabuddha*-s [respectively].

The *RGVV* then categorizes beings both in and outside of the Buddhist

[853] The *RGV(V)* takes time to clarify the meaning of these similes. Of note [bearing in mind the similes referenced above], the comparison to the jewel is in regards to the power (*prabhāva*; Tib. *mthu*) of the *tathāgatagarbha*, which according to *RGV(V)* 1.31 refers to its being the *dharmakāya*, while that with the sky refers to the identity (*ananyathā*) of the *tathāgatagarbha* to all things, being *tathatā*. See Johnston (1950: 27); Takasaki (1966: 200-201).

fold, expanding upon the four categories of beings above.[854] These are 1) those with desire for existence (*bhavābhilāṣin*); 2) those with desire for extinction (*vibhavābhilāṣin*); and 3) those with desire for neither (*tadubhayānabhilāṣin*). The first of these, interesting bearing in mind the universalist tone of the *RGV*(*V*) otherwise, includes 1a) those of the lineage not for final *nirvāṇa* (*aparinirvāṇagotraka*); who desire *saṃsāra* and not *nirvāṇa* (*saṃsāram eva śanti na nirvāṇaṃ*).[855] There are then 1b) those inside the *dharma* (*ihadhārmika*) who have fallen into the desire for *saṃsāra* over *nirvāṇa*, some of whom are hostile to the Mahāyāna. These, in an unforgiving quotation from the *AAN* (therein identified as *icchantika*-s), are not true disciples of the Buddha.

> *na ahaṃ teṣāṃ śāstā na te mama śrāvakāḥ / tān ahaṃ śāriputra tamasas tamo 'ntaram andhakārān mahāndhakāragāminas tamobhūyiṣṭhā iti vadāmi /*
>
> *RGVV* 1.33, Johnston (1950: 28,2-4)

> I am not their teacher, they are not my disciples. Śāriputra, I say that [they] go from gloom into gloom, from darkness into great[er] darkness.[856]

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[854] Johnston (1950: 27-29).

[855] Contra Takasaki (1966: 202), I do not believe that 1a) describes the *icchantika*: these beings instead are 'not part of the family of *nirvāṇa*' (*aparinirvāṇagotraka*), by virtue of not having yet considered liberation. These are then, perhaps, the *pṛthagjana*-s who have not yet cultivated a desire for *nirvāṇa* at all. See also Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 285).

In the *AAN*, these are certainly beings within the *saṅgha* possessing wrong views.[857] In accord with the rest of the *RGV(V)* (and indeed the *MPMS*), these *icchantika*-s are certainly within the Buddhist fold, but opposed to the *tathāgatagarbha* that herein is presented as the highest expression of the *saddharma*.[858]

We are then given a list of those seeking extinction, divided into 2a) those fallen into a way without means of attaining (*anupāyapatita*), and 2b) those who 'have method' (*upāyapatita*). Of these the former are other teachers extraneous to the *dharma* (*itobāhya anyatīrthya*) and worthy of our attention, given their place in our discussion of a Buddhist self so far.

RGVV^{S} and *RGVV*^{T} list these as ascetics (*caraka*-s; *RGVV*^{T}: *tsa ra ka*); wanderers (*parivrājaka*-s; *RGVV*^{T}: *kun tu rgyu*) and *nirgrantha*-s (*nigranthaputra*; *RGVV*^{T}: *gcer bu pa la sogs pa*).[859] Interestingly, *RGVV*^{C} differs, listing the Sāṃkhya-s (僧佉), Vaiśeṣika-s (衛世師), and *Nirgrantha-jñātaputra*-s (尼揵陀若提子).[860] Linked to these are 2b) those in the Buddhist fold, literally 'with faith in the *dharma*', who despite this attachment to wrong views remain nominally 'insiders'. *RGVV*^{C} alone provides an example of these

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[856] In the context of the *AAN* these beings are identified as the *icchantika*-s, *AAN*: T.668,467c22-c24. See Takasaki (1966: 203,ft.30); Silk (forthcoming: 42-43; 127-128).
[857] *AAN*: T.688,467c20-c22.
[858] Johnston (1950: 27,17-28, 4).
[859] Johnston (1950: 28,6). Here *nirgranthiputra* amended to *nirgranthaputra*, following Schmithausen (1971: 142).
[860] *RGVV*^{C}: T.1611,828c19-c22; see Takasaki (1966: 203,ft.35-38). These three non-Buddhist categories are those named by *Ratnāvali* v.1.61, Hahn (1982: 26-27).

wayward 'insiders', referring to the Vātsīputrīyas (犢子等).[861] As outlined earlier, there are clear distinctions to be made between the Pudgalavādin account of skandhic personhood and the designation of the *tathāgatagarbha* as a self, though this gloss of *RGVV*^{C} identifies theirs as an erroneous view within the *saṅgha*. It is likely that in the eyes of the authors of the *RGVV*, the Pudgalavādin view of a self – rooted as it is in the 'worldly' constituents of beings (i.e. the *skandha*-s) – is just as erroneous as any notion of self arrived at by the *tīrthika*.[862]

This is rare clarification provided by the *tathāgatagarbha* literature regarding whom precisely is meant by whom the *RGV(V)* calls *tīrthya*-s, or otherwise (*anya*)*tīrthika*-s.[863] Throughout this literature the significant feature of this category is, once again, their adherence to a notion of selfhood.[864] It is not however certain that the expression *nirgrantha* refers in all instances to the Jains, however if so then they too suffer for admitting a notion of selfhood

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[861] *RGVV*^{C}: T.1611,828c22.
[862] Johnston (1950: 28,5-10). See also chapter 1.4.1.
[863] The *AMS* provides a list of *tīrthika*-s in the myth of Bodhimati (see chapter 8.5.2), though this does not mention any of the *āstika* philosophical schools as here.
[864] For the Sāṃkhya, this is the discrete, entirely passive self that inhabits the body of a sentient being (in that system the active *jīva*, composed also of *prakṛti* or crude substance, contrasted to the *puruṣa*). See Larson (1969: 167-176).
For the Vaiśeṣika, the self (*ātman*) is one of the nine substances (*dravya*) in existence, and hence one of a broad range of atomic entities which comprise sentient beings. See Kumar (2013: 73-84).
Jainism, meanwhile, taught the existence of a lasting *jīva* that accrues *karman* like as a kind of defilement, only to cast it off upon attainment of liberation. See Dundas (1992: 104-105).

in the form of the permanent *jīva*.[865] None of these expressions seem to refer directly to the *upaniṣad*-s so discerned in the *MPMS*-group of texts, though it is very plausible that the *caraka*-s and *parivrājaka*-s of *RGVV*$^{S/T}$ are Vedic renunciates who perhaps venerated precisely this literature. Either way, the *RGV(V)* remains very much aware of various groups teaching differently about the existence of a self.

The distinguishing feature between those of 1b) inside the *dharma* who can and cannot attain, according to an unknown source used in the *RGVV*, is 'lacking inclination to emptiness' (*śūnyatānadhimukta*), stating that one defined as such is not different from the *tīrthya*.[866] Others with this have the view of emptiness (*śūnyatādṛṣṭi*), who having been taught this as a 'door to liberation' (*vimokṣamukha*) go too far in this and are 'intoxicated with emptiness' (*śūnyatāyāṃ mādyamānānāṃ*).[867] In criticism of the *śūnyatādṛṣṭi* –

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[865] Jamspal (2010: 143-147) details how it is simplistic to translate *nirgrantha* simply as referring to the Jains. The Jain representative of the six *tīrthika*-s is called Nirgrantha Jñātiputra, and the Jain tradition itself has accepted this term as denoting one 'without ties', i.e. of their own brand of *śramaṇa* tradition. However in the *BGVNS* the *nirgrantha* Satyavādin is both clothed (so not a *digambara* Jain) and appeals to the authority of the Veda-s, i.e. cannot be a *nāstika śramaṇa*: see chapter 8.6.
Lists of different designators for the self, as adhered to by these groups, are considered in chapter 4.4.1-2.
The *AMS* enigmatically refers also to an emptiness teaching of the *nirgrantha*-s: *gcer bu pa yang thams cad stong par sgom ste / gcer bu pa'i sbrang ma khyod cang ma zer cig //* (e.g. *AMS*^{T}: D.213,160b2; Q.879,167b7; though in *AMS*^{C}*:* T.120,527c15: 外道亦修空): something not known of in any Jain sources. If *nirgrantha* does not refer to the Jains themselves, perhaps the sense is other *tīrthika*-s holding strongly annihilationist views, e.g. the Cārvāka-s; see p.16.
[866] *RGVV* 1.33, Johnston (1950: 28,9-11).
[867] *RGVV* 1.33, Johnston (1950: 28,10-11). Here Schimithausen (1971: 142) prefers *ādeśyamānāyāṃ* for *mādyamānānāṃ*. The latter would perhaps evoke the medicinal imagery (emptiness to be used as a medicine, but harmful if 'retained') found also in the *Kāśyapa-Parivarta* (Vorobyova-

a 'view' of emptiness' that seems to drift too close to annihilationism – the *RGVV*, quotes the *Kāśyapa-Parivarta*, affirming that this is no better than the view of personhood (*pudgaladṛṣṭi*) denied so frequently across Buddhist sources.[868]

We deduce from this that a problem for the authors of the *RGV(V)*, regarding adherents of the Mahāyāna not accepting the *tathāgatagarbha*, is again some detrimental understanding of emptiness: a destructive comprehension preventing some audience from accepting any positive expression of awakened reality.

The *RGVV* considers further those who have incorrect 'method' (*upāya*): 1) outsiders, 2) Buddhists who hold to a view of the self, and 3) Buddhists who have pride in their comprehension of emptiness: each pertaining to categories we have dealt with above (the *tīrthya*, *pudgalavādin* and wayward *śūnyatāvādin*, respectively). Those with correct method are identified as twofold: a) *śrāvaka*-s and b) *pratyekabuddha*-s, both of whom are fixed upon what is right (*samyaktvaniyāma*). The category approved of by the text is those who desire neither for *saṃsāra* nor *nirvāṇa*: as such the *RGVV* conceptualizes the *bodhisattva* path in terms of the equality of these two (*saṃsāranirvāṇasamatāpatti*), and lauds the non-abiding *nirvāṇa* (*apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*) that is being in the world for the benefit of beings, but not

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Desyatovskaya, 2002: 26-27, §65), which follows directly in that text to that portion quoted here by the *RGVV*.

[868] *varaṃ khalu kāśyapa sumerumātrā pudgaladṛṣṭir na tv eva abhimānikasya śūnyatādṛṣṭir iti / RGVV* 1.33; Johnston (1950: 28,11-12); Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya (2002: 26, §64): …*varaṃ khalu puna kāśyapa sumerumātrā pudgaladṛṣṭir āśritā na tv evādhimānikasya śunyatādṛṣṭim ālīnā.*

being defiled by it.[869]

Poignantly, the *icchantika*-s and those of the *dharma* who have fallen into wrong positions are grouped together as those who follow in the wrong way (*mithyātvaniyantaḥ sattvarāśiḥ*): still very much in accord with our understanding of the former as 'within' the *saṅgha*, but practicing somehow contrary to the *saddharma*. Indeed as they are here distinguished from the *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s, and are certainly not the *tīrthya*-s 'outside' of the fold, we deduce that these must be Mahāyānists who nevertheless are not advocates of the *tathāgatagarbha*.[870]

However the *icchantika*-s are also certainly not the irredeemable *agotra* beings of the *vijñānavāda-tathāgatagarbha* tradition, discussed in texts such as the *MSA*.[871] Rather, the *RGV* perhaps sees these beings as only figuratively 'hopeless' due as *RGVV* 1.33 puts it to their 'longing for *saṃsāra'* (*saṃsāram icchanti*), but does not condemn them absolutely in future births. Indeed by virtue of being associated with one of the causes of purification (*śuddhihetu*), the *icchantika* is very much 'teachable': as is, as shall become more important to us, the *tīrthya* who is properly outside of the *saṅgha*.

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[869] Johnston (1950: 28,12-18). No doubt the equation *tathāgatagarbha=dharmakāya* is another rendering of this fundamental assertion of the Mahāyāna. For an account of *apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*, see Nagao (1991: 23-29).

[870] See p.77,ft.195.

[871] See, for example, *MSA(B)* 3, Lévy (1907: 12):
aikāntiko duścarite 'sti kaścit kaścit samudghātitaśukladharmā /
amokṣabhāgīyaśubho 'sti kaścin nihīnaśuklo 'sty api hetuhīnaḥ //
'Some beings do only bad deeds; some have destroyed their pure qualities; lack qualities for liberation; have only some quality, and some lack the cause entirely.' As Thurman (2004: 28,ft.16) writes, this contradicts the clearly *tathāgatagarbha* oriented message of *MSA* 10.37, and clearly holds that some beings are irredeemably *agotra*; see also Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 80,ft.3).

The *RGVV*, commentating on *RGV* 1.33, now focuses on these four main categories: the *icchantika*-s, *tīrthya*-s, *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s. These four are associated with four obstructions (*āvaraṇa*-s) and the aforementioned 'causes of purification' (*śuddhihetu*-s) introduced back in *RGV* 1.30. A correspondence is made between these four causes and the four obstructions in *RGV* 1.33; the former being remedies to the latter. We might summarize these as follows.

1) The cause 'faith in the *dharma'* (*dharmādhimukti*) remedies the aversion to the *dharma* (*dharmapratigha*) of the *icchantika*-s;

2) superior insight (*adhiprajñā*) remedies perception of the self (*ātmadarśana*) of the *tīrthya*-s;

3) concentration (*samādhi*) remedies the fear of suffering in the world (*saṃsāraduḥkhabhīrūtva*) of the *śrāvaka*-s;

4) compassion (*karuṇā*) remedies the indifference to beings (*sattvārthaḥ nirapekṣatā*) peculiar to the *pratyekabuddha*-s.[872]

RGV 1.35 then states that these causes are deemed to bring about four results, which are named as the *guṇapāramitā*-s.[873]

The following verse, seeming to comment upon *RGV* 1.35 (presented above), introduces a term related to the *viparyāsa*-s: therein we find described an inversion (*viparyaya*) in regards to the *dharmakāya*, which designates the appropriate employment of the terms *ātman* etc. in regards to what is not mundane.

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[872] For an elegant presentation of the *guṇapāramitā*-s, *śuddhihetu*-s and other equations made in this section, see Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 368).
[873] Johnston (1950: 30,l.4-5).

phalam eṣāṃ samāsena dharmakāye viparyayāt /

caturvidhaviparyāsapratipakṣaprabhāvitam //

RGV 1.36, Johnston (1950: 30,7-8)

The result of these [causes], due to inversion (*viparyaya*) [of notions] regarding the *dharmakāya* is, in short, characterized by remedies to the four-fold distortions (*viparyāsa*).[874]

The *RGVV* makes clear in the commentary to *RGV* 1.36 that these 'perfect qualities' (*guṇapāramitā*) of the *dharmakāya* are the results of their being brought about by remedies (*pratipakṣa*) to the four *viparyāsa*-s. The ensuing commentary attempts to make distinctions between the unacceptable, distorted views we have so far encountered: the acceptable, conventional Buddhist positions regarding *dharma*-s, here called the 'inversion' of distortions' (*viparyāsaviparyaya*, Tib. *phyin ci ma log*); and views that must again go through some 'inversion' (*viparyaya*) to correctly comprehend the *guṇapāramitā*.

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[874] *RGV*^{T} 1.36 (e.g. D.4025,90b2-3; Q.5526,93a2-a3) presents a problem: *'di dag 'bras ni mdor bsdu na / chos kyi sku la phyin ci log / rnam pa bzhi las bzlog pa yi / gnyen pos rab tu phye ba nyid //*
In this it seems the terms *viparyāsa* (normally rendered *phyin ci log*) and *viparyāya* (*bzlog pa*; *RGV*^{C} 倒) are switched: perhaps communicating that the results are remedies (*gnyen po*) of inversions of four-fold distortions of the *dharmakāya*. This translation is confusing, and does not seem to offer a comprehensible alternative meaning to *RGV*^{S}, in which *viparyāya* appears to have no negative connotation and is contrasted to the clearly pejorative *viparyāsa*. See Takasaki (1966: 208,ft.72); Edgerton (1953b: 491a).

tatra yā rūpādike vastuny anitye nityam iti saṃjñā / duḥkhe sukham iti / anātmany ātmeti / aśubhe śubham iti saṃjñā / ayam ucyate caturvidho viparyāsaḥ / etadviparyayeṇa caturvidha evāviparyāso veditavyaḥ / katamaś caturvidhaḥ / yā tasminn eva rūpādike vastuny anityasaṃjñā / duḥkhasaṃjñā / anātmasaṃjñā / aśubhasaṃjñā / ayam ucyate caturvidhaviparyāsaviparyayaḥ / sa khalv eṣa nityādilakṣaṇaṃ tathāgatadharmakāyam adhikṛtya iha viparyāso 'bhipreto yasya pratipakṣeṇa caturākārā tathāgatadharmakāyaguṇapāramitā vyavasthāpitā /

RGVV 1.36, Johnston (1950: 30,11-17)

There exists the idea that entities composed of the *skandha*-s are permanent when they are impermanent, blissful when suffering, self when not-self, pure when impure. This is called the fourfold distortion. Through the inversion of this, there is to be known the fourfold non-distortion.

What are these four? These are, regarding the *skandha*-s, the ideas of non-permanence, suffering, self, and impurity. This is called the inversion of the fourfold distortion.

Furthermore, these (inversions) are accepted as distortions in regards to the *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata, which is characterized by permanence etc., of which there is established as remedies the fourfold perfect qualities of the Tathāgata's *dharmakāya.*

Hence the *RGVV* (not dissimilar to the *MPMS*) sees there to be 1) distorted views corresponding to the mundane perspective (i.e. that would see a self among the *skandha*-s), and 2) non-distorted views that accept analysis of all phenomena as constituted by suffering, non-self etc. However these views themselves become distortions if held in regards to the *dharmakāya*. What is certainly *not* advocated is a return to the original views deemed false regarding mundane phenomena: our new object being the truest body of the Tathāgata, i.e. his supermundane character.

As such the *guṇapāramitā* are something else again: positive qualities arrived at through a dialectical rejection of both 1) an uninformed perspective on phenomena and 2) the erroneous application of the same analysis to what is supermundane.[875] This, as we theorized in the last chapter, might mark their designation as *pāramitā*: 'perfections' applicable to notions such as selfhood that describe the *dharmakāya*.[876]

The *RGVV* then quotes the introduction of the four *pāramitā* found in the *ŚDS*.[877] Though close to the *ŚDS*^{T}, this passage in the *RGVV* also reaffirms that what is not known to those of lesser vehicles is precisely the *dharmakāya*.

> *sarvaśrāvakapratyekabuddhā api bhagavan śūnyatājñānena adṛṣṭapūrve sarvajñajñānaviṣaye tathāgatadharmakāye viparyastāḥ*
>
> *RGVV* 1.36, Johnston (1950: 30,21-31,1)

[875] King (1991: 89-90) recognizes that this dialectic results in what could easily be couched as a middle way between self and non-self.
[876] See pp.292-293.
[877] See pp.288-290.

> Lord, also all the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, on account of their knowledge of emptiness, suffer distortion [of notions] regarding the *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata, that is the thus-far unseen object of the omniscient one.

The passage outlines the distortions of seeing non-self for self and so on, and refers to the *skandha*-s that would conventionally provide an exhaustive typology of all that exists.[878] But a further distortion is peculiar to the *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s due to their ignorance regarding what is made known here: i.e. they lack insight into the *dhamakāya* that is the privileged knowledge of the Tathāgata. Those who see correctly the supermundane see in terms of the four *guṇapāramitā*-s and they are the true *bodhisattva*-s. What is pertinent is that the *śrāvaka*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s are here associated with emptiness, rather than any other category. This implies that those who cultivate the emptiness of phenomena are not, in the eyes of the *ŚDS* and *RGV(V)*, considered to be true *bodhisattva*-s at all.

The account of the *guṇapāramitā* above clearly wishes to correct erroneous cultivations of emptiness, but also must not affirm the existence of anything denied by the doctrine of non-self. This is detailed in the commentary to *RGV* 1.35-36, where the correspondence between the *guṇapāramitā*-s and *śuddhihetu*-s are repeated. This is elaborated through a reversing of sequence (*pratilomakrama*), i.e. of the result (i.e. [*guṇa*-]*pāramitā*) arising

[878] See chapter 1.3.

from a cause ([*śuddhi*-]*hetu*) in regards to the four earlier mentioned categories of beings.[879]

Space does not permit us to consider the education of three of these: namely the *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha* and *icchantika* (whom, we note, is deemed capable of correction through cultivating faith in the *saddharma*).[880] The significant import is that each can be prescribed some correction that orients them towards the *dharmakāya*: in each instance realizing some aspect of this absolute through correction of a distorted view. Of course the most important of these for us is the second category – the *tīrthya* – whose point of departure from the *saddharma* is belief in a self, and whose correct orientation is towards the *ātmapāramitā*.

7.1.4 *The* Ātmapāramitā *& its Attainment*

The *tīrthya* is prescribed the superior insight (*adhiprajñā*: synonymous here with *prajñāpāramitā*), as a remedy to their attachment to the view a self. The section of the text detailing this deserves presentation in full.

> *pañcasūpādānaskandheṣv ātmadarśinām anyatīrthyānām asadātmagrahābhirativiparyayeṇa prajñāpāramitābhāvanāyāḥ paramātmapāramitādhigamaḥ phalaṃ draṣṭavyam / sarve hy anyatīrthyā rūpādikam atatsvabhāvaṃ vastu ātma iti upagatāḥ / tac caiṣāṃ vastu yathāgraham ātmalakṣaṇena visaṃvāditvāt sarvakālam anātmā / tathāgataḥ punar yathābhūtajñānena*

[879] Johnston (1950: 31,7-10).
[880] See Johnston (1950: 31,7-32,13).

sarvadharmanairātmyaparapāram abhiprāptaḥ / tac cāsya nairātmyam anātmalakṣaṇena yathādarśanam avisaṃvāditatvāt[881] *sarvakālam ātmābhipretaṃ nairātmyaṃ evātmana iti*[882] *kṛtvā / yathoktaṃ sthito 'sthānayogeneti /*

RGVV 1.36, Johnston (1950: 31,10-16).

The acquisition of the perfection of the highest self should be taught as the result of cultivation of the perfection of insight, by inversion of delight in attachment to an unreal self,[883] which belongs to the *tīrthya*-s who are different [to us], who have a view of the self in respect to the five *skandha*-s.

Indeed, all the *tīrthya*-s accept as a self an entity consisting of the *skandha*-s, the nature of which is not [a self]; this entity that has been so grasped by them, due to it contradicting the character of a self, is always the absence of a self.

But the Tathāgata, by seeing things as they are, has attained the pinnacle of the absence of self in all phenomena; this absence of self so perceived by him, due to it not contradicting the character of non-self, is always the sense of self that takes self meant as precisely absence of self; like when it is said 'abiding by means of not abiding.'

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[881] Amended following Schmithausen (1971: 143): *avisaṃvāditvāt* -> *avisaṃvāditatvāt*.
[882] Amended following Schmithausen (1971: 143): *ātmanti* -> *ātmana iti*.
[883] *RGVV*^{C} here uses 神我, more commonly Skt. *puruṣa*, to refer to the *ātman* of *tīrthikas*: T.1611,829c15&c24; see Takasaki (1966: 210,ft.89).

This section considers the worldly, unreal self (*asadātman*) clung to by the *tīrthya*. The response to this false view is the cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā*, and the result is the perfection that is the 'highest' self (*paramātman*; *RGVV*^{T}: *bdag dam pa*; *RGVV*^{C}: 第一我).[884]

We see here how the *RGVV* marries *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine with the language of the *prajñāpāramitā* literature, beginning with the absence of self (*nairātmya*) in all phenomena, not just persons. The Tathāgata is said to have attained the pinnacle of absence of self in regards to all *dharma*-s (*sarvadharmanairātmyaparapāra*; *RGVV*^{T}: *chos thams cad bdag med pa dam pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa*; *RGVV*^{C}: 一切法無我到第一彼岸), which according to both *RGVV*^{S} and *RGVV*^{T} is precisely how the Buddha can then have a notion of selfhood.[885] It seems that the *RGVV* articulates the end of understanding non-self (applicable to all phenomena) as a superior notion of selfhood, attained by cultivating *prajñāpāramitā*.

This constitutes an important development in the *tathāgatagarbha* tradition. We have seen our other sources reflect some opposition between their doctrine and some wrong interpretation of *śūnyatā*. We find this also in the *RGV(V)* (citing the *Kāśyapa-Parivarta*), in which the correct expression of selfhood is arrived at by the cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā*.[886] In other words, correctly grasping emptiness is a precursor to knowing the perfection of

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[884] *RGVV*^{T}: D.4025,91b1; Q.5526,94a3; *RGVV*^{C}: T.1611,829c17.
[885] For differing content of *RGVV*^{C}, see chapter 7.1.5.
[886] See p.331.

self.[887] Arguably this reflects some attempt at reconciliation between different streams of Mahāyāna thought. While the account of the *RGVV* marries the notions of *śūnyatā* and the *tathāgatagarbha*, it does not seem that such compatibility was also perceived by the *MPMS*-group. In the latter, the emphasis was upon the permanence of the *buddha-dhātu* in *contrast* to the emptiness (seemingly their non-existence) of worldly entities, whereas for the *RGVV* it is this very emptiness of entities that is the proper conception of *tathāgatagarbha*.[888]

On the one hand, the qualification of the *ātman* of the *guṇapāramitā* as *parama*- qualifies that this be distinguished from the mundane self.[889] In *RGVV*^{T} the subsequent section on *sukhapāramitā* also employs this qualification (*bde ba dam*), but it is absent in regards to the other two, and in *RGVV*^{S} it is absent in regards to all but *ātmapāramitā*.[890] The *tīrthya* holds that there is a self in regards to things made of the five *skandha*-s: wrong, our text reminds us, because what they discern lacks the character of a self.[891] What is key here, once again, is the distinction between the conventional self and the supreme (*parama*-) notion of self: the later of which can bear no similarity to the former, apart from in name.

Hence there is the sense of (supreme) self that refers always to

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[887] This is apparent in the epithet of the text, featured in its Sanskrit title (Johnston (1950: 69)) as the *Mahāyāna-Uttaratantra-Śāstra*, expressing a 'higher', also 'subsequent', doctrine to that of the *prajñāpāramitā*.
[888] See p.283,ft.754.
[889] See chapter 6.1.4.
[890] This *sukhapāramitā* may again distinguish the bliss of *nirvāṇa* from any kind of worldly pleasure: all things worldly being necessarily characterized by *duḥkha* as much as they are by non-self.
[891] See chapter 1.3.

absence of (worldly) self. In this the former and latter surely refer to different notions, which reminds us of the dialectical model of this teaching found earlier in the *MBhS*.[892] This is expressed through a line drawn from early in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (*ASP*) which therein acts as a caveat for understanding how the *bodhisattva* should avoid fixed views: 'abiding' (*sthita*) in such a way that lacks the character of wrong, i.e. delusional, abiding in views.[893]

7.1.5 *The Self in Absence of Self.*

RGVV^{C} omits the line *nairātmyam eva ātmani kṛtvā* (and its equivalent in *RGVV*^{T}) along with the above mentioned verse echoing the *ASP*. In place of this we find clarification that the expression *nairātmya* corresponds to the absence of a false self, held by the *tīrthika*-s (無彼外道虛妄神我), while the *ātman* refers to the Tathāgata having attained the 'powerful' self (如來有彼得自在我).[894] The former is consistent with the *RGVV's* association of *nairātmya* with denial of the mundane self, though the latter, picked up again in the Chinese, will require further attention. In place of the verse reminiscent of the *ASP*, we find the following.

如[895]清淨真空，得第一無我，諸佛得淨體，是名得大身。

RGVV^{C}: T.1611,829c26-c27

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[892] See pp.251-252.
[893] Vaidya (1960: 4,25): …*susthito 'sthānayogena*.
[894] *RGVV*^{C}: T.1611,829c24; 829c25.
[895] 如＝知＜三＞＜宮＞

> Thus having attained the pinnacle of non-self, which is pure, real emptiness, the Buddhas attain the pure essence: hence it is said that they attain the great self.[896]

RGVV^{C} comments on this verse, focusing on the 'great self', reflecting the Sanskrit *mahātman*.[897] It is perhaps telling that the translation 大身 is used instead of 大我: distinguishing the 'great self' from erroneous, worldly notions of the self (我).[898]

> 得大身者，謂如來得第一清淨真如法身。彼是諸佛如來實我。以得自在體，以得第一清淨身，偈言諸佛得淨體故。以是義故，諸佛名得清淨自在，偈言是名得大身故。以是義故，依於此義諸佛如來1於[899]無漏界中得為[900]第一最自在我。
>
> 又復即依如是義故，如來法身不名為有。以無我相無法相故。以是義故，不得言有，以如彼相如是無故。
>
> 又復即依如是義故，如來法身不名為無。以唯有彼真如我體，是故不得言無法身，以如彼相如是有故。依此義故，諸外道問「如來死後為有身耶？為無身耶？」有如是等，是故如來不記不答。

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[896] *RGVV*^{C}: T.1611,829c26-c27: 如清淨真空 得第一無我 諸佛得淨體 是名得大身; see Takasaki (1966: 211,ft.96).
[897] See p.356. This expression appears twice in the *RGVV* (v.1.142; 4.39), though seemingly as an epithet of the Buddha connoting reverence rather than any qualified notion of selfhood.
[898] See Zacchetti (2004: 202,ft.28); also Nakamura (1980: 922d).
[899] 〔於〕－<三><宮>
[900] 〔爲〕－<三><宮>

RGVV^{C}: T.1611,829c28-830a11.

Attaining the great self means that the Tathāgata attains the *dharmakāya* that is the highest pure reality. That is the true self of the Buddha-Tathāgata-s. Because they have attained a nature of mastery, and attaining the supremely pure body, the verse states that the Buddhas have attained the pure body. Because of that, the Buddhas are said to have attained purity and mastery, hence the verse states that they have attained the great self. Hence, based on this meaning, there is the sense that all Buddha-Tathāgata-s attain the supremely masterful self in the untainted realm.

Moreover, based on this meaning, the *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata is not called a being. Due to the character of absence of self and the character of absence of *dharma*-s, he cannot be called a being; because of having such a character, he is hence a non-being.

Moreover, based on this meaning, the *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata is not a non-being; due only to the nature of his self being reality: hence it cannot be said there is no *dharmakāya*, because of having such a character, he is hence a being.

Based on this meaning, when the *tīrthika*-s asked 'does the Tathāgata possesses a body or not after he had died?' such [issues] as these, the Tathāgata did not explain nor respond to.

Takasaki recognized that the above verse bears close resemblance to

Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra (*MSA*) 9.23, and the corresponding commentary of Vasubandhu's (*MSAB)*, to which we shall return later.[901] Notably all forms of *MSAB* lack lines that reflect anything of the expression 自在體: the 'nature of mastery' attained by the Buddha.[902]

The *RGVV* in all forms draws from the *MSA* (the only śāstric text from which it does), but *RGVV*^{C} seems to be more influenced by it (or shared material) still.[903] The terminology in these verses – with preference for *mahātman* or *paramātman* over *ātmapāramitā*– seems to have the same meaning as in our previous passages of the *RGVV*: namely that of a 'higher self' arrived at through comprehension of *nairātmya*. Both the *RGV(V)* and *MSA* consider the self qualified as 'highest' or 'pure' to be found in *nairātmya*, or more directly in the *MSA* in 'the purity that is emptiness'.[904]

In contrast to discussion of this topic in the *MPMS*-group (especially the *MBhS*), these verses leave the mystery of the Buddha's lasting existence intact, evoking the older Buddhist trope of the topics 'not-expounded' (*avyākṛta*) addressed (or, rather, not) by the Buddha in the Pāli *sutta*-s.[905] Most significant for us is the explanation of the *dharmakāya* as a being or 'presence' (有) precisely because the essence of (the Buddha's) self is reality (真如我體) that appears characterized by the absence of any 'worldly' selves.

We return to *RGVV* 1.36, bearing in mind both the reference to the

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[901] Takasaki (1966: 211-212,ft.96).
[902] See in particular *RGVV*^{C}: T.1604,603c11-c17.
[903] *RGVV* 1.149, Johnston (1950: 71,16-17), quoting *MSA* 9.37, see: p.355-356.
[904] See chapter 7.2.
[905] See e.g. *Culamāluṅkyovāda-Sutta*: *MN*.I.426-432 (also p.228,ft.622); *Khandha-Sutta*: *SN*.I 395-397.

ASP in *RGVV*^{S} and *RGVV*^{T}, and the attempt by *RGVV*^{C} to explain the contradiction of self and not self (in terms of an equation of the like *dharmakāya* = (*tathatā* = *nairātmya*)). Having outlined the 1) obstacles of 2) categories of particular beings to attaining awakening, and 3) the particular qualities or 'perfections' to which they can aspire, the *RGVV* associates these qualities with the *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata (*caturākārā tathāgatadharmakāyaguṇapāramitā*).[906] The Tathāgata is identified with the *dharmadhātu* that reaches the limit of space (*ākāśadhātuparyavasāno 'parāntakoṭīniṣṭha*): affirming that the *dharmakāya* be understood as a designator for reality itself as well as the awakened Buddha.[907] We then find further mention of the four causes, rephrasing for us the benefits of each. As before, we need only consider the second of these.[908]

> *prajñāpāramitābhāvanayā ākāśopamasattvabhājanalokanairātmya niṣṭhāgamanād /*
>
> *RGVV* 1.36: Johnston (1950: 32,9-10)

> By practice of the perfection of insight (*prajñāpāramitā*: not *adhiprajñā*, as earlier), [the Tathāgata] attained realization of the absence of self in beings and in the world, that are 'like space' [resulting in his attaining the perfection of self].

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[906] Johnston (1950: 10-11).
[907] The expression *dharmadhātu* can indeed refer to 'the nature of phenomena' in themselves, and as a designator for the true nature of the Buddha. See Takasaki (1966b: 82-83).
[908] See p.333.

Our primary concern, the *ātmapāramitā*, is once again clearly associated with *prajñāpāramitā*, as the Tathāgata realizes all beings and *dharma*-s to be without self (*nairātmya*). These entities are compared to space; an allusion both to the insubstantial nature of beings and, perhaps, also to their inherent purity if correctly perceived.[909] We note however that the *guṇapāramitā*-s are not mentioned by name in these lines, and that the focus is rather on the more conventional understanding of the Buddha's attainments in terms of negation (e.g. realizing absence of self), and not this somehow constituting positive expressions of higher reality.

Such expressions return in *RGV* 1.37, which reintroduces the *guṇapāramitā*-s.[910]

sa hi prakṛtiśuddhatvād vāsanāpagamāc chuciḥ /

paramātma ātmanairātmyaprapañcavyupaśāntitaḥ[911] *//*

sukho manomayaskandhataddhetuvinivṛttitaḥ /

nityaḥ saṃsāranirvāṇasamatāprativedhataḥ //

RGV 1.37-38, Johnston (1950: 34,8-11)

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[909] See Lamotte, (1944: 364-368).

[910] What precedes this is an account of the *tathāgatadhātu* being the remedy to entrenchment in ignorance, which in the *ŚDS* is the fundamental affliction of *arhat*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s who continue to transmigrate through mind-made bodies (*manomayakāya*). The *RGV(V)* clarifies, then, that faith in the *tathāgatagarbha* is what brings about the *dharmakāya* that succeeds the *manomayakāya* of those in the lesser vehicles. See *RGV(V)* 1.38, Johnston (1950: 34,10-35,2).

[911] Amended following Schmithausen (1971: 143): *ātmanairātmyaprapañcakṣayaśāntitaḥ* -> *ātmanairātmyaprapañcavyupaśāntitaḥ*.

> Indeed [the *dharmakāya*] is pure because of its innate purity and removal of impressions; having calmed the false conceptions of self and absence of self is the highest self; is bliss due to removal of the mind-made *skandha* and its causes; is permanent due to the realization of the equality of *saṃsāra* with *nirvāṇa*.

These verses support the interpretation of the *guṇapāramitā*-s discussed above. In particular, the second of these is here called *paramātman*: the 'highest self', which is realized through overcoming false notions of both self *and* non-self.

In *RGV(V)*, *ātmapāramitā* is then explained as the rejection of 1) the false view of self adhered to be the *tīrthya* and 2) the false view of non-self adhered to by the *śrāvaka*.[912] Both are deemed extreme positions, and while the former does not surprise us the latter is seemingly due to annihilationist dispositions of the *śrāvaka* (perhaps considered guilty of adopting a (erroneous) view of emptiness).

The *ŚDS* stated before that it is only the sons of the Buddha that see the fourfold *pāramitā*, who surely are not *śrāvaka*-s.[913] Hence the *bodhisattva* is one who accepts the *tathāgatagarbha*, presumably after cultivating *prajñāpāramitā*. Others are either a) not entered into the great vehicle, i.e. *śrāvaka*-s/*pratyekabuddha*-s; b) those who reject the *tathāgatagarbha* as the

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[912] Johnston (1950: 34,13-15).
[913] See pp.291-292.

correct expression of the Mahāyāna (and as such are *icchantika*-s), or c) extraneous, i.e. the *tīrthya*-s.

7.1.6 ***Assessment***

The *RGV(V)* is a rich text with much to discuss, though once again this study must remain focused on how the text understands discourse on the *tathāgatagarbha* as relating to selfhood. Two questions require answering: what is understood by *ātmapāramitā* (and associated terms) in the *RGV(V)*, and in what way is this clearly still unconventional Buddhist expression of value for our authors?[914]

The key to appreciating the *dharmakāya* so conceived is another central equation made by the *RGV(V)*. This is between not just the *tathāgatagarbha* and *dharmakāya* (as found also in the *AAN* and *ŚDS*), but also reality as it properly is (*tathatā*).

> *samalā tathatā atha nirmalā vimalā buddhaguṇā jinakriyā / viṣayaḥ paramārthadarśināṃ śubharatnatrayasambhavo*[915] *yataḥ //*
>
> *RGV* 1.23, Johnston (1950: 21,3-4).

> Reality with defilement; [reality] without defilement; the qualities of a Buddha and the actions of a victorious one: these are the object of

[914] King reflects on the possible shock value of such positive expressions, though as we have seen precursors to these expressions existed also in the *MPMS*-group which clearly preceded the *RGV(V)*. King (1991: 105).
[915] Amended following Schmithausen (1971: 140): *-sargako -> -sambhavo.*

those perceiving what is supreme, from which are generated the three pure jewels.

saṃbuddhakāyaspharaṇāt tathatāvyatibhedāt / gotrataś ca sadā sarve buddhagarbhāḥ śarīriṇaḥ //

RGV 1.28, Johnston (1950: 26,5-6).

Because the body of the Buddha penetrates [all things]; because reality pervades [everywhere]; and because in all beings, always, is the gene [for awakening], those who have bodies are all containing a Buddha.

The sense of the above is that the common medium across which the *tathāgatagarbha* can be said to be also the *dharmakāya* is *tathatā*: that is the nature of reality, often translated as 'suchness' (*tathā-tā*), i.e. reality 'as it is'.[916] Certainly *tathatā* is a category at home in the *prajñāpāramitā* literature: explaining the emptiness of all *dharma*-s that is their reduction to interrelated phenomena without any underlying substrate.[917] In the manner that the *sattva-dhātu* is the common element in the *AAN*, here in the *RGV(V)* it is the

[916] See Edgerton (1953b: 248a-b); Lamotte (1980: 2186,ft.1), citing the *Madhyantavibhāgabhāṣya,* Nagao (1964: 23-34): '[*śūnyatā*] is *tathatā* because, unchanging, it dwells always the same.' A good account of *tathatā* relevant to the *tathāgatagarbha* literature is that provided by King (1997: 187).
[917] This is the basis of Seyfort Ruegg's distinction between *prajñāpāramitā* non-dualism (*advaya*) and the kind of monism found in, for example, *advaitavedānta*. In short, to state the non-dualism of all phenomena preserves their discreteness as phenomena but clarifies that all things are no more than this: i.e. exist exhaustively as causally interrelated phenomena. See Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 291; 361).

nature of all beings as *tathatā* that allows their nature to be equated with awakened reality: i.e. the *dharmakāya*.

This model will help us understand the perfected qualities of the *dharmakāya*, which should be understood as the 'perfect qualities' that explain the Buddha's body as *reality* properly understood.[918] We reconsider how *ātmapāramitā* is described: as the highest form of self (*paramātman*) achieved by the perfection of insight, realizing the pinnacle of absence of self (*nairātymaparapāra*). We have addressed how in the *ŚDS* these *pāramitā*-s that qualify the *dharmakāya* cannot, by virtue of being Mahāyānist 'ideal' qualities (*pāramitā*), correspond to things in the mundane world.[919] As such, the 'perfection of self' must be a 'selfhood' that is arrived at through Mahāyānist categories: specifically the cultivation of the emptiness of any notion of conventional self.[920]

The *RGV(V)* certainly sees itself as a successor to the *prajñāpāramitā* literature, still very concerned (similar to the *tathāgatagarbha sūtra*-s before it) with correcting erroneous cultivations of emptiness and their repercussions (depression, annihilationism etc.).[921] As a true 'successor' to the *prajñāpāramitā*, the *RGV(V)* incorporates the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine into an otherwise *śūnyatāvāda*-oriented system: reinterpreting the former in terms of emptiness and *tathatā*. It wishes, as King writes in regards to the **Buddha-Nature-Śāstra* (a Chinese text very much reliant upon the *RGV(V)*), to express

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[918] Stated, though not expounded, by the *ŚDS*: see chapter 6.1.4.
[919] See pp.292-293.
[920] See Seyfort Ruegg (1989a: 37) for a 'gnoseological' interpretation of the attribution of qualities to the *dharmakāya*, that accords with Jo nang tradition in Tibet.
[921] See pp.322-323.

absence of (conventional) personhood – that position arrived at through *prajñāpāramitā* – in positive terms.[922]

The *ātmapāramitā*/*paramātman* is then an ideal notion of self attributable to the *dharmakāya*, but to make sense of this we must reassess the value of the term *ātman* in these expressions. Similar to other texts we have addressed, the *RGV(V)* sees there to be a dialectical development from the (erroneous) position of a worldly self, to the denial of any worldly self, to the affirmation of a 'perfection' of self.[923] This does not denote a self in any way reminiscent of worldly personhood: it is, in fact, the self that is the realization of the non-existence of just this.

I propose this be understood as follows: that 'one's own self', i.e. what one properly is, or better one's *identity* as an expression of reality (*tathatā*), is the absence of self understood in a conventional fashion. Hence, the *paramātman* is the *dharmakāya*'s true, permanent and unchanging identity *as characterized by* the absence of permanent, unchanging selfhood.[924] This positive expression marks the end of a dialectic observed by the authors of the *RGV(V)* beginning with the (erroneous) view of a self, its revision under the teaching of non-self, and the synthesis that is a positive expression of the absence of self, that is the correct understanding of the *dharmakāya*.

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[922] King (1991: 106): 'Self is utterly negated, it is completely empty, and yet this is how things 'are' – one ends on this positive note. This is the truth of things, the essence of things; yes, they *are* 'Thus'.'

[923] We find this also in the *MBhS*, wherein the teaching of the 'true' self succeeds the teaching of non-self. See chapter 5.6.

[924] A curious translation is Takasaki's rendering of *ātmapāramitā* as the 'Perfection of Unity': one perhaps betraying a monistic leaning in that author's interpretation of the text. See e.g. Takasaki (1966a: 26-28).

Conceived metaphysically, reality 'with impurity' (*samalā tathatā*) is fundamentally the same as that without. Beings and Buddha are both in essence *tathatā*, and hence the soteriological poles of *tathāgatagarbha* and *dharmakāya* are also the same. It is clear that this *śūnyatā*-oriented account of the self is not that found in the *MPMS*-group addressed earlier. In these the 'true self' of the Buddha belongs to a paradigm of awakening in which one attains a seemingly personal state of liberation less abstract than this *dharmakāya* (understood as a collection of supreme qualities) by 'cleansing' the *buddha-dhātu*.

But the *RGV(V)* cannot regard the *tathāgatagarbha* as a kind of self: rather it is the afflicted, unmanifested form of the *dharmakāya* which, when sentient beings still consider themselves 'selves', cannot *in that afflicted predicament* be called the *paramātman*. The authors of the *RGV(V)*, most likely aware of (but eschewing much contribution from) the *MPMS* hence developed the 'the *ātman* of the Buddha' into 'the *paramātman* of the *dharmakāya*'.[925]

One important thread still connects the *MPMS*-group to the *RGV(V)*, which will be of great importance in the following chapter: the place of the *tīrthika* (/*tīrthya*) in regards to discourse on the *tathāgatagarbha*/*dharmakāya* as *ātman*. According to the *RGV(V)*, the *tīrthika* is no doubt wrong-minded: defined by the attachment to self that is to be overcome by teaching *anātman*

[925] Radich (2007: 1294-1295) sees the *RGVV* embody 'the most emphatically gnostic-docetistic-transcendent pole of a spectrum of positions' regarding the bodies of the Buddha. Though its use of the language of selfhood is just one small aspect of this, it is poignant that the *RGVV* deems a qualified notion of self to be still appropriate in discussion of the *dharmakāya*.

(which, according to the text, finds its definitive expression through cultivating *prajñāpāramitā*). However their clinging to the notion of *some kind of* selfhood prefigures their potential to realizes to what the term should properly refer. Hence, the positive expression *ātmapāramitā* can be seen to validate no *ātmavāda* per se, but can appear to revise this discourse in terms of *nairātmya*. The true self, unbeknownst to those lacking the faculties of a Buddha, is one's identity as the absence of any (worldly) self: a *positive* expression that is the conclusion to all prior discourse on selfhood.

What is beyond doubt is that the authors of the *RGV(V)* saw these extraneous teachers as both 1) 'teachable', and not condemned as absolutely wrong-minded (no more so than the other three categories of the deluded who are *within* the *saṅgha*), and 2) precisely so through appeal to correct insight that reveals the supreme (*parama-*; *-pāramitā*) comprehension of selfhood. It is possible also that the critique of those who miscomprehend emptiness, also found in the *RGV(V)*, is in part for the purpose of qualifying what *should* be taught to those still attached to selfhood: i.e. a doctrine of emptiness that affirms still some positive expressions of the *dharmakāya*, that is a correct contemplative focus of the *bodhisattva*.

7.2 The Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra

Another śāstric work that deserves our attention is the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (*MSA*), which not unlike the *LAS* sits on the periphery of the 'pure' *tathāgatagarbha* corpus as I have defined it.[926] The text is

[926] See p.8,ft.19b.

another of those attributed to Maitreya-nātha / Asaṅga, though unlike the *RGV(V)* is more consistent with this set by virtue of its clearly being a Yogācāra-oriented text.[927] The term *tathāgatagarbha* appears only once in the *Mahāyānasūtālaṃkāra-Bhāṣya* (*MSAB*) commenting on *MSA* 9.37, in which there is explained the lack of particularization (*nirviśiṣṭa*) of *tathatā*, the pure nature of which is the Tathāgata: a description not in disagreement with how we have understood the *dharmakāya* of the *RGV(V)*.[928] As stated above, however, the *MSA* as a whole has far more in common with what we recognize as Yogācāra categories: for example prioritizing the *triyāna* model of beings possessing different *gotra*-s over the *ekayāna* influential in other texts that we have addressed.[929] This may be related to the *MSA* being a fiercely polemical text, which from the title of its first chapter concerns itself with the defense of the Mahāyāna distinct from, and superior to, the Hīnayāna.[930]

After a prolonged presentation of the character of the Mahāyāna and the *bodhisattva*-path, chapter nine of the *MSA* describes the goal of

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[927] Authorship of the *MSA*, and with it the historicity of Maitreya-nātha, remains unclear: see Griffiths (1990: 43,ft.7). However the Yogācāra disposition of the *MSA* is in greater coherence with that of the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga* and *Madhyāntavibhāga* (e.g. accepting the primacy of the *triyāna*) to the exclusion of the *RGV* (and possibly the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, which also lacks trademark features of the Yogācāra).
[928] Lévi (1907: 40). The root verse (*MSA* 9.37: *sarveṣām aviśiṣṭāpi tathatā śuddhim āgatā / tathāgatatvaṃ tasmāc ca tadgarbhāḥ sarvadehinaḥ //),* is indeed quoted in *RGVV* 1.148 (Johnston 1950: 72,16-17). The *MSA(B)*'s interpretation of *tathāgatagarbha* is as a *bahuvrīhi* compound (akin to *TGS*[2]: see chapter 2.2): likely a key distinction between (or point of departure from) the *MSA* and *tathāgatagarbha sūtra* literature that we have addressed. See Seyfort Ruegg (1977: 288).
[929] Indeed the *MSA* presents the *ekayāna* as a provisional teaching. See *MSA* 11.54: Lévi (1907: 69).
[930] Griffiths (1990: 48-49).

awakening in terms of the purification of the *dhātu* of the Buddha: perhaps better understood here as the 'realm' of the awakened, rather than his nature or essence.[931] Here we encounter the first verse that requires our attention, bearing a great resemblance to the content of *RGVV*^{C} above.[932]

> *śūnyatāyāṃ viśuddhāyāṃ nairātmyān mārgalābhataḥ /*
> *buddhāḥ śuddhātmalābhitvāt gatā ātmamahātmatām //*
>
> *MSA* 9.23, Lévy (1907: 37).

> In emptiness being pure, having attained a path that is absence of self, [and] because they have attained the pure self, Buddhas arrive at their own great self.

Notably the Tibetan expression for this *ātmamahātma* is *bdag nyid chen po'i bdag*, which appears familiar.[933] We may take the *bdag nyid* here to refer to the individual, i.e. the conventional person or subject, in the manner that it does in *AMS*^{T}: therein distinguishing the conventional person from the more profound *bdag gi dbyings*, i.e. their *ātma-dhātu*.[934] *MSA*^{C} avoids any such distinction (perhaps not finding need to state grammatically the conventional agent as such): hence we can read *MSA*^{S} as simply 'the acquiring of one's own 'great self'.[935] This expression, much like in the *RGVV*,

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[931] See discussion of this term in chapter 3.3.
[932] See pp.343-345.
[933] *MSA*^{T} e.g. D.4020,9b4; Q.5521,*phi*,10b6.
[934] See chapter 4.7.
[935] *MSA*^{C}: T.1604,603c10.

seems to be the self that is the pinnacle of non-self: i.e. the conclusion to having properly comprehended the doctrine of *anātman*.

As stated above, the *MSA* should be thought of first as a Yogācāra text that incorporated (and not without qualification) a kind of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine. However dating this in relation to the texts we have addressed is difficult: the *MSA* is quoted by all versions of the *RGVV*, and while both texts are likely to have developed over time (very possibly overlapping) we cannot assume that the *MSA* draws its account from this source.[936] Nevertheless, the *MSA* contains what appears to be a formulation of a 'great self', which may suggest its awareness also of the *MPMS*, or at least some ideas featured therein.[937]

In the *MPMS*-group, it certainly appears that there is affirmed a self *qua* permanent, essential nature that defines beings. However the *ŚDS*, *RGV(V)* and *MSA* all seem to downplay the sense of *ātman* as a resident entity in beings, but rather use it to qualify their status after having attained awakening.[938] Once again, the *ātman* of this *mahātman* might better be understood as one's great 'identity'; i.e. the correct comprehension of *what one is* once rid of the illusion of conventional selfhood.[939]

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[936] Intriguing is the metrical similarity between the first verses of *MSA* 9 and those detailing the nine similes of the *tathāgatagarbha* in the *RGV*, discussed by Zimmermann (2002: 78), which has him suggest that the two may have been composed 'in the same or in a closely similar milieu.' If this is accepted, then the concern of *MSA* 9 with an account of 'great selfhood', an idea it may have acquired from the milieu of the *MPMS*, is more interesting still.

[937] See p.112.

[938] What Seyfort Ruegg (1989a: 5) has described as a metatheoretical expression, referring to no 'first order entity'.

[939] It is true that elsewhere this expression is a term of reverence into which one cannot necessarily read any understanding of a notion of selfhood.

We are fortunate that Indian commentarial material survives that pertains to the *MSA*. First, there is the *Mahāyānasūtālaṃkāra-Bhāṣya* (*MSAB*) that provides a structure for understanding the verses of the *MSA*, which explains the meaning (*artha*) of the nature of the Buddha which is a kind of self.[940]

> *tatra cānāsrave dhātau buddhānāṃ paramātmā nirdiśyate /*
>
> *kiṃ kāraṇaṃ l agranairātmyātmakatvāt / agraṃ nairātmyaṃ viśuddhā tathatā sā ca buddhānām ātmā svabhāvārthena tasyāṃ viśuddhāyām agraṃ nairātmyam ātmānaṃ buddhā labhante śuddhaṃ /*
>
> *ataḥ śuddhātmalābhitvāt buddhā ātmamāhātmyaṃ prāptā ity anena abhisaṃdhinā buddhānām anāsrave dhātau paramātmā vyavasthāpyate /*
>
> *MSAB* 9.23, Lévy (1907: 38).

In this [verse], regarding the pure realm, there is taught the supreme self of the Buddhas.

However this is otherwise still reminiscent of the upaniṣadic *mahātman*, in the cosmogony of texts such as the *BĀU* (e.g. *BĀU* 4.4.20; see Olivelle (1998: 124-125), that is the totality of selves originally unified and self-conscious (see van Buitenen (1964)). While perhaps wanting to evoke this concept, the *MSA* surely does so without implying that a *greater* sense of personhood is attained, so much as the great *sense* of personhood which is precisely the lack of a worldly self.

[940] Attribution of the *MSAB* to the same author of the *MSA* is found in the Chinese tradition (i.e. Asaṅga), while the Sanskrit manuscript and Tibetan colophon name one Vyavadātasamaya, and later Tibetan tradition (in which the *MSA* survives as an independent text) attributes the commentary to Asaṅga's brother, Vasubandha. Authorship of these texts remains unresolved, and hence I find it prudent to here consider each on their own terms. See Griffiths (1990: 45).

> Why is this? Due to their self [as identity] being the pinnacle of non-self. The pinnacle of non-self is reality purified, that is the self of the Buddhas in the sense of [their] own nature; that being purified, the Buddhas attain the pure self that is the pinnacle of none self.
> Hence, due to the attainment of the pure self, the Buddhas are said to attain their own great self; with this meaning, regarding the pure realm, is the supreme self of the Buddhas established.[941]

Here there is no more mention of emptiness, but qualification of the self of Buddhas in terms of non-self (*nairātmya*). What is arrived at is the supreme self (*paramātman*) which we saw also in the *RGVV*, and again is most likely 1) a synonym for *mahātman* and 2) a designator for a reality void of discrete, worldly persons. We note the use of the term *dhātu* in the above, which here (and elsewhere in *MSA* 9) certainly seems to denote the 'realm' attained by the Buddhas, i.e. the state of *nirvāṇa*.[942] This is not the sense of *dhātu* in the compound *buddha-dhātu* as we have encountered elsewhere, and as such the above may constitute a redirection of known *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine enacted by the *MSA*.[943] Use of *dhātu* to signify 'realm' in the above may

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[941] For another account of this passage, with special attention to the sense of *abhisaṃdhi*, see Seyfort Ruegg (1989b: 305).
[942] e.g. *MSA* 9.26, Lévy (1907: 38): *buddhānām amale dhātau naikatā bahutā na ca / ākāśavad adehatvāt pūrvadehānusārataḥ* // 'In the uncontaminated realm of the Buddhas they are neither single nor many; due to having no body, like the sky, [and] due to following on from his previous body.'
[943] The sense of *dhātu* as realm is confirmed by *MSA*^{C}: T.1604,603c12; c17 (無漏界) discussed by Takasaki (1966: 83); also Williams (2009: 96; ft.30). See also chapter 3.3.

reflect a very deliberate interpretation of pre-existing *tathāgatagarbha* categories in the direction of the Yogācāra, according with these authors.[944]

We have available to us also the commentary to this verse (and prose of *MSAB*) provided by Sthiramati's *(Mahāyāna)Sūtrālaṃkāravṛtti-Bhāṣya* (*MSAVB*), which in accord with the reputation of its author continues to take this text further in the direction of Yogācāra categories.[945] Specifically, the *MSAVB* (which comments on nearly every word of the *MSA*), stresses that the *nairātmya* discussed above is both that of persons and indeed of *dharma*-s: the latter being a dimension not apparent in the *MSA(B)* which, in stronger accord with the *tathāgatagarbha* corpus in general, appears focused upon the absence of selfhood in persons alone.[946]

Returning to the root text, the *MSA* elsewhere employs the term *mahātman* in the context of a 'great person', i.e. applauding the virtue of the Buddha. For our purposes one further verse should be addressed.

saṃskāramātraṃ jagad etya buddhyā nirātmakaṃ

duḥkhavirūḍhimātraṃ /

vihāya yānarthamayātmadṛṣṭiḥ mahātmadṛṣṭiṃ śrayate mahārthāṃ //

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[944] The *MSA* goes on to make clear that it does not agree with what it probably would view as the *śāśvatāvāda* view of the *MPMS*-group, denying as it does that the Buddha could be called either existing or non-existing after *nirvāṇa*: *MSA(B)* 9.24. Once again this bears a similarity to the last portion of the commentary in *RGVV*^{C}, concerned with questions left unanswered by the Buddha.

[945] *MSAVB*: e.g. D.4034,*mi*,1b-*tsi*,266a; Q.5531,*mi*,1-*tsi*,308a8. Available to us also is the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāraṭīkā*, attributed to one *Asvabhāva/Niḥsvabhāva, though this provides no further elaboration on the passage relevant to us. See Griffiths (1990: 46-48).

[946] *MSAVB*: e.g. D.4034,*mi,*119a3-b3; Q.5531,*mi*,133b5-134a5.

MSA 14.37, Lévi (1907: 95).

Having come to understand that the world is mere construction, without self, merely a wealth of suffering; having abandoned the view of the self that is without meaning, [one] relies upon the view of the great self that is the great meaning.

The verse following this (*MSA* 14.38) situates thoughts of self/non-self in the context of the right conduct of the *bodhisattva*, but it remains the case that the above seems to associate this with denial of worldly selfhood. The commentary in *MSAB* is revealing.

anarthamayātmadṛṣṭir yā kliṣṭā satkāyadṛṣṭiḥ / mahātmadṛṣṭir iti mahārthā yā sarvasatveṣv ātmasamacittalābhātmadṛṣṭiḥ / sā hi sarvasatvārthakriyāhetutvāt mahārthā /

MSAB 14.37, Lévy (1907: 95).

The view of self that is without meaning is the afflicted view of the worldly self. The view of a great self, this has a great meaning, which is the view of self [born of] attaining the mind of the sameness of [one]self with all beings: this is a great meaning, due to its being the cause of actions for the sake of all beings.

Here *anartha* refers to the lack of a referent to the *ātman* of the worldly *ātmadṛṣṭi*. The *mahārtha*, by contrast, is labeled 'great' not just to distinguish it from what is false, but perhaps to align it with the broader affirmations of the *MSA* regarding the 'greatness' of the Mahāyāna and its teaching.[947] The same may be true of the here somewhat 'ethicized' *mahātman*, working as the text says for all beings, and qualified by 1) abandoning the false self and 2) (presumably related) realizing the lack of distinction between oneself and others. Though it is not stated explicitly, this *mahātman* may be meant to evoke the great self *qua* identity addressed above, and similar to that found in the *RGVV*. This would mean that the notion of identity that has abandoned the self dismisses also the ethical distinction between (conventional) self and other.

This 'great meaning' (or perhaps 'purpose') establishes the *bodhisattva*'s acts for the sake of all beings. The 'great self' that they exhibit indeed acts in such a fashion, but this cannot avoid evoking the *mahātman* mentioned earlier in the *MSA* that seems to be the great *identity* of an awakened being lacking any sense of conventional personhood. Hence, the great self of the Buddha is at once 1) their *identity* that recognizes the absence of discrete beings, and 2) the root of compassionate action for all beings, to be pursued by the *bodhisattva*.

This implied ethicization of the 'true' sense of self is not central to the *tathāgatagarbha* literature proper, but perhaps reflects the nature of the *MSA*

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[947] Similar indeed to the use of *-pāramitā* with *nitya*, *ātman* etc. in the *ŚDS* and *RGV(V)*: qualifying an otherwise rejected notion (e.g. selfhood) in terms of its *correct* usage in accord with Buddhist categories. See also Seyfort Ruegg (1989b: 305).

as a compendious text outside of this tradition: exhibiting a different take again on this doctrine, and its associated discourse on 'correct' selfhood, that we have been considering.[948] Its usage of the expression *mahātman* is also enigmatic, and may reflect its own awareness (perhaps apart from the *tathāgatagarbha* lineage as we have presented it here) of the *MPMS* and its innovation of a Buddhist *ātmavāda*.

7.3 *Further Śāstric Sources*

It is not the purpose of this study to investigate non-Indian interpretations of the *tathāgatagarbha*. It is certainly the case that commentarial (and indeed *sūtra* material) produced in China developed the *tathāgatagarbha* into a more comprehensive teaching: one which arguably is the backbone of all successful expressions of Chinese Buddhism.[949] In Tibet, though little is written about other *tathāgatagarbha* texts, the transmission of the *RGV(V)* to there by the *paṇḍita* Sajjana *RGV(V)* in the eleventh century remains an important event in the history of Buddhism in that tradition.[950]

We nevertheless have a few instances of Indian commentators referencing the *tathāgatagarbha* and, importantly, implying that it continued to be haunted by allegations of promoting a 'heretical' Buddhist *ātmavāda*.[951]

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[948] Though ethical repercussions of this doctrine do feature elsewhere: see chapter 4.8, regarding the vetarianism of the *AMS*.
[949] A key example of which is the **Buddhanature-Śāstra*, treated by King (1991), and of course the *Awakening of Faith* (T.1666): see Vorenkamp (2004). Both were influential Chinese reflections on the *tathāgatagarbha* considered products of India authors. See pp.8-9.
[950] Recent accounts of the reception of the *RGV(V)* in India and Tibetan can be found in Mathes (2008: 25-48); Kano (2008: 17-89).
[951] Consider also Candrakīrti's use of the *LAS*: see p.309.

Bhāviveka's C6th *Tarkajvala* mentions the *tathāgatagarbha* in its fourth chapter, concerned with the *śrāvaka*-s and their positions on various matters: metaphysical and Buddhological specifically.[952] One complaint that the *śrāvaka*-s are considered to have is with the permanence of the Tathāgata in the Mahāyāna.

> *de bzhin gshegs pa rtag pa nyid du ston par byed pas 'dus byas thams cad mi rtag pa zhes bya ba dang 'gal ba'i yang phyir ro // de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying pos khyab pa nyid dang / len pa'i rnam par shes pa ston par byed pas bdag tu 'dzin pa ma spangs pa'i yang phyir ro //*
>
> *Tarkajvala*: Eckel (2008: 319).

> The teaching of the permanence of the Tathāgata contradicts the expression that all conditioned things are impermanent. The teaching of the pervasion of the *tathāgatagarbha* and the receiving consciousness (*ādānavijñāna*) do not overcome grasping to the self (*ātmagrāha*).

Hence the permanence of the Buddha is mentioned in the same breath as the pervasiveness of the *tathāgatagarbha*, and with it the *ādānavijñāna* (*len pa'i rnam par shes pa*) that is a synonym of the *ālayavijñāna*.[953] As a Mahāyāna doctrine the *tathāgatagarbha* is here associated with failure to overcome attachment to the self. In other words, the *śrāvaka*-s hold that this

[952] See Eckel (2008). Regarding Bhāviveka, see Seyfort Ruegg (1981: 61-66).
[953] For thorough treatment of this notion, see Schmithausen (1987).

doctrine is counterproductive: promoting attachment to some reality that might survive *nirvāṇa*, but obstructing the cultivation of non-self, central to the *śrāvakayāna*.

The author's attention then turns to the *tathāgatagarbha qua* selfhood.

> *de bzhin gshegs pa ni khyab pa'o zhes bya ba ni ye shes kyi shes byam lus pa la khyab pas yin gyi / khyab 'jug dang 'dra bar thams cad du gnas pa nyid ni ma yin no //*
> *de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po can zhes bya ba yang stong pa nyid dang / mtshan ma med pa dang / smon pa med pa la sogs pa rnams sems can thams cad kyi rgyud la yod pa'i phyir yin gyi / nang gi byed pa'i skyes bu rtag pa thams cad du khyab pa lta bu ni ma yin te / ji skad du/ chos thams cad ni stong pa nyid dang / mtshan ma med pa dang / smon pa med pa'i ngo bo / gang stong pa nyid dang/ mtshan ma dang / smon pa med pa de ni de bzhin gshegs pa'o zhes bya ba la sogs pa 'byung bas so //*
> *len pa'i rnam par shes pa yang 'khor bar 'jug pa dang ldog pa'i rgyur gyur pa/ chu bo chen po'i rgyun bzhin du 'bab pas 'jug tu zin kyang/ skad cig ma nyid kyi rgyun gyis 'jug pa yin gyi / bdag dang 'dra bar ni ma yin pa'i phyir bdag med pa'i chos kyi phyag rgya dang mi 'gal lo //*
>
> *Tarkajvala*, Eckel (2008: 339).

> Saying that the Tathāgata pervades means that his knowledge pervades all objects of cognition, not pervading all in the manner of Viṣṇu.
>
> Saying that the *tathāgatagarbha* is emptiness, signlessness, lacking intention etc. means that it exists in the [mental] continuum of all beings, but is not like an inner agent, permanent, and all-pervading. So it was said, 'all *dharma*-s are emptiness, signless, lacking intention, and what is emptiness, signless, lacking intention is said to be the Tathāgata'.
>
> The receiving consciousness (*ādānavijñāna*) is the cause of the rising and falling of *samsāra*. Flowing like the stream of a great river, it is active, but active as a continuum of momentariness. It is not like a self, hence does not contradict the seal of the *dharma* that is non-self.

Bhāviveka's interpretation is clear: that one manner of understanding the underlying consciousness of sentient beings, in a state of constant flux, affirms the permanence of the Buddha in beings. The presence of the *tathāgatagarbha* is, moreover, defined in terms of *buddhajñāna*. This does not seem to be the presence of the *buddhajñāna* as found in the *TGS*, but rather the pervasion of the Buddha's *own* knowledge, as found in the *Tathāgatotpattisaṃbhavanirdeśa-Sūtra*.[954] What the *tathāgatagarbha* is certainly not is analogous to the presence of Viṣṇu in all beings as communicated by *vaiṣṇava* metaphysics (a comparison we did not encounter

[954] See p.314; also p.60,ft.141a.

explicitly in the *tathāgatagarbha* sources themselves); nor does this designate an agent (*kartṛ*) within beings.[955]

Interestingly, Bhāviveka's later chapter on the Yogācāra does not mention the *tathāgatagarbha* as a tenet of that system. The implication of this is that despite his association of the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *ādanavijñāna*, (and reference to the *LAS* elsewhere in the *Tarkajvala*) he does not consider it to be a Yogācāra category. Indeed despite its apparent absorption by the Yogācāra, other Mādhyamika authors continued to consider the *tathāgatagarbha* as a definitive teaching expounding the *ekayāna*.[956]

Kamalaśīla's late-C8th *Madhyamakāloka*, for example, understands the *tathāgatagarbha* to express the *dharmadhātu* present in all beings, explaining the ability of all to attain awakening.[957]

> *sems can thams cad ni de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po can no zhes bya ba 'dis kyang / thams cad bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub kyi go 'phang thob par rung ba nyid du yongs su bstan te / de bzhin gshegs pa'i sgra ni chos kyi dbyings gang zag dang chos la bdag med pa'i mtshan nyid rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal ba yin par brjod par bzhed pa'i phyir ro //*
>
> *Madhyamakāloka*: D.3887,242b4-b6; Q.5287,272a8-273a2; gS.3290,338a6-b2; N.*mdo 'grel*,*sa*,265b-5-6.

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[955] E.g. *Bhagavad Gīta* 11.38-40, Sargeant (1994: 490-492).
[956] See p.7,ft.18.
[957] See Seyfort Ruegg (1981: 95-96).

> ‘All sentient beings possess the *tathāgatagarbha’*, is the teaching that all [beings] are able to attain the state of full, perfect awakening; because the expression ‘Tathāgata’ is the realm of reality (*dharmadhātu*), which has the character of absence of self in regards to both persons and phenomena, that is said to be natural luminosity.

As Kano writes, this understands the *tathāgatagarbha* as ‘*dharmadhātu-garbha’*, in which the characteristic of the *dharmadhātu* is precisely the absence of self: an understanding of this entity as *nairātmya* similar to that in the *LAS*, wherein the *tathāgatagarbha* is clearly glossed as such.[958] Understanding the content of the *tathāgatagarbha* as *nairātmya* is certainly visible also in the *RGV(V)* and *MSA*, which are other possible sources for this interpretation. Whatever else, it is certainly a long way from the account of the *MPMS*-group that affirms the *tathāgatagarbha* as a kind of selfhood.

The *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine addressed in previous chapters was then taken in two directions: one in accord with the Yogācāra, in which it appears subservient to the *ālayavijñāna*; and one with the Madhyamaka in which it is understood to have the same character of all *dharma*-s, i.e. properly expressing the *dharmadhātu* defined in terms of emptiness. The latter is certainly more in accord with the *RGV(V)* that is the terminus of ‘pure’ *tathāgatagarbha* thought in India: reconfiguring the *ekayāna* paradigm of the *SPS* in terms of the universal *buddhagotra*, but as we have witnessed this

[958] Kano (2008: 10).

does not represent all aspects of this doctrine across its various manifestations.[959]

In particular, the *RGV(V)* – and other śāstric works that discuss the *tathāgatagarbha* – avoid the perhaps very problematic language of the *MPMS*-group concerning a 'true' self in the constitution of beings. The remaining question pertains to what distinguished the intentions of those authors behind the *MPMS*-group from those of other texts, such as the *ŚDS* and *RGV(V)*, who were clearly disposed towards revising the *tathāgatagarbha* in accord with other Mahāyāna categories.

[959] See Seyfort Ruegg (2004: 39-40; 1977).

8. Conclusions: The Function of the Buddhist Self

8.1 *Summary*

Having reviewed relevant exponents of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, we pause now to summarize how each appears to discuss the *tathāgatagarbha* in terms of selfhood. The below reflects a progression of conceptual developments in this literature, which I propose be taken as a chronology of relevant material in these sources.[960]

* The *Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (*TGS*) makes no mention of the *tathāgatagarbha* as a self, though across its different versions exhibits a wide variety of descriptions for that significant content of sentient beings that constitutes their identity with a Buddha. Some of these expressions suggest this content to be an essential constituent (e.g. the *buddha-dhātu*), though others present this only as a collection of qualities (e.g. *buddhajñāna*) manifested upon awakening. The presence of this reality in all beings, as Zimmermann has demonstrated, is in all likelihood a development of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtra* (*SPS*) and its account of one vehicle (*ekayāna*) through which all beings can (and indeed will) be awakened.

* The *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Mahāsūtra* (*MPMS*, and of course part of the *MPMS*-group), following Shimoda's stratification of the text, has content that

[960] Allowing for the possibility of material from some texts, e.g. the first stratum of the *MPMS* (prior to its appropriation of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine) to predate the *TGS*. I do not include here the somewhat tangential *MSA*: the composition of which is contemporaneous with the *RGV* and which might, I suggest in the previous chapter, have also been aware of the *MPMS*.

pre-dates its acceptance of *tathāgatagarbha* thought, that is instead focused on the permanence of the Buddha.[961] The text also states that the Buddha could be considered a self (i.e. permanently existing, exerting 'masterful' control over his existence), though later in its development attributed this instead to the *buddha-dhātu*: the nature of a Buddha present in sentient beings. This *buddha-dhātu* is called the 'true' self: distinct from any worldly notion of selfhood, but also that which has been misunderstood for a worldly self by teachers outside of the *saddharma* (i.e. *tīrthika*-s), with whose accounts of the self the *buddha-dhātu* should not be confused.

* The *Aṅgulimālīya-Sūtra* (*AMS*, also of the *MPMS*-group) appears to be the main inheritor of the *buddha-dhātu* doctrine as outlined in the *MPMS*. It shares the view that this is a permanent element present in beings, though frequently refers to this as the *ātma-dhātu*, i.e. '(proper) nature of the (worldly) self', which was perhaps intended to distinguish the (*buddha*-)*dhātu* within beings from any erroneous notion of a self held by the *tīrthika*-s. Such lexical distinctions aside, the *ātma-dhātu* seems very much like a constituent of beings that is their true nature, and as such is synonymous with the true self of the *MPMS*.

* The *Mahābherī-Sūtra* (*MBhS*, also of the *MPMS*-group) is notable for echoing much of the content of the *SPS*, along with having an account of the permanence of beings across births and into awakening (reminiscent of that found in the *AAN*). Regarding selfhood, its focus (more akin to the *SPS*, or the earlier content of the *MPMS*) appears to be the Buddha constituting a

[961] Regarding the *MPMS*-group as a category, see p.8,ft.19a; also pp.74-75.

permanent, 'masterful' self with power over his existence. This designation is fitting also for the *tathāgatagarbha* that wants for liberation: an equation that the *MBhS* certainly accepts, and does not seem as concerned to defend as the *MPMS* and *AMS*.

* The *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda-Sūtra* (*ŚDS*) is clearly aware of at least the *MPMS*, if not also the *AMS* and/or *MBhS*, and shares the view that the *tathāgatagarbha* should not be confused for any worldly notion of a self. It picks up the view, present in the earlier content of the *MPMS*, that it is correct to think of what is supermundane – herein the *dharmakāya* – in terms of selfhood, though qualified as the perfection of self (*ātmapāramitā*) to distinguish it from any worldly usage of that designation. Importantly, this 'perfected' self is clarified as a property not of sentient beings *per se*, but of their character after awakening.

* The *Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśa-Parivarta* (*AAN*) concerns also the identity of the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *dharmakāya*. Both are known also as the *sattva-dhātu*, and while this appears to constitute a lasting nature that transmigrates until awakening, again being the common element between 'beings and Buddhas', it is not designated as a self.[962]

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[962] As made clear, the *AAN* avoids any reference to the *tathāgatagarbha* as a self (a trope deemed worthy of mention by every text here clearly later than the *MPMS*). Silk (forthcoming: 11,ft.36), and with him Oda (1993: 576) (though contra Takasaki (1974: 111-121)) contend that it is likely later than the *ŚDS*, hence also the *MPMS*-group, and likely presupposes material such as the *tathāgatagarbha*/*dharmakāya* equation found therein. If this is so, then the *AAN*'s lack of interest in the *tathāgatagarbha* designated as a self is intriguing, especially if we presume that the text may have been aware of the *AMS* and *MBhS* which seem to share a common interest in the expanse of existence, expressed very much in terms of the language of selfhood. A

* The *Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra* (*LAS*), as a Yogācāra-oriented text, sees the *tathāgatagarbha* reduced to an epithet of the *ālayavijñāna*: the substrate consciousness that is this text's own understanding of a basis both for successive (re)births and eventual awakening. Herein the *tathāgatagarbha* is taught for the purpose of leading *tīrthika*-s into the *saddharma*. As such, the *tathāgatagarbha* designated in terms of selfhood is treated as provisional: a position that may represent disapproval of the *MPMS*-group and its dalliances with *ātmavādain* categories.

* The *Ratnagotravibhāga-Śāstra* (*RGV*) and commentary (*RGVV*) appear to mark the culmination of (non-Yogācāra) *tathāgatagarbha* thought in India: influenced strongly by the *TGS*, *ŚDS* and *AAN*, but certainly also aware of at least the earlier stratum of the *MPMS*. In this the perfection of self in the *dharmakāya*, picked up from the *ŚDS*, is glossed as both 1) a 'perfected' understanding of one's identity arrived at through full appreciation of the doctrine of non-self; and 2) that aspect of the *dharmakāya* arrived at by the *tīrthika* – i.e. one attached to the notion of selfhood – by cultivating the perfection of insight (*prajñāpāramitā*). It is then the 'correct' comprehension of one's identity that is arrived at by understanding the erroneousness (indeed emptiness) of worldly personhood: a conclusion to discourse on the self (*ātmavāda*) as entertained by the *tīrthika*-s.

In some instances the designation *ātman* is employed in relation to a Buddha as one who exhibits the attributes of a self: i.e. permanence,

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closer investigation of other themes shared by all of these texts may provide some clarity regarding their relationship.

superlative (Buddha-)qualities, and autonomy in regards to the mechanics of *karman*. This is true both of the *MPMS* (certainly its earlier content) and it seems the *MBhS* (derivative of the *MPMS*, but also of the *SPS* that is concerned foremost with the permanence of a 'divine', seemingly god-like, Buddha).[963] Influenced by the *tathāgatagarbha*, the later content of the *MPMS* introduced the notion of a *tathāgatagarbha*/*buddha-dhātu* that might be considered the 'true' self present in beings: an account inherited by both the *AMS* and *MBhS*. The *AMS* appears to defend the notion of a *buddha-dhātu* and clarifies, perhaps to critics of the *MPMS*, that this be understood as the *ātma*[-*buddha*]-*dhātu* rather than simply a 'correct' form of a self (in perhaps fragile contrast to all those that are not).[964]

The authors of the *ŚDS* and *LAS* seem to have disapproved of understanding the *tathāgatagarbha* as any kind of self, but the *ŚDS* preserves the idea that some 'higher' notion of selfhood can be attributed to the *dharmakāya*: a metaphysically abstract account of the 'Buddha as (perfect) selfhood'. This is picked up by the *RGV(V)*, which then explains this 'perfection of self' in terms of a perspective arrived at through the overcoming of worldly selfhood.

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[963] Lai (1981: 450-453) discusses the early content of the *SPS* as embodying a 'personal' Buddhology that is 'predocetic', i.e. prior to the Buddha's dissolution into the abstract *dharmakāya* (a category not present in the earliest material of the *SPS*) of which the *buddhakāya* is only an emanation. This appears very much like the account of the eternal, god-like Buddha found in the *MPMS*-group, which is eclipsed in the *ŚDS* with the abstract *dharmakāya*: a text which is perhaps less interested in the continuity of the Buddha, and more the exploration of Buddhahood as a goal of the *bodhisattva*.

[964] See chapter 4.9.

This trajectory is not without continuity. The final position of the *RGV(V)* is that a supreme notion of selfhood is arrived at precisely through understanding the absence of anything wrongly deemed a self. This is still in accord with the account of the *MPMS*-group, which reassures its audience that the 'true' self of the *tathāgatagarbha* is not that of the wrong-minded *tīrthika*-s: indeed it is realized precisely through abandoning such worldly notions. The distinction, however, is the willingness of these texts to attribute this 'correct' selfhood to a reality affirmed both before *as well as* after awakening: the distinction between *tathāgatagarbha* and *dharmakāya* (*ŚDS*; *RGV(V)*) or *buddha-dhātu* and Buddha (*MPMS*-group). The distinguishing factor between each is mental afflictions (*kleśa*-s), which in each instance accompany the former but not the latter. While the *MPMS*-group seems happy for the 'selfhood' of a Buddha to be present in afflicted beings, the authors of the *ŚDS* and *RGV(V)* do not use this to predicate the 'nirvāṇic' aspect of sentient beings *prior* to their alleviation from mental afflictions.

This distinction is indicative of the Buddhology of each text: the *MPMS*-group, seemingly closer to the god-like account of the Buddha found in the *SPS*, seem to conceive of the Buddha as a permanent, but still personal, reality. Their notion of awakening as an abiding joy experienced by a recipient (the possessor of a *buddha-dhātu*) unites one who desires for awakening with the state in which they enjoy this as a fully manifested Buddha.[965] The *ŚDS* appears more metaphysically abstract: the Buddha is conceived in terms of a collection of qualities – including the *ātmapāramitā* which (according to the

[965] Central both of the *MPMS* (see e.g. p.72), and *MBhS* (pp.233-234).

RGV(V)) is precisely the absence of any worldly self – that describes the absolute, and crucially *impersonal*, Buddha.[966] Implied criticism by the *ŚDS* (and also the *LAS*) of the *MPMS*-group might concern its attachment still to Buddhahood as attainment by a *personal* entity. For the *ŚDS*, in so far as there is any 'true' self in the *tathāgatagarbha*, it must be that self *qua* true identity that is completely depersonalized, and has abandoned any suggestion of a recipient that might 'enjoy' awakening.

The intention of this thesis is to understand not only how the *tathāgatagarbha* literature has employed the designation of a self, but also why. It is important to establish that such language was not necessary for all of our authors. Those of the *TGS* and *AAN* composed rich and provocative accounts of the *tathāgatagarbha* as respectively 1) the permanent presence of awakened qualities in the constitution of sentient beings and 2) the essential nature (*dhātu*) of sentient beings that allows for their equation with an awakened Buddha. Neither text uses the expression *ātman* at any stage, though both concern a permanent, unchanging nature that jars with the earlier Buddhist reduction of beings to elements dependently arisen.[967] It seems an innovation of the *MPMS* to introduce explicit designation of this [*sattva-*]*buddha-dhātu* as a kind of self: a notion strongly qualified by the *ŚDS* and

[966] The position of the *AAN* in this typology, which shows evidence of both poles of personal/abstract Buddhology, I find difficult to place. This demonstrates that these poles do not constitute a strict dichotomy: rather we deal here with a spectrum of positions on how a Buddha should be best conceived, perhaps determined by other doctrinal interests of each of our texts.

[967] See the account of this in chapter 1.3.

RGV(V) when they affirm that only *subsequent* to awakening can there be any correct talk of a 'true' self, as a quality of the *dharmakāya*.

We recognize then two forms of the '*tathāgatagarbha* as self' present across these texts: 1) the implicit, wherein the *tathāgatagarbha* clearly performs some of the functions of a self (outlined in the first chapter); and 2) the explicit, in which it is designated by the expression *ātman*. In the former, the *tathāgatagarbha* is a self insofar as it represents that permanent constitution of beings that is denied elsewhere in the Buddhist tradition. Where beings are effectively 'reduced' to the *skandha*-s, and reborn only through the mechanics of *karman* that fuel recurring production of these, there is no space for any component entity, i.e. some *dhātu*, that is more than this. The *tathāgatagarbha* as (*sattva*-)*dhātu*, in spite of this, seems to act as the common factor between repeated experience of *saṃsāra*, and of *nirvāṇa* (a position of the *AAN* and *RGV(V)* in particular).

We might here hark back to our earlier discussion of the Pudgalavāda, which seems similarly concerned with preserving the numerical identity of a sentient being before and after attainment of *nirvāṇa*.[968] As a Śrāvakayāna expression, the Pudgalavāda position has as its focus the attainment of the state of *arhattva* rather than full awakening, though for both that school and at least some of our *tathāgatagarbha* authors there is a shared concern for how a worldly person can conceive of themselves as 'attaining' anything in light of the doctrine of non-self. At stake for both traditions are two kinds of continuity: 1) that between successive births and 2) that between a saṃsāric being and a

[968] See chapter 1.4.1.

nirvāṇic Buddha. The notion of an expansive reality that unites these (as in the *MBhS* and *AAN*), or called the basis of both (the *ŚDS*), or constitutes in some sense the presence of a Buddha already in beings (the *MPMS*-group) supplies the demand for some continuity in a system that otherwise rejects the existence of that which would unify experience: i.e. a permanent self.[969]

In light of the distaste wider Buddhism seemed to have for this notion, the remaining question is why there are texts that explicitly refer to the *tathāgatagarbha*/*buddha-dhātu* as a 'true' self when use of this expression need not be necessary. Associations of the *tathāgatagarbha* with permanence and mastery – two key qualities attributable to a self – certainly invite use of this expression, and it is evident that the true self of this literature shares these with the self not found amidst the *skandha*-s. But adoption of the term *ātman* clearly did not go unopposed. On the one hand, this may be seen as a natural development of the idea of a permanent capacity for awakening found first in the *TGS*, in conjunction with the attribution of selfhood to the Buddha by the *MPMS*, but the adoption of the term *ātman* was clearly, and justifiably, seen as controversial.

The *MPMS*-group betrays an awareness (which apparently increased over different recensions) of erroneous notions of the self with which this should not be confused, and both the *MPMS* and *AMS* go to some lengths to clarify how the true self is not one clearly rejected by earlier Buddhist sources. The authors of both the *ŚDS* and *LAS* draw a line under any suggestion that this designation is befitting of the *tathāgatagarbha*, and focus instead on the

[969] See p.32.

dharmakāya (exhibiting the perfection of self) and *ālayavijñāna* (a changing, meta-psychological substrate) respectively. The *RGV(V)* considered that the 'perfection of self', or the *dharmakāya* conceived as the 'supreme self', still had value: at least in part, as implied by the *LAS*, for the purpose of educating the *tīrthika* attached to a view of the selfhood.

However the *RGV*, or otherwise 'Treatise of the Supreme Teaching' (*Uttaratantra-Śāstra*) certainly does not hold that this supreme self is merely provisional: it is certainly a correct designation of the *dharmakāya*. Similarly, the *MPMS*-group affirm at length the value of this doctrine, and to accept the account of the *LAS* regarding the intent of their authors would be somewhat hasty, bearing in mind the latter's clear adherence to a different interpretation of the *tathāgatagarbha* (i.e. couched in Yogācāra terms). We must, I believe, work under the assumption that the authors of the *MPMS*-group believed, as indeed they claim, to be expounding a 'hidden', or pedagogically intentional teaching (*saṃdhāvacana*) of the Buddha, which constituted a higher expression of the *saddharma*.[970]

I believe that the perceived relationship between this 'true' self and its misconception in the eyes of the *tīrthika* is key to understanding why our authors chose to describe the *tathāgatagarbha* as the true self. For the remainder of this chapter, I shall focus on passages in the above literature that imply that this proximity to the discourse of *tīrthika*-s does not reduce the *tathāgatagarbha* as a self to a provisional or expedient teaching. Rather, it represents in several of our texts a development towards the doctrinal

[970] See p.113,ft.283.

completion, and by that subjugation, of all apparently similar, extraneous *ātmavāda* doctrines. This, I shall argue, constitutes a thread running through our literature which might again be prefigured by the *SPS*: both the inspiration for the *tathāgatagarbha* and, I believe, a key exponent of a Buddhological paradigm shared by, foremost, the *MPMS*-group.

8.2 *Extraneous Teachers*

Before proceeding, my account of why the *tathāgatagarbha* authors introduced a Buddhist self rests on a certain understanding of those with whom they may have been compared. It has been demonstrated that our authors probably received allegations that their doctrine resembled too closely accounts of a self associated with the so-called *tīrthika*-s.

This term comes in several variant forms (*tīrthya*, *tīrthika*, *tīrthaka*, *tīrthikara*), and is employed across Mahāyāna texts in particular in a strongly pejorative sense: denoting rival, non-Buddhist teachers extraneous to the *saṅgha*. Tibetan translation frequently renders these as *mu stegs*, *mu stegs can* or *mu stegs pa*, though attested also is *phyi rol pa* – literally an 'outsider' – which both agrees with the common Chinese rendering of this term (外道), and captures better the sense of an extraneous party, as connoted by Buddhist literature.[971] The *tathāgatagarbha* literature refers to these *tīrthika*-s as those who teach the existence of a self: as much as the defining feature of

[971] Chandra (1959: 609b-c; 518c).

the *saddharma* can be said to be denial of the worldly self, that of the *tīrthika*-s is attachment to precisely that.[972]

According to Parpola, these expressions stem from the brāhmaṇical cult of the *tīrtha*; those who frequented these fords or bathing places, associated with the *avabhṛtha* ritual prescribed to cleanse the Vedic sacrificer of impurities.[973] Across Buddhist literature, Edgerton considers such terms to be pejorative in all instances, referring to 'heretics' (the synonym *tīrthikara* he defines as a 'heresiarch, founder of a heretical sect').[974] This is questionable in two ways: first, Parpola doubts that *tīrthikara* employs the suffix -*kara* in the sense of builder or maker, but instead designates their occupancy or use of a bathing place, i.e. as 'one who frequents sacred bathing places, one who abides at a *tīrtha'*: identical in sense to *tīrthika*.[975] Secondly, I contend that it is wrong to crudely translate these teachers as 'heretics', as has been scholarly convention.

In Pāli literature, the term certainly designates founders of various doctrines, e.g. *śramaṇa*-s, much like Śākyamuni, who had gained some following.[976] We need look no further than the inspiration for the account of King Ajātasattu's encounter with the six *tīrthika*-s discussed in chapter one: i.e. the *Sāmaññaphala-Sutta*, within which the six are clearly revered teachers, '[each] known as a famous *titthakara*' with an assembly of

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[972] Indeed the *RGVV* identifies 'insiders' of the *saṅgha* whose wrong conceptions are those of the *tīrthika*-s, *RGVV*^{C} naming these as the Vātsīputrīya-s: see p.329.
[973] *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 6.1.1.1-2, Weber (1973, 131-132). See also Böhtlingk & Roth (1861: 347-348).
[974] With one key exception: see p.395.
[975] Parpola (2003: 543-544).
[976] See Balcerowicz (1997: 205).

disciples.[977] Still more difficult to reconcile with the sense of 'heretic' is this term's use in the *Soṇadaṇḍa-Sutta*, in which the term is used to describe Śākyamuni himself, called therein 'chief among numerous *titthakara*-s'.[978]

Furthermore, in Buddhist sources (including the *LAS*) these are sometimes qualified as *anyatīrthya*-s, that is 'religious teachers [who are] other [to us]'.[979] With all of this in mind, the expression *tīrthika*, according to Parpola, might best be defined as 'adherent or founder of any religion', in which of course the connotation for most Buddhist sources is that of *false* religion, i.e. inferior rivals to the Buddha.[980] These connotations are not well represented by the English 'heretic' (or Edgerton's elegant 'heresiarch'), which necessarily carry with them the weight of their sense in Christian tradition.[981] Put succinctly, the *tīrthika* of Indian Buddhism can be no 'heretic' by virtue of not being part of the *saṅgha*: neither ordained as a monk nor having taken refuge in the three jewels as an *upāsaka*. A heretic, by definition, must oppose some doctrine from *within* a given tradition: something a *tīrthika* cannot be said to do in regards to Buddhism (as made very clear by their categorization in the *RGV(V)*).[982]

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[977] *DN*.I.47-49: *ayaṃ deva pūraṇo kassapo saṃghī ceva gaṇī ca gaṇācariyo ca ñāto yasassī titthakaro sādhusammato bahujanassa…*
[978] *DN*.I.116: *gotamo saṅghī gaṇī gaṇācariyo puthutitthakarānaṃ*. See also Parpola (2003: 541-542).
[979] Also *DN*.III.115; *MN*.I.494; 512. See also pp.301-302.
[980] Parpola (2003: 543). Notably, he sees the Jain *tīrthaṅkara*, the 'maker of a ford', to be derivative of forms of *tīrthika* (2003: 543-545); it is certainly true that both traditions employ forms of the latter to designate religious teachers in a general sense.
[981] For an insightful account of this concept in Christian tradition, see McGrath (2009: 17-97).
[982] In passing, I propose that heretic might be a very fitting translation of the *icchantika* as presented by the *MPMS* and other *tathāgatagarbha* sources:

Concise alternative translations are not forthcoming: the English 'heathen' certainly communicates the extraneousness of these teachers, though not the tone of begrudging (perhaps sarcastic) respect connoted by the Sanskrit. I propose as an analogue the term 'sophist' as found in the context of the Platonic dialogues, with its tone of disapproval veiled by respectability: the *tīrthika* is similarly one who claims to teach truth (and is hence, ostensibly, 'reverent'), though the content of their teaching is without worth. I propose no final translation of these terms, though I believe this comparison to those 'wayward sophists' be kept in mind when these teachers or practitioners are mentioned in our texts.[983] Indeed, my argument presupposes that reference to these beings connotes some respectability, if at least in the recognition that these persons are in all instances 'high-minded', albeit also certainly *wrong*-minded, rivals to the Buddha.

It is in contrast to these beings that the authors of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature most frequently teach some notion of a 'real' self, though it is not clear how these *tīrthika*-s relate to specific doctrines or schools known to us (though some suggestions are made by the *RGVV*).[984] As we have seen,

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seeing as the *icchantika* indeed seems to be (at least according to the *RGVV*) 1) a Mahāyāna Buddhist (i.e. distinguishable from the *śrāvaka* or *pratyekabuddha*) who nevertheless 2) rejects the authority of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine.

[983] Worth considering is the neologism 'allodoxes', (perhaps) coined by Scherrer-Schaub (1999: 71). Surely here the referent is however the doctrines themselves, and so one would assume 'allodoxist' for *tīrthika* itself. I do not feel that such an expression (though in meaning apt) would fit comfortably into English translation, and hence have not favoured it here.

[984] See pp.328-329. Edgerton (1953b: 254b) notes that the *Mahāvastu* (Senart (1897: 392,7) seems to distinguish these *tīrthika*-s from the renunciate *śramaṇa*-s and Vedic *brāhmaṇa*-s, though this is not clearly the case in our literature, in which erroneous notions of the self appear conflated.

when mentioned in the *tathāgatagarbha* sources these seem to refer to two broad categories: 1) those holding there to exist an empirical self (*ātman*, *sattva*, *jīva* etc.) and; 2) those holding there to exist a subliminal self, akin to that found in the upaniṣadic literature (e.g. situated in the heart, the size of a grain etc.). We cannot be sure, then, that the *tathāgatagarbha* authors had in mind any one rival group, but rather sought to distinguish their doctrine from any teacher – *āstika* or *nāstika* – who affirmed the existence of something that might warrant the label *ātman*.[985]

My argument is that some of our sources choose not simply to distinguish the *tathāgatagarbha* as 'true self' from the erroneous, worldly self, but wish rather to subordinate these misconceptions to a complete notion of the self as taught by the Buddha. This argument has in mind what has been called the 'inclusion' of the other in a manner that would both recognize yet also *reduce* extraneous notions of a self to a deficient form of the Buddhist *dharma*.

8.3 *Inclusivism*

Hence the key concept in this model is inclusivism: a notion strongly associated with Indologist Paul Hacker and, primarily, his work in neo-Vedānta as a system that sought to 'include' ideas extraneous to it.[986] Late in his career, Hacker defines inclusivism, which he held to be an essential trope of Indian religion in general, as follows.

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[985] See chapter 1.2.
[986] See e.g. Hacker (1995).

> Inclusivism means declaring that a central conception of an alien religious or *weltanschaulich* group is identical with this or that central conception of the group to which one belongs oneself. To inclusivism there mostly belongs, explicitly or implicitly, the assertion that the alien declared to be identical with one's own is in some way subordinate or inferior to the latter.[987]

Models of inclusivism such as that of Hacker should certainly be distinguished from anything that we might deem religious 'tolerance'. The latter, perhaps in a Buddhist context well exhibited by the rock edicts of Aśoka, praises the legitimacy of teachings other than that of the *saddharma* in the world, and advocates compassion shown to teachers of what is not one's own.[988] However this makes no attempt to affirm the superiority of one's own teaching, nor identifies any elements of the foreign system as more completely understood through it. Rather, the inclusivism under discussion here is what Johann Figl referred to as 'historical-revelatory': i.e. that in which 'other religions are judged as good but provisional and surpassed by the superior home religion'; of what in Hacker's own typology would be deemed 'an inclusivism of strength'.[989] For Hacker, Indian inclusivism is a polemical mode of subjugating a rival tradition or system by expressing its deficiency:

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[987] Seyfort Ruegg (2008: 98), translating Hacker in Oberhammer (1983: 12).
[988] See e.g. rock edicts VII and XII, in Nikam & McKeon (1959: 51-52).
[989] Kiblinger (2005: 6-8; also Seyfort Ruegg (2008: 98)). The distinction between 'inclusivisms' of weakness and strength is however not too useful: in my account here, I propose that the 'inclusion' of the *tīrthika* may reflect authors' fear of rival traditions that are in the ascension.

not necessarily for proselytic purposes, so much as for reaffirming the superiority of one doctrine over that of another.

Hacker's ideas have not gone uncriticized.[990] It has been recognized, for example, that what he terms inclusivism is not something exclusive to Indian religion, but in fact refers to the common subsuming and subjugating of foreign ideas by any system of belief.[991] While this is certainly true, we can still say that Indian religion has historically been quintessentially 'inclusivist'. As such there is still room, as Seyfort Ruegg has suggested, for this idea to help make sense of how different Indian traditions interacted.[992] Indeed Seyfort Ruegg has recognized that this might be useful in respect of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature, though I believe that the most convincing evidence in support of this reading has so far been overlooked.[993]

It is likely that inclusivism is most useful as a category when discussing strictly doctrinal matters: i.e. the inclusion of some tenet or metaphysical position that otherwise appears at odds to the original system. One example of doctrinal inclusion *par excellence* is very relevant to this study: the *ekayāna* doctrine of the *SPS* that declares the vehicles of the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha* to be expedient, pedagogical creations, and hence inferior to the Mahāyāna.[994] This constitutes the inclusion of two entire soteriological traditions: the *śrāvaka*/*pratyekabuddha*-*yāna*-s are, in all aspects, deemed

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[990] See Oberhammer (1983).
[991] See Wezler in Oberhammer (1983: 61-69). Also Olivelle (1986: 867-868).
[992] Seyfort Ruegg (2008: 99).
[993] Seyfort Ruegg (1989a: 50-52).
[994] E.g. *SPS* v.2.54-57, Kern & Nanjio (1970: 46,11-47,4). See also Hubbard (1995); Kunst (1977).

deficient expressions of the Mahāyāna.[995] In a not dissimilar fashion, I believe that in the *tathāgatagarbha* literature we witness signs of polemical inclusion of a specific, defining doctrinal element of teachers outside of the *saṅgha*: i.e. that of a supermundane self that is one's 'proper' (awakened) nature.[996]

8.4 *Inclusion by* Ātmavāda

If we accept that the conventional discourse of Indian Buddhism was the *anātmavāda*, i.e. a discourse on the absence of a lasting self, then the appearance of some doctrine of a self could certainly betray an act of inclusivism as understood by Hacker.[997] It has been demonstrated in the first chapter that Buddhism was very much defined by its rejection of the self as a constituent of sentient beings: otherwise a unifying trope across other schools of *āstika* and *nāstika* Indian thought.[998] Our *tathāgatagarbha* authors certainly communicate that the non-self doctrine is a cornerstone of the *dharma as they perceived it*, but we should address the possibility that our authors misrepresent the ubiquity of non-self teaching in Buddhism of their time.

It is certainly the case that the Pudgalavāda, perhaps at times constituting a significant portion of the *saṅgha*, argued for the indeterminate

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[995] The historical reality behind the *pratyekabuddha* as a category is still unclear. See also Nattier (2003: 139,ft.6); Ray (1994: 212-250).
[996] Nattier (2007: 181-183) rightly emphasizes that the *ekayāna* doctrine was in likelihood not the most popular soteriological paradigm of the Mahāyāna in India (in preference for the three-vehicle model aggressively 'included' by that of the *SPS*), let alone of the so-called 'early' Mahāyāna; see also Nattier (2003: 174-176). In as far as this is the case, every occurrence of the term *ekayāna* in a *tathāgatagarbha*-oriented text serves to better cohere this corpus with the *SPS* as its likely precursor. See also Fujita (1975: 109-116).
[997] See pp.23-24.
[998] See chapter 1.2.

existence of some person that 'does' and 'receives'.[999] However in their sources this appears always in terms of the *skandha*-s, i.e. accepting the parameters for discussing selfhood set by the Buddhist *sutta*-s, and in affirmation of a person that is neither among these *nor not*. In short, argument between other Buddhist schools and advocates of the Pudgalavāda is over how to understand the teaching of non-self in terms of these *skandha*-s, which for all of these are the only framework within which personhood can be discussed. The *tathāgatagarbha* literature, by contrast, agrees *against* the Pudgalavāda that there is no form of self to be found here: but rather that a form of selfhood exists apart from sentient beings understood solely in terms of *skandha*-s.[1000]

Exposition of this previously 'hidden' teaching is explicitly contrasted with extraneous, non-Buddhist *ātmadṛṣṭi*-s, which haunt this teaching of a correct, Buddhist self in such a fashion that one wonders if our authors protested too much. Indeed, it is likely that the Buddhist self of the *MPMS*-group is, as the *LAS* observes, very much like that of the *tīrthika*-s (perhaps especially reminiscent of the upaniṣadic milieu): especially when it appears to explain the transmigration of some element of beings.[1001] What is important is that at least some of our authors imply that such resemblance is not at the expense of this newly revealed Buddhist *ātmavāda*, but rather it is the *tīrthika-ātman* that is proximate to the position of the Buddha.

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[999] If nothing more, as a recipient of extinction upon *nirvāṇa*: see p.30.
[1000] One knowable only to those awakened (or nearly so), with their particular vision of what constitutes a sentient being: see p.66.
[1001] Found, most contentiously, in the *MBhS* and its discussion of existence in terms of discrete 'selves': see chapter 5.5.

We have seen it implied that notions of the *tīrthika* are not so much utterly false, but rather *deficient* forms of the Buddha's own correct teaching. This, indeed, seems to betray some kind of doctrinal inclusion: affirming that the *tīrthika* teaches not something utterly foreign, but rather a deficient form of the *dharma* which, with some (perhaps weighty) qualification brings it into accord with the real state of things. In the earliest sources that discuss the true self that is the *tathāgatagarbha* – namely the *MPMS* and *AMS* – we encountered the suggestion that erroneous notions of the self actually stem from misconception of the Buddha-nature.[1002] This recognizes the *tīrthika* as always wrong-minded yet, crucially, somehow indebted to the correct, Buddhist notion of the self. I revisit here what may be the earliest and latest examples of this thinking found in our sources.

When considering the *MPMS*, we encountered the parable of the two doctors (perhaps the earliest account of the Buddha as a self), which included the example of woodworm eating in such a fashion that they appeared able to write.[1003] In this parable the good doctor clearly corresponds to the Buddha, and both the naïve doctor, and the woodworm of the example, to the *tīrthika*-s. This implies 1) that the Buddha taught non-self as a corrective to the view of the *tīrthika*-s, but in time teaches the correct self of the *buddha-dhātu*, and 2) that, like the woodworm, the *tīrthika*-s are not absolutely wrong to teach a notion of selfhood, but rather do not understand to what the expression 'self' should refer. Theirs is then a deficient notion of the self, the partial truth of which is 'stumbled upon' in much the same fashion that the naïve doctor of

[1002] Regarding this suggestion in the *AMS*, see pp.172-175.
[1003] See chapter 3.6.1.

the story must, in some lucky instances, have correctly prescribed the milk-medicine. The *tīrthika*, though frequently ignorant in regards to its referent, is right to see some value in the expression *ātman*.

In the last chapter, concerning the *RGV(V)*, we saw how this – the last 'pure' *tathāgatagarbha* text – considered the *dharmakāya* conceived as *ātmapāramitā* to be a position arrived at by the *tīrthika* once they have, through cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā*, availed themselves of attachment to (false) notions of selfhood. Their notion of a worldly self, though requiring some 'inversion' (*viparyāya*), prefigures the higher or perfect self (*paramātman*; *ātmapāramitā*), that is their true 'identity'. No doubt the *RGV(V)* was produced by authors quite different in opinion to those of the *MPMS*, though it seems to have inherited an association between the correct notion of the self and those who are attached to falsities, i.e. the *tīrthika*-s, who through this association of terms might be led into the *saddharma*.

The self of the *RGV(V)* is certainly one characterized by Buddhist categories: it is the self *qua* true identity, characterized by absence of conventional personhood.[1004] The *RGV(V)* seems then to reflect a later attempt to make sense of earlier *tathāgatagarbha* literature, in which the more *ātmavāda*-oriented language of the *MPMS*-group is downplayed in favour of a more abstract account of awakening (as found in the *ŚDS*). But prior to the *RGV(V)* and its attempt to 'include' these *tīrthika*-s pedagogically, the *MPMS*-group appears to reflect an inclusion more akin to that discussed by Hacker:

[1004] See pp.352-354; similar to that also in the *MSA*: see pp.356-362.

one that considers all *ātmavāda* expressions to be derivative, perhaps also *intentionally* so, of the *saddharma*.

8.5 *Emanation & Expansion*

We turn to what may be the two earliest texts to champion the *tathāgatagarbha* as the 'true self': the later stratum of the *MPMS* and the *AMS*. Both suggest that the views of *tīrthika*-s exist precisely *because* there is a *buddha-dhātu* (and hence in some small way gesture towards the true self). However both texts also seem to go further: implying that the inferior teachings of the *tīrthika* must also play some small part in the Buddha's own activities for sentient beings.

8.5.1 Bodhisattva-nirmita *in the* MPMS

We concluded our study of the *tathāgata-dhātu* chapter of the *MPMS* with the parable of the lost sword, which was notable for suggesting again that non-Buddhist accounts of the self are produced by miscomprehension of the true self.[1005] This parable culminates in the following lines, which imply that there might be 'worldly' beings who teach in accord with *dharma*, and that they can be said to be '(*bodhisattva*)-emanations (變化; *sprul pa*)'.[1006]

[1005] Chapter 3.6.4.
[1006] It shall become apparent that *nirmita* need not refer always to an emanated or magically produced 'person', though this may be the case in this portion of the *MPMS*. The range of what precisely can be 'emanated' by a Buddha, and for what purposes, requires further study. For an account of magically created beings from a Sarvāstivāda source, see Dietz (1994).

若世間說我隨順法者，當知是則爲離世俗，當知皆是菩薩變化，現同俗說。

佛復告迦葉：一切言說、呪術、記論，如來所說爲一切本。

MPMS^{C1}: T.376,887c16-20.

If a worldly [person] expounds a self that is in accord with what is *dharma*, they should be known as in contrast to worldly habits; it should be known that they are **emanations of a *bodhisattva*** shown to be in accord with conventional teaching.

The Buddha again said to Kāśyapa: all speech, incantations, and treatises; the Tathāgata is the root of all these.[1007]

legs par smras pa chos dang 'tsham pa gang yin pa de ni 'jig rten pa rnams kyi yin na yang 'jig rten las 'das pa yin par rig par bya'o //

'jig rten pa'i nang na rnam pa thams cad du chos kyi mchog ni / byang chub sems dpa' sprul pa yin par rig par bya ste /

bstan bcos sam / rig sngags sam / gsang sngags ci yang rung ba de dag thams cad ni / rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyis gsungs pa yin par shes par gyis shig /

MPMS^{T}: §418,1-6.

[1007] This translation omits and disregards a chapter division present in *MPMS*^{C1} (which may have been introduced by Faxian) and instead follows the division of the text into meaningful sections by Habata (2013). See also Habata (2007: li-liv); Hodge (2012: 34,ft.60).

What is well-spoken and in accord with correct *dharma*, even if of worldly persons, that should be known as supermundane.
If among the worldly there is that which is in all ways highest *dharma*, that should be known as an **emanation of a *bodhisattva***.
All that are suitable treatises, spells, or incantations should be known as pronouncements by the perfect Buddha.

善男子，若有凡夫能善説者，即是隨順無上佛法。若有善能，分別隨順宣説是者，當知即是菩薩相貌。
善男子，所有種種異論、呪術、言語、文字，皆是佛説，非外道説。

MPMS^{C2}: T.374,412c25-413a1.

Good son, if there is some common person able to explain [this] well, then this is in accord with the supreme *dharma* of the Buddha. If there is someone able to discern [the self] and accordingly propagate this teaching, you should know them to be **appearances of *bodhisattva*-s**.[1008]
Good son, all various different discourses, incantations, speech and words, all these are the Buddha's speech, not that of the *tīrthika*-s.

[1008] Blum (2013: 254) suggests 'countenance of a *bodhisattva*', which suggests (wrongly, I hold) the inauthenticity of these individuals. *MPMS*^{C2} may reflect some (mis)reading of *nimitta*, suggested by e.g. the occurrence of 相貌 at T.227,564b15, corresponding to a form of *nimitta* in *ASP*, Vaidya (1960: 163,13); see Karashima (2011: 308,ft.54).

The above imply that whenever one teaches in accord with *dharma*, this teaching somehow participates in the supermundane, and moreover that such teachers are emanations from *bodhisattva*(-s?) 'shown to be in accord with conventional teaching'.[1009] *MPMS*^{T} certainly makes clear that these are teachings 'of worldly (*laukika*) persons', so presumably not either Buddhas or *bodhisattva*-s. This implies that there are teachings in the world indebted to the *bodhisattva*(-s) (who were in this parable responsible for teaching the *buddha-dhātu*) that conform to the world, but still of some 'dharmic' origin and value. *MPMS*^{C2} agrees with *MPMS*^{T} that the objects of discussion are here the ideas of 'worldly persons' (here 凡夫: commonly reflecting the very pejorative *pṛthagjana*, but possibly still rendering *laukika*).[1010]

Hence the *MPMS* seems to suggest that there are expressions outside of what is *ostensibly* the *dharma*, i.e. spoken by 'worldly persons', which are nonetheless *bodhisattva-nirmita*. This is implied elsewhere in the text, where the *MPMS* cites the *Śuraṅgamasamādhi-Sūtra* and its account of the Buddha's producing many magical displays (apparently numbering eighteen) for one didactic purpose or another.[1011] The *MPMS* elsewhere presents a list

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[1009] See Habata (1990: 182-183). This is clearly reminiscent of the activity of the *bodhisattva* – 'in accord with what is of the world' – found in the *Lokānuvartāna-Sūtra* (e.g. T.807,751c3: 隨世間習俗而入，示現如是). Ties with this text are central to Shimoda's reading of the *MPMS*: see p.77.

[1010] Nakamura (1975: 1269a).

[1011] See e.g. *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,870c21: 種種現化，如首楞嚴三昧所說; also *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,388b20-b22; *MPMS*^{T}: §194,3-4: *cho 'phrul*, which both suggest *(*ṛddhi*)*prātihārya* over *nirmita*.
The *Śūraṅgamasamādhi-Sūtra* indeed mentions a range of 18 magical displays (T.642,640a11-12: 神通變化; **ṛddhiprātihārya*), though does not elaborate upon these, but interestingly *MPMS*^{C2} (T.374,389b9-389c21) does appear to list eighteen such 'displays' by the Buddha in the world (in contrast to a greater number still, listed by *MPMS*^{T}: §204-214). Again, however, none

of the Buddha's displays (including as an *icchantika* and even the deity Māra), but notably none of these lists mention the *tīrthika* as a teacher generated by the Buddha.[1012]

Regarding teachings of the self, the *MPMS* implies that all notions of the supermundane self are through the influence of the *bodhisattva-mahāsattva* previously in the world. The parable could then constitute a mythological account of past events: a previous teaching of the *bodhisattva* (Śākyamuni) in the world that led to the generation of all *tīrthika* doctrines. We should keep this aspect of the above example in mind as we proceed.[1013]

This *tīrthika* as an emanation of specifically the *bodhisattva* is, importantly, not absolutely new to us. Edgerton notes an exception to the normally pejorative sense of the term, in the *Mahāvastu*: in a passage listing the abilities of the eight stage *bodhisattva*, they are said to become *tīrthika*-s to promote 'destruction of [re]birth' (*bhavasūdana*).[1014] Edgerton explains this line only in terms of a corruption, though this might be an important precursor

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of these pertain specifically to *tīrthika*-s, as discussed above. See also Lamotte (2003: 193,ft.243).

[1012] See *MPMS*^{C1}: T.376,871b15-c26; *MPMS*^{C2}: T.374,389a27-390a1; *MPMS*^{T}: §202-214. Notably these are all to dissuade beings from other paths: in this portion of the text, the *tīrthika* is certainly extraneous to the otherwise diverse productions of the Buddha.

[1013] This could refer to an emanation from the transcendent Buddha (Śākyamuni) in the world *as* a *bodhisattva*: a model of the Buddha's past activity present in the *SPS*. See e.g. Nagao (1991: 33).

[1014] Edgerton (1953b: 254b); *Mahāvastu*, Senart (1882a: 108,8): …*ataḥ prabhṛti tīrthikā vā bhavanti bhavasūdanāḥ*. A similar account of the eighth-stage *bodhisattva's* activities is found in the *Daśabhūmika-Sūtra* (Vaidya (1967: 45,7-15); alternatively T.287,560c3-c18) though no mention is made of manifesting as a *tīrthika* specifically. The textual history of the *Mahāvastu* – in particular in regards to its presentation of the career of the *bodhisattva* – is however unclear, and it is plausible that this account of the *bodhisattva* as *tīrthika* represents Mahāyānist influences upon the text, to be discussed by Tournier (forthcoming).

for considering the *tīrthika* as some form of *bodhisattva-nirmita*, as in the above passage.[1015] This implies that the eighth-stage *bodhisattva* manifested in the world for the purpose of teaching an end to what is worldly: teaching a notion of '*ātmavāda*' liberation that prefigured any attempt to teach the doctrine of *anātman*.[1016]

All of this implies that the above passage of the *MPMS* views some worldly teachings as devices of the *bodhisattva*, rather than final teachings of the Buddha: i.e. that the *bodhisattva* can 'emanate' some teacher that appears on the surface to be extraneous to the *saddharma*. Their ideas, however, can still be considered derivative of the Buddha's own teaching of a true self (akin to wrong imaginings of the lost sword). This passage of the *MPMS* certainly holds that extraneous *ātmavāda* teachings are deficient, yet still somehow indebted to those of the Buddha.

The trace of the expression *ātma-dhātu* in the above portion of the *MPMS* leads us conveniently back to the *AMS*, and supports a proximity between the two which should be kept in mind as we continue.[1017]

[1015] The *Mahāvastu* is of course also a Mahāsāṃghika text. Shimoda (1997: 382-386) finds chapter 8 of the *MPMS* to be influenced by the *Lokānuvartana-Sūtra*, specifically in its account of the *bodhisattva*-s exhibiting the same miraculous powers as the Buddha, which of course should pre-date this account of the *buddha-dhātu*.
This might explain the odd expression 菩薩變化 in this passage of *MPMS*^{C1}, though that precise expression occurs only this once in the *MPMS*, and not in chapter 8 that is so central to Shimoda's account of its relationship to the *Lokānuvartāna-Sūtra*.

[1016] A range of the *bodhisattva's* transformations are discussed by Harrison (2003: 144-145). For the nature of these occurrence in the world (sometimes designated as *saṃcintyabhavopapatti*) see Nagao (1991: 29).

[1017] A proximity, specifically, between the *AMS* and this portion of the *MPMS*: see pp.170-171.

8.5.2 *The Myth of Buddhamati in the* AMS

This passage occurs late in the structure of the *AMS*, and would best be described less as a parable and more as a myth concerning the origin of *tīrthika* practices in the world, all through miscomprehension of the Buddhist *dharma*. The Buddha recounts how in a previous *kalpa* the forest-dwelling monk Buddhamati (the last after the departure of the Buddha called Kosantabhadra) has his robe stolen and suffers a variety of misfortunes in the wilderness.[1018] He is observed by one wandering *brāhmaṇa* or another, who all take up extreme ascetical practices in emulation of the monk, thinking what they see to be dharmic.[1019]

[1018] I can find no further references to this Buddha (*AMS*^{C}: T.120,541a29: 拘孫陀跋陀羅; *AMS*^{T}: e.g. D.213,198a5; Q.879,205b2: *ko san ta bzang po*) in Indian sources outside of this text and its quotation by the *Jñānasārasamuccaya-Nibandhana* (discussed below: pp.401-403).

[1019] *AMS*^{C} and *AMS*^{T} present different lists of these ascetical practices, summarized as follows.
AMS^{C}: 裸形沙門 (**nirgrantha-śramaṇa*-s); 出家婆羅門 (**parivrāja-brāhmaṇa*-s); 苦行婆羅門 (**duṣkara-brāhmaṇa*-s); 灰塗婆羅門 (ash-smeared *brāhmaṇa*-s); 投巖事火 ('who jump from cliffs [and] worship fire'). See *AMS*^{C}: T.120, 541b8-541c2.
AMS^{T}: *dge sbyong gcer bu pa* (*nirgrantha-śrāmaṇa*-s); *mur 'dug kun du rgyu ba* (*tīrtha-parivrājaka*-s); *ya mtshan can dka' thub byed pa* (ascetical *pāṣaṇḍa*-s); *mur 'dug spyod pa dang phyugs bdag pa rnams* (*tīrtha* 'practitioners', and *maheśvarin*-s); *ba lang gi lci ba'i ril bu can* ('those with cow dung in their matted hair'). This list culminates in another onlooker thinking the eighth stage of the *bodhisattva* path (*mi g.yo ba'i sa*) to be liberation itself, which leads to further suffering (*mi g.yo ba'i sa*[a] *mya ngan du 'gro bar gyur*). See *AMS*^{T}: D.213,198b2-199a5; Go.25.04,52b1-53a4; L.58,240b6-241b4; Q.879,205b8-206b3; N.198,319a7-320a7; S.82, 256a3-257a2.
[a] NQ. omit *sa*
This demonstrates a variety of practices known to our authors, and perhaps a significant encounter with *śaiva* asceticism between the creation of *AMS*^{C} and *AMS*^{T}.

The myth culminates in the Buddha explaining that this is precisely how the different 96 (non-Buddhist) ascetical practices arise.[1020] This alone suggests a sense of indebtedness perceived between the *saddharma* and those other practices in the world that aim at liberation, but it would certainly be hasty to argue this based only on what is clearly a mythic projection into a previous *kalpa*. The Buddha then employs the image of a deer rushing to drink at a watering hole that is only a mirage, explaining that monks similarly produce notions that are *adharma* during the decline of the Buddha's teaching.[1021] This is further unpacked as follows.

> 如是文殊師利，世間一切所作之，上尸羅、威儀種種所作，一切悉是如來化現。法滅盡時，如是事生。若如是者，正法則滅。
>
> 如是文殊師利，於眞實我，世間如是，如是：邪見諸異妄想，謂解脫如是，謂我如是。

[1020] *AMS*^{C}: T.120,541c2-4. See also Chavannes (1910: 410); Nakamura (1975: 255a). These appear to have been mentioned more frequently in Chinese sources, in which the 96 are composed of the 16 schools derivative of each of the six *tīrthika*-s featured in the *Sāmaññaphala-Sutta*. The number is mentioned also in *MPMS*^{C1} (T.376,880c25), in which it is denied that the *bodhisattva* does not know their practices, and instead clarifies that he appears to pursue their ascetical paths (T.376,881a1: 於九十六種，而現出家). The *bodhisattva* as presented by the *MPMS* is then very much engaged with non-Buddhist customs and practices, implying a climate in which these practices were seen to be worthy of attention, engagement and perhaps – evidenced by the doctrine of a true self – some degree of emulation.
For a contrast with very different (and in all probability earlier) attitudes to the *bodhisattva vis-à-vis* extraneous teachings, with which we might contrast the attitude of the *MPMS* and *AMS*, see Harrison (1987: 85).

[1021] *AMS*^{C}: T.120,541c6-c7; e.g. *AMS*^{T}: D.214,199a6-a7; Q.879,206b4-5. This image is used also by the *LAS*, which employs the image of deer investigating a mirage to explain miscomprehension of the *dharma*: see *LAS*, Nanjio (1923: 77,3-12).

出世間者，亦不知如來隱覆之教，謂言無我是佛所說。彼隨說思量，如外道因起[1022]。

彼諸世間，隨順愚癡；出世間者，亦復迷失，隱覆說智。

是故如來說一乘中道離於二邊：我眞實、佛眞實、法眞實、僧眞實：是故說中道名摩訶衍。

AMS^{C}: T.120,541c7-c17.

Like this, Mañjuśrī, all that is produced in the world, superior conducts and deportments that are variously produced, are all **emanations of the Tathāgata**. When the *dharma* is disappearing, then such things arise. In this way the *saddharma* disappears.

Like this, Mañjuśrī, regarding the real self, the world is like this:

[having] perverse views and [various] different, false notions;

considering liberation to be like such-and-such, [and] the self to be like such-and-such.

Those who are [of the] supermundane, also do not know the hidden teaching of the Tathāgata, saying that non-self is the teaching of the Buddha.[1023] They, by pondering on the basis of that [misunderstood] teaching, like the *tīrthika*-s [above], produce [errors] because of it.[1024]

[1022] （起）－<三>

[1023] *AMS*^{T} here differs, stating that this error belongs to the *tīrthika*-s (*mur ‘dug*): see D.213,199b2; Go.53a9; L.58,242a1-2; N.198,220b5-6; Q.879,206b7; S.82,257a7.

[1024] Referring to the arising (起) of *tīrthika* -s in the preceding myth.

> Those worldly ones conform to what is foolish; and those [of the] supermundane also wander from knowledge of the hidden teaching [of the Buddha].
>
> Therefore the Tathāgata taught the middle path of the *ekayāna*, which is apart from the two extremes [of the worldly and supermundane]. He taught the self to be real,[1025] the Buddha to be real, the *dharma* to be real, the *saṅgha* to be real: hence is taught the middle way that is known as the Mahāyāna.[1026]

Though this translation is difficult, the sense is clearly that the arising of the *tīrthika*-s is analogous for the error of those within the Buddhist fold (i.e. 'those [of the] supermundane', who accept non-self): hence this passage, as elsewhere in our literature, has in mind those who reject the *tathāgatagarbha* as a self due to holding firmly to non-self. However it seems again that all perverse views surrounding the self and liberation come about during the decline of the *saddharma* (evoking the crisis 'prophesized' throughout the *MPMS*-group).[1027] Despite the deficiency of non-Buddhist teaching, however, what is taught in the world that is oriented towards liberation must still be

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[1025] This appears to reflect an uncommon use of the term *ātman* over *ātma-dhātu* in the *AMS*, which confirms that this text does – for all of its apparent distinction of the latter from erroneous forms of the former – embrace still a notion of a 'true self' as found in the *MPMS*.

[1026] Compare *AMS*^{T} (in which we find *sangs rgyas kyi sprul pa*), e.g. D.214,199a7-199b4; Go.53a7-b1; L.58,241b7-242a4; N.198,220b3-221a1; Q.879,206b5-207a1; S.82,257a6-b3.

[1027] See chapter 3.2.

somehow 'emanated' by the Buddha.[1028] In the myth of Buddhamati it appears that such practices arise through misconception alone, but the explanation implies that all superior practices still derive their value from the Buddha.[1029] The implication is that such deviations from the *saddharma* are at worst permitted by the Buddha, or – as our texts seem to state – are themselves *buddha-nirmita*: that is, magical productions of the Buddha for some didactic purpose.[1030]

We are fortunate that a gloss on the above is provided by a rare śāstric quotation of the *AMS*, found in the C10th *Jñānasārasamuccaya-Nibandhana*

[1028] This expression 如來化現 appears once also in *MPMS*^{C1} (T.376, 887c23-24: 是故如來化現，字本不爲非法), in which the 'root of *akṣara*-s', which are *tathāgata*-emanations, are not *adharma'*. This immediately follows the passage on the 菩薩變化 discussed above, though the context appears to be part of subsequent material on the profound meaning of *akṣara*-s. The significance of this material in the *MPMS*, apparently interested in the power and meaning of *mantra*-s explained in Mahāyānist terms, may be illuminated by ft.1029, below.

[1029] This has the flavour of the apparent 'inclusion' of worldly rites and magic in the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-Sūtra*, addressed by Suzuki (2005; 2006; 2007), whose hypothesis is that this text includes so many worldly practices in order to have them subordinated to the Mahāyāna, amidst the competitive religious environment of the Gupta period. I agree with Suzuki (2005: 12) that the rhetoric of 'assimilation into Hinduism' is not enough to explain either this literature, nor (in this study) *ātmavāda* expressions of some *tathāgatagarbha* authors: the adoption of a previously extraneous discourse (as much as that of rites or rituals) entails in each text the clear subordination of the other to Buddhist sources of authority.
The *MPMS* and *AMS*, perhaps prefigured by the 'inclusivist' attitude of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-Sūtra,* clearly mention worldly rites and rituals amidst discussion of the true self. While it is this account of a self that remains their primary concern, it is possible that the attitude of the latter text regarding ritual practices was known to the authors of the former.

[1030] See Edgerton (1953b: 302b). It seems here that the teachings themselves, rather than any teachers, can be considered *buddha-nirmita*. This might imply teachers themselves to be emanations, or it may be that the *AMS* holds that doctrines themselves are here 'magically produced'.

of Bodhibhadra (commenting on the root text of Āryadeva).[1031] This survives in Tibetan translation, and a key quotation follows this text's examination of the different Śrāvakayāna and Mahāyāna schools and their collective distinction from the views of the *tīrthika*-s. Bodhibhadra cites the Buddhamati myth and part of its explanation to justify compassion for extraneous teachers.

> *'di ltar yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas ko san ti'i dge slong buddha ma ti'i rjes su 'brangs nas / bskal pa dang po'i tshe 'dzam bu'i gling lta ba'i lha rnams la brten te / skyes pa'i phyi rol pa'i lta ba 'di dag kyang khong du chud par byas la de bzlog par bya'i rnam par sdang bar bya ba ni ma yin te /*
>
> *'phags pa sor mo'i phreng ba la phan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo las / 'jam dpal de ltar 'jig rten pa'i tshul khrims dang spyod pa dang bya ba'i cho ga thams cad kyang <u>sangs rgyas kyi sprul pa'o</u> zhes gsungs pa'i phyir dang / de dag snying rje'i yul du gyur pa'i phyir te // de phyir log par bstan pa yi // grub mtha'*[1032] *'chal ba'i blo can la // re*[1033] *lugs rjes 'jug blo can rnams // snying rje nyid ni rab tu skye // zhes bshad pa'i phyir ro //*
>
> *Jñānasārasamuccaya-Nibandhana*: D.3852,*tsha*,41a5-a7; Q.5252,*tsha*,47b1-b5; N.*tsha*,39b7-40a3; gS.3255,*tsha*,52b6-53a3.

[1031] D.3852; Q.5252; N.*tsha*,26b-44b; gS.3255: *ye shes snying po kun las btus pa zhes bya ba'i bshad sbya*.
[1032] DNgS. *mtha* : Q. *mthar*
[1033] DNQ. *re* : gS. *de*

> It is thus: conforming to [the behaviour of] Buddhamati, monk of the perfectly awakened Buddha Kosanti, the time of the first *kalpa* was grounded in the view of the gods of Jambudvīpa.
>
> Even the views of outsiders that are produced, being understood, should be opposed but not hated.
>
> It is said in the Mahāyāna *sūtra* called '*Ārya Aṅgulimālīya'*: 'Mañjuśrī, it is thus: the performing of worldly deeds, and all practiced rites, are also **emanations of the Buddha**': this is said [by the Buddha] so that those [doing these] might become objects of compassion.
>
> So it is explained: 'The intelligent of each [Buddhist] doctrine should produce compassion for those who are confused, regarding teachings that are distorted.'

Bodhibhadra does not seem convinced by the finality of the *AMS* in its attitude to the *tīrthika*: stating that the above was taught for the purpose of generating compassion for the *tīrthika*, i.e. perhaps indicating an expedient means for counteracting hatred of non-Buddhists. However he certainly read this passage of the *AMS* as being concerned with the indebtedness of *tīrthika*-s to the *saddharma*: their practices being emanations of the Buddha. Again, this is not to affirm the absolute value of their conduct or ideas, but rather to *include* their teachings in a broader model of the Buddha as being somehow responsible for *all* practices that aim at liberation.

Hence the *AMS*, as in the example of the woodworm and parable of the lost sword in the *MPMS*, teaches that the erroneous self of the *tīrthika* to be

derivative of the true self of the Buddha. As much as the teaching of non-self can lead the *śrāvaka*-s into muddy water, yet still be a teaching of the Buddha, so too are the clearly wrong-minded ideas and practices of the *tīrthika*: any semblance of truth in whose doctrine finds its origin in the Buddha and his *saddharma*.

The final lines in the previous passage of the *AMS* are particularly powerful: declaring the 'reality' (contra, perhaps, their 'unreality' in the minds of objectors to the *tathāgatagarbha*) of the three jewels *and* the (true) self. The *AMS* considers this to be the middle way of the Buddha, which both versions call also both the Mahāyāna and, poignantly, the *ekayāna*.[1034] Such a declaration situates the above account under the influence, once again, of the doctrine of one, expansive vehicle as outlined in the *SPS*. It is significant, then, that the *SPS* is home also to accounts of *buddha-nirmita*, produced skillfully by the transcendent Buddha for one audience or another: a model of the one vehicle which might, in the *MPMS* and *AMS* in particular, support the extension of the Buddha's influence beyond the three vehicles of the *saṅgha*.[1035]

[1034] See Nattier (2007: 184-185).

[1035] The expression *ekayāna* does not feature in $MPMS^{C1}$ or $MPMS^{T}$ (though the expedient nature of the *śrāvakayāna* certainly does: see e.g. $MPMS^{C1}$: T.376,879c15-c27), but does appear once in $MPMS^{C2}$ (T.374,383a25). This may then be a later gloss upon that text, was certainly present in Indian texts underlying both extant versions of the *AMS*.

8.6 *The Extent of the One Vehicle*

It is through a return to the notion of the one vehicle of the *SPS*, perhaps situated at the genesis of *tathāgatagarbha* teaching, that I believe we can unpack the motivation for a uniquely Buddhist *ātmavāda* as found in the *MPMS*-group. This account is buttressed by the notion of 'Buddha-emanations' found in the above, which stand out in passages explaining the true self and distinguishing it from extraneous accounts of erroneous selfhood. My argument, following that of Zimmermann, is that the *tathāgatagarbha* constitutes a development of the *ekayāna* towards the inclusion of *all* beings within the range of the Buddha's influence: a development which might have encouraged some authors to reconsider the relationship between what was taught by the Buddha and his 'rivals', who of course also possess (unbeknownst to them) the nature of a Buddha.

For the authors of the *ŚDS* and *LAS*, these *tīrthika*-s appear to be unequivocally misguided: but for those of the *MPMS* and *AMS* their relationship to the *saddharma* seems more complex.[1036] The latter reflect a model of the Buddha's teaching as doctrinally '*all* inclusive', in which what is sought after by the *tīrthika* is the same permanent, unchanging nature as that taught by the Buddha, but deficiently conceived. This understands popular non-Buddhist accounts of liberation, e.g. those of the upaniṣadic milieu clearly known to our authors, as incomplete comprehensions of the Buddha's own teaching. All of these, these two texts then imply, are then also 'emanations'

[1036] Regarding the *ŚDS*, see pp.274-275; regarding the *LAS*, pp.301-302.

of the Buddha: presumably gesturing towards the *buddha-dhātu* that is the true self.

Accounts of the Buddha's magical powers are frequent throughout Mahāyāna sources, and though not all employ the language of *buddha-nirmita*-s the *SPS* certainly does.[1037] The text is well known for its model of the Buddha as a transcendent, god-like presence who produces one teaching (or indeed teacher) or another in order to influence beings in the direction of full awakening. Certainly this involves teaching in accord with skill in means, for example emanating different bodies to teach in different worlds, or displaying the apparent deaths of previous Buddhas in the world.[1038]

> *tan mayāpi mahāpratibhāna bahavas tathāgatavigrahā nirmitāḥ, ye daśasu dikṣv anyonyeṣu buddhakṣetreṣu lokadhātusahasreṣu sattvānāṃ dharmaṃ deśayanti…*
>
> *SPS*, Kern & Nanjio (1970: 242,11-12).

> Therefore, Mahāpratibhāna, by me were emanated many figures of the Tathāgata, who in the ten directions, in the various Buddha-fields of a thousand worlds, teach the *dharma* to sentient beings.

[1037] Attribution of *nirmita* to advanced *bodhisattva*-s is also not unheard of, most famously in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*: see Lamotte (1962: 324-325).
[1038] For such emanations explained in terms of the skilful means (*upāyakauśalya*) of the Buddha, another important aspect of the *SPS*, see Pye (2003: 37-59).

ye ca mayā kulaputrā atrāntarā tathāgatā arhantaḥ samyaksaṃbuddhāḥ parikīrtitā dīpaṃkaratathāgataprabhṛtayaḥ, teṣāṃ ca tathāgatānām arhatāṃ samyaksaṃbuddhānāṃ parinirvāṇāni, maya eva tāni kulaputrā upāyakauśalyadharmadeśanābhinirhāranirmitāni /

SPS, Kern & Nanjio (1970: 317,10-13).

Good sons, in the meantime [since my awakening], [regarding] those Tathāgata-Arhat-Samyaksaṃbuddha-s of whom I spoke, starting with the Tathāgata Dīpaṃkara, the final *nirvāṇa*-s of those Tathāgata-Arhat-Samyaksaṃbuddha-s were, good sons, emanated by me for [the purpose of] completing instruction of *dharma* [for beings] by skill in means.

The above reflect a Buddhology centred on the age-long influence of Śākyamuni, less common in non-Mahāyāna sources though (to give justice to Shimoda's reading of the *MPMS*) indubitably present in the *Lokānuvartana-Sūtra*. Such an account of the Buddha seems preserved in the *MPMS*-group, very much aware of the *SPS*, its 'high', docetic Buddhology, and the *ekayāna* doctrine. This can be distinguished from the Buddhology of texts like the *ŚDS*, which though explicitly sharing the *ekayāna* paradigm appears less interested in the Buddha imagined as a transcendent pedagogue.[1039] It is indeed this

[1039] The *nirmāṇakāya* – as part of the three-body doctrine normally associated with the Yogācāra – features late in the *RGV(V)*: see *RGV* 3.53-57, Johnston (1950: 107,2-17).

Buddhology of a distinctly 'personal' Buddha, responsible for a *buddha-dhātu* doctrine that describes precisely a true self, which we can see distinguishing the *MPMS*-group from the more abstract, 'impersonal' *tathāgatagarbha*/*dharmakāya* of the *ŚDS* and *RGV(V)*.

The *SPS* also compares the two lesser vehicles of the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha* to magical emanations, through the analogy of the illusory city.[1040] In this example, a group of travelers bound for a far-off treasure are deterred due to the great distance between them and their destination. This is until a skilled leader conjures another city *en route* – comparable to the perceived goals of the *arhat* and *pratyekabuddha* – which convinces the party to embark on their journey.

> *tatra tathāgataḥ sattvān durbalāśayān viditvā yathā sa deśikas tadṛddhimayaṃ nagaram <u>abhinirmimīte</u>*[1041] *teṣāṃ sattvānāṃ viśrāmaṇārtham*…
>
> *SPS*, Kern & Nanjio (1970: 189,2-4).

> Regarding this [education of beings], the Tathāgata, knowing sentient beings to be of feeble nature, like the guide who produces the magically-made emanated city; so that those beings may have respite…[teaches two provisional, inferior goals].[1042]

[1040] Found also in the *MBhS*: see p.207,ft.562.
[1041] See also Edgerton (1953b: 52a).
[1042] I note that the emanated city is compared to the teaching of the three vehicles: it is perhaps in a similar manner that the *AMS* describes the

Returning to the *tathāgatagarbha* literature, the *MPMS* and *AMS* both seem to reflect this understanding of *buddha-nirmita* found in the *SPS*: holding that the *tīrthika* notion of a self is in some fashion a skilful product of the Buddha, for the purpose of perhaps introducing the very idea of liberation.[1043] As suggested by Bodhibhadra's reading of the *AMS*, it is indeed possible to read the Buddhamati myth as teaching the indebtedness of extraneous teachings to the *saddharma*, which though not the line of the *RGV(V)* is visible still in the belief that the *tīrthika*-s' attachment to the notion of lasting selfhood finds validity in their realization of the *ātmapāramita*.

The idea that *tīrthika*-s may themselves be *bodhisattva*-emanations may not have been an original contribution of the *MPMS*-group: it is found, as noted above, in the *Mahāvastu* regarding *bodhisattva*-s leading beings (gradually) towards liberation.[1044] Their being purposefully manifested by the Buddha/*bodhisattva*-s is heavily implied by the use of *nirmita* in the *MPMS* and *AMS*, though these texts otherwise still portray the *tīrthika* as misguided in their comprehension of the self.[1045] As such we require further evidence

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teachings of *tīrthika*-s (rather than the teachers themselves) as doctrinal 'emanations'. See pp.399-400.

[1043] The *MBhS*, for all of its closeness to the *SPS*, has no account of *buddha-nirmita* (outside of its form of this parable) and seems uninterested in the *tīrthika* (completely absent from *MBhS*^{C}) *vis-à-vis* selfhood. It nonetheless accepts the notion of a 'true self' of beings, presumably from the *MPMS* (perhaps also the *AMS*), and perhaps accepts without need to argue further, the Buddhist self as that misconceived by other schools.

[1044] See pp.395-396.

[1045] Notably the *SPS* does not consider *tīrthika*-s in these terms: its account of the Mahāyāna as an 'inclusive' vehicle extends only over the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddhayāna*-s, casting the *tīrthika* still as foreign to the Buddha's influence: see e.g. Karashima (2007: 146-148).

that we are right to read these *nirmita* in terms of the *SPS*: provided by a related *tathāgatagarbha* source, thus far omitted for not making this the centre of its doctrine, nor discussing it in terms of selfhood.[1046]

This is the *Bodhisattvagocaropāyaviṣayavikurvāṇanirdeśa-Sūtra* (*BGVNS*).[1047] The Tibetan version of this text (*BGVNS*^{T}) has been studied and translated by Jamspal, while its two Chinese forms have been addressed in brief by Takasaki and Zimmermann.[1048] The later of these Chinese versions (*BGVNS*^{C}: T.272), attributed to Bodhiruci, alone teaches the *tathāgatagarbha*, though clearly does so echoing, and not developing, content found in texts that we have already addressed.[1049]

> 當依一切衆生煩惱身觀．．．此身即是如來藏故。大王當知，一切煩惱諸垢藏中，有如來性湛然滿足。如石中金；如木中火；如地下水；如乳中酪；如麻中油；如子中芽[1050]；如藏中寶；如模[1051]中象；如孕中胎；如雲中日。
>
> 是故我言：煩惱身中，有如來藏。
>
> *BGVNS*^{C}: T.272,359a24-a26; 359a29-b3.

[1046] See p.7,ft.18.
[1047] See Jamspal (2010: xvi).
[1048] Takasaki (1975: 254-275). Regarding this text as a Buddhist critique of *arthaśāstra* literature, see Zimmermann (2000).
[1049] Certainly this reflects just one (and the most expansive) of three recensions of the text: however the inclusion of the *tathāgatagarbha* in this version complements well its attitude to not just the *ekayāna*, but also the sanctity of sentient beings. See Zimmermann (2000: 178-180; 194-198).
[1050] 牙＝芽＜元＞＜明＞
[1051] 摸＝模＜元＞＜明＞

> One should contemplate [the *dharmakāya*] on the basis of the body of afflictions of all sentient beings…because this [*dharma*-]body is indeed the *tathāgatagarbha*. Your Majesty should know that amidst the store of all afflictions and impurities there exists the nature of a Tathāgata that is utterly complete. Like 1) gold in stone; 2) fire in wood; 3) water beneath the earth; 4) cream in milk; 5) oil in hemp; 6) a sprout in a seed; 7) a riches in a treasury; 8) an icon in a mould; 9) a fetus in the womb; 10) sun behind cloud.
>
> Hence do I say that amidst the body of afflictions there exists the *tathāgatagarbha*.

Of the above examples, numbers 1), 6) and 8) are reminiscent of some found in the *TGS*; 4) appears in the *MPMS*; and 3) and 10) in the *MBhS*.[1052] Despite the opening claim that the body is *tathāgatagarbha*, the passage then states that there exists a *tathāgata-dhātu* (called again in the last line *tathāgatagarbha*), i.e. an essential nature beneath afflictions, using the model of the *buddha-dhātu* most commonly reflected in the *MPMS*-group. This account in *BGVNS*^{C1} is clearly familiar, and may be well aware of the *MPMS*-group, or its milieu, that has become the focus of this chapter.

The *BGVNS* (in all of its versions) is also strongly indebted to the *SPS*: espousing as it does an account of the *ekayāna* and, as we shall see, a model of the Buddha as a transcendent, personal being exerting tremendous

[1052] See Takasaki (1974: 257-262).

influence over his Buddha-field via the application of his skilful means.[1053] The text can be considered a work of Mahāyānist '*arthaśāstra*': concerned with statecraft and the duties of a king, recounting the education of King Caṇḍapradyota by the insightful *nirgrantha* Satyavādin.[1054] Satyavādin appeals to the authority of the Vedas when celebrating the qualities of the 'ascetic Gautama', and later in the same text is praised by that very Buddha for being a *bodhisattva* skilled in teaching all kinds of beings through adopting different guises.[1055] He is, as far as we can understand it, a *bodhisattva-tīrthika*.

A striking feature of the *BGVNS*, this time shared by the Tibetan translation (*BGVNS*^{T}), is its understanding of such *tīrthika*-s as being permitted to exist by the will of the Buddha.

> 彼處不生諸外道等。何以故？　文殊師利，我佛國土，有諸外道、尼乾子等，皆是如來住持力故，爲欲示現不可思議方便境界。

[1053] *BGVNS*^{C}: T.272,326b8-b15.

[1054] Note that this Satyavādin is presumably that known also in the *sutta* literature: see p.15,ft.36.
Jamspal details how it is simplistic to translate *nirgrantha* always simply as referring to the Jains. The Jain representative of the six *tīrthika*-s is one Nirgrantha Jñātiputra, and the Jain tradition itself has accepted this title as denoting one 'without ties', i.e. of their own brand of *śramaṇa* tradition. However in *BGVNS* the *nirgrantha* Satyavādin is both clothed (so not a digambara Jain) and appeals to the authority of the Veda-s, i.e. cannot be a kind of *nāstika śramaṇa*. Whatever the case, these certainly designate 'highly respected teachers', much akin to the understanding of *tīrthika*-s in general above. See Jamspal (2010: 143-147).

[1055] See *BGVNS*^{C} T.272,361b10-c26; also Jamspal (2010: 108-109).

何以故？　此諸[1056]一切諸外道等，皆是住於不可思議解脱門故；皆是大智、究竟般若波羅蜜門故；一切皆得大方便力奮迅自在故；一切皆得不捨佛、法、僧等念故；一切皆到第一彼岸，以大神力，教化衆生故；一切皆得如來加力，教化衆生故。

BGVNS^{C}: T.272,326c23-327a2.

That place [i.e. the Buddha-field) does not generate *tīrthika*-s etc. Why is that? Mañjuśrī, in my Buddha-field, the presence of *tīrthika*-s and *nirgrantha*-s is due to the sustaining power of the Tathāgata, for the purpose of manifesting the sphere of inconceivable skill in means.[1057] Why is this? Because all of these *tīrthika*-s etc. are founded upon the gateway of inconceivable liberation; all are provided with great cognition and supreme perfection of insight; all have attained the power of great skilful means and vigorous mastery; all have attained non-abandonment of the recollection the Buddha, *dharma* and *saṅgha*; all having reached the highest position use their power to develop sentient beings; all have attained empowerment by the Tathāgata to teach and develop sentient beings.[1058]

[1056] 諸＝處＜三＞＜宮＞

[1057] Herein 住 probably reflects Sanskrit *adhiṣṭhāna* (reflected throughout *BGVNS*^{T} by *byin gyi rlabs*: see Jamspal (2010: 171)), a feature of the Buddha's activity explored by Tournier (2014: 9-13).

[1058] For a translation of this based on *BGVNS*^{T}, see Jamspal (2010: 36-37).

The above is followed by an account of the audience being converted from the *śrāvakayāna* to what is called the *ekayāna*.[1059] Clearly the intended meaning is the superiority of the Mahāyāna into which all other vehicles dissolve, and with it the *bodhisattva*-s that are its advocates. Rather than condemn the *tīrthika*-s, this explains them as empowered by the Buddha. This is supported by the verses that follow the above.

外道大神通　皆自在菩薩　/　汝當知方便　示現如是相

一切諸菩薩　聞諸外道等　/　具足方便力　皆發歡喜心

BGVNS^{C}: T.272,327c10-13.

> Those with great powers among the *tīrthika*-s are all masterful *bodhisattva*-s: you should know that their skill in means manifests such characteristics. When all the *bodhisattva*-s hear that the *tīrthika*-s are endowed with the power of skill in means, they are greatly pleased.[1060]

Hence *tīrthika*-s (and their doctrines), though no doubt provisional, exist for the purpose of leading beings towards thoughts of liberation from *saṃsāra*. These are taken to be evidence of the Buddha's skilful means: products of the Buddha that display the range of his influence. As we read in the *MPMS*, nothing 'higher', i.e. pertaining to liberation, is taught in the world without having its origin in the Buddha and his own intentions.

[1059] E.g. *BGVNS*^{C}: T.272,327a3-a5.
[1060] For this passage translated from *BGVNS*^{T}, see Jamspal (2010: 39).

We should keep in mind that the *BGVNS* is situated on the fringe of what we can call the *tathāgatagarbha* literature. Only one of its versions makes reference to that doctrine, but all are well-versed in the *ekayāna* of the *SPS* and, it would seem, that same text's paradigm of a transcendent, god-like Buddha influencing the world. This influence extends to the establishment of *tīrthika*-s for the purpose of leading certain worldly beings, very gradually, towards awakening.

In the *MPMS* and *AMS* the picture is not quite so clear: we have seen that all things 'superior' in the world can be considered emanations by the Buddha/*bodhisattva*, but also that the *tīrthika*-s remain undoubtedly wrong-minded in their attachment to wrong notions of the self. However the attitude of the authors of these texts may still be similar to that of the *BGVNS*: i.e. that these *tīrthika*-s teach in accord with the wishes of the Buddha, especially (as in the *AMS*) in light of the decline of the true *saddharma* in the world. These *tīrthika*-s, were they to realize the *correct* usage of the term self, would then properly realize the *buddha-dhātu*. Hence all musings upon liberation, properly conceived, are derivative of the *saddharma*, and are expressions of the *ekayāna* that leads to the eventual attainment of *all* beings.

A final suggestion that the *ekayāna* paradigm might explain wrong notions of selfhood in terms of a final *ātmavāda* expression comes from an unlikely source. It has been established that the *LAS* was peripheral to the *tathāgatagarbha* corpus, yet despite its bent towards determinism (its *triyāna* model) over universalism makes mention still of the *ekayāna*.[1061]

[1061] See Kunst (1977: 313-314); also Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 74-75; 180-185).

devayānaṃ brahmayānaṃ śrāvakīyaṃ tathaiva ca /

tāthāgataṃ ca pratyekaṃ yānān etān vadāmy aham //

yānānāṃ nāsti vai niṣṭhā yāvac cittaṃ pravartate /

citte tu vai parāvṛtte na yānaṃ na ca yāninaḥ //

yānavyavasthānaṃ naiva asti yānam ekaṃ vadāmy aham /

prakarṣaṇārthaṃ bālānāṃ yānabhedaṃ vadāmy aham //

LAS v.2.203-205; Nanjio (1923: 134-135).

I speak of the vehicles of *deva*-s, *brāhmaṇa*-s, *śrāvaka*-s, *tathāgata*-s and *pratyekabuddha*-s.

There is no completion of the vehicles as long as the mind is active; if the mind is reverted[1062], there is no vehicle nor passenger.

There is no establishment of the vehicles, thus I speak of the single vehicle. For the purpose of leading the ignorant, I speak of the distinction of vehicles.[1063]

Though elsewhere the *LAS* speaks of the more frequently attested three vehicles, here we clearly find identified two more vehicles. Though it is not explicitly stated that the first two are any more or less 'correct' than the others (the *śrāvakayāna* and *pratyekabuddhayāna* being lesser vehicles, though still discernibly 'Buddhist'), the sense here is that all five collapse into

[1062] This is the *āśrayaparāvṛtti* that understands the *ālayavijñāna* as being 'revolved' upon the attainment of awakening: see e.g. *MSAB* 9.11, Lévy (1907: 35-36).

[1063] Consider also *LAS* v.10.315, Nanjio (1923: 306).

the one vehicle. As such we find even in the *LAS* the suggestion that non-Buddhist 'vehicles' are derivative of the *ekayāna* (albeit in a system that holds their collapse to be as much that of mental fabrications as skilful productions of the Buddha).[1064] What completes the *ekayāna* model, one could argue, is the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine explaining the universal ground for awakening shared by *all* beings, be they within the fold of the *saṅgha* or otherwise: being the true, universal self sought for, but not fully understood by, those extraneous to the *saddharma*.

8.7 *Summation*

I stress here that the above account of the *tīrthika* as a kind of *buddha-nirmita,* explaining extraneous *ātmavāda* teachings as deficient or even provisional forms of the true *ātmavāda* of the Buddha, is no explanation of the origins of an implicit doctrine of the self across the *tathāgatagarbha* literature. On the one hand the ubiquity of the *tathāgatagarbha*, an idea rooted in the promise of awakening for all beings, might have arisen to account for what it was about all sentient beings that guaranteed their eventual awakening (especially in the apparent absence of a living Buddha teaching in the world). For this to hold, this essential nature must also be in some sense permanent: a feature that jars with the pan-Buddhist preoccupation with what I have called

[1064] We note also that a rare mention of the *anyatīrthika* in the *LAS* comes in the opening of its chapter on meat eating, in which these beings are (backhandedly) complimented for, despite their waywardness, sharing the Buddha's abstention from meat. This chapter is notable for a rare textual reference to the *AMS*, albeit just in association of it with vegetarianism, and as such may have at least been aware of its attitude towards *tīrthika*-s. See *LAS* v.8.16, Nanjio (1923: 258).

the *anātmavāda*. The identity of this nature with the permanent, powerful 'self' that is a fully awakened Buddha – an innovation of the *MPMS* that remains enigmatic – led to some authors boldly affirming that the *tathāgatagarbha* is as much a self as the Buddha that can be considered as such upon manifestation. It is one innovation (perhaps again indebted to the 'high-Buddhology' of the *SPS*) to hold that the Buddha by virtue of his permanence and power can be considered a self, but another to embody this reality in the constitution of sentient beings.

The notion of a true self 'within' sentient beings, which makes constant reference to non-Buddhists also using the term, is at the core of the *MPMS*-group: a focus that the later *RGV(V)* seems to have put to pedagogical use.[1065] But behind the original declaration that the *buddha-dhātu* could be called a self is a perspective upon the world that sees the Buddha's influence everywhere, and at all times. So far-reaching is this Buddha – the source of many pedagogical 'emanations' – that *any* gesturing outside of *saṃsāra* must have as its origin the Buddhist *saddharma*. Hence, not only is the *tathāgatagarbha* the definitive notion of selfhood, but it also explains that for which extraneous *tīrthika*-s had been seeking. Following the *nirmita* mentioned in the *MPMS* and *AMS* – the texts of our literature dealing most extensively with these *tīrthika*-s – it is possible also that these teachers were themselves reducible to devices of the Buddha's teaching: beginning to direct those extraneous to the Mahāyāna in the direction of the true self.

[1065] Its contribution, once again, being the affirmation that the *ātman* as identity of the *dharmakāya* has as its content the *anātman* of all sentient beings.

This account of our authors, and the Buddhological paradigm that they presuppose, fits well under the umbrella of religious inclusivism: the innovations of the *tīrthika* are revealed to be no competition for the *saddharma*, but rather deficient expressions of the 'hidden meaning' of the Buddha, which is the universality of the *buddha-dhātu*. Accordingly the *MPMS* and *AMS*, and perhaps later also the *RGV(V)*, see their *tathāgatagarbha* as the conclusion to two different discourses: that on the nature of non-self (miscomprehended by those within the *saṅgha*), and upon the nature of the self (misunderstood by those outside of it).

By indulging in the latter, the authors of the *RGV(V)* may have appealed to the high-minded *tīrthika*-s (or their followers), who sought a definitive expression of the *ātmavāda* shared by other Indian schools.[1066] However the *MPMS* and *AMS* seem adamant that the self of the *tīrtihika*-s remains deficient, which has me doubt that their doctrine was aimed directly at the conversion of these 'rivals' (perhaps a later innovation of the *RGV(V)*, which even then certainly does not seem to address outsiders themselves).[1067] What the *MPMS*-group exhibits, however, is a prophetic account of the *saddharma* vanishing from the world eighty years after the

[1066] As stated above (pp.352-354) this 'self' of the *RGV(V)* remains better thought of as an 'identity' of beings: reminiscent no doubt of the apparent loss of (discrete) selfhood affirmed in the *advaita* if one properly considers oneself to be *brahman*, though unlikely to post-date this: see p.14,ft.33.

[1067] See p.6. We should keep in mind also the presence in both the *MMPS* and *AMS* of passages justifying violence against non-Buddhists (though not, by name, *tīrthika*-s), which would seem highly inappropriate in a text aimed at those outside of a tradition that is confronted with some adversity. See Kano (2008: 3-4,ft.11).

reemergence of each text.[1068] This may betray a concern of these authors for the immediate future of their tradition, perhaps shared by their audience.

Hodge's hypothesis regarding the *MPMS*, i.e. that it was born in the Andhra region in the C3rd, holds that this may reflect fear in the decline of the Śātavāhana dynasty, which had provided patronage to the *saṅgha* for some generations.[1069] Hodge's historical situating of the *MPMS* (and with it that of related texts also, down to the *ŚDS*) is by no means proven.[1070] It can still be said however that some crisis perceived by the *MPMS*-group's authors may reflect an awareness of rival religious groups gaining greater influence in their vicinity; perhaps in the subsequent Gupta period that saw the ascension of brāhmaṇical traditions across India.[1071] Such circumstances might have stirred these authors to not only affirm the continuing presence of the Buddha (a more general Mahāyānist concern), but also, through application of the

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[1068] See pp.74-76.

[1069] See pp.75-79 regarding Hodge's account. Connections perceived between this literature and the Mahāsāṃghika of the Andhra region (see Bareau (1955: 89-103)) are however not convincing. For their possible role in the early Mahāyāna, see Harrison (1982: 227-228); also Lamotte (1949: 25,ft.1), concerning possible origins of the *prajñāpāramitā* literature in the 'southern region' (*dakṣiṇāpatha*) and scholars approving of this idea (of whom, notably, he was not one). Moreover, the sources we have considered here show the hallmarks of a more mature Mahāyāna, perhaps influenced by some Mahāsāṃghika ideas (or at any rate the *Lokānuvartana-Sūtra*: see p.77,ft.196), but if so these are certainly only some among a wider array of influences: most prominently (as we have addressed) the *SPS*.
The localizing of (earlier) Mahāyāna sources in one region of another is undermined by Skilling (2009); also Boucher (2008: xix-xx).

[1070] For a recent (though no more convincing) form of this argument pertaining to the *ŚDS*, see Barber (2008).

[1071] Williams (2009: 109) does not discuss the early date (nor possible southerly origins) of the *MPMS* as suggested by Hodge, and more conservatively associates the *tathāgatagarbha* literature as a whole with the Gupta Empire: 'the high period of vigorous classical Brāhmanic 'Hindu' culture'. See also Nakamura (1980: 213-214); and Hara (1990: 183-184).

tathāgatagarbha doctrine, the continuing ability of all of its audience to eventually attain full awakening.[1072]

In response to some perceived crisis, the authors of the *MPMS* and *AMS* may have sought to express to their audience(s) that extraneous traditions represent no real alternative to the Buddhist *dharma*. The doctrines of *tīrthika*-s are deficient, flawed misconceptions of the *buddha-dhātu* which – importantly – are fulfilled through the correct teaching of the Buddha.[1073] Moreover, all of these beings still teach towards the goal of liberation from *saṃsāra*, and hence can be explained as emanations of a still influential Buddha: they simply require qualification in terms of the *buddha-dhātu* that is the *real* significant nature of all beings.

Hence by teaching a Buddhist form of *ātmavāda* the authors of the *MPMS*-group may have affirmed their superiority over the upaniṣadic milieu, *āstika* philosophical schools, and/or rival *nāstika* systems such as those of the Jains or Ājīvika-s. Perhaps this is evidence also of a desire to 'invite' these wayward beings into the *saddharma* (possessing as they are the *tathāgatagarbha* also), though the texts we have addressed show a conspicuous lack of interest in appealing directly to them (with the exception,

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[1072] Hubbard considers the notion of decline in the *saddharma* in the *SPS* to reflect opposition to earlier content of that *sūtra*, and with it encouragement to reproducers of the text. Such may be plausible in the case of the *MPMS* also, though its familiarity with non-Buddhist ideas reflects broader horizons: i.e. defense of their doctrine not just from accusations of 'heresy', but more specifically proximity to foreign *ātmavāda*-s. See Hubbard (1999: 200-204); Nattier (1991: 39)

[1073] Similarly articulated by Hubbard in regards to the *SPS* (1995:131): 'There is no 'other' to be located in this approach except within the borders of one's own discourse; thus, inasmuch as the 'other' exists only on one's own terms, neither self nor other requires critical presentation and evaluation.'

perhaps, of the *RGV(V)*). Rather, these texts affirm the Buddha's continuing role in the world, in which all teachings of a self can be dismissively explained away as miscomprehensions of the *buddha-dhātu*, or even as part of the rich, pedagogical tapestry of *buddha-nirmita* active in the world.[1074]

8.8 *Final Remarks*

The *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine that survived in India and Tibet was certainly that found in the *RGV(V)*. Interest in the *MPMS*-group in China testifies to an appeal these *sūtra*-s had to audiences in a very different religious landscape, but relative lack of interest in these texts in Indian and Tibetan commentaries supports the view that condemnation of *ātmavāda* discourse by the *ŚDS* and *LAS* reflected some disapproval, even among other *tathāgatagarbha* authors. But as stated at the start of this study, the suggestion that a 'Buddhist *ātmavāda*' was only a provisional teaching does an injustice to those authors who espoused this: their form of the *saddharma* appears to be one that at least one group of authors held to be true and, indeed, comprehensive.

[1074] If we accept the *ŚDS* to be a successor to the *MPMS*-group, then the content of that *sūtra* might suggest a turn-around in the perceived fortunes of the *dharma* in their climate. Not only does the *ŚDS* distance itself from the *buddha-dhātu* or 'true self' form of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, but it also states in no uncertain terms that the *tīrthika* is of no value in relation to the *dharma* (see pp.274-275). Perhaps this is down to little more than a greater distance between these authors and the Buddhology of the *SPS*: the *ŚDS* favouring a more metaphysically abstract model of the Buddha (as *dharmakāya*) over the more 'personal', even interventionist Buddha of the *SPS*. If we accept localization of these texts as suggested by Hodge and Wayman and Wayman, this could betray a perceived change in fortune for the advocates of the *tathāgatagarbha*, though this remains speculative.

It is possible that such authors' use of the language of selfhood to promote the *tathāgatagarbha* may reflect an attempt to 'include', and in so doing diminish, the influence of extraneous, non-Buddhist doctrines and practices. The background of this seems still to be the *SPS*: a by now well-established precursor to the *tathāgatagarbha* corpus. The *tathāgatagarbha* appears to be a product of its *ekayāna* paradigm: a model of the world as a stage in which a personal, enduringly influential Buddha directs all beings towards awakening, which is here conceptualized as the realization of one's own inherently awakened 'self'. Expressing it as such not only lauds the qualities of the Buddha, but also diminishes by association all other teachers who look for, but who do not fully comprehend, what is their true nature.[1075]

The clearest point of reference for all of our authors has been the *SPS*, with its own brand of docetic, 'high-Buddhological' doctrine that informs much of the *tathāgatagarbha* tradition. A loose thread in this account is the suggestion of other influences upon this literature: in particular that of the Mahāsāṃghika, or indeed other non-Mahāyāna *nikāya*-s.[1076] Wayman and Wayman's claims about the *ŚDS* are by no means conclusive, though together with Hodge's bold claims about the *MPMS*, Shimoda's discernment of Mahāsāṃghika-like elements in that text, and some evidence that this literature circulated (if not developed) in the Andhra region, there is presented

[1075] I note that no such attitude to the *tīrthika* is taken by the *SPS*, which has as its primary concern the acceptance of its doctrines – foremost the one-vehicle paradigm – by other members of the *saṅgha*. See e.g. Karashima (2001).

[1076] We consider, for example, the title of *mahāsūtra* applied to the *MPMS*, perhaps suggesting Sarvāstivādin or Mūlasarvāstivādin influence: see p.68,ft.159.

an at least coherent model situating this doctrine's development in proximity to this school or one of its subsidiaries.[1077] But the picture of how different *nikāya*-s may have related to the Mahāyāna and its innovations remains unclear, and identifying a geographical context for this literature may be at best speculation, until such time as a convincing model for the development of the Mahāyāna should ever emerge.[1078]

Wherever and whenever we might imagine the religious climate of our authors, they certainly portray a religious landscape which requires further study. In places, the *tathāgatagarbha* literature seeks to close a perceived chasm between the error of rival doctrines and the verity of the *saddharma*, performed through a proclaimed expansion of the Buddha's sphere of influence.[1079] As argued above, this could reflect an attempt to 'complete' rival doctrines, but perhaps also explain differences as further examples of how the Buddha operates in the world. We also wonder precisely who these *tīrthika*-s so perceived by our authors were, and in what manner they came into contact with exponents of the *saddharma*. No doubt Mahāyāna *sūtra*-s provide clues to unearthing a different environment to that of the Pāli *sutta*-s, in which said teachers are remembered as revered individuals among whom the Buddha himself was counted; but we read nothing to suggest that Mahāyāna authors during their own time considered these 'rivals' to be lacking in influence.

[1077] See in particular Shimoda (1994).
[1078] See, most recently, contributions in Nyanatusita (2013).
[1079] Not dissimilar to that found in Suzuki's reading of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-Sūtra* (see p.401,ft.1029). The tactics of inclusion in our texts are no doubt different, though what these may all share is a common desire to explain the prevalence of non-Buddhist ideas and practices through an expansion of what can be considered 'dharmic'.

Defined as they seem to be by engaging in a discourse on the self, eschewed by most of the Buddhist tradition in favour of discussing precisely its absence, it remains of interest under what conditions some authors revised the Buddha's *saddharma* in order to expand and 'include' such musings. But the authors of the *MPMS*-group clearly believed there to be value in promoting a Buddhist account of the self: one which crowned the *tathāgatagarbha* as a definitive expression of the soteriological prospects of sentient beings, and sought to conclude perhaps the most prevalent inter-religious discourse to have occupied classical Indian thought.

Appendix: Designators for Significant Content in the *Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra*

The below draws together close readings of all versions of the *Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (*TGS*): found separately in Takasaki (1974: 48-53) regarding the Chinese translations of the text and in Zimmermann (2002: 50-52) regarding both Tibetan versions.

For more on the different versions of the *TGS*, see chapter 2.2. As in sections 2.3-4, the below is concerned with the explanatory content of each simile. Each is again numbered, and titled in the form 'desirable content / undesirable exterior'. Where findings are true of all versions of TGS^{2}, these are presented last.[1080]

0. Buddha image / lotus calyx.

TGS^{C1} – Amidst all afflictions are the knowledge, vision and body of a *tathāgata* (如來智、如來眼、如來身).[1081] Furthermore, all beings *have* a *tathāgatagarbha* (如來藏) laden with virtues no different to those of the Buddha (implying *garbha* (藏) should be understood as a 'store' of qualities).[1082]

TGS^{T} – Within defiled beings sit *tathāgata*-s, called also (*de bzhin gshegs*

[1080] I do not here consider the forms of these similes as reproduced in the *RGV(V)*, though on occasion the Sanskrit form of that text will be referred to where it might clarify any expression of the *TGS*.
[1081] TGS^{C1}: T.666,457b29-c01.
[1082] TGS^{C1}: T.666,457c2-3.

pa'i chos nyid; Skt. *tathāgatadharmatā*): perhaps implying a tripartite model.[1083]

TGS^{B} – Follows *TGS*^{T}.[1084]

TGS^{C2} – Motionless *tathāgata*-s are sat not within beings with their afflictions, but simply among afflictions.[1085]

(*TGS*^{2} – Concludes by stating that beings 'are' *tathāgatagarbha* (which better characterizes *TGS*^{2} in general.[1086])

1. Buddha image / lotus calyx.

TGS^{C1} – The Buddha sees the *tathāgatagarbha* of sentient beings, which are called eternal and undefiled (this is the *dharmatā* of Buddhas: 諸佛法爾).[1087] Unusually for this version, *sattva*-s are also said to *be tathāgatagarbha*, permanently and without change (常住不變), but they are also covered by afflictions.[1088] The Buddha teaches this *sūtra* in order to reveal the nature of a Buddha (佛性) of beings.[1089] In verse, all beings 'possess the *tathāgatagarbha*', and within the bodies of all beings exists the *buddha-garbha* (佛藏).[1090]

TGS^{T} – All beings, always, are *tathāgatagarbha* (this is the essence (*chos*

[1083] *TGS*^{T}: 0M.12
[1084] *TGS*^{B}: 0M.16.
[1085] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,461c8.
[1086] *TGS*^{T}: 0M.19-20; *TGS*^{B}: 0M.16-17; *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,461c11.
[1087] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,457c6-8.
[1088] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,457c8-9.
[1089] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,457c6-7; see also p.61,ft.145.
[1090] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,457c11; c22; see also p.60,ft.141b.

nyid: *dharmatā*) of *dharma*-s).[1091] In verse, beings possess the body of a *jina* (*rgyal ba'i lus*).[1092]

TGS^{B} – Follows *TGS*^{T} (though lacking *chos nyid*) except in verse has *rgyal ba'i sku*.[1093]

TGS^{C2} – All beings are *tathāgatagarbha* (this is the *dharmatā* and *dharmadhātu* (法性法界)).[1094] In verse, all beings have the body of a *tathāgata* (如來身) qualified as subtle (微妙).[1095]

TGS^{2} – What is to be cleansed is the *tathāgata*'s knowledge (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes*; 如來智).[1096] We note that in verse, *TGS*^{2} always repeats the sense of a Buddha's 'body' within beings, present as in the *upamāna*.[1097]

2. Honey / bees.

TGS^{C1} – Beings have the knowledge and vision of a Buddha (佛知見).[1098] In verse, they have the *tathāgatagarbha* (如來藏).[1099]

[1091] *TGS*^{T}: 1B.2-3.
[1092] *TGS*^{T}: 1C.7. Also; *TGS*^{T}: 1C.19 has *rgyal ba'i lus su gnas pa*, though see Zimmermann (2002: 109,ft.83) for more on this.
[1093] See *TGS*^{B}: 1B.2-3; *TGS*^{B}: 1C.16
[1094] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,461c16-c20. Here the *dharmadhātu* (法界) seems to correspond to the other versions calling this teaching the *dhatmatā* of *dharma*-s; as such this does not serve as a designation of the contained reality so much as an amplifier of this doctrine's significance. See also Zimmermann (2002: 106-107,ft.71).
[1095] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,462a2; 462a4. For the expression 微妙, which might wish to qualify that this body is not anything physical *per se*, see Nakamura (1975: 1294c).
[1096] *TGS*^{T}: 1B.5; *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,461c7.
[1097] For more, see Zimmermann (2002: 109,ft.83).
[1098] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,457c29.
[1099] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,457c26.

TGS^{T} – Beings have the quality of Buddhahood (*sangs rgyas nyid*).[1100] In verse, afflictions are to be cleared away in order to reveal a *tathāgata*.[1101]

TGS^{B} – Has simply *sangs rgyas*.[1102] In verse, beings possess a *tathāgata*.[1103]

TGS^{C2} – Beings have already 'attainment of awakening' (已成佛).[1104] In verse, Sentient beings are said to have the *dharmakāya* (法身); also a *tathāgata* among afflicitions.[1105]

3. Kernel / husk.

TGS^{C1} – Concealed by afflictions is the limitless knowledge and vision of the *tathāgata* (如來無量知見) which is concealed by afflictions.[1106] In verse, beings possess the *buddhagarbha* (佛藏) and nature of a *tathāgata* (如來性).[1107]

TGS^{T} – Amid afflictions is *tathāgata*-hood (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i nyid*); Buddha-hood (*sangs rgyas nyid*); a *rang byung nyid* (**svayaṃbhūtva*).[1108] Zimmermann reads this as referring to the

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[1100] *TGS*^{T}: 2A.6;11.
[1101] *TGS*^{T}: 2C.10-11.
[1102] *TGS*^{B}: 2A.6.
[1103] *TGS*^{B}: 2C.10.
[1104] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,462a17
[1105] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,462a29; 462b4.
[1106] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,458a12-13.
[1107] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,458a20; 458a22.
[1108] *TGS*^{T}: 3B.2-3. See Zimmermann (2002: 115,ft.108).

Buddha's self-realized power.[1109] In verse, there is the *sangs rgyas sa* (*buddhabhūmi*), and a nature (*chos nyid*) 'like that of the Buddha'.[1110]

TGS^{B} – Has only the *de bzhin gshegs pa'i nyid* from *TGS*^{T}, but in verse follows *TGS*^{T}.[1111]

TGS^{C2} – Amid afflictions is a *tathāgata*'s body (如來體); sentient beings are precisely *tathāgatagarbha* (如來藏).[1112] In verse, the contaminated nature is the *tathāgata*'s knowledge (如來智), and then also the body of a Buddha (佛身).[1113]

4. Gold nugget / excrement.

TGS^{C1} – Beings possess the *tathāgatagarbha*.[1114] In verse, there is the nature of a *tathāgata* (如來性) and of a Buddha (佛性).[1115]

TGS^{T} – Beings possess what is not subject to perishing (*chud mi za ba'i chos can*).[1116] This is also the indestructible nature of a *tathāgata* (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i chos nyid*).[1117] In verse, beings have their own pure nature (*rang bzhin sbyang*).[1118]

[1109] Zimmermann (2002: 115). Note that in the Sanskrit version of this presented in *RGV* 1.106, the reality to be unveiled is rather the *jinatva*, or 'nature of a victor'. See Johnston (1950: 62,2).
[1110] *TGS*^{T}: 3C.10; 14.
[1111] *TGS*^{B}: 3B.4-5; 3C.11; 14.
[1112] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,462b9-11.
[1113] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,462b20; 462b23.
[1114] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,458a28-458b01.
[1115] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,458b7-9.
[1116]; *TGS*^{T}: 4A.7. See also Zimmermann (2002: 118). For some clarification, the Sanskrit version of the simile in *RGV* 1.108 reads *avināśadharmin*: see Johnston (1950: 62.13). See also Zimmermann (2002: 118).
[1117] *TGS*^{T}: 4B.10.
[1118] *TGS*^{T}: 4C.14

TGS^{B} – Follows *TGS*^{T}, except has a changeless nature (*mi 'gyur ba'i chos nyid*).[1119] In verse, we find *rang bzhin*.[1120]

TGS^{C2} – Beings have what is intrinsically imperishable (*TGS*^{C2}: 本體不壞).[1121] Also beings have the indestructible *dharma*(-s) (不壞法), which Zimmermann edits, in light of the Tibetan and some Chinese editions, to an indestructible 'nature' (不壞法性).[1122] In verse beings have their own pure nature (自性清淨).[1123]

5. Treasure / ground beneath a house.

TGS^{C1} – Beings have the knowledge of a *tathāgata*. Also, they have in their bodies the great treasure-store of *dharma*-s (大法寶藏), that is also the **tathāgata*(*dharma*)*garbha* (如來法藏).[1124] In verse, the bodies of beings possess a great treasure (大寶) that is eternal and unchanging (常在不變易).[1125]

TGS^{T} – Beings have the *tathāgatagarbha* (with ten powers, four self-assurances, eighteen major qualities and eighty minor qualities), beneath the house that is their 'thinking based upon clinging' (*mngon par zhen pa'i yid la byed pa*).[1126] This is a treasure of qualities (*chos kyi*

[1119] *TGS*^{B}: 4B.9.
[1120] *TGS*^{B}: 4C.14.
[1121] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,462b27
[1122] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,462c3-4. See Zimmermann (2002: 281).
[1123] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,462c17. Throughout the *RGVV* we indeed find (*citta*-)*prakṛti* corresponding to the Chinese 自性. See also Zimmermann (2002: 119).
[1124] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,458b13-16.
[1125] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,548b24. See Zimmermann (2002: 124,ft.151)
[1126] *TGS*^{T}: 5A.9-10. For this the *RGVV* provides *abhiniveśamanasikāra*. See Johnston (1950: 62, l.13).

gter).[1127] In verse, beings have 'the motionless, transcended body' (*g.yo ba med cing bde gshegs lus su mthong*; 諸佛體不動搖).[1128]

TGS^{B} – Beings have 'the nature of a Buddha' (*sangs rgyas kyi chos*).[1129] In verse, there is simply a great treasury (*mdzod chen*).[1130]

TGS^{C2} – Beings have the knowledge of a *tathāgata*. Also they have a store of the Buddha's qualities (佛法藏), having the *tathāgatagarbha*.[1131] In verse, this resembles *TGS*^{2}: 諸佛體不動搖.[1132]

(*TGS*^{2} – Apart from in verse, the contained *tathāgatagarbha* is presented as a collection of qualities.[1133])

6. Sprout / seed.

TGS^{C1} – What is contained within afflictions is quiescent *nirvāṇa* (妙寂泥洹), called also *tathāgata, arhat, samyaksaṃbuddha* (如來應供等正覺).[1134] In verse, there is present the *tathāgatagarbha*, called also the **buddhagarbha* (佛藏) that is perhaps a 'store' of the qualities.[1135]

TGS^{T} – It is implied that beings themselves are wrapped in afflictions (i.e. a tripartite model). However a *sattva* is precisely the essence (*snying po*) that is the nature of a *tathāgata* (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i chos nyid*).[1136] In verse, beings have the body of a *sugata* (*bde gshegs pa'i lus*).[1137]

[1127] *TGS*^{T}: 5B.5.
[1128] *TGS*^{C1}: 5C.13; *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,463a9.
[1129] *TGS*^{B}: 5A.9.
[1130] *TGS*^{B}: 5C.14.
[1131] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,463c29-a02.
[1132] *TGS*^{C2}: 463,a9.
[1133] See also pp.64-65.
[1134] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,458c3-4.
[1135] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,458c10-11.

TGS^{B} – Has *snying po*, but states also that there exists a *sattva-dhātu* (*sems can kyi khams*).[1138] In verse, there is found a *bde gshegs lus*.[1139]

TGS^{C2} – This nature is the store of the *tathāgata* (如來藏性).[1140] In verse, there is the body of a *tathāgata* (如來體).[1141]

(*TGS*^{2} – This provides the *TGS's* only uses of the term *sattva-dhātu* (有情界; *sems can gyi khams*).[1142])

7. Tathāgata statue / rags in wilderness.

TGS^{C1} – In the bodies of beings is the 'marvelous store' of a *tathāgata* (如來妙藏).[1143] In verse, there is the motionless nature of a *tathāgata* (如來性不動), also called the body of a *jina* (最勝身).[1144]

TGS^{T} – Beings have the perception and wisdom of a *tathāgata* (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes mthong ba*).[1145] In verse, there is the real nature (*chos nyid*) of sentient beings, called also the permanent (*rtag*) *jina*.[1146]

TGS^{B} – Follows *TGS*^{T}.[1147]

TGS^{C2} – Beings have the knowledge and vision of a *tathāgata* (如來智見).[1148]

[1136] *TGS*^{T}: 6B.2-3.
[1137] *TGS*^{T}: 6C.8
[1138] *TGS*^{B}: 6B.2; 4.
[1139] *TGS*^{B}: 6C.9.
[1140] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,463a18-19.
[1141] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,463a29.
[1142] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,463a21; *TGS*^{T}: 6B.5; *TGS*^{B}: 6B.4-5. For more on this *sattva-dhātu*, see p.63,ft.151.
[1143] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,548c20-21.
[1144] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,459a4. See Nakamura (1975: 446a).
[1145] *TGS*^{T}: 7B.7
[1146] *TGS*^{T}: 7C.20
[1147] *TGS*^{B}: 7B.6; 7C.20.
[1148] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,463b20-21

In verse, there is the body of a *tathāgata* (如來體) and of a Buddha (佛身) always present in beings.[1149]

(*TGS*^{2} – Beings themselves are amidst afflictions, beneath which is the body of a *tathāgata*.[1150] In verse, this is always the firmly established body of a *jina* (*rgyal ba'i sku ni mnyam par bzhag gyur*), and indeed a *jina* 'wrapped [by afflictions]', while what awaits realization is the knowledge of a *sugata*.[1151])

8. *Cakravartin* embryo / poor woman.

TGS^{C1} – In beings there is the *tathāgatagarbha*, called also the nature of a Buddha (佛性).[1152] In verse, the bodies of beings are said to contain the *tathāgatagarbha*.[1153]

TGS^{T} – All beings have the gene (*rigs*; Skt. *gotra*) of the *tathāgata*.[1154] In verse, this is the true nature (*chos nyid*) of beings.[1155]

TGS^{B} – The *tathāgatagarbha* is called also the *tathāgata-dhātu* (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i khams*.)[1156] In verse, this follows *TGS*^{T}.[1157]

TGS^{C2} – In beings there is the *tathāgata-dhātu* (如來界).[1158] This is qualified

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[1149] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,463b29; c4.
[1150] *TGS*^{T}: 7B.5-6; *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,463b18-19.
[1151] *TGS*^{T}: 7C.15; *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,463b23; b29.
[1152] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,459a10-11; 459a13
[1153] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,459a21; 459a23.
[1154] *TGS*^{T}: 8B.3-4. This term dominates the *RGV(V)*, but is here perhaps employed less technically, due to the biological nature of the example.
[1155] *TGS*^{T}: 8C.17; 20.
[1156] *TGS*^{B}: 8B.3.
[1157] *TGS*^{B}: 8C.17; 39.
[1158] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,463c15.

also as the *tathāgatagarbha* within beings.[1159] In verse, we find (as in both Tibetan versions) the true nature (法性) of beings.[1160]

9. Golden figure / clay mould.

TGS^{C1} – In beings is the *buddha-garbha* (佛藏) replete with qualities, and also the body of a Buddha (佛身).[1161] In verse, beings possess the nature of a *tathāgata* (如來性) possessed by all beings.[1162]

TGS^{T} – Within afflictions there are the Buddha's qualities, and also his 'uncontaminated knowledge' (*zag pa med pa'i ye shes rin po che*; Skt. **anāsravajñānaratna*).[1163] This is the knowledge of the *tathāgata*.[1164] In verse, this is the Buddha's knowledge (*sangs rgyas ye shes*).[1165]

TGS^{B} – Follows *TGS*^{T}.[1166]

TGS^{C2} – The content is here the treasure of the Buddha's qualities, and untainted knowledge (佛法無漏知寶).[1167] In verse, there is simply the knowledge of the *tathāgata* (如來之智).[1168]

[1159] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,463c15.
[1160] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,463c29; 464a1
[1161] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,459a29; 459b2.
[1162] *TGS*^{C1}: T.666,459b8.
[1163] *TGS*^{T}: 9B.4-5.
[1164] *TGS*^{T}: 9B.10.
[1165] *TGS*^{T}: 9C.14-15.
[1166] *TGS*^{B}: 9B.3-4; 9C.15-16.
[1167] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,464a12-13.
[1168] *TGS*^{C2}: T.667,464a28.

Abbreviations

AAN	*Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśa-Parivarta* (Chinese translation: 佛説不增不減經, T.668)
AKB	*Abhidharmakośa-Bhāṣya* (Pradhan edition (1975))
AMS	*Aṅgulimālīya-Sūtra*
AMS^{C}	*Aṅgulimālīya-Sūtra* (Chinese translation: 央掘魔羅經, T.120)
AMS^{T}	*Aṅgulimālīya-Sūtra* (Tibetan *bka' 'gyur* translation: *'phags pa sor mo'i phreng ba la phan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, D.123; Go.25,04; L.58; N.198; Q.879; S.82; Ta.1.4.1.2)
AN	*Aṅguttara Nikāya* (references to Pāli Text Society editions)
ASP	*Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Vaidya edition (1960))
BĀU	*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* (Olivelle edition (1998))
BG	*Bhagavad-Gīta* (Sargeant edition (1994))
BGVNS	*Bodhisattvagocaropāyaviṣayavikurvāṇanirdeśa-Sūtra*
BGVNS^{C}	*Bodhisattvagocaropāyaviṣayavikurvāṇanirdeśa-Sūtra* (Chinese translation: 大薩遮尼乾子所説經, T.272)
BGVNS^{T}	*Bodhisattvagocaropāyaviṣayavikurvāṇanirdeśa-Sūtra* (Tibetan *bka' 'gyur* translation: *'phags pa byang chub sems dpa'i spyod yul gyi thabs kyi yul la rnam par 'phrul ba bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, D.146; Go.15,03; L.188; N.132; Q.813; S.246; Ta.1.4.0.32): translated in Jamspal (2010).
ChU	*Chāṇḍogya-Upaniṣad* (Olivelle edition (1998))
D	*Derge* edition of the Tibetan *bka' 'gyur / bstan 'gyur*
DN	*Dīgha Nikāya* (references to Pāli Text Society edition)
E	Indicates 'English summary' regarding Japanese works of scholarship.
Go	*Gon dha la* edition of the Tibetan *bka' 'gyur*
KU	*Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* (Olivelle edition (1998))
L	London edition of the Tibetan *bka' 'gyur*
LAS	*Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra* (Nanjio edition (1923))
MBhS	*Mahābherī*(*hāraka*)*-Sūtra*

MBhS^{C} *Mahābherī Sūtra* (Chinese translation: 大法鼓經, T.270)

MBhS^{T} *Mahābherīhāraka-Sūtra* (Tibetan translation: *'phags pa rnga bo che chen po'i le'u zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, D.222; Go.27,08; L.70; N.207; Q.888; S.94; Ta.1.4.2.1)

MN *Majjhima Nikāya* (references to Pāli Text Society edition)

MMS *Mahāmegha-Sūtra*

MPMS: *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Mahāsūtra*

MPMS^{C1} *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Mahāsūtra* (佛説大般泥洹經, T.376)

MPMS^{C2} *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Mahāsūtra* (大般涅槃經, T.374)

MPMS^{SF} *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Mahāsūtra* Sanskrit fragments (in Habata (2007; 2009))

MPMS^{T} *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sūtra* (Tibetan *bka' 'gyur* translation: *'phags pa yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa chen po'i mdo*, D.120; L.123; N.107; Q.788; S.179)

MSA *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (Lévy edition (1907))

MSA^{C} *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (Chinese translation: 大乘莊嚴經論, T.1604)

MSA^{T} *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (Tibetan *bstan 'gyur* translation: *theg pa chen po mdo sde'i rgyan zhes bya ba'i tshig le'u byas pa*, D.4020; Q.5521)

MSAB *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārabhāṣya* (Lévy edition (1907))

MSAVB *(Mahāyāna)Sūtrālaṃkāravṛttibhāṣya* (Tibetan *bstan 'gyur* translation: *mdo sde rgyan gyi 'grel bshad*, D.4034; Q.5531)

N *sNar thang edition of the Tibetan bka' 'gyur / bstan 'gyur* (accessed through tbrc.org online resources).

Q *Pe cing edition of the Tibetan bka' 'gyur / bstan 'gyur*; volumes in Suzuki (1955-61).

RGV(V) *Ratnagotravibhāga-Śāstra(-Vyākhyā)*

RGV(V)^{C} *Ratnagotravibhāga-Śāstra(-Vyākhyā)* (Chinese translation: 究竟一乘寶性論, T.1611)

RGV(V)T	*Ratnagotravibhāga-Śāstra(-Vyākhyā)* (Tibetan *bstan 'gyur* translation: *theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos rnam par bshad pa*, D.4025; Q.5526)
RGV(V)^{S}	*Ratnagotravibhāga-Śāstra(-Vyākhyā)* (Johnston edition (1950))
S	*sTog pho brang* edition of the Tibetan *bka' 'gyur* (accessed through tbrc.org online resources).
gS	*gSer* edition of the Tibetan *bstan 'gyur* (accessed through tbrc.org online resources)
SN	*Samyutta Nikāya* (references to Pāli Text Society edition)
SPS	*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtra* (Kern & Nanjio edition (1970))
ŚDS	*Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda-Sūtra*
ŚDS^{C1}	*Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda-Sūtra* (Guṇabhadra translation: 勝鬘師子吼一乘大方便方廣經, T.353)
ŚDS^{C2}	*Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda-Sūtra* (Bodhiruci translation (in 大寶積經): 勝鬘夫人會第四十八, T.310, 672c14-678c4)
ŚDS^{T}	*Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda-Sūtra* (Tibetan *bka' 'gyur* version: *'phags pa lha mo dpal 'phren gi seng ge'i sgra zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, D.92; Go.09,13; L.643,48; N.79; Q.760,48; S.11,48; Ta.1.3.1.21)
ŚU	*Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad* (Olivelle edition (1998))
T	*Taisho Chinese canon* (accessed via the Daizōkyō Text Database: http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/ddb-bdk-sat2.php?lang=en; also via the CBETA Digital Canon (2014))
Ta	*Ta bo* edition of the Tibetan *bka' 'gyur*
TGS	*Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra*
TGS^{1}	*Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (recension 1: identified by Zimmermann (2002))
TGS^{2}	*Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (recension 2: identified by Zimmermann (2002))
TGS^{C1}	*Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (Buddhabhadra Chinese translation)
TGS^{C2}	*Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (Amoghavajra Chinese translation)

TGS^{T}	*Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (Tibetan *bka' 'gyur* edition, in Zimmermann (2002))
TGS^{B}	*Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (Tibetan Bathang (*'ba' thang*) manuscript, in Zimmermann (2002))
Z	*Zoku zōkyō* Chinese canon (accessed via the CBETA Digital Canon (2014)).

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