

Abstract

Defining Wisdom: Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā*
D.Phil Dissertation
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Trinity Term 2015

This thesis examines Ratnākaraśānti's (ca. 970-1045 C.E.) explication of *Prajñāpāramitā* in his doxographical works and his *Sāratamā*. Based on extant Sanskrit and Tibetan primary sources, it argues that Ratnākaraśānti's main teacher was Dharmakīrtiśrī (late 10th C.E.) and that Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā* sought to replace his teacher's *Yogācāra-Mādhyamika* framework with a causal explanation of *Prajñāpāramitā* through redefining the term *Prajñāpāramitā* as the path to awakening, rather than its goal. By unpacking that causal explanation in light of his broader system, the thesis demonstrates the way that Ratnākaraśānti's own version of *Nirākāravādin-Yogācāra-Mādhyamika* refutes cognitive images (*ākāra*) as unreal ultimately, but claims they are still perceived by buddhas out of compassion. This conclusion debunks the long-standing theory that Ratnākaraśānti was an Indian proponent of the controversial Tibetan *gZhan-stong* despite later *gZhan-stong* proponents' attempts to claim him as their own.

There are two parts to the study. The first part introduces Ratnākaraśānti's life, philosophy and doxography based upon evidence from a Tibetan colophon to his *Mādhyamika* commentary and the Tibetan hagiography of his student Adhīśa (a.k.a. Atīśa) and upon a comparative analysis of his doxographical works that are prerequisites for reading his *Sāratamā*. The second part consists of an annotated translation of the *Sāratamā*'s introductory section, contrasted with the prior standard interpretation by Haribhadra's (9th century C.E.).

In the two appendices are included a Tibetan critical edition and a separate hybrid Sanskrit and Tibetan critical edition of the *Sāratamā*'s first *parivarta* based on the extant 11th and 13th century incomplete MSS and on the Tibetan translations in the sDe dge, Peking and sNarhang editions. The hybrid edition also includes my provisional critical edition of the root text—i.e. the first *parivarta* of the *Āryāṣṭa-sāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*—and my own translation of two small sample sections of the *Sāratamā*, which are extant only in Tibetan, back into Sanskrit.

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A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Trinity Term 2015

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Preface and Acknowledgements

My interest in the topic of *Prajñāpāramitā* was set in motion some twenty five years ago, when I first heard the Heart Sūtra being chanted in a Buddhist temple and wondered about the meaning of the word. My academic study of it, however, did not begin in earnest until 2001 when I began my master's degree in Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies at Naropa University focusing on the summary of the eight topics by the 19th century Tibetan scholar called Padma Vajra. Shortly after receiving my master's degree in Religious Studies in 2008 from the University of California Santa Barbara, I began my doctorate at Oxford University under the caring supervision of Professor Vesna Wallace. I am extremely grateful for her help, encouragement, and guidance in the world of scholarship. After Professor Wallace left Oxford in 2010, Professor Alexis Sanderson kindly agreed to co-supervise me. Upon his advice, rather than submitting the thesis in its then-current state, I spent the last five years trying to improve my knowledge of Sanskrit and philology and to read as much as possible of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature and Ratnākaraśānti's works. I am deeply indebted to him for this advice, for shaping my studies, and for the generous amount of time that he spent reading with me personally. Although under Professor Wallace's and Professor Sanderson's supervision I was able to prepare an English translation for the entire Sanskrit part of my hybrid edition of the *Sāratamā* and *Aṣṭa* which constitutes more than 25 long palm leaf folios, I have chosen not to include that translation in this dissertation, because of its length and its complexity, which if properly annotated would have greatly exceeded the thesis word limit. For this reason, I am submitting instead a translation of and commentary on only the *Sāratamā*'s introductory section with a much-needed introduction to Ratnākaraśānti's philosophy, which has been sorely lacking in academia up until now. I will publish the full English translation separately in the near future.

In my 15 years of graduate study at four different universities, I have been deeply touched by the kindness of my teachers, whose help has inspired my development as a scholar and as a person. I cannot name them all, but in particular, I would express my great appreciation to Harunaga Isaacson for allowing me to sit in on his numerous Sanskrit reading classes, for helping me improve my Sanskrit, for suggesting valuable corrections to the edition and to the thesis, and for inspiring me personally with his scholarship. I would also like to thank Richard Gombrich, Mattia Salvini, Kengo Harimoto, Martin Delhey, and Jim Benson for reading Sanskrit texts with me and their helpful insights and advice and to Lance Cousins for reading Pāli and Gāndhārī with me. I am also truly grateful to Dzongsar Khyentse, Lhoppon Rechung, Acarya Lama Tenpa, José Cabezón, Phil Stanley, Jules Levinson, Ngapa Chodrak, Choying Dorje, Dorji Wangchuk, and Karma Phuntsok for reading Tibetan with me and guiding me in understanding the literature.

I would especially like to thank Hong Luo for allowing me to read his Sanskrit edition of the PPU before it is published. It has been invaluable in helping me understand Ratnākaraśānti's thought and has guided my translations of passages from the Tibetan text. I thank Hodo Nakamura and Guan Di for allowing me to read and cite their unpublished work-in-progress DBA edition and for their helpful comments and suggestions. I would also thank Patrick McAllister for sharing his unpublished translation of the CAP with me, Youngjin Lee for sharing his forthcoming edition of the AAV with me, Gareth Sparham for sharing his thoughts and information with me, Karl Brunnhölzl for initially suggesting that I look into Ratnākaraśānti's works, and to Elisa Freschi, Pierre-Julien Harter, Alexandra Kemp, Charles Hastings, and David Pritzker for our enjoyable discussions on the topic of my thesis.

I very warmly thank Kenichi Kuranishi, Florin Deleanu, Kazuo Kano, and Shinya Moriyama for helping me understand the Japanese scholarship and giving me

valuable advice and clarifications. I thank also Taiken Kyuma for inviting me to present at the Vikrama Project in Kyoto and to all the scholars who attended and gave helpful input on the edition.

I would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions by Ulrike Roesler, Jowita Kramer, and Péter-Dániel Szántó in the early stages of my research. I would like to thank Orna Almogi for sending articles and encouragement. I would also like to thank Jung Lan Bang, Shanshan Jia, Andrey Klebanov, and the Hamburg gang for their useful suggestions. I also thank Alexander von Rospatt for providing me with a copy of the Lotus Research Centre publication of the Nepali version of the Sanskrit *Aṣṭa* and Jack Petranker for sending me a copy of Conze's transcription of the missing folio.

I would also like to acknowledge Charles Li and Dan McNamara, who both provided last minute proofreading and valuable feedback at different stages.

I would also like to thank the many institutions who funded and supported me, including University of California Santa Barbara, FLAS, Numata, and Deutsche Akademischer Austausch Dienst. I greatly appreciate Anna Balikci Denjongpa at the Namgyal Institute in Sikkim, Francesco Sferra at the IsIAO, Martin Liebetrueth at Göttingen University, Helmut Tauscher at Vienna University and TBRC for kindly providing me photographs of the MSS and xylographs.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Dzigar Kongtrul, Gona Tulku, and Jigme Khyentse for inspiring me to study, to my family for their support all these years, and to Michael McIlmurray for being there for me with love and care the whole way through.

Thank you.

1. Introduction

As one of the most important Buddhist scholars and most prolific writers of the eleventh century, Ratnākaraśānti (*ca.* 970-1045) argued for a single sheer luminosity (*prakāśamātra*) *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint that attempts to bridge the gap between Yogācāra and Mādhyamika philosophical systems and help them dovetail with Vajrayāna praxis.¹ His works on logic, metrics, epistemology, gnoseology, and esoteric Vajrayāna theory and practice had a major impact on the course of late Mahāyāna Buddhism in India and Tibet. But in his triptych of works on the topic of *Prajñāpāramitā*—among which the *Sāratamā* was the *magnum opus*—we find one of his most novel contributions. There, he challenged the prevailing definition of *Prajñāpāramitā* as the goal and re-defined it in accord with earlier Yogācāra values as the very path to awakening itself.² Since Mahāyāna Buddhist scholars were still struggling to understand their evolving identity in light of the proliferation of new tantric developments, the redefinition of *Prajñāpāramitā* was controversial. For his fans, Ratnākaraśānti was a hero who had argued tenaciously for the *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint. For his opponents, his enmity for his own teachers had led him to betray the tradition in which he was raised. But no matter what their philosophical persuasion, students flocked to study with him at Vikramaśīla and later Indian scholars, such as Abhayākaragupta, followed him closely in their own commentaries.

¹ I will translate the verbal forms of *pra+√kās* as “shine forth” but the substantives as “luminosity” (*prakāśa*), which should be distinguished from “lucidity” (*prabhāsvaratā*). I will also use the terms Mādhyamika and Yogācāra, untranslated, as either adjectives or a nouns to refer to the philosophical positions, their proponents, or the schools themselves itself, even if the corresponding Sanskrit text used, for instance, Madhyamaka. Also, proper names and common Sanskrit terms, like Yogācāra and Mahāyāna, will not be italicized, but other terms, including *Sākāravāda*, will be italicized consistently (not just the first time) and occasionally capitilized when they refer to titles or religious schools/viewpoints. When Sanskrit terms are used, an “s” will be added directly to the end to pluralize these terms when necessary, as in “buddhas,” “*Nirākāravādins*” “*sūtras*” and so on. I will also use *Nirākāravāda* for the position, but *Nirākāravādin* either as an adjective modifying a noun or as a pronoun for a person who holds that position. For Tibetan terms and titles, I will capitalize root letters and also place dashes between syllables for proper names only.

² Since Ratnākaraśānti follows the traditional practice of personifying *Prajñāpāramitā* metaphorically as the Mother *Prajñāpāramitā* who gives birth to buddhas, I will consistently capitalize the term and refer to Her in the feminine, even when the term *Prajñāpāramitā* is applied, often ambiguously within the literature, to a general topic of study, a realization, a system of praxis, or a *sūtra*.

Because of this, his legendary encyclopedic knowledge and hermeneutic skill earned him the epithet “Omniscient One in the Degenerate Age” (*kalikālasarvajña*).

Not only was Ratnākaraśānti famous in India, but many of the founding figures in the Tibetan New Translation (*gsar ma*) period personally revered and studied with him. In time however, later Tibetans, who by and large adopted the diametrically opposed Mādhyamika viewpoint of Candrakīrti, did not appreciate Ratnākaraśānti’s philosophical position. Over time, they increasingly vilified him in their hagiographies and downplayed his influence in their transmission lists. Except for the controversial *gZhan-stong* scholars who tried to claim his works as one of their own authoritative Indian sources, few cited or even mentioned his works after the fifteenth century and, for this reason, Ratnākaraśānti’s legacy eventually drifted into obscurity. Although he was highly regarded in the early Tibetan intellectual milieu, only one indigenous Tibetan sub-commentary on any work of Ratnākaraśānti is known to remain and his works are virtually unknown by modern Tibetan scholars.

Unfortunately, since the short history of modern Tibetology and Buddhology has been permeated by both Tibetan and Western biases, Ratnākaraśānti’s commentaries and their influence have been underappreciated by modern scholars. Despite the historical importance of Ratnākaraśānti, his *Sāratamā* and the valuable information it contains regarding Late Mahāyāna Buddhism, the *Sāratamā* has never been studied in depth probably due to the daunting task of approaching such an encyclopedic work on such an esoteric and detailed topic. The background knowledge necessary for reading any Sanskrit philosophical text is often a challenge to obtain. But, the *Sāratamā* requires an exceptional amount. As the final work of his *Prajñāpāramitā* triptych, Ratnākaraśānti’s commentary is highly elliptical and assumes that readers will, at a minimum, (a) have studied his *Prajñāpāramitā* framework as outlined in his two prior commentaries on the topic, namely the *Prajñāpā-*

ramitopadeśa (PPu) and the *Śuddhimatī* (Śud), (b) have come to know his philosophical viewpoint based on his *Vijñaptimā-tratāsiddhi* (VMS), *Madhyamapratipadāsiddhi/Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti* (MPS/ MAV), *Madhyamakālaṃkāropadeśa* (MAu), (c) have understood his proof of the internal determination of pervasion based on his *Antarvyāptisamarthana* (AVS), (d) have become familiar with the general structure of both the *Aṣṭa* and the AA and (e) have a sense of several hundred years of prior interpretations of the same points. That is to say, the bar for entry into the text of the *Sāratamā* is rather high. In spite of the current rise in interest in Ratnākaraśānti, very little groundwork has been laid for the study of this or any of Ratnākaraśānti's doxographical works. There are few critical editions and almost no in-depth Western studies about Ratnākaraśānti himself, his opponents, his viewpoint, his doctrinal system, or his doxographical classifications. Until we know more about these fundamental topics, we will neither be able to understand his voluminous legacy of commentaries accurately nor measure their impact on subsequent generations.

In order to address this problem, in order to contribute to a broader understanding of Ratnākaraśānti's work, and in order to fill a lacuna in Western scholarship, this thesis presents a comparative historical, philological and philosophical analysis of available Tibetan and Sanskrit primary sources aimed at elucidating the prerequisites to reading the *Sāratamā* itself. This study first presents evidence that Ratnākaraśānti's main teacher was Dharmakīrtiśrī (a.k.a. *gSer-gling-pa*, late 10th C.E.). It then unpacks Ratnākaraśānti's explication of his philosophical system in his doxographical works, which inform his explication of *Prajñāpāramitā* in the *Sāratamā*. Next, it attempts to identify Ratnākaraśānti's opponents based his own doxographical statements and classification schemes. Finally, it demonstrates that Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā* sought to replace his own teacher's *Yogācāra-Mādhyamika* framework with a causal explanation of *Prajñāpāramitā* through re-defining the term

Prajñāpāramitā as the path to awakening, rather than as the goal *qua* awakening itself in the way that Haribhadra, Dharmakīrtiśrī and others had.

1.1. Organization of the Study

Following this brief introductory chapter, the study will be divided into two parts.

The first part is a four chapter introduction that pieces together the puzzle of Ratnākaraśānti's life, his viewpoint, his notion of causality, and his doxographical classifications.

Chapter two is an investigation of the scant clues about Ratnākaraśānti's life. Since the late hagiographies put forth much contradictory information about Ratnākaraśānti's teachers and these are often cited naively by scholars, this chapter focuses on addressing the question of who his main teacher likely was and what teachings he received from him. It first problematizes the late Tibetan imagination of Ratnākaraśānti as a purely intellectual scholar whose students beat him in debate, disavowed him, or became his teachers. Then, it reveals that he was instead highly regarded as both a scholar and an accomplished practitioner by analyzing the colophon of the *Madhyamakālaṃkāropadeśa* (MAu). Next it demonstrates that Ratnākaraśānti was the most senior student of Dharmakīrtiśrī (a.k.a. *gSer-gling-pa*) by analyzing the colloquial sections of the *rNam thar yongs grags* hagiography of Adhīśa (a.k.a. Atiśa 982-1054). Finally, it argues, by scrutinizing the transmission lists in the *rNam thar yongs grags*, that Dharmakīrtiśrī was a major influence on the course of Ratnākaraśānti's scholarship, insofar as he taught Ratnākaraśānti about *Prajñāpāramitā*, since Ratnākaraśānti himself taught *Prajñāpāramitā* as the quintessential crux of both sūtra and tantra.

Chapter three provides an overview of Ratnākaraśānti's sheer luminosity viewpoint and his proof of it. Since Ratnākaraśānti's viewpoint has been misdescribed as *gZhan-stong* and his use of the three natures hermeneutic has been misrepresented, this chapter sketches out his philosophical framework focusing on the way his *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint lays out the two realities and three natures accor-

ding to the classic *Madhyāntavibhāga* model. It also elucidates what he means when he argues that Yogācāra and Mādhyamika have equivalent established conclusions.

Chapter four analyzes Ratnākaraśānti’s teleological notion of causality in his *Nirākāravādin* system. It unpacks the way that Ratnākaraśānti explains parallel “erroneous” and “unerroneous” causal systems and their lack of mutual exclusivity.³ It also demonstrates the role that *Prajñāpāramitā* plays in connecting “erroneous” and “unerroneous” worlds of causality through his unusual explanation of the three bodies (*kāya*) of a buddha.⁴ It also highlights the particular way that Ratnākaraśānti refutes the reality of cognitive images (*ākāra*) at the ultimate level, but explains their availability to buddhas, insofar as they retain a small amount of error after their awakening.

Chapter five unpacks Ratnākaraśānti’s doxographical classifications. Since the identity of Ratnākaraśānti’s opponents has been debated for fifty years in modern scholarship, this chapter addresses the questions of who his opponents were and how to understand the correspondence between his doxographical classifications and the philosophical positions to which they refer. In particular, it attempts to map his doxographical lists of four Buddhist schools and seven opponent positions onto the unnamed positions that he refutes in his doxographical works.

The second part of the thesis consists of three chapters.

Chapter six is a preface to the editions attached in the appendix. It introduces the MSS and materials used in the various editions.

³ The terms “erroneous” and “unerroneous” are mine, not Ratnākaraśānti’s.

⁴ This thesis will not discuss the *gZhan-stong* philosophical system in detail. The texts wrongly attributed to Ratnākaraśānti in the bibliography and my clarification of his explanation of the three natures should demonstrate the falsity of the long-standing theory that Ratnākaraśānti himself was an Indian proponent of the controversial Tibetan *gZhan-stong* school. I have identified the only known Tibetan sub-commentary on any Ratnākaraśānti work, namely bCom-ldan Rig-pa’i-ral-gri’s *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam par bshad pa tshig don gsal ba’i me tog ces bya ba*, which was an early attempt to explain Ratnākaraśānti’s MPS/MAv in a *gZhan-stong* way. I am preparing a separate article to introduce and explain this work. In the meantime, see Bibliography section 11.4.5.

Chapter seven is the annotated translation of the introductory section of Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā*. The annotations aim to help unpack the controversy over how to define *Prajñāpāramitā*. Within the translation, the entire argument from the *Ālokā* of Haribhadra (9th century C.E.) is placed side by side with Ratnākaraśānti's critique of it in order to clarify what is at stake in Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā*—an encyclopedic reference work that elucidates perhaps the oldest and most important Mahāyāna *sūtra*, the *Āryāṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* (*Aṣṭa*), by correlating it line by line to the twelve hundred point table of contents provided in the *Abhisamayālamkārikāsāstra* (AA).

Chapter eight is the brief concluding chapter. It summarizes Ratnākaraśānti's definition and its implications for the path and the goal *vis-à-vis* Haribhadra's definition of the same.

Aside from the appendix within this volume, there are two separate appendices, namely (a) an independent Tibetan critical edition and (b) an independent hybrid Sanskrit and Tibetan critical edition of the first *parivarta* based on the extant 11th and 13th century partial MSS and the Tibetan translation in the sDe dge, Peking and sNar thang editions. The hybrid edition also includes my new critical edition of the root text—i.e. the first *parivarta* of the *Āryāṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*—along with my own translation of the *Sāratamā*'s *bodhicitta/acitta* sections that are extant only Tibetan back into Sanskrit.

In this first part of the thesis, my introductory study tries to provide some of the necessary context mainly from the PPU and the MAU, but also from Ratnākaraśānti's other works. Unfortunately, most of these works are only available in unedited Tibetan translations, which despite their good intentions are opaque when it comes to expressing the philosophical subtleties of Ratnākaraśānti's nuanced Sanskrit commentaries. Neither the Peking nor the sNar thang editions of these works were

available to me during this writing, so I had to rely only on sDe dge (D) edition and the dPe bsdur ma edition (C), which records readings from the Peking and sNar thang editions. I only record the variant readings in my footnotes, when they change the meaning of the text. Since even short passages in these works can require much study, given the large number of works referred to, there are bound to be errors. For this reason, my study of these texts must be regarded as preliminary. My main interest in undertaking such a broad study was to bring together relevant passages and to frame questions for future research, so that scholars can get a much needed overview of Ratnākaraśānti's philosophy and doxography that can be improved and corrected over time.

PART ONE: Ratnākaraśānti's Life, Legacy, and Work

2. Ratnākaraśānti's Life

Before reading the *Sāratamā*, we might ask, who was Ratnākaraśānti? What were the defining influences in his life? What impact did he have on others? Unfortunately, since there is no extant Sanskrit or Tibetan biography or hagiography dealing with Ratnākaraśānti's life as a whole, any information about Ratnākaraśānti (a.k.a. Śānti-pā/Śānti-pa/Śānti-pa) must be pieced together from scant mentions of him in other textual sources, be interpreted through comparison with still textual other sources, and be established through analysis.⁵ Since the Tibetan hagiographers and historians from whom we get much of our information sought to downplay Ratnākaraśānti's influence on their subjects, establishing even the most basic facts about Ratnākaraśānti's life requires much hard work and analysis. The following section may read less like a biography of Ratnākaraśānti's life and more like a mystery or detective novel unpacking the clues about who Ratnākaraśānti was.

The contradictory and implausible biographical information about Ratnākaraśānti found in Tāranātha's (1575-1634 C.E.) *Dharma History (chos 'byung)*,⁶ GosgZhon-nu-dpal's (1392-1481) *Blue Annals*,⁶ and the Eighty Four Mahāsiddha stories has been problematized elsewhere and contains little useful information for our purposes.⁷ We will focus instead on trying to extract information from three early sources, namely the colophon to the *Madhyamakālaṃkāropadeśa* (MAu), the so-called

⁵ I will generally use the name Ratnākaraśānti, but in some contexts when discussing sources that use Śānti-pā, Śānti-pa or Śānti-pa, I will use and normalize the name to Śānti-pā as the abbreviated honorific Śānti-pāda. Generally, the names Ratnākaraśānti, Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba, Śānti-pā, Śānti-pa, Śānti-pa become quite confused in Tibetan sources. Sometimes the names Śānti-pā and Ratnākaraśānti have come to be used in the same passage as though they refer to two different people. See, for instance, *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol 78-9), where *sha nti pa* is used and then *ra tna āka ra śā nti* as though different persons when clearly referring to the same person. Whatever the progression, the different names led Śānti-pā to become confused with other individuals and even associated with villains. For instance, see Gyatso (2006: 10-12), where the evil minister Shita appears in variant readings as Shantipa. See also Yiannopoulos (2012:1-2).

⁶ Bu-sTon's history makes almost no mention of Ratnākaraśānti. This may have been due to his rivalry with the Sa skya Monastery scholars who revered him.

⁷ See, for instance, Yiannopoulos (2012:1-2). Yiannopoulos mentions many of the problems with the biographical sources, but many more could be pointed out. I will note a few of the discrepancies between the various different stories while sketching out below the information from our sources, so that readers can get some sense of the later twists on the same stories.

‘Siddha Biography,’ and the *rNam thar yongs grags* hagiography of Adhīśa.⁸ From these, we will see the following. Firstly, Ratnākaraśānti was highly regarded as a scholar and accomplished practitioner in the eleventh century despite the Tibetan hagiographic trope that his students all outshone him. Secondly, the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings that Ratnākaraśānti received from his teacher Dharmakīrtiśrī were a defining influence on him. Thirdly, Ratnākaraśānti’s interpretation of *Prajñāpāramitā* had an influential impact on others, whether they adopted his viewpoint or not.

Before entering into the main examination of the earlier sources, it will be useful to sketch out some rough dates for Ratnākaraśānti.

2.1. Dates

No source gives reliable information about Ratnākaraśānti’s date of birth or death.⁹ The dates of many of his contemporaries are also unsettled.¹⁰ The study of Ratnā-

⁸ Although Atīśa has become common and recognizable in Tibetological and Buddhological studies, I use “Adhīśa” here following Isaacson and Sferra (2014: 70fn51), who argue that this is the most plausible epithet among the options. The form “Atīśa” is unattested in any Sanskrit source and is not a complete Sanskrit word. For a discussion of the alternatives, i.e. Atīśa, Atīśaya, and Atīśa, see Eimer (1977: 21-22), Eimer (1982:fn1). For dating Adhīśa, see Hadano (1959:293-4) who is followed provisionally by Tatz (1988:473). For the problem of mining hagiographies for historical information, see Schaeffer (2000:361). I will normalize all references by other scholars to Atīśa or Atīśa as “Adhīśa.”

⁹ Extant Tibetan sources do not help us establish the dates for Ratnākaraśānti’s death. See Dowman (1986:94), where the Mahāsiddha story suggests that Ratnākaraśānti was born in the reign of Devapāla. Ratnākaraśānti’s birth during Devapāla clearly would contradict Ratnākaraśānti’s reputed connections with other masters in the Mahāsiddha collection, such as Koṭāli-pā and Thagana-pā, who are also part of the transmission reports in Hevajra etc. in the eleventh century and contradict the accounts of Tibetans who met him in the mid-eleventh century. See also Chimpa (1990:294-5), where Tāranātha suggests that Ratnākaraśānti was born during reign of Mahāpāla (Mahīpāla?) and died during the reign of *Bheyapāla, who, according to Tāranātha, was the father of Neyapāla (Nayapāla?). Unfortunately, *Bheyapāla does not appear in the succession of reigns of the Pāla kings and Nayapāla is thought to have succeeded his father, Mahīpāla. Thus, Tāranātha’s dates do not help us with the date of Ratnākaraśānti’s birth or death.

¹⁰ Yiannopoulis (2012:2) cites Tāranātha as placing Ratnākaraśānti during the regency of Canaka, supplying the dates 955-983 without mentioning his sources for these dates for Canaka. Wherever they come from, it seems that he incorrectly takes Tāranātha to have stated that Ratnākaraśānti was born during Canaka’s reign. In Chimpa (1990:294-5), Tāranātha’s actual statement is that Ratnākaraśānti was invited to Vikramaśīla by Canaka. Thus, even if we knew Canaka’s dates, they would not provide information about Ratnākaraśānti’s date of birth. Beyond the question of Canaka’s relation to his birth, Tāranātha’s story does not add up. According to Tāranātha, Canaka (= *Cānaka?) was the brother of King Mahīpāla’s wife who served as regent after Mahīpāla’s death until Mahīpāla’s younger son Bheyāpāla (=Nayapāla?) was old enough to assume the throne. Aside from Tāranātha’s story, there is neither a record of a Bheyāpāla nor any time for him to have ruled according to inscriptional evidence of the Pāla succession. Unless further evidence comes to light, we must doubt Tāranātha’s Pāla story and his idea of Canaka as interim regent. But even if we ignore Tāranātha’s reference to Bheyāpāla, I am not aware of any information on any Pāla king or regent named “Canaka” (Chimpa’s transliteration

karaśānti's works themselves has not yet reached the point where a relative chronology of his compositions can provide us any real help. Thus, for a basic estimate of Ratnākaraśānti's dates, we can only look to biographical sources, such as the *rNam thar yongs grags*, in which Ratnākaraśānti is presented as a teacher of Adhīśa (982-1054), as an elder with seniority over Adhīśa, and as still being at Vikramaśīla when Adhīśa sought unsuccessfully to return from Tibet in 1045.¹¹ If we assume that Ratnākaraśānti was from a slightly older generation than Adhīśa, then he might have been born around 970 and died shortly after 1045.¹² These dates are roughly consistent with what we know about Ratnākaraśānti's period of activity in general and hence, a relatively safe estimate.¹³ We can still leave open the possibility that he lived longer, as some sources suggest, in either direction.¹⁴ But he could not have died later

of the Tibetan), on Cāṅaka or on Cāṅakya—a more likely spelling of his name. Furthermore, even if we assume that Canaka was some sort of regent or even just an important person during Ratnākaraśānti's time and place—as might be gleaned from the several anecdotes involving Canaka in 'Brog-mi's biographies—we still are uncertain about what Canaka's position and relationship to Ratnākaraśānti might have been. Even if we allow that Canaka followed Mahīpāla and had a relationship with Ratnākaraśānti, it does not seem likely that Canaka (as the regent following Mahīpāla) invited Ratnākaraśānti to Vikramaśīla, as Tāranātha reports, because if Canaka's regency somehow did follow Mahīpāla's reign, then the earliest he could have invited him to Vikramaśīla would be in 1027 (if we accept Sircar's dates for Mahīpāla) or 1036 (if we accept Majumdar's dates). Since we also know—according to Davidson's "latest" dates for 'Brog-mi's trip to India—that 'Brog-mi likely met Ratnākaraśānti at Vikramaśīla well before 1027 and spent time with so-called "King" Canaka around 1018-1028 C.E., Canaka could not have been a post-Mahīpāla king or regent who invited Ratnākaraśānti to Vikramaśīla. Hence, Canaka does not appear useful for dating either Ratnākaraśānti's birth or his time at Vikramaśīla. For more on 'Brog-mi and Canaka, see Stearns (2006).

¹¹ Shizuka (2011) reasons that Ratnākaraśānti died in 1030, because, according to the *Blue Annals*, 'Gos Khug-pa-lhas-btsas did not mention meeting Ratnākaraśānti in the list of seventy-two teachers with whom he studied. Among those that 'Gos Khug-pa-lhas-btsas mentions is Adhīśa. The absence of evidence in the report by 'Gos Khug-pa-lhas-btsas is not strong evidence of Ratnākaraśānti's absence or death, as Shizuka suggests. It also is contradicted by earlier information from the *rNam thar yongs grags*. But 'Gos Khug-pa-lhas-btsas' non-mention of Ratnākaraśānti might explain why the *Blue Annals* has Śīlākara instead of Ratnākaraśānti giving Adhīśa permission to go to Tibet in 1040. Cf. Roerich (1949:246-8).

¹² According to the oral tradition (personal communication Geshe Ngapa Chodrak), Adhīśa sent Ratnākaraśānti his *Bodhipathapradīpa* looking for approval and Ratnākaraśānti wrote him a letter congratulating him on his work that was preserved in Tibet. If true, the timing of this letter would have been around 1045.

¹³ Aside from his relationship to Adhīśa (982-1054 CE). Kajiyama has argued persuasively that Ratnākaraśānti was older and more senior than Jñānaśrīmitra (active between 980-1030) and Ratnakīrti (active between 1000-1050). This suggests that Ratnākaraśānti's birth was prior, eg. in 960s or 970s.

¹⁴ Cf. Robinson (1979), where the Mahāsiddha story claims that Ratnākaraśānti left Vikramaśīla at some point and travelled to do missionary work until he was 100 years old. Cf. also Chimpa (1990:295fn12) where he cites another Mahāsiddha story that claims that Ratnākaraśānti lived 700 years. Cf. also Yiannopoulis (2012:6), where he reports a Tibetan oral tradition, of which I am unaware, that Ratnākaraśānti is still in samādhi in the Svayambhūnāth temple in Kathmandu.

than Adhīṣa in any event, because, if my reading of the *rNam thar yongs grags* is correct, Adhīṣa himself knew of Ratnākaraśānti's death.¹⁵

2.2. Who was Ratnākaraśānti?

Among the Tibetan translations of Ratnākaraśānti's works, the colophon of the MAu (*dBu ma rgyan gyi man ngag*) is unique in that it sketches out the highlights of what we know about Ratnākaraśānti's life in general.¹⁶ Since it contains early information that may be more reliable than the later hagiographies, annals, and histories, we will focus here on extracting information from this colophon and use it to frame the discussion of who Ratnākaraśānti was by bringing in information from other sources where relevant.

The colophon itself can actually be subdivided into two colophons that appear at the end of the same Tibetan translation, namely a “prose” colophon written by Śāntibhadra the *Paṇḍita* (b. late 10th - d. ca.1050) overseeing the first translation and a “verse” colophon by Amogha the *Paṇḍita* (11th/12th century?) overseeing the revisions.¹⁷ The prose colophon gives us clues about the trajectory of Ratnākaraśānti's life story that we can compare with other sources, whereas the verse colophon gives a glimpse of the debate over his legacy after death. We will discuss these two colophons in the order in which they appear. But since it is helpful to know something about who our sources were, we will begin the discussion there.

First, it is never certain who has written a colophon, but the prose colophon appears to have been written by Śāntibhadra, the Nepali *Paṇḍita* who appears, in the

¹⁵ *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 86-7).

¹⁶ There is no real biographical information to speak of from any extant Sanskrit colophons to Ratnākaraśānti's works, except from an (unspecified) MS, which states that Ratnākaraśānti was a *pūrvadeśīya* “an easterner.” Harunaga Isaacson (personal communication). It is difficult to know whether we should understand *pūrvadeśīya* as the place where Ratnākaraśānti was born, or simply where he was known to live.

¹⁷ Cf. Sobisch (2008:26fn35), where he states: “According to A-mes-zhabs' Transmission and Summary (71v), the *Phyag rgya chen po yi ge med pa* was received (by 'Brog-mi) from *Paṇḍita* Amogha. It is based on both the *Hevajra* and *Guhyasamāja* system, ‘but since its blessing is performed by way of the fifteen-deity Nairātmyā, it is subsumed among the Hevajra cycle.’” It is not certain whether the “Amogha” in the MAu colophon is the same person as the 11th century Amoghavajra. In any event, I will just use the name Amogha.

hagiographic accounts of 'Brog-mi (992-1077? C.E.), to have been a devoted, direct personal student of Ratnākaraśānti's.¹⁸ Although the colophon could have been composed by the Tibetan translator, given the information, the wording and the sentence structure of the colophon itself, it seems more likely communicated by the *Paṇḍita* to the translator and appears to have been written originally in Sanskrit.¹⁹

Second, the “verse” colophon comes after the names of the original translators. This colophon appears to have been written by the Kaśmīri *Paṇḍita* Amogha, who edited and corrected the original translation at some point later.²⁰

As for the date of the colophon, only a tentative estimate can be given in connection with the lives of Śāntibhadra and of the Tibetan translator Śākya-'od.²¹ If Śāntibhadra's date of death is correct, the colophon was written before 1050 C.E. This time frame seems to roughly correspond with what is known about Śākya-'od, who appears to have been a slightly younger contemporary of Śākya-ye-shes (a.k.a. 'Brog-mi lo-tṣā-ba) and of 'Khon Śākya-blo-gros (b. 995?-1050? C.E.), the translator of the *Sāratamā* into Tibetan.²² However, we know that Śāntibhadra began working with

¹⁸ Śāntibhadra, sometimes spelled Śāntabhadra in Tibetological sources, appears to have had many aliases, such as Kṛṣṇa/Nag-po-pa, Kṛṣṇācārya, Newari Jaḥ Hum, and Bha ro Ham thung. His tantric name *Kṛṣṇa/nag po* has also sometimes been confused with the names of Hevajra masters *Kāñha/Kṛṣṇa-samayavajra*, etc. See Stearns (2006:135-36:fn135). For more on Śāntibhadra's many names, see also Stearns (2001:206-7). For an account of Śāntibhadra's hagiography by Tāranātha, see Templeman (1992), where in particular on p.311 he gives his date of death (d.1050). I have not been able to study the materials myself, but it should be noted that my reasoning about the date of the colophon relies on Templeman. The date Templeman provides seems reasonable and is supported by 'Brog-mi's hagiographies, in which Śāntibhadra appears to have taught 'Brog-mi Sanskrit in Nepal ca. 1010-20 C.E. and studied before that with Ratnākaraśānti himself. Cf. Stearns (2006:170).

¹⁹ Cf. Stearns (2001:207fn17).

²⁰ Of course, we cannot entirely rule out that someone else wrote these colophons later and inserted them, but the content of the prose section suggests that it would have had to have been someone quite early.

²¹ Also, Cahadu (=Jaḥ Hum) Śāntibhadra and 'Bro seng-dkar Śākya-'od translated *Lhan cig dmigs pa nges par grub pa*. (D4255). This eleventh century Śākya-'od should be distinguished from the 9th century Indian master known as Śākya-'od (*Śākyaprabhā), the 12th/13th century *Mā ṇi bka' 'bum* treasure revealer (*gter ston*) known as dBu-ru-ston-pa Śākya-'od (or Śākya-bzang-po), and the 15th century 'Bri-ra-ba Śākya-'od.

²² See Davidson (2005:169-173), where he places the date for 'Brog-mi's trip to Nepal in 1010, but no later than 1020 based on a consideration of the various sources which differ. See also Stearns (2006:169), where he explains that 'Brog-mi lo-tṣā-ba's name “Śākya-ye-shes” was a combination of the names of his teacher rGya Śākya-gzhon-nu (=Śākya) and of the abbot of the monastery Se Ye-shes-brtson-'grus (=Ye shes) who ordained him and sent him to Nepal ca. 1010 C.E. to study Sanskrit with Śāntibhadra. It seems that rGya Śākya-gzhon-nu passed his name to at least two other students—'Khon Śākya-blo-gros and Śākya-'od around that time. rGya-Śākya-gzhon-nu and Se Ye-shes-brtson-

Tibetan translators, such as 'Brog-mi no later than 1020 C.E., according to Davidson's estimate of 'Brog-mi first arrival in Nepal. This means that if Ratnākaraśānti had already written the commentary by that point, the colophon could have been written between 1020-1050 C.E.. Even though a later date for the colophon cannot be definitively excluded, it seems to have been written during or close in time to Ratnākaraśānti's life.²³

The colophon itself does not provide us with conclusive information about Ratnākaraśānti. Rather, as a description of Ratnākaraśānti's accomplishments and his mission by one of his seemingly closer students, it provides us a relatively early and reliable starting point for comparison with other information about Ratnākaraśānti from the perspective of his other students or subsequent sources. First we will analyze the entire prose colophon—broken into five numbered chunks of text—and then discuss how it helps us define Ratnākaraśānti's identity. The colophon states:

(1) When the one called Ratnākaraśānti [wrote] the *Madhyamakālamkāropadeśa*, he was praised as supreme and unequalled among the *Paṇḍitas*.²⁴

As might be expected from a description by a student of Ratnākaraśānti, this sentence presents an image of him as being highly regarded by his peers, but more importantly, suggests that the *Madhyamakālamkāropadeśa* was a central work that made him famous and played a major role in defining his scholarly identity. The colophon then goes on to explain the rewards for Ratnākaraśānti's accomplishment as follows:

(2) He was invited to Oḍḍiyāna by the wisdom *ḍākinī*, thanks to being celebrated as the commentator on the corpus of sūtras and tantras who was foremost even among the forty *siddhas* (*grub pa brnyes pa*) in the

'grus are said to have gathered all their students together in roughly 1004 and sent "several knowledgeable and capable monks to India to study the Dharma." Although Śākya-'od was not mentioned by name in this story or part of the first trip with three monks, he could well have been among the young students assembled there and simply gone later to Nepal and worked with Śāntibhadra.

²³ Though the colophon could be later, it seems less likely, because Subhūtiśānti was also invited to Tibet to work with early Sa skya translators, such as 'Khon Śākya-blo-gros, around this time.

²⁴ MAu (D231a1;C622): *dbu ma rgyan gyi man ngag |slob dpon rin chen 'byung gnas zhi ba zhes bya ba dus de'i tshes paṇḍi ta rnams las mchog tu gyur par kun kyis bsngags shing 'gran zla med pa|*

tales (*rtogs pa brjod pa; avadāna*) and [who was] the foremost even among the concurrent four great guardians [of Vikramaśīla].²⁵

This sentence suggests that at the time of its writing, Ratnākaraśānti had already accomplished most of what he was reported by other sources to have done in his life. Since sentence (2) is packed with information, we will break it into four parts (2a-d) in order to highlight relevant information and analyze it more closely.

(2a) The colophon reads: “as the commentator on the corpus of sūtras and tantras.” It may not seem significant in light of later developments, but before Ratnākaraśānti there were certainly few if any scholars who commented on both the sūtras and the tantras at all—not to mention the extent to which Ratnākaraśānti did. Many of Ratnākaraśānti’s colleagues left us few or no tantric commentaries. Thus, that Ratnākaraśānti commented extensively on tantras is not just a notable achievement; it suggests rather something of his role in the institutionalization of tantras. Although we cannot say precisely what that role was, as an important scholar of Vikramaśīla, his commenting on the tantras seems to have been central in bringing them further into the mainstream.

(2b) The colophon reads: “[He was] foremost even among the concurrent four great guardians.” From this, we can see that Ratnākaraśānti’s commentarial prowess brought him the lofty position of “great guardian” of Vikramaśīla. Furthermore, the colophon tells us that among the “four” scholar guardians of Vikramaśīla, Ratnākaraśānti was the “foremost.” It may not be worth quibbling about the number and identity of those guardians, but since it tells us *how pre-eminent* Ratnākaraśānti was, it may be worth pointing out that other sources describe six guardians, not four. This colophon’s mention of “four”, however, is supported by the fact that four great scholars—i.e. Ratnākaraśānti, Nāro-pā, Vidyākoka, and *Hāsavajra (*bzhad pa’i rdo*

²⁵ MAu (D231a2; C622): *ye shes kyi mkha’ ’gro mas au byun (u rgyan PN) du spyang drangs te| rtogs pa brjod pa’i grub pa brnyes pa bzhi bcu’i nang nas kyang mdo sde dang rgyud sde la ’grel pa mdzad pa’i mchog tu grags pa| dus mtshungs pa’i sgo srung (srungs PN) chen po bzhi las kyang gtso bor gyur pa|*

rje)—are mentioned in the *rNam thar yongs grags* as having held a special place in the assembly.²⁶ The number four seems to be more likely, given the fact that the alleged source of the “six” guardians seems to be none other than Śāntibhadra, the writer of this colophon. That is to say, ’Brog-mi’s hagiography reports that, after ’Brog-mi studied Sanskrit with Śāntibhadra for a year, Śāntibhadra said to him:

When you go to India, you should study with my Master, the great scholar called Śānti-pā, because he is renowned to be the second Omniscient One (*sarvajña*) in the age of strife (*kaliyuga*) and is one of the six scholar guardians at the Vikramaśīla temple in Magadha.²⁷

Certainly, one could speculate that, at the time of writing this colophon, there might have been only four scholar guardians, but later, two more were added to make six. Unfortunately, those six guardians named in ’Brog-mi’s hagiography and other sources—i.e. Ratnākaraśānti as guardian of the East, Vāgīśvarakīrti (10th/11th century) of the South, Prajñākaramati (10th century C.E.?) of the West, Nāro-pā of the North, and both Jñānaśrīmitra (b.10th century C.E.?) and Ratnavajra (b.late 10th century C.E.?) in the central pillars—do not line up with the four in the *rNam thar yongs grags*.²⁸ Thus, the colophon’s evidence of four guardians seems more reliable and we should question whether the other scholars in the six guardians list were not

²⁶ Cf. *rNam thar Lam yig* (Zhol: 250-5), which includes traces of a first-hand account of Vikramaśīla in 1039 C.E. Nag-tsho’s account there does not call them guardians/gatekeepers. Rather, he describes the Vikramaśīla temple as divided into four main sections headed by these four scholars. Cf. Yiannopolous (2012:2-3). See Chimpa (1990:203), where Tāranātha explains that, at Nālanda, those who were capable of arguing with non-Buddhists preached the Dharma outside the monastery’s boundary walls, while those who were incapable of this preached it within. Cf. also Chimpa (1990:294) where Tāranātha claims that the six guardian system was first instituted at Vikramaśīla at the time of Ratnākaraśānti.

²⁷ This is my translation of the Tibetan text provided by Stearns (2001:84) (without the interlinear commentary): *pan ḍi ta’i zhal nas khyed rgya gar du ’gro na nga’i slob dpon| brtsod pa’i dus kyis thams cad mkhyen pa gnyis par grags pa mkhas pa shan ti ba* (sic! - *pa ces pa| ma ga ta’i gnas bhi ka ma la shi la’i rtsug lag khang na mkhas pa go* (sic! - *sgo drug gi ya cig yin pas de’i drung du song gsung|*

²⁸ Guenther (1986:20) describes four Nalanda gatekeepers: Ratnākaraśānti western gate, Prajñākaramati eastern gate, Kṛṣṇācārya (=Śāntibhadra!) southern gate, and Jetari northern gate. Naudou (1980:159-160), Dowman (1986:400fn91) take this to be a cause for doubting the Blue Annals and Tāranātha’s lists. Cf. Roerich (206), where ’Gos cites these same six. Cf. Chimpa (1990:296-303) where Tāranātha explains these same six, but switches the directions of Vāgīśvarakīrti and Prajñākaramati. In the *rNam thar yongs grags*, the three other scholars concurrent with Ratnākaraśānti were present after 1040 when Adhīśa departed for Tibet. Since Nāro-pā is thought to have died when Adhīśa departed, if two more guardians were added after that departure, Nāro-pā could not have been one of them. Note also that the dates are just based on common rough estimates to give readers a basic idea. They are by no means established.

invented as a sectarian attempt to dilute and challenge Ratnākaraśānti's fame and pre-eminence over his contemporaries.

(2c) The colophon reads: “He was invited to Oḍḍiyāna by the wisdom ḍākinī.” First, we should be clear that an invitation “to Oḍḍiyāna by the wisdom ḍākinī” was probably meant to be a sign of Ratnākaraśānti's accomplishment in tantric practice. Hence, even though the Mahāsiddha story of Śānti-pā suggests that he was an erudite scholar who did not practice, we can understand this colophon's information to suggest the opposite. Second, although the invitation to Oḍḍiyāna might be taken to be a description of purely spiritual accomplishment, it is also possible that Ratnākaraśānti had some physical connection with the geographical location, since 'Brog-mi's hagiography recounts a story about Ratnākaraśānti in Oḍḍiyāna as follows:

Among the [guardians], Śānti-pā was known as a second Omniscient One. This is the reason: he was an adept born to the west in Oḍḍiyāna, and while he was living there, his chosen deity had prophesied, “You must go to Magadha without asking anyone. Vast benefit will come to the Buddhist doctrine.” In accordance with the prophecy, Śānti-pā loaded many volumes on two elephants. When he left with a small retinue, an elder of the saṅgha in that land dreamed that he was told “The entire Dharma has gone to Magadha.” The saṅgha was immediately gathered, and when they searched for him in all directions they found the teacher Ratnākaraśānti leaving with his disciples. They understood that the dream had been a sign of this. No matter how much they tried to delay him they were unable to do so, and he travelled to Vikramaśīla and did what was to be done for the doctrine. Thus my master taught.²⁹

In this story, the details are a bit different and the direction of travel is reversed. Rather than going to Oḍḍiyāna at the invitation of a wisdom ḍākinī, it has him departing from Oḍḍiyāna due to the prophecy of his chosen deity. If we assume that 'Brog-mi just got a few details backward and take the colophon as more reliable, it could suggest that Ratnākaraśānti actually spent time in Oḍḍiyāna. Since Ratnākaraśānti is well-known to have been at Vikramaśīla toward the end of his life and

²⁹ Stearns (2006:171). Further research is needed about tropes with similar travel themes.

since, according to one Sanskrit colophon, Ratnākaraśānti was from the East (*pūrvadeśīya*) and not from Oḍḍiyāna in the West, it seems possible that this colophon is suggesting that Ratnākaraśānti left Vikramaśīla for Oḍḍiyāna at some point due to a prophetic dream or actual invitation.³⁰

(2d) The colophon reads: “[he was foremost] among the forty siddhas (*grub pa brnyes pa*) in the tales (*rtogs pa brjod pa; avadāna*).” Ratnākaraśānti’s being foremost among the siddhas is intended to tell us that Ratnākaraśānti was not just an adept of the tantras, but specifically a master of Mahāmudrā practice. Interestingly, this image is in stark contrast to the image of Ratnākaraśānti (a.k.a. Śānti-pā/Śāntipa) in the later tales of the eighty-four Mahāsiddhas, where he is presented as someone who did not practice or accomplish anything until he was 100 years old and only then due to the spiritual guidance of his peasant student Koṭālī-pā.³¹ The fact that Ratnākaraśānti is foremost among the “forty” siddhas is interesting to note, because he is one of only thirty-eight siddhas who overlap between the lists of siddhas in the traditions of *Abhayadatta and *Vajrāsana.³² Based on this colophon’s mention of forty siddhas, we might speculate that an earlier version of these siddha stories existed with only ca. ‘forty’ siddha stories in them and that the number of siddhas grew from there in two different directions that were later recorded by Abhayadatta and Vajrāsana. Whatever the case, the colophon is mentioning these tales as though the story of Ratnākaraśānti demonstrates his superiority over others.³³ For this reason, it may be

³⁰ Harunaga Isaacson (personal communication).

³¹ Cf. sMon-grub Shes-rab’s *Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi’i lo rgyus* (Śānti-pā). For a translation of this text, see Robinson (1979:60-5). Cf. also *Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi’i rnam thar*, p.36-42. Cf. also *Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi’i gsol ’debs* (Śānti-pā) p.935. It has been suggested by Dan Martin that *mi ’jigs pa sbyin pa* might be *Abhayadāna rather than *Abhayadatta.

³² By the “traditions” of *Abhayadatta or *Vajrāsana (or *Vīraprakāśa), I mean to refer to the texts to whom various versions of the Mahāsiddha stories are attributed. I have used these backtranslated names simply because they are used by others in their scholarship. For a comparison of these two lists, see Schroeder (2006:197-201, 207-211). Cf. Dowman (1986:xii), who relates a story that the *Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi’i lo rgyus* was said to have been told to sMon-grub Shes-rab by Abhayadatta in the 12th century and also that the *Grub thob brgyad bcu rtogs pa’i snying po rdo rje’i glu* were compiled by a scholar named *Vīraprakāśa (Stearns reconstructs this name: *Vīraprabhāsvara).

³³ See Schroeder (2006:197-201, 207-211). Further research about the differences between these two stories is needed.

safe to assume that Śāntibhadra is referring to a much more positive tale than what we find in the tales of the eighty-four *Mahāsiddhas*, which present him in a negative and diminutive light. At the very least, we can imagine that the tale, like this colophon, would have presented Ratnākaraśānti as both a great scholar and an accomplished practitioner (*siddha*), who was lauded for his commentaries on both the sūtras and the tantras and celebrated for his accomplishments in both general tantric practice and Mahāmudrā.

Now we turn back to the colophon itself, which explains Ratnākaraśānti's life's mission as follows:³⁴

(3) Since Ratnākaraśānti has unerringly understood the quintessential intention of Asaṅga and Nāgārjuna, [he] is the supreme clarifier of the teachings, insofar as Bhadanta Candrakīrti and so on had strayed (*'chal bar gyur*) from Nāgārjuna's intention and there are some [who] still follow [what Candrakīrti] had written incorrectly and performed deceitfully—despite [the fact that Candrakīrti] himself later abandoned his nihilism and became a commentator on the profound tantras toward the end of his life.³⁵

This section of the colophon concerns Ratnākaraśānti's mission in life. Since the MAu commentary itself begins by saying it will explain the two realities according to Nāgārjuna and Maitreya and Asaṅga, Śāntibhadra's mention of Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga merely reiterates what the commentary states. However, since the name Candrakīrti is never mentioned in the MAu, Śāntibhadra is telling us that he understands the commentary to be aimed at refuting the position of Candrakīrti himself. Although we should not conflate Śāntibhadra's characterization of Ratnākaraśānti's intentions with Ratnākaraśānti's actual intentions, Śāntibhadra was probably relatively close to Ratnākaraśānti's milieu and some weight might be accorded to his opinion

³⁴ Cf. Ruegg (1981:122) “written to oppose the doctrine of Bhadanta Candrakīrti, who had strayed from the true purport of Nāgārjuna (but who later abandoned nihilism in his Tantrik commentary).”

³⁵ MAu (D231a3; C622): *'phags pa thogs med dang klu sgrub snying po 'i thugs kyi (kyis PN) dgongs pa ma nor bar (ba-PN) rtogs shing bstan pa 'i gsal byed mchog tu gyur pa 'i phyir dang (sic !) | btsun pa zla grags la sogs pa klu sgrub kyi dgongs pa las 'chal bar gyur na (nas P) rang slad kyis tshe smad la med par smra ba dor nas rgyud zab mo 'i 'grel pa byed par 'gyur la| 'on kyang des log par bris pa de 'i rjes su 'jug cing g.yo sgyus spyod pa yang 'ga' 'byung bar...* My translation follow *'chal bar gyur nas P* and ignores the *dang*, assuming it to be a mistake of some sort, since the sentence flows better without it.

that Ratnākaraśānti's critique was aiming primarily at the school's founder rather than at a particular follower. Indeed, Ratnākaraśānti's refutations are aimed at anyone and everyone who follows Candrakīrti's Mādhyamika school, not just a particular interpretation of it. This is why Ratnākaraśānti's commentaries contain strong dismissals of Candrakīrti's basic position, accusing it, among other things, of leading people onto a wrong path altogether.³⁶ That said, it is also interesting that Śāntibhadra's colophon considers Candrakīrti, the Mādhyamika scholar, to be the same person as Candrakīrti, the tantric commentator, but suggests that the latter recanted the Mādhyamika position of the former. It is not clear that Ratnākaraśānti himself saw these two Candrakīrtis as the same person. But, since Ratnākaraśānti was a holder of the tantric Candrakīrti's *Guhyasamāja* transmission, Śāntibhadra's explanation helps to justify Ratnākaraśānti's vehement refutation of Candrakīrti's Mādhyamika position was not a lack of devotion to the tantric Candrakīrti, but something that would have been sanctioned by the tantric Candrakīrti himself. Whatever the case, the colophon goes on to suggest that refuting Candrakīrti's Mādhyamika position was not merely a motive for Ratnākaraśānti to write the MAu, but was his very purpose in life. It states:

(4) Regarding [this clarification of the teachings], the Blessed One himself said in the *mDo sde dad pa cher 'byung ba* sūtra and the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* and so on, "In the future [someone] with great faith in the sūtras will emerge."³⁷ Also, he said "[There will be] these and those who will also not understand my intention." From among his predictions, [there is the prediction]: "Subsequently, [people] will understand erroneously, then after that, the correct explainer of my intention will also emerge and the followers of what I originally taught will increase." In particular, he made the prediction about this Ācārya, in the *Mañjuśrīmūlatantra*:

³⁶ Referring to the position of Candrakīrti, see PPU (D143b4): *gzhan la de ni mi rung ba'i phyir ro zhes zer ba de ni lung dang bstan bcos thams cad dang tshad ma rnam las phyi rol du gyur pa yin pas lam ngan pa de lta bu de dag ni thag bsrings te spang bar bya'o||*

³⁷ The *mDo sde dad pa cher 'byung ba* (**Mahāprasādabhāvasūtra*) is unknown, but could be a corruption of or an earlier title of the *Theg pa chen po dad pa la rab tu sgom pa'i mdo* (**Mahāyānaprasādaprabhāvanaśūtra*).

“Who is the name ‘Ocean/Source of Jewels (*Ratnākara*)’ [referring to]? [He will be] the source [of] clarifying the teachings of the Teacher.”³⁸

The colophon’s introduction of predictions here is meant to bolster the authority Ratnākaraśānti’s works by claiming that he was the “one” foreordained to refute the errant views of wayward Buddhists, such as Candrakīrti’s Mādhyamika followers. Certainly, this colophon is not the first to claim that a scholar was merely upholding the intentions of earlier masters, but it is important to note that Ratnākaraśānti is portrayed here particularly as being focused on the enemy within, rather than on the enemy without. Since Ratnākaraśānti’s writings spend little energy refuting non-Buddhist positions—especially when compared to, for instance, Kamalaśīla (740-795 C.E.) or Ratnakīrti (11th century C.E.)—this colophon is suggesting that Ratnākaraśānti’s works were understood and appreciated by his students as re-establishing an early viewpoint through his mastery in Buddhist hermeneutics and interpretation. Furthermore, that Ratnākaraśānti’s commentaries criticize the viewpoint of “a certain Mādhyamika scholar,” ostensibly from Candrakīrti’s Mādhyamika school, as the “most sinful among the sinful” (*pāpīyaḥ pāpīyāt*) does indeed suggest that, as alluded to in the colophon, destroying the position of Candrakīrti, in particular, was a motivating force in his life’s work.³⁹ Then, immediately following this impassioned eulogy, we are given the name of the translators who composed it:

(5) This translation is by the Indian *Paṇḍita* Śāntibhadra and the translator Bhikṣu Śākya-’od.⁴⁰

³⁸ MAu (D231a4; C623): ...*mdo sde dad pa cher ’byung dang| dgongs pa nges par ’grel pa (la PN) sogs par bcom ldan ’das nyid kyis gsungs nas| yang de dang de dag gis ni nga’i dgongs pa ma rtogs (gtogs PN) pa’o zhes kyang gsungs nas| slad kyis de dag nor bar shes te slad kyis nga’i dgongs pa ma nor bar ’chad pa yang ’byung la| dang po nas ngas bshad pa’i rjes su ’jug pa ni mang du ’byung ngo (om. ngo N) zhes lung bstan pa’i nang nas khyad par du slob dpon ’di ni ’jam dpal rtsa ba’i rgyud las| rin chen ’byung zhes bya ming gang| |ston pa’i bstan pa gsal byed ’byung| |zhes kyang lung bstan pa des mdzad pa’o|*

³⁹ PPU (D152b5): *sdig pa can las kyang sdig pa can du gyur pa yin|*

⁴⁰ MAu (D231a6; C623): *rgya gar gyi mkhan po śā nti bha dra dang| lo tsā ba dge slong śākya ’od kyis bsgyur ba|*

It is common practice that translators' names are placed last in the text. Hence, this marks the end of the first Tibetan translation and the first colophon. Whether Śāntibhadra wrote the colophon himself in Sanskrit or communicated it verbally to the translator, it is likely that he, who had first-hand knowledge of Ratnākaraśānti in India, would be the source. We cannot assume that he represents the perspective of all people, but it gives us a glimpse of Ratnākaraśānti's identity from a student's perspective.

Immediately following the end of this first colophon, we find another colophon with a verse summary written by Amogha, who may well have been a student. Amogha writes:

(f) He destroys [what was] performed deceptively [and] strikes down at the vital point [what was] falsity planted (*'debs*).
 [He] bears the victory banner [of] the Omniscient One's awareness [with] the flagpole/life force (*srog shing*) of a logician.
 [He] adorns (*legs mdzad; śobhita*) the Mahāyāna with *Vijñapti-Madhyamakālamkāropadeśa*.
 [Who is he?] The logician who has conquered Candrakīrti.⁴¹

Here, the image of the **victory banner of the Omniscient One's awareness** atop a **flagpole of a logician** may be suggesting that Ratnākaraśānti was seen as an accomplished tantric practitioner despite appearing as a logician. But even more than the previous colophon, Amogha's verse colophon focuses on praising Ratnākaraśānti and his commentary primarily for having conquered the viewpoint of Candrakīrti and his followers. Although I have translated the colophon to read "*Vijñapti-Madhyamakālamkāropadeśa*," it should be pointed out that the Tibetan is in a condensed style of verse and because of this, is grammatically ambiguous. The sentence could also be read as "he adorned/taught the Mahāyāna as *vijñapti*."⁴² The name "*Vijñapti-Madhyamakālamkāropadeśa*" has been interpreted by Ruegg and

⁴¹ MAu (D231a6; C623): *g.yo sgyus spyod pa tshar gcod bsnyon 'debs gnad la 'bebs| rtog ge'i srog shing kun mkhyen ye shes rgyal mtshan can| |theg chen rnam rig dbu ma 'i rgyan kyi man ngag bcas| |legs mdzad gang de zla grags 'joms pa 'i rtog ge yin||*

⁴²This reading may be less likely, but in verse, it cannot be ruled out.

others as suggesting that Ratnākaraśānti’s viewpoint was referred to as “*viññapti-madhyamaka*.”⁴³ However, in this very *Madhyamakālaṃkāropadeśa* itself, Ratnākaraśānti classifies his own position as *Nirākāra* (*rnam pa med pa*).⁴⁴ As a translator praising this commentary, Amogha would have been well aware of this. Given his praise of Ratnākaraśānti, it seems doubtful that he would have disagreed with Ratnākaraśānti’s self-designation. Thus, there seems to me little chance that Amogha meant Ratnākaraśānti’s viewpoint to be known simply as *Vijñaptimadhyamaka*, as Ruegg seems to suggest. That said, since it is in verse, it is plausible that Amogha might have used the name *Vijñaptimadhyamaka* as a synecdoche for *Nirākāra-vijñaptimātravādin Mādhyamika*, a name that some take the PPU to imply as Ratnākaraśānti’s own position, as will be discussed below.⁴⁵ If we read it this way, then Amogha would be suggesting that Ratnākaraśānti’s MAu did not just refute the positions of Candrakīrti and others, it also elucidated a new interpretation of Mādhyamika that captured the original intention of Nāgārjuna—a claim that Ratnākaraśānti’s MPS/MAv and MAu both make. Whatever we take Amogha to be suggesting, after this colophon was written, it seems that the designation *Vijñapti-*

⁴³ Cf. Ruegg (1981:122fn407, 56fn165). Although Ruegg associates this school with *tathāgatagarbha* theory, it is unlikely to be the case here, since Amogha would likely have known that Ratnākaraśānti upholds a three vehicle (*triyāna*) position and explains the *tathāgatagarbha* theory connected with it as applying only to bodhisattvas, like other provisional (*neyārtha*) teachings on the single vehicle (*ekayāna*). For more on Ruegg’s idea about the school’s relation to *tathāgatagarbha*, see Chimpa (1990:126fn21) where he mentions *dbu ma rnam rig pa* briefly. Cf. Kazuo Kano (2006: Chapter 3), where he demonstrates that the *Triyānavasthāna, which mentions *tathāgatagarbha*, is incorrectly attributed to Ratnākaraśānti. Clearly, Ratnākaraśānti’s corpus is consistent in eschewing an *ekayāna tathāgatagarbha* viewpoint in favor of more traditional Yogācāra positions, such as *anāsravadhātu* and *triyāna*. For more on the *Triyānavasthāna, see Ratnākaraśānti’s “wrongly attributed works” in the bibliography. In his comments, Ruegg also neglects to mention that the word “*viññapti*” is used merely as an affix to the front of the text’s name here, not as a classification of Ratnākaraśānti’s viewpoint. Nonetheless, Ruegg’s interpretation of the term *Vijñapti-Mādhyamika as a particular philosophical classification has been quoted, for instance, by Brunnhölzl (2011:8,157, 148fn243), who argues that Ratnākaraśānti was an Indian *gZhan-stong pa*. Cf. also Gareth Sparham (2001).

⁴⁴ See MAu (D226b2; C611): *lugs 'di ni rnam pa med pa yin*. Given that Ratnākaraśānti states in this text that his *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint is held by both the Yogācāra and Mādhyamika school founders, one could just interpret the colophon’s addition of “*viññapti*” to be referring to the word “Mādhyamika” in the title of the text as a way of describing Ratnākaraśānti’s interpretation of Mādhyamika alone, not as a way of referring to his own position. In fact, I will argue below that Ratnākaraśānti aimed to subsume both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika schools under the rubric of his own philosophic *Nirākāravādin* position.

⁴⁵ See MAu (D226b2; C611): *lugs 'di ni rnam pa med pa yin*. Cf. PPU (D151b4) *rnal 'byor spyod pa'i lugs 'di ni shin tu bzlog par dka' bar 'gyur ro||* For a description of this position, see Ruegg (1981:122), who describes Ratnākaraśānti’s position as essentially “*Nirākāravijñānavādin*.”

Mādhyamika played a central role in instigating the Tibetan controversy over whether Ratnākaraśānti's viewpoint was actually Mādhyamika or Yogācāra, a topic engaged by famous Tibetan authors such as Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1419 C.E.).⁴⁶ The colophon ends:

(g) Later, the Kaśmīri Amogha and 'O-ru lo-tsā-ba edited and fixed [the translation].⁴⁷

It is probably not particularly significant that Amogha was a Kaśmīri, but it may be taken as support for the notion that Ratnākaraśānti's fame was widespread beyond the area of Vikramaśīla. Whether Amogha himself was a close student of Ratnākaraśānti or not, he speaks here in very strong terms about Ratnākaraśānti's accomplishment and appears to have regarded him as an Omniscient One, who saved the teachings from doom.

After having looked at the ways in which two seemingly close students saw Ratnākaraśānti, we will now turn to the hagiography of eleventh century master Maitreyañātha (a.k.a. Matirīpā or Advayavajra).⁴⁸ Although Maitreyañātha does not appear to have been a close student of Ratnākaraśānti, his later hagiographers claimed that he was. Whatever the case, as we shall see, the earliest known hagiography of Maitreyañātha can provide us information useful for getting a sense of Ratnākaraśānti's stature and the public perception of him.

⁴⁶ See, for instance, Sparham (2001:209fn17).

⁴⁷ MAu (D231a1; C622): |*slad nas kha (a PN) che a mo gha (ka PN) dang 'o ru lo tsā bas zhus te gtan la phab pa'o (+maṅgālam P/maṅgālam N)* ||

⁴⁸ My use of the name Maitreyañātha (rather than his names more commonly used) and my dating of Maitreyañātha's life here follows Isaacson and Sferra (2014:71), who note that the oft-repeated dates 1007-1085 proposed by Tatz are uncertain and may be misleading if taken as fact.

2.3. Maitreyaṅātha's Hagiography

The earliest known hagiography of Maitreyaṅātha is found in the so-called 'Siddha Biography,' which refers to the Sanskrit MS 142 in the Kaiser Library in Kathmandu that was likely written ca.1200 CE.⁴⁹ Okuyama has suggested that the text itself was composed by Vajrapāṇi, a student of Maitreyaṅātha.⁵⁰ If correct, the composition of the hagiography might date to the late 11th/early 12th century. In the MS are found multiple hagiographic life stories ostensibly promoting the *amanasikāra* lineage of Maitreyaṅātha. Since Ratnākaraśānti does not fit into that *amanasikāra* lineage, his life story is not found in this collection. However, there is a notable, albeit brief, general mention of Ratnākaraśānti in the folios containing Maitreyaṅātha's life story within the section that recounts his training. Since the Siddha Biography gives us clues about Ratnākaraśānti's perceived stature, it helps understand what the public perception of Ratnākaraśānti might have been among eleventh century Indian scholars. The short mention of Ratnākaraśānti is where the Siddha Biography describes Maitreyaṅātha's relationship to Ratnākaraśānti, as follows:⁵¹

[Maitreyaṅātha] studied Pramāṇa, Mādhyamika, the way of the Pāramitās, and other *śāstras* with Nāro-pā for twenty years. After that he stayed together with Rāgavajra, who knew the *śāstra* of the Way of Mantras, for five years. Afterwards, by the side of the great *Paṇḍita* Ratnākaraśānti, the revered guru and master, he studied the *Nirākāra* position for one year. Afterwards he went to Vikramaśīla and at the side of the great *Paṇḍita* Jñānaśrīmitra studied his compositions for two years.⁵²

⁴⁹ For a full discussion of the MS, the biography itself and its differences from the later Tibetan hagiographies based on it, see Isaacson and Sferra (2014:60,70fn47,420-430), where it was recently re-edited, translated, analyzed, and re-produced in Appendix 7 "The Life of Maitreyaṅātha/Advayavajra in Kaiser Library MS 142." A complete bibliography and its study for this MS is given on 420-2. The MS is listed in my bibliography under the heading 'Siddha Biography' in Indian primary sources. Some call it the Sham Shere manuscript. Cf. for instance Tatz (1987).

⁵⁰ See Isaacson and Sferra (2014:61fn5, 424), where they estimate the date of MS 142 to be ca. 1200 C.E. They also note that Kano (2006:26fn36) agrees with this. If correct, this could put the original composition somewhere late 11th/early 12th century. Okuyama (1991:568) suggests that "this hagiography was composed by someone belonging to the lineage of Vajrapāṇi, one of Maitreyaṅātha's principal students."

⁵¹ Although this translation is from Isaacson and Sferra (2014:424-5), I have removed a bracketed insertion from the translation. Cf. Tatz (1998:473)

⁵² Isaacson and Sferra (2014:424-5): *viṃśatīvarṣaparyantaṃ nāropādasamīpe pramāṇamādhyamika-pāramitānayaḍīśāstram śrutam. tadanu mantranayaśāstrajñena rāgavajreṇa sahāvasthitah pañcavarṣaparyantam. paścān mahāpaṇḍitaratnākaraśāntigurubhaṭṭārakapādānām pārśve nirākāravayavasthām*

There are three aspects of this description that are worth highlighting for our purposes. The first is that the hagiographer tells us that Maitreyañātha studied most topics with Nāro-pā for the prior twenty years, but studied a single topic, namely “*Nirākāravāda*,” with Ratnākaraśānti for only one year, the least among all the teachers mentioned in the passage.⁵³ Although later Tibetan retellings of this story claim that Maitreyañātha spent more time training with Ratnākaraśānti, this section of the Siddha Biography and the subsequent section detailing his close relations with his tantric guru would rather seem to suggest that Maitreyañātha was not a close student of Ratnākaraśānti’s at all.⁵⁴

The second aspect to highlight is the degree to which this late 11th/early 12th century Indian hagiographer chose to eulogize Ratnākaraśānti, as Isaacson and Sferra note:

Of all the masters mentioned in this short work, Ratnākaraśānti is the one whose name is accompanied by the greatest number of titles or respectful suffixes: he is called a *Mahāpaṇḍita*, and we find *gurubhaṭṭārakapāda* after his name. The great reverence shown, apparently, hereby is consistent with other sources which suggest that Ratnākaraśānti must have been extraordinarily famous in his own time. This very fame might be a reason for a hagiography of Maitreyañātha to claim that master to have studied, *inter alia*, with one of the greatest teachers of the early eleventh century, Ratnākaraśānti.⁵⁵

There are many angles from which the hagiographer’s reverence for Ratnākaraśānti can be interpreted in light of the fact that Maitreyañātha was not a close student or a

varṣam ekaṃ yāvat. paścād vikramāśīlam gatvā mahāpaṇḍitajñānaśrīmitrapādānāṃ pārśve tat-prakaraṇaṃ śrutam varṣadvayaṃ. The editions’ variant readings are not reported here.

⁵³ For a later Tibetan reworking of this account, see Isaacson and Sferra (2014:431) which includes Marco Passavanti’s study of the *bLa ma rgyud pa’i rim pa* (LGR)—a text likely based on this ‘Siddha Biography’—reproduced in Appendix 8. There, it states, with regard to this sentence, that Maitreyañātha “studied for three years the philosophical tenet of the *Alīkākāra-Cittamātrins with Ratnākaraśānti, the teacher who was the jewel among the *Paṇḍitas*.” It is not clear whether the LGR was based directly on a Sanskrit MS or a Tibetan source. Generally, due to the hegemony of later Tibetan doxographies, it is difficult to tell in Tibetan translations whether a given *rnam rdzun* is meant to translate the Sanskrit *Nirākāravādin* or **Alīkākāra* and the term *sems tsam* is equally opaque for understanding the underlying Sanskrit.

⁵⁴ For more general information on the negative shifts in attitude toward Ratnākaraśānti within the biographies, see Tatz (1987) and Isaacson and Sferra (2014).

⁵⁵ Isaacson and Sferra (2014:64ff)

follower of Ratnākaraśānti's viewpoint.⁵⁶ But at the most basic level, it tells us that, aside from Ratnākaraśānti being known as a highly celebrated scholar in his own time, his reputation among the late 11th/early 12th century audience in India and possibly Tibet was still so high that a hagiographer of a lineage from an opposing viewpoint would seek to associate his subject Maitreyañātha with him in some way.⁵⁷

The third notable aspect of this early biography of Maitreyañātha is that it makes no mention of any controversy or debate with Ratnākaraśānti. This is important because later sources claim that Ratnākaraśānti was the loser in an alleged debate between the two and was behind Maitreyañātha's expulsion from Vikramaśīla.⁵⁸ Certainly, the praise of Ratnākaraśānti in this earlier version of the Maitreyañātha life story would suggest that neither an expulsion nor a debate nor even a rift with Ratnākaraśānti was known to the hagiographer. Since the alleged debate between Maitreyañātha and Ratnākaraśānti appears to have been interpolated only at a late stage into the Tibetan hagiographies of Adhīśa and others, this alerts us to the fact these late sources may contain polemic biases that render their accounts untrustworthy.⁵⁹

2.4. rNam thar yongs grags

Now that we have a general idea about who Ratnākaraśānti was, as presented in two early sources, we will turn to investigate the hagiography of Adhīśa, known as the *Jo*

⁵⁶ Since Maitreyañātha is not the subject of this section, I will not discuss the veracity of Maitreyañātha's association with Ratnākaraśānti in greater detail. See Isaacson and Sferra (2014:60-69) for an exploration of the possible motives for the hagiographers association of him with Ratnākaraśānti.

⁵⁷ See Isaacson and Sferra (2014:60-69) for more detail on how *bLa ma rgyud pa'i rim pa* (and other subsequent Tibetan commentaries) did not just increase the number of years that Maitreyañātha studied with Ratnākaraśānti, but presented other details about him differently.

⁵⁸ Tatz (1988:477) states: "Pad-ma dKar-po locates the expulsion incident, and also the controversy with Ratnākaraśānti, at a time that follows his studies with Śabareśvara and return to the Middle Country (296.5-297.4)."

⁵⁹ For a brief discussion of interpolation of "Maitrī-pā's" debate against Śānti-pā into the hagiography of Adhīśa, see Tatz (1988:477). Tatz appears to think that Maitreyañātha is more likely to have had a rift of some other sort with Ratnākaraśānti than with Adhīśa. Unfortunately, he neither explains his reasons for saying this nor does he attempt to reconcile this idea with his positive reading of the positive description of Ratnākaraśānti found in the Sham Shere manuscript.

bo rje dpal ldan mar me mdzad ye shes kyi rnam thar rgyas pa yongs grags (henceforth *rNam thar yongs grags*), in order to get a closer look at his relationships to others and to identify some of the defining influences that helped shape him as a scholar, since these will help us understand better his polemic agenda within his doxography.

According to the colophon enshrined within the *rNam thar yongs grags*, the story itself is a compilation from Nag-tsho-Tshul-khrims-rgyal-ba (1011-65?)—Adhīśa’s student who had originally been sent to Vikramaśīla to invite Adhīśa to Tibet in 1039 and had stayed by his side for 19 years.⁶⁰ The colophon also tells us that, very shortly after Adhīśa’s death, dGe-bshes Rong-pa-phyags-sor-ba (b. late 11th century), also known as Rong-pa-lag-sor-ba, collected the complete life story from Nag-tsho and then later told it to four of his disciples. One of them, Zul-phu Bya-’dul, (1100?-1174?) compiled the various notes and wrote down the first version of the story in the mid- twelfth century.⁶¹ Next, the *rNam thar yongs grags* was composed by mChims Nam-mkha’-grags (1210-1285 C.E.), the famous abbot of Narthang monastery, and in 1302 C.E. was redacted by the 9th abbot of sNar thang and incorporated into the *Bka’ gdams glegs bam (Pha chos)*, of which several prints based on the blocks prepared in 1487/9 C.E. are still available today.⁶² Thus, although the *rNam thar yongs grags* contains information about Ratnākaraśānti that likely traces back to first-hand accounts from the eleventh century, the version we have appears to have been compiled and edited at least twice between the 12th and 15th century and, unfortunately, the later editors appear to have tried to downplay Adhīśa’s relationship with Ratnākaraśānti due to sectarian concerns.⁶³ For this reason, we will have to

⁶⁰ Eimer (1997:25). Cf. *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 235:2-7)

⁶¹ Eimer (1997:16)

⁶² Eimer (1997:13fn27) cites Dieter Schuh’s study, which is not available to me at this time. Also, see Ehrhard, Franz-Karl. “The Transmission of the Thig le bcu drug and the Bka’ gdams glegs bam.” *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism*, ed. Helmut Eimer and David Germano. Leiden: Brill (2002) 29-56. Ehrhard’s study is also not available to me at this time.

⁶³ For more on the dating of the text, see Eimer (1997:25).

extract the early information from the extant 15th century version of the *rNam thar yongs grags* through critical reading and careful mining.⁶⁴ We will also refer occasionally to the *Jo bo rje'i rnam thar lam yig chos kyi 'byung gnas* (henceforth *rNam thar lam yig*) that follows directly after the *rNam thar yongs grags* in the *Bka' gdams glegs bam (Pha chos)* but provides a more extensive telling of the story of Adhīśa's invitation to Tibet.⁶⁵ The *rNam thar lam yig* is ascribed by tradition to 'Brom-ston rGyal-ba'i-'byung gnas (1005-1064) but he could not possibly be the author, given his dates.

There is some question about the authenticity and late Tibetan agenda apparent in certain anachronistic sections within the *rNam thar yongs grags* and the *rNam thar lam yig*. But there is, on the whole, much within Nag-tsho's account that is useful for our purposes.⁶⁶ By comparing the *rNam thar yongs grags* to its probable predecessor the *rNam thar rgyas pa*, Eimer has pointed out certain archaisms that

⁶⁴ Cf. Eimer (1977: 211, 213), who explains that the *rNam thar yongs grags* and the *rNam thar rgyas pa* are the two oldest extant hagiographies and trace back to a common archetype. We will focus here on the *rNam thar yongs grags*, because, although the *rNam thar rgyas pa* enshrines more archaisms that are more likely original, the *rNam thar yongs grags*, in which 70% of the material is virtually identical to the *rNam thar rgyas pa*, may actually contain more of the original text overall. See Eimer (1982:45), where he states, "Since the *rNam thar rgyas pa* does not include some passages given in the *rNam thar yongs grags*, we may conclude that it does not comprise all the biographical material given by its sources...The extant version of the *rNam thar rgyas pa* is to be regarded as defective; it should be used together with the *rNam thar yongs grags* in order to have at hand the full amount of biographical material contained in the common ancestor of these two texts." (Note that I have capitalized these titles in Eimer's quote according to his conventions). Furthermore, *rNam thar yongs grags* has the benefit of presenting the same materials in a more coherent and comprehensible order following the course of Adhīśa's life. See Eimer (1997:13-14). For a discussion of linguistic differences, see Eimer (1977:193-5).

⁶⁵ I have referred to Lokesh Chandra's 1982 Zhol edition, which reproduces the two biographies—namely the *rNam thar yongs grags* and the *rNam thar lam yig*—from the *Bka' gdams glegs bam (Pha chos)*. Since the Zhol edition claims to be a mere reproduction of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* block prints, it is not a re-edited version of the texts and should contain no variant readings. On the prefatory title page and in the preface to the Zhol reproduction, we find only the full title of the *rNam thar yongs grags*. For more information about this Zhol reproduction, see Eimer (1985:201-3). Even though the *rNam thar lam yig* is not mentioned on the title page or in the preface, the text of the *rNam thar lam yig* is found on p.237 (roman numbering). As in the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* block prints themselves, the *rNam thar lam yig* follows immediately after the text of the *rNam thar yongs grags*. For more information about this *rNam thar lam yig*, see Eimer (1998b:8), Eimer (1977:106, 274) and Eimer (1982:44). It is important to note here that Eimer (2008a:380) differentiates this *rNam thar lam yig* from "the one volume blockprint collection with the marginal title *Lam yig*" i.e. the only collection in which the *rNam thar rgyas pa* is found. For more on these two collections—i.e. the *Lam Yig* and the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*—see Eimer (2008a:380) and Eimer (1997:13).

⁶⁶ See Eimer (1982:45). It should also be mentioned that an Indian *Paṇḍita* named *Kṣitigarbha (*sa'i-snying-po*) who accompanied Adhīśa on his journey to Tibet in 1042 may be an additional source of some of the narrative sections of Nag-tsho's verse hymn to Adhīśa written shortly after his death. Cf. Eimer (1997:19ff) and (1989:22).

help identify likely original parts of the story.⁶⁷ But generally, the colloquial style of Nag-tsho’s narrative is distinctive and probably early, in that it often reads less like a hagiography and more like a first-hand account of his own experience. On the other hand, the extant version of transmission lists within the *rNam thar yongs grags* show clear signs of editing aimed at glorifying Adhīsa and diminishing Ratnākaraśānti’s role in his education. These transmission lists also contradict information in Nag-tsho’s account. For this reason, we will first look at Nag-tsho’s account of his own personal interactions with Ratnākaraśānti and his conversations with Adhīsa about Ratnākaraśānti in order to extract information about Ratnākaraśānti’s relationships and possible influences. Next, we will problematize and analyze the transmission reports contained in the *rNam thar yongs grags* in order to compare this with other information about Ratnākaraśānti.⁶⁸

2.4.1. Teachers

Ratnākaraśānti, like most scholars in this period, appears to have received transmissions or teachings from many masters, but some of those appear to have also been his students.⁶⁹ In order to discern the teacher who may have influenced him the most in his formative years, we will first look at two passages in the *rNam thar yongs grags*, where it is said that Ratnākaraśānti was a student of the famous scholar Dharmakīrtiśrī (ca. late 10th century).⁷⁰ The first passage appears to be a justification

⁶⁷ Eimer (1982:45). Eimer has identified some older passages in the *rNam thar rgyas pa* by the use of the term *lo rgyus*. This term later came to mean “history,” but in its early usage meant a “chapter” or “section” and this usage occurs several times throughout the text. For his analytical of the *rNam thar rgyas pa* and *rNam thar yongs grags*, see Eimer (1977:192) and Eimer (1979).

⁶⁸ Eimer (1982:45). It is not clear who wrote the transmission lists (*thob yig*) and teachings (*gsan yig*) reports. It is conceivable that original information could have been obtained from Indian sources, such as from Kṣitigarbha, but if it were, it is not likely that much remains, since the lists demonstrate many Tibetan concerns, as we shall see.

⁶⁹ For instance, see Isaacson (2002a:459fn5), where he mentions Thagana (a.k.a. Thagana-pā) as having possibly been Ratnākaraśānti’s teacher in one lineage and a student in another. Cf. Dowman (1986:94), where the Mahāsiddha story describes Ratnākaraśānti’s student Koṭālī-pā becoming his teacher.

⁷⁰ Dharmakīrtiśrī is called *gser gling pa* in the text, but I have tentatively followed the convention of calling him Dharmakīrtiśrī (*chos grags dpal*) rather than his other aliases, such as Suvarṇadvīpa Dharmakīrti (*gser gling chos grags*) or Dharmapāla, for instance. See Eimer (1981:74).

of why Adhīśa considered himself to be a holder of Dharmakīrtiśrī’s pith instructions, as Nag-tsho reports:

Dharmakīrtiśrī had four great disciples (1) Ratnākaraśānti, (2) Adhīśa, (3) Jñānaśrīmitra, (4) Ratnakīrti. But, among them, Ratnākaraśānti was like a guardian for entering the teachings, so Dharmakīrtiśrī told Adhīśa “Go study with Ratnākaraśānti.” For this reason, [Adhīśa] said “[I] studied the major textual traditions (*gzhung*) of *Prajñāpāramitā* with Ratnākaraśānti.⁷¹ Since Ratnākaraśānti did not possess [Dharmakīrtiśrī’s] pith instructions of *Abhisamayālamkāra*, [I] got these from Dharmakīrtiśrī himself. [Ratnākaraśānti also] explained *tantric* praxis (*rtog pa*; *kalpa*) from top to bottom (*phar bshad tshur bshad*).”⁷² [Adhīśa also] said, “[I] also studied with Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti [other] teachings of Dharmakīrtiśrī [and hence] I possess all Dharmakīrtiśrī’s pith instructions.”⁷³

This passage is aimed at explaining the reason why Adhīśa can call himself a holder of all the pith instructions of Dharmakīrtiśrī, namely because Adhīśa heard the main

⁷¹ The term *gzhung* can just mean “text,” but I suspect that in this context—as is often the case for Ratnākaraśānti in his use of the term *mata*—the meaning is more than just a “text.” For this reason, I have translated *gzhung che ba rnams* as “major textual traditions.” For Ratnākaraśānti’s use of *mata*, see my footnote 455.

⁷² The lack of pronouns in the Tibetan makes the agent in each sentence slightly unclear, but the transmission reports suggest the bracketed insertions that I have made here. Cf. LC *rtog pa*=*kalpa*.

⁷³ *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 94:5ff): *bla ma gser gling pa la slob ma paṇḍita chen po | mkhas pa chen po shantipa dang | jo bo dang | mkhan po dzāna shrī mitra dang | ratnakīrti dang bzhi yod pa la | de rnams kyi nang nas kyang bstan pa’i sgo srung pa lta bu shanti pa yin pas | bla ma gser gling pa’i zhal nas khyed shanti pa la chos nyon gsung nas | jo bos pha rol tu phyin pa’i gzhung che ba rnams shanti pa la gsan | shanti pa la man ngag gi bzhad pa mi ’dug nas | mngon par rtogs pa’i rgyan bla ma gser gling pa nyid la gsan | sngags kyi rtog pa la phar bshad tshur bshad mdzad gsung | mkhan po dzāna shrī mitra dang | ratnakīrti gnyis la yang gser gling pa’i chos gsan | gser gling pa’i gdams ngag thams cad mnga’i ba yin gsung |* The fact that none of the occurrences of *gsung* in this passage are preceded by an end quote marker, like *zhes* etc., may indicate that three separate occurrences of indirect speech in the same way that a final *skad* indicates speech heard indirectly, i.e. “it is said.” However, elsewhere in the *rNam thar yongs grags*, there are occurrences of *gsung* without a quote marker that also appear to mark what we might call “direct speech” as well, in that the first and second person pronouns are used together with an imperative. For example, see *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 137:4) where Ratnākaraśānti says: *khyed snying rje bar ’dug pa’i phyir lo gsum khyed la gyar du btang | de nas nga rang gi paṇḍita tshur spyān drongs | tshe dang ldan pas (em. pa) kyang bal yul tshun chad du ma bskyal na dam tshig nyams so gsung*. In this example, the use of *gsung* without the quote marker *zhes* does not outweigh the effect of reported speech created by the first and second person pronouns with an imperative. In other words, even though the writer himself may not be claiming to have heard these words himself, he wants us to believe that these words (or something very similar) were actually spoken by Ratnākaraśānti himself. In the above passage too, Dharmakīrtiśrī’s speech is presented without a quote marker but with a second person pronoun and an imperative suggesting reported speech: *bla ma gser gling pa’i zhal nas khyed shanti pa la chos nyon gsung*. Thus, despite the lack of *zhes* etc., we can understand the three occurrences of *gsung* in this sentence to be marking what I have translated as though it is reported speech. Similarly, I have also taken *jo bos* as an agentive marker for the following two sentences that end with *gsung*, since the source of this information, if it is true, would have likely originated with Adhīśa. We can speculate that the reason for using *gsung* twice for the speech by Adhīśa derives from the author’s wish to separate the first quote, which might have been something Adhīśa explained on some occasion(s), from the second quote, which might have been something Adhīśa claimed over and over.

pith instructions from Dharmakīrtiśrī and collected the rest of his teachings from Dharmakīrtiśrī's own students. Since the transmission reports show Adhīśa to have received more teachings from Ratnākaraśānti than from Dharmakīrtiśrī, we can also understand that, by presenting Ratnākaraśānti as a mere surrogate of Dharmakīrtiśrī, the passage may be deliberately attempting to downplay Ratnākaraśānti's role as Adhīśa's teacher.⁷⁴ Whatever the case, for our purposes here, the most important aspect of this passage is that Ratnākaraśānti is said to be the foremost student of Dharmakīrtiśrī. This is significant, because Dharmakīrtiśrī is not mentioned as Ratnākaraśānti's teacher in any other known source. Furthermore, since Dharmakīrtiśrī is known primarily for the *Durbodhālokā* (DBA), a commentary on *Prajñāpāramitā*, it is significant that Ratnākaraśānti is being called a holder of Dharmakīrtiśrī's transmission, insofar as Ratnākaraśānti himself is often associated with *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings in other hagiographic remarks.

The fact that Nag-tsho mentions Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti as disciples of Dharmakīrtiśrī in the passage above is also interesting, because, if true, it would suggest something about Ratnākaraśānti's relationship to these other famous scholars at Vikramaśīla who were known to have criticized Ratnākaraśānti. That is to say, if all three of them were indeed disciples of Dharmakīrtiśrī, then we might understand their famous *Nirākāravāda* vs. *Sākāravāda* debate as a form of sibling rivalry. Furthermore, if Dharmakīrtiśrī were indeed the teacher of Ratnākaraśānti and others at Vikramaśīla, we might wonder whether they all travelled to study with Dharmakīrtiśrī or whether Dharmakīrtiśrī spent some time teaching in Vikramaśīla.⁷⁵ Given that the colophon to Dharmakīrtiśrī's DBA states that it was written in Śrīvijayanagara in Malayagiri and given that Adhīśa's biographies say that he travelled to the

⁷⁴ Adhīśa is often said to have received teachings on *bodhicitta* from Dharmakīrtiśrī in particular. This passage's suggestion that Adhīśa primarily received from Dharmakīrtiśrī his pith instructions on *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* is in accord with other accounts about Adhīśa receiving relatively few teachings from Dharmakīrtiśrī, because *bodhicitta* is regarded as the main topic of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*.

⁷⁵ See Sarkar (1986:42) for some evidence of Dharmakīrtiśrī in India.

city of Śrīvijaya—probably in 1012 C.E. at the age of 31—in order to receive teachings from Dharmakīrtiśrī, it is generally thought that Dharmakīrtiśrī did not live and teach in India⁷⁶ However, if Dharmakīrtiśrī truly only taught in Suvarṇadvīpa and if Ratnākaraśānti were a student of his who was senior to Adhīśa and able to pass on most of Dharmakīrtiśrī’s pith instructions to him, then Ratnākaraśānti and the other students mentioned would have had to have gone to Suvarṇadvīpa before 1012 C.E. and spent a longer time studying there with Dharmakīrtiśrī than Adhīśa himself had.⁷⁷ Although it is conceivable that they all went to Suvarṇadvīpa to study with one of the most famous masters of their day, there is one passage in the *rNam thar yongs grags* that may suggest they would have studied with him in India instead. In that passage, Ratnākaraśānti is speaking to Nag-tsho and the other Tibetans who had just arrived at Vikramaśīla and had asked to be his students. There, Ratnākaraśānti is reported to have explained to them the daily schedule as follows:⁷⁸

During the day, in the saṅgha park/temple, after the entire saṅgha, including myself, is led in a gathered group (*'du ba'i gral*) for the mid-day meal (*gdugs tshod*) by the Elder, it will break into groups of trainees (*bslab pa'i gral zhig tu bzhag*). At that time, go to the great abodes (*gnas*) [of] Dharmakīrtiśrī and so on and when you arrive, I will be leading the saṅgha assembly (*dge 'dun gyi tshogs dpon mdzad*) there at the head of the group [for] you.”⁷⁹ Due to his saying this

⁷⁶ Cf. Sarkar (1986) who explains that Dharmakīrtiśrī wrote his DBA commentary in Śrīvijayanagara in Malayagiri, not in some place in Southern India, associated with early Malayan settlers.

⁷⁷ Assuming that this were true, future research could focus on whether there might be any inscriptional or other evidence of any of them having gone there. For instance, there is a now famous inscription mentioning a missionary named Kīrti in the Southeast Asian context around this time. One might be able to determine whether that Kīrti had any relation to the contemporaneous missionary Dharmakīrti of Suvarṇadvīpa. Cf. Cœdès (1968:118), where it says, during Jayavarman V’s reign d. 1001: “The great dignitaries revealed by the inscriptions were, in general, like the king himself, adherents of the official Śaivism. But, as during preceding reigns, Buddhism continued to be practiced by some officials of high rank. The inscriptions give some idea of this Buddhism. From the doctrinal point of view, it presented itself as the heir of the Yogācāra school and the representative of the ‘pure doctrines of the void and of subjectivity’ restored in Cambodia by the efforts of the Kīrtipāṇḍita, but in practice it borrowed part of its terminology from Hinduist rituals and involved above all the worship of the Bodhisattva Lokeśvara.” Some Tibetan scholars classify Dharmakīrtiśrī as a Yogācāra, but whether he would have classified himself that way has yet to be studied or determined.

⁷⁸ For an English paraphrase of Nag-tsho’s backstory, see Dutt (2008:368).

⁷⁹ Although the phrase *gser gling la sogs gnas chen rnams* has no genitive, I have taken it to be an abbreviated manner of speaking that amounts to *gser gling pa la sogs pa'i gnas chen rnams*. If we take Nag tsho to be calling the *gnas* itself “Dharmakīrtiśrī,” it would still imply a genitive, like calling a statue *of a buddha* “the buddha statue” or simply “the buddha.”

(*snyam pa*), without hearing another word (*skad*), [our] doubts (*sgro 'dogs mchod*) [about what to do each day] were cleared up.⁸⁰

Given that this anecdote is recounted in a slightly archaic colloquial Tibetan register, it is a likely candidate for belonging to the earliest strands of the anecdotes reported by Nag-tsho. But, as a description of what daily life for the monks at Vikramaśīla would entail, it differs from what we would expect at any monastery perhaps only in its mention of “the great abodes (*gnas*) of Dharmakīrtiśrī.” Unfortunately, the passage does not make clear what these “the great abodes” specifically refer to, so we do not know whether they referred to relics, remains, blessed objects, sites, temples, or possibly even stūpas.⁸¹ Whatever the case, it seems obvious in the passage that the *gnas* associated with Dharmakīrtiśrī must have been some material things in a particular location revered out of devotion to Dharmakīrtiśrī. Furthermore, although Nag-tsho’s anecdote mentions other *gnas chen rnams* in the phrase “and so on,” the fact that the particular *gnas* associated with Dharmakīrtiśrī is mentioned at the head of the list can be taken as suggesting that the *gnas* associated with Dharmakīrtiśrī was the most important among them. Given the other passage above, we may surmise that the reason why Ratnākaraśānti, the most senior scholar, taught his own class near that *gnas* was because he was considered foremost among Dharmakīrtiśrī’s main students.⁸² Whatever the case, the prominent position that the *gnas* associated with Dharmakīrtiśrī appears to have held at Vikramaśīla, according to the above passage, lends credence to the idea that Dharmakīrtiśrī had multiple students at Vikramaśīla,

⁸⁰ *rNam thar lam yig* (Zhol: 250): *nang par tsha ba 'i dus su | dge 'dun gyi kun dga' ra bar nga yang dge 'dun thams cad gdugs tshod la 'du ba 'i gral du gnas brtan gyis khrid nas bslab pa 'i gral dkyil zhig tu bzhag | de 'i dus su khyed ni gser gling la sogs gnas chen rnams su byon nas phyags ma phebs pa yin par gda' na 'ang | bdag gis khyed gral gyi dbu la dge 'dun gyi tshogs dpon mdzad kyin yod snyam pa las | gzhan gyi skad mi go ba dang sgro 'dogs mchod |*

⁸¹ Dutt (361) reports that the Tibetan historian Sum-pa mentions Vikramaśīla to have had 58 *samsthā* which he guesses may have been “institutions,” but might be back-translating *gnas*.

⁸² Aside from mentioning Jñānaśrīmitra, Ratnakīrti, and Adhīśa, *rNam thar Lam yig* (Zhol: 248) also mentions one *Kamalaśīla* as being a scholar at Vikramaśīla during this time. This may be a reference to *Kamalaśīla* (a.k.a. Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas) the Indian teacher said to have visited Tibet in the eleventh century, who also claimed to have studied at Vikramaśīla and to have been a student of Dharmakīrtiśrī.

such as Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti. Furthermore, if we understand these *gnas* to have contained some form of his physical remains, then we might speculate that Dharmakīrtiśrī could have even spent the end of his life teaching at Vikramaśīla.⁸³ Certainly, if so many Vikramaśīla scholars, such as Ratnākaraśānti, Jñānaśrīmitra, Ratnakīrti and Adhīśa, all studied with him, it seems more likely that he would have taught in India than that they all travelled there and returned to Vikramaśīla.

In a third mention of Ratnākaraśānti, Nag-tsho suggests that Ratnākaraśānti was a prime lineage holder of Dharmakīrtiśrī, when telling the story of Adhīśa’s Indian student *Kṣitigarbha (*sa’i snying po*), who came to Tibet with Adhīśa as a young man and was trained there for eighteen years up to the point of reaching spiritual maturity. Nag-tsho tells us:

[Originally] the *Paṇḍita* *Kṣitigarbha would [sometimes] take the Buddhist side and [sometimes] take the non-Buddhist side [in debate], suggesting that there was no particular boundary between the two. [But], since Adhīśa distinguished the differences so clearly, *Kṣitigarbha became Adhīśa’s student out of faith. [After that] Adhīśa said: “Aside from the four of us—(1-2) my gurus Dharmakīrtiśrī and Ratnākaraśānti, (3) myself, and (4) *Kṣitigarbha—no one can tell the difference between the Buddhists and non-Buddhists. Moreover, although Ratnākaraśānti and I were the only two [left] in India who could cut through doubts and know the [real] Dharma, the Guru [Ratnākaraśānti] has passed away and I have come to Tibet.⁸⁴ As a consequence, India is now doomed (*ngan par*).”⁸⁵

Once again, in this passage, Nag-tsho is mentioning in a colloquial register what Adhīśa said about Ratnākaraśānti. Here, we see that Adhīśa regarded Ratnākaraśānti not only as one of the two gurus in whom he personally had faith, but as the second in

⁸³ Eimer (1981:74) reports that Adhīśa was thought to have brought relics of Dharmakīrtiśrī to Tibet and deposited them in Reting Monastery. Further research may be helpful for determining whether these could be the *gnas chen* referred to here. In any event, Eimer speculates that the possession of Dharmakīrtiśrī’s relics could mean that he died in India at or near Vikramaśīla.

⁸⁴ It is possible to understand *bla ma* here as dual/plural, indicating Ratnākaraśānti and Dharmakīrtiśrī, but the prior sentence speaks only of Ratnākaraśānti.

⁸⁵ *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 86:2): *paṇḍita sa’i snying pos ris nang pa byas | ris phyi pa byas pas| phyi nang gnyis khyad tsams mi ’dug zer ba la| jo bos khyad par shin tu gsal bar phyed bas| dad nas slob mar gyur phyi nang gnyis khyad par ’byad mkhyen pa nga’i bla ma gser g.ling pa dang| shāntipa gnyis| nga dang gsum| nga’i slob ma sa’i snying po dang bzhi las med| de yang the tshom gcod pa dang| chos ’driś rgya gar na nga dang nga’i bla ma shāntipa gnyis la byed pa yin pa la | bla ma ’das nga bod du ’ong rgya gar yang ngan par thal gsung | From the context of looking back at Kṣitigarbha’s transformation in Tibet, it appears that this statement about Ratnākaraśānti having died was made late in Adhīśa’s stay in Tibet.*

a lineage that begins with Dharmakīrtiśrī and passes through Ratnākaraśānti to Adhīśa. That Ratnākaraśānti is characterized as the only one in India able to distinguish Buddhist from non-Buddhists speaks to the high regard for his abilities, but also belies the fact that Buddhist and non-Buddhist practices must have appeared so similar on the ground at the time that a deep understanding of doctrine was required to distinguish the two.

Aside from the implication about Ratnākaraśānti's relationship to Dharmakīrtiśrī, this passage gives us other hints about Ratnākaraśānti's death. First, although the passage mentions Ratnākaraśānti and Dharmakīrtiśrī, it only mentions Ratnākaraśānti's death, not Dharmakīrtiśrī's death. This is likely because Ratnākaraśānti's death was recent, whereas Dharmakīrtiśrī's death was already a distant fact. Second, the passage's wistful mention of Ratnākaraśānti's death may be taken to suggest that Adhīśa came to learn of Ratnākaraśānti's passing while he was already in Tibet and unable to return to India in order to help the Dharma. If correct, this would suggest that Ratnākaraśānti died after 1045 C.E. when Adhīśa is known to have been unable to return to India, because he could not pass through a war zone or find a safe way around it.

In conclusion, based on Nag-tsho's testimony thus far, we can summarize the following points about Ratnākaraśānti. First, even though Dharmakīrtiśrī is not mentioned as Ratnākaraśānti's teacher in other hagiographic sources or transmission reports, Nag-tsho's anecdotes suggest that Ratnākaraśānti, like Adhīśa, was a close student of Dharmakīrtiśrī, who appears to have been considered the main holder of his lineage in India. Second, Ratnākaraśānti may have studied in Suvarṇadvīpa before 1012, but it seems more likely that he studied with him in India, possibly at Vikramaśīla. Third, if Dharmakīrtiśrī's *gnas* involved his physical remains being at Vikramaśīla, then we might speculate further that Dharmakīrtiśrī could have taught at

Vikramaśīla late in his life and even died there. This would certainly explain why he famously told Adhīsa to study with Ratnākaraśānti, instead of teaching him himself. It would also explain why there were abodes/objects revering (*gnas*) Dharmakīrtiśrī at Vikramaśīla and why Adhīsa might have been able to bring relics of Dharmakīrtiśrī to Tibet. Finally, despite the fact that later hagiographies downplay Ratnākaraśānti as Adhīsa’s teacher, Nag-tsho would appear to have heard Adhīsa more than once speak with reverence of his teacher Ratnākaraśānti, whom he considered a direct link to Dharmakīrtiśrī capable of transmitting all his teachings to him.

2.4.2. Ratnākaraśānti’s Legacy

The above passages suggest Ratnākaraśānti was an important teacher to Adhīsa and perhaps more present in Adhīsa’s life than Dharmakīrtiśrī, but many histories, hagiographies, and compilations have presented Adhīsa as someone who did not respect Ratnākaraśānti as his teacher. In order to see how Ratnākaraśānti’s legacy came to be diminished, it may be worth looking at several places in which Nag-tsho’s account, as reported in the *rNam thar lam yig*, hints at Ratnākaraśānti’s singular importance for Adhīsa and for the rest of Vikramaśīla.

Firstly, when Nag-tsho and his party of Tibetans first arrive at Vikramaśīla, he tells another Tibetan named rGya-rtson who was already studying there that he had come to invite Adhīsa to Tibet. According to the Nag-tsho story, rGya-rtson responds:

From now on, you should never tell anyone that you have come to invite Adhīsa. Tell them all that you have come to do studies. Here, the Elder Ratnākaraśānti is the one to serve (*bya ba yod*).⁸⁶ Here, he is the

⁸⁶ As mentioned above, Roerich (1949: 246-7) records a similar, abbreviated version of this story, but in it, the two main characters are changed. The first change is that the Elder/Abbot of Vikramaśīla becomes someone named Śīlākara, instead of Ratnākaraśānti. The second difference is that the Tibetans go first to Adhīsa and invite him to Tibet. Adhīsa then replies: “I have decided to proceed in any case to Tibet... But it is difficult for the Elder to let us go, and one must find a way out of the difficulty.” Turning to Nag-tsho Adhīsa said: “Do not say to anyone that you had come to invite me! Say that you have come for study!” and then he sends them to the Elder Śīlākara. Roerich (1949:244) mentions Ratnākaraśānti as a teacher of Adhīsa, but in this passage accords Śīlākara the power to keep Adhīsa in the monastery. Between the two versions, the *rNam thar yongs grags* is likely more

one in charge (*dbang*) and he is Adhīśa’s master (*bdag po*). You should listen to the Dharma and pay attention (*sems ’dzin*) to him.⁸⁷

In this passage, we see, contra later accounts, that Adhīśa was not being portrayed as the great Abbot in charge of everything, but as a close student beholden to Ratnākaraśānti. Furthermore, Nag-tsho tells us that some time later, when Adhīśa decided to leave for Tibet, Adhīśa went along with the Tibetan delegation to ask Ratnākaraśānti’s permission to leave. Ratnākaraśānti says:

Because you [Tibetans] have been kind (*snying rje ba*), I will give him to you for three years on loan. After that, I would like my *Paṇḍita* brought back (*spyān drongs*). Also, if the Venerable [Adhīśa] is not escorted back at least to Nepal, the *samaya* will be broken.⁸⁸

Then, after an emotional goodbye, Adhīśa offers 1/4 of the gold he had received from the Tibetans to be split among the various Vikramaśīla masters, 1/4 of the gold to the King for repairs to the buildings, 1/4 of the gold as an offering to Bodhgaya and Uddanāpura, and 1/4 of the gold to the leader of the saṅgha, the Elder Ratnākaraśānti.⁸⁹ In this way, the *rNam thar lam yig* account, like the *rNam thar yongs grags*, has sections in which, reading through the lines, we can see Adhīśa being presented as a close student of Ratnākaraśānti and as someone to whom he looked up both as a teacher and a master, while Ratnākaraśānti is being presented as having been a bit

trustworthy, especially since, according to Eimer (1977: 46, 247), all later hagiographical accounts trace back to the text on which *rNam thar yongs grags* and *rNam thar rgyas pa* are based.

⁸⁷ *rNam thar Lam yig* (Zhol: 247:6): *da a ti sha gdan ’dran du ongs skad ye ma zer| slob gnyer byed pa la ’ongs pa yin zer ba kun la smos| ’di na gnas brtan ra tna ākara bya ba yod de| de ’di na dbang che zhing| a ti sha’i bdag po yang yin| de la chos nyan cing de’i sems ’dzin dgos|* That Ratnākaraśānti was presented as the one “in charge,” it is not clear that this means that he was formally installed as “abbot” of Vikramaśīla, since it is not uncommon that the most revered scholar or practitioner in a monastery supercedes an abbot in power.

⁸⁸ *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 137:4): *khyed snying rje bar ’dug pa’i phyir lo gsum khyed la gyar du btang| de nas nga rang gi Paṇḍita tshur spyān drongs| tshē dang ldan pas (em. pa) kyang bal yul tshun chad du ma bskyal na dam tshig nyams so gsung|* It is not clear whose *samaya* will be broken, Nag-tsho’s *samaya* or Adhīśa’s, but the following sentence suggests Nag-tsho’s *samaya* will be broken.

⁸⁹ *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 137:5ff): *jo bo’i zhal nas lo tsā ba la gser de khyer la shog gsung nas sngar gyi gser ling ba cha bzhir byas te| cha gcig jo bo’i bla ma rnams la bsngos| chag cig rdo rje gdan du mchod pa la bsngos| chag cig gnas brtan ratnākaras dbu mdzad pa’i bri ka ma la śī la’i dge ’dun la bsngos| cha gcig rgyal po la gtad nas bla ma tshor bsngos zhes ’byung|*

controlling but very caring.⁹⁰ Now we turn to the transmission lists to see how Ratnākaraśānti's legacy was undermined.

2.4.3. The Problem with the Transmission Section

In the *rNam thar yongs grags*, there is a section that purports to tell what teachings Adhīśa received and the transmission lineages from whom he received them.⁹¹ The precise source of these *rNam thar yongs grags* transmission lists is not made clear within the *rNam thar yongs grags* itself. Since the lists contains several statements that contradict others made elsewhere in the *rNam thar yongs grags*, they may have been edited by someone other than the original compiler.⁹² In several places, we can see that someone was trying to distance Adhīśa from Ratnākaraśānti.⁹³ In any event, rather than discuss the problems in detail, we will focus on two contradictions concerning Ratnākaraśānti's transmission lineage of the *tantras* and *Prajñāpāramitā*.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ The rest of the passage is an emotional speech by Ratnākaraśānti that is too long to reproduce here.

⁹¹ This section of the *rNam thar yongs grags* differs from the *rNam thar rgyas pa* in the order of presentation of the information and Sanskritization of some names, but does not differ in substance here according to Eimer's close analysis (1977:194,196, 202)

⁹² For instance, there is one place where *Guhyasamāja* stories were told in the transmission section without noticing that the same stories had been told elsewhere in the diachronic narrative. Cf. Eimer 1977 (169ff:2.2.1.3).

⁹³ For instance, in the middle of the transmission list of the “view” (*lta ba; dṛṣṭi*), the following story is uncharacteristically interpolated for no clear reason. *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 79): *pha rol tu phyin pa'i brgyud pa la | shing rta srol gnyis te | lta ba rnam par dag pa'i brgyud dang | spyod pa rnam par dag pa'i rgyud do | lta ba'i brgyud pa ni | slob dpon klu sgrub | zla ba grags pa | rig pa'i khu byug | a ba dhu ti pa che chung | jo bo ste | brgyud pa drug po gnas lugs kyi don phyin ci ma log par rtogs pa 'di rnams kyi yon tan ma lus pa yang jo bo la mnga' ba yin | snye thang na bzhugs pa'i dus su slob dpon rig pa'i khu byug la yang chos thun 'ga' nyan gsung | jo bo dang po bla ma ratna a ka ra śānti pa'i lta ba sems tsam rnam brdzun pa la phyis de bor nas slob dpon klu sgrub lugs kyi lta ba 'dzin pa yin | lta ba de 'phor ba la jo bos bla ma śānti pa la 'bul ba chen po byas kyang ma mnyes te | slob ma bya ba lta ba 'dzin pa cig dgos pa yin gsung skad do | de rnams lta ba rnam par dag pa'i brgyud pa yin byas su zad | spyod pa rnam par dag pa med pa yin gsung |* There are also several formal aspects within the passage that make it seem like a later interpolation. Firstly, there are two slightly redundant sentences summarizing what has been “said” (*gsung*)—one before the middle paragraph and one after it. This appears to be a repetition of the refrain without adding any new information. Secondly, in the latter of these redundant sentences, the pronoun “those” is far removed from any antecedent and does not make sense referring to Gurus/scholars there following the story. Both of these differ from the pattern of other lists.

⁹⁴ When two sources contradict, it is sometimes difficult to say which one is false. In this case, it is clear that the transmission lists have been tampered with and not the other way around, given the elaborations that disrupt the regularity and the flow of the lists and might be taken as a sign that they

Firstly, the transmission lists show Adhīśa’s receipt of only one mother tantra, namely *Samvara*, and that transmission is not from Ratnākaraśānti.⁹⁵ They make no mention of his having received the *Hevajratantra* or *Mahāmāyā* from Ratnākaraśānti anywhere, even though Ratnākaraśānti was known to have favored *Hevajratantra* tantra and likely taught it extensively.⁹⁶ At first glance, this does not accord with the above citation from this same hagiography, which says, “Ratnākaraśānti also explained *tantric* praxis (*rtog pa; kalpa*) from top to bottom (*phar bshad tshur bshad*)” to Adhīśa. But more importantly, it contradicts another statement found in the *rNam thar yongs grags* itself, which states:

Thanks to a request by Ston-pa dge-ba, Adhīśa himself composed commentaries on Śānti-pā’s *Śrīhevajrasādhana* the *Sahajasadyoga* (*lhan cig skyes pa ’i rnal ’byor*)⁹⁷ and Ḍombhi Heruka’s *Amṛtaprabhā[-nāma-sāadhanopāyikā]* (*bdud rtsi ’od*).⁹⁸ Also, Adhīśa translated, together with the Lo-tsā-ba [Ston-pa dge-ba] many commentaries on the *Samvara* cycle (*khlor lo sdom pa*) and the compositions, such as the *sādhana*s on the *Mahāmāyā* written by Kukuri-pā, Rgyan-pa,⁹⁹ and Śānti-pā.¹⁰⁰

In regard to this statement, the transmission lists do mention that Adhīśa received a “blessing” (*byin slabs*) lineage from Ḍombhi that could explain how Adhīśa could write a commentary on his *Amṛtaprabhā*.¹⁰¹ However, since nowhere in the transmission reports is he said to have received *Mahāmāyātāntra* or *Hevajratantra*, we must wonder how Adhīśa could have written a commentary on these without himself

were added later. It would take us too far astray for me to demonstrate these disruptions here. See Eimer (1977:193).

⁹⁵ The transmission lists do mention Adhīśa’s receipt of *Guhyasamāja* from Ratnākaraśānti, but this is not classified as mother tantra.

⁹⁶ For the tantric transmissions, see *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 77-78). Cf. also Eimer 1977 (169ff:2.2.1.3).

⁹⁷ Sobisch (2008:41#6-7). The translator is not mentioned there. For more on this text, see Isaacson (2002a).

⁹⁸ I have used the text title as it appears in Sobisch (2008:34#12). I do not follow the Tibetan literally here.

⁹⁹ I am not certain who this Tibetan name is referring to, so I have not Sanskritized it.

¹⁰⁰ *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 206:6ff): *ston pa dge bas zhus nas dpal dgyes pa rdo rje ’i slob dpon (207) śānti pas mdzad pa ’i lhan cig skyes pa ’i rnal ’byor dang| ḍombhi heruka ’i bdud rtsi ’od kyi ’grel pa jo bo nyid kyis mdzad pa dang| ’khlor lo sdom pa ’i gzhang mang po dang| dpal mahā mā yā ’i sgrub thabs dang| slob dpon ku ku ri pa ma dang| rgyan pa ma dang| śānti pas mdzad pas mdzad pa la sogs pa bla ma nyid dang lo tsā bas bsgyur ro|*

¹⁰¹ Cf. *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 82:4).

having received these teachings first. Were these transmissions ignored or removed from the transmission lists?

Secondly, in Nag-tsho's account above regarding *Prajñāpāramitā*, we saw that Adhīśa explained that, except for the pith instructions of *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* which he received from Dharmakīrtiśrī himself, he received Dharmakīrtiśrī's other teachings on *Prajñāpāramitā* from Ratnākaraśānti. Based on this statement, we would expect that, of the two *Prajñāpāramitā* lineages—i.e. the Maitreya and Mañjuśrī lineages—that were passed to Adhīśa, Ratnākaraśānti would have been mentioned in the transmission of Mañjuśrī's lineage to Adhīśa. However this list does not mention Ratnākaraśānti. Instead, Mañjuśrī's list elaborates the following lineage:

The lineage [of *Prajñāpāramitā*] from Ārya Mañjuśrī is—

- (a) Ārya Mañjuśrī, who despite being a buddha plays the role of a bodhisattva until cyclic existence is emptied for the benefit of sentient beings.
- (b) Ācārya Akṣayamati, who has innumerable qualities. If you ask what are they like: He is adorned with the thirteen qualities, i.e. the five celebrated in *pāramitā* and the eight celebrated in the secret mantra. Alternatively, he is known as the six names and endowed with the seven wondrous messages (*gta*) and so on.¹⁰²
- (c) The monk *Oladharini (?),¹⁰³ who had the same qualities as Akṣayamati, by whom he was first blessed, and as Mañjuśrī, by whom he was later blessed.
- (d) Vīravajra, who was naturally blessed with many qualities, especially endowed with the twelve qualities of training.
- (e) Mahāśrī—*Mahā* [meaning] great, insofar as [he was] born into the family of the great vehicle, *śrī* [meaning] glorious, given his attainment of the glory of happiness free from negative influence (*zag med*).¹⁰⁴
- (f) Ratnasattva,¹⁰⁵ *Ratna* [meaning] a precious thing and [something that] brings benefit to others even without thinking. *Sattva* means

¹⁰² According to the Jeffrey Hopkins' electronic dictionary, these *gtam* are something spoken from one *Paṇḍita* to another's ear directly.

¹⁰³ This is a transliteration of the Tibetan. I do not know who this is.

¹⁰⁴ Clearly this could not be the list of an Indian, for instance, like Kṣitigarbha, since a Tibetan editor added this gloss for Tibetans.

¹⁰⁵ I have placed Tib. *bodhisattva* with *sattva* based on the gloss that follows, since it suggests only the word *sattva* was there previously. I have also normalized the spelling of *sattva*, though Tib. reads *satva*.

bodhisattva or replete with the indication “mahāsattva” in [one’s] hand (*has ta na* ?).¹⁰⁶
 (g) Dharmakīrtiśrī,
 (h) Adhīśa, who came to possess all the qualities of these gurus too.
 Even just hearing their names brings about immeasurable benefit to beings.¹⁰⁷

Notice here the embellishments for a Tibetan audience that explains the Sanskrit words in each name. Could it be that Ratnākaraśānti’s name was left out when transmission lists were edited? His name being missing here not only contradicts the Nag-tsho statement mentioned above, it contradicts others. For example, earlier in the *rNam thar yongs grags* where Nag-tsho reports that Adhīśa said:

Since my guru Śānti-pā would refute each and every interpretation of Mādhyamika whenever he taught the *Aṣṭa*, that very [Mādhyamika] viewpoint that was my own (*nga’i*) came to be clearer and clearer (*gsal btab pa*). Although Yogācāra-Mādhyamika became crystal clear (*shin tu gsal ba*), I had faith in the tradition of Candrakīrti.¹⁰⁸

Here, in Nag-tsho’s account, Adhīśa—who is known to have followed Candrakīrti’s viewpoint in an eclectic manner—is suggesting that he received teachings on the *Aṣṭa*

¹⁰⁶ I am not sure what *has ta na* means. I have tentatively translated as though it is a Tibskrit expression “hand” (skt. hasta) “in” (tib.na). The glosses are entirely a Tibetan concern and would not have likely been part of the list of an Indian, for instance, like Kṣitigarbha.

¹⁰⁷ *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 80:6ff): *’phags pa ’jam dpal nas brgyud pa ni* | (a) *’phags pa ’jam dpal ni sangs rgyas yin yang* | *sems can gyi don la ’khor ba ma stongs bar du byang chub sems dpa’i cha byad ’dzin pa yin no* | (b) *slob dpon blo gros mi zad pa ni* | *yon [81] tan dpag tu med pa dang ldan pa yin te mdor na yon tan ji tsam dang ldan zhe na* | *pha rol tu phyin pa la grags pa’i yon tan lnga dang* | *gsang sngags la grags pa’i yon tan brgyad de* | *bcu gsum gyis brgyan pa’o* | *gzhan yang mtshan drug tu grags* | *ngo mtshar gyi gtam bdun dang ldan pa la sogs pa’o* | (c) *dge slong o la dha ri ni slob dpon blo gros mi zad pa dang yon tan mnyam ste* | *sngon la slob dpon gyis byin gyis brlabs la* | *phyis ’jam dpal dang mjal nas byin gyis brlabs so* | (d) *slob dpon dpa’ bo rdo rje ni* | *rang bzhin gyi yon tan mang po dang ldan pa khyed par du sbyang pa’i yon tan bcu gnyis dang ldan pa’o* | (e) *mahā śrī la mahā ni chen po ste* | *theg pa chen po’i rigs su skyes pa’o* | *śrī ni dpal te zag med kyi bde ba’i dpal thob pa’o* | (f) *ratna bo dhi sa tva ni* | *rin po che* (sic ! - *ratna*) *ste rin po che dang ’ngas* (em. *nges*) *par rtog pa med kyang gzhan don byed par ’gyur ro* | *sa tva ni* | *byang chub sems sam* | *has ta na sems dpa’ chen po zhes mtshan don dang ldan pa’o* | (g) | *gser gling pa* | (h) *jo bo ste* | *mtshan tsam gyis kyang ’gro ba dpag tu med pa’i don mdzad pa’i bla ma ’di rnams kyi yang yon tan ma lus pa jo bo la mnga’ ba yin* | *brgyad pa ’di rnams thams cad spyod pa rnam par dag pa byang chub kyis sems kho nas sems can gyi don mdzad de* | *lta ba med pa ma yin gsung* |

¹⁰⁸ *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 5a1): *nga’i bla ma shānti pa brgyad stong pa gsungs tsa na dbu mar bshad pa thams cad re re nas sun phyung pas* | *nga’i dbu ma’i lta ba de nyid snyal la* (em.- *gsal*) *btab pa bzhin du long* (em.- *song*) | *rnal ’byor spyod pa’i dbu ma shin tu gsal bar kyang* (em.- *gyur kyang*) | *nga zla ba grags pa’i lugs la shin tu dad pa yin gsung* | I have based these emendations on the variant readings found in Sang po (1973:597-658): *nga’i bla ma shānti pa brgyad stong pa gsung tsa na dbu mar bshad pa thams cad re re nas sun phyung bas* | *nga’i dbu ma’i lta ba de nyid gsar btab pa bzhin du song* | *rnal ’byor spyod pa’i dbu ma shin tu gsar bar gyur* | *nga zla ba grags pa’i lugs la shin tu ngang pa yin gsung* | The Tibetan expression *tsa na* is a more archaic expression. For more on these expressions, see Eimer (1977:199-4.2.1.4)

over and over.¹⁰⁹ Since the *Sāratamā* is Ratnākaraśānti’s commentary on the *Aṣṭa* and since it cites and follows the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* in several places—eg. explaining the twenty-two types of bodhicitta in accord with the eighty types based on the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*—it seems likely that Ratnākaraśānti would have possessed the Mañjuśrī transmission stemming from Akṣayamati and would have passed it on. However, the transmission lists do not contain his name.

On the other hand, an unembellished list of “*tantra* and *pāramitā* as a pair” does contain Ratnākaraśānti’s name:

The lineage of *tantra* and *pāramitā* as a pair (*gnyis ka*) is [as follows]:

(a) Ācārya Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva (*’phags pa lha*),¹¹⁰ Candrakīrti, the yogi Tela, *Vidyākoka, Jñānabodhi, Mañjuśrībhadra, Ratnākaraśānti, Adhīśa.

(b) Also, Ācārya Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Mātṛceta, the yogi Tela, Jātipāya (*tsa ti pa ya?*),¹¹¹ Mañjuśrībhadra, Bodhibhadra, Śānti-pā,¹¹² Adhīśa. These (*de rnams*) are the scholars of *tantra* and *pāramitā* as a pair. It is said that Adhīśa came to possess all their qualities too.¹¹³

Here, it is not clear that “*tantra* and *pāramitā* as a pair” refers to a *Prajñāpāramitā* lineage.¹¹⁴ Even if it does, there is no mention of Dharmakīrtiśrī in the list. Given that

¹⁰⁹ Adhīśa’s philosophical position is complex and difficult to establish. For signs of his eclecticism, see, for instance, Vose (2009:23-5), where he discusses Adhīśa’s partial acceptance of Bhāvaviveka, who later Candrakīrti interpreters considered Candrakīrti to have thoroughly refuted.

¹¹⁰ Here the Tibetanized name *’phags pa lha* contrasts the Sanskritized Āryadeva in the next list. According to Eimer, this partial Sanskritization of some but not all terms is one of the superficial features that makes *rNam thar yongs grags* more likely to be later than *rNam thar rgyas pa* although the substance is the same. For more on this process, see Eimer (1977:195-7).

¹¹¹ This Sanskrit name is merely a guess. Jātipāya is unattested as a word or a name, but I have found no mention of *tsa ti pa ya* elsewhere either.

¹¹² Here the Tibetanized name *Śānti-pa* contrasts the Sanskritized Ratnākaraśānti in the previous list. Obviously the Sanskritization process missed a few along the way, but these lists were from the same original source.

¹¹³ *rNam thar yongs grags* (Zhol: 81:6): *sngags* (em. *sngags dang*) *pha rol tu phyin pa gnyis ka ’i brgyud pa ni| slob dpon slu sgrub ’phags pa lha| zla ba grags pa te la yo gi| rig pa ’i khu byug| ye shes byang chub| ’jam dpal bzang (82) po| ra tnā ka ra śānti| a ti śa zhes ’byung| gzhan yang slob dpon klu sgrub| ārya de ba| ma ti tsi ta| te la yo gi| tsa ti pa ya| mañju śrī bha dra| bho (sic!) dhi bha dra| śānti pa| jo bo ’o| ’di rnams sngags dang pha rol tu phyin pa gnyis ka la mkhas pa yin te| ’di rnams kyi yon tan ma lus pa yang jo bo la mnga’ ba yin gsungs| grub pa thob pa ’i brgyud gnyis las| gcig ’jam dpal bzang po| śānti pa| jo bo nyid do|* Note here that I have emended *sngags pha rol tu phyin pa* because the end of the sentence reads *sngags dang pha rol tu phyin pa*.

¹¹⁴ See Luo Hong (2013) for evidence in the seven opening verses that Ratnākaraśānti propounded *Prajñāpāramitā* as central to both the *pāramitā* system (*pāramitānaya*) and the mantra system (*mantranaya*). He might have passed a sūtra and *tantra* *Prajñāpāramitā* lineage on, but it is not clear to what textual tradition this actually refers. Maitreya’s tradition refers to the AA, whereas Mañjuśrī’s tradition seems to be associated with the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* and other texts.

these two lists are unembellished, could an editor have somehow overlooked them and left Ratnākaraśānti's name in? Whatever the case, these transmission lists also contradict Nag-tsho's statement mentioned above that—except for the AA pith instructions—Adhīśa received “the major textual traditions (*gzhung*) of *Prajñāpāramitā*” from Ratnākaraśānti.

Interestingly, the *rNam thar yongs grags* transmission lists contradict the hagiographical material in a similar way to the hagiographies of 'Brog-mi. The biographies mention that 'Brog-mi studied with Ratnākaraśānti for eight years and received teachings on *Prajñāpāramitā*, Hevajra and so on from him. But, the transmission reports associated with 'Brog-mi do not generally record his reception of these teachings and in several places, they make a point of saying that 'Brog-mi was not satisfied with what he learned from Ratnākaraśānti and sought other teachers.¹¹⁵ Since 'Brog-mi's hagiography also suggest that he went to study with Ratnākaraśānti because of his renown as a scholar, it is surprising that 'Brog-mi would have thought so highly of Ratnākaraśānti in the beginning of his studies but have had a complete change of heart by the end of his eight years of study with Ratnākaraśānti. Such a turn of events is certainly not impossible, but from Nag-tsho's narrative in *rNam thar yongs grags* we actually find evidence to the contrary. There, we see that well after 'Brog-mi returned to Tibet from his stay in India, 'Brog-mi actually erected a statue of Ratnākaraśānti at his *Sa snying lha khang* in order to memorialize the profound impact that Ratnākaraśānti had had on him.¹¹⁶ From this simple contradiction, we can perhaps glimpse the fact that we need to approach the hagiographies and transmission lists of all Ratnākaraśānti's known teachers and students with extreme caution. Like Maitreyañātha's later hagiographies, other biographical materials may have

¹¹⁵ Sobisch (2006:41fn93) mentions that according to Ngor-chen's *Correct System* (5v), 'Brog-mi studied the Hevajra cycle with Ratnākaraśānti. Cf. Stearns (2001:87).

¹¹⁶ *rNam thar yongs grags* (168:6), where it explains that 'Brog-mi and Ling-lo-tsā ba invited Adhīśa to *Sa snying lha khang* and later had two statues built at that *Sa snying* Temple, one of Adhīśa and one of Śānti-pā.

deliberately tried to play down the relationship between Ratnākaraśānti's students and Ratnākaraśānti himself. It is not hard to imagine that, as Candrakīrti's Mādhyamika philosophy became more and more established in the Tibetan context, Ratnākaraśānti—who criticized and opposed Candrakīrti's philosophy—was a bad name to have on one's resumé, particularly in the dogmatic and sectarian atmosphere of Tibet in the 15th – 17th centuries when many lineage identities began to coalesce around distinctive philosophical viewpoints, rather than practice.

2.4.3.1. Conclusion

If our brief and narrow examination of the above sources is correct, the picture of Ratnākaraśānti that emerges from Śāntibhadra's and Amogha's colophons and the other sources is that Ratnākaraśānti was widely considered an accomplished practitioner, siddha, and scholar.

As for his students, we have little information about whether other supposed students, such as Subhūtiśānti, Divākaracandra, Śraddhākaravarman, Thagana, or Koṭālī-pā actually followed Ratnākaraśānti or considered him their main teacher.¹¹⁷ From their writings it seems that many of them held Mādhyamika viewpoints.¹¹⁸ However, as we can see in the *rNam thar yongs grags* of Adhīśa, his self-identification with the lineage of both Dharmakīrtiśrī and Ratnākaraśānti suggests that he saw himself as upholding both Dharmakīrtiśrī and Ratnākaraśānti's legacy in Tibet, even despite Adhīśa's own espousal of Candrakīrti's Mādhyamika viewpoint as opposed to his gurus' viewpoints. If Candrakīrti's Mādhyamika viewpoint were

¹¹⁷ Thagana appears to be the same name as the Tib. *sa gebs pa* that appears in some lists. Cf. also Shizuka (2011:74) who mentions the following list from the **Rahasyasaṃgraha (Sarvarahasya lineage?)* that I have not relied on: Sa-'dres-pa, Vīrabhadra (mngon shes can), Za-hor Btsun-mo-can (Divākaracandra), Śāntadeva (Śāntadeva/Śāntideva?), Ratnākaraśānti, Dpal zhas (Śrīgupta), Mar me mdzad (Dīpaṃkara), 'Gos [Khug-pa-lhas-btsas]. Also, Shizuka seems to suggest that Sa-'dres-pa (=Gomiśra?) passed these teachings directly to Ratnākaraśānti himself.

¹¹⁸ According to Harunaga Isaacson (personal communication), Ratnākaraśānti's student Kalahaṃsakumāra was one of the few Indian scholars to follow Ratnākaraśānti's viewpoint closely. For an example of this, see *Dākinījālacakravartīśrīsaṃvararahasyaṃ nāma sādhanam* by *Kalahaṃsakumāra*. Edited in Dhīḥ 26 (1998), pp. 107–137.

Ratnākaraśānti's mission in life to destroy, as the MAu colophons suggest, then we can only think that Ratnākaraśānti's relationships with some of his close students was humanly complex.

Interestingly, Ratnākaraśānti's relationship with his own teacher Dharmakīrtiśrī seems to have been equally complex. If we take Nag-tsho's first-hand account of their relationship to be correct, then Dharmakīrtiśrī was likely a major influence on Ratnākaraśānti. Certainly, in making *Prajñāpāramitā* the centerpiece of his whole system, Ratnākaraśānti appears to have been influenced by Dharmakīrtiśrī, whose primary scholarly work was also on *Prajñāpāramitā*. However, since Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā* and other commentaries refute Haribhadra's position, which Dharmakīrtiśrī's *Durbodhālokā* (DBA) follows,¹¹⁹ we can also understand that Ratnākaraśānti's own identity as a scholar was formed in contrast to his teacher, with whom he disagreed on foundational assumptions. Despite Ratnākaraśānti's disagreement with his own teacher on philosophical points, we can see from Nag-tsho's account that he was likely devoted to him and considered himself to be very close. Furthermore, Ratnākaraśānti's own complex but caring relationships with his students might have sprung from his own complex but caring relationship with his teacher.¹²⁰ That Adhīśa himself appears in the *rNam thar yongs grags* to have named both Dharmakīrtiśrī and Ratnākaraśānti as his main teachers and praised them both, despite adopting different viewpoints from them, may indicate that in India at that time—unlike later in sectarian Tibet—philosophical issues were not the defining issue in whether or not scholars considered themselves devoted students of a particular teacher. Thus, although Ratnākaraśānti himself does not follow Dharmakīrtiśrī

¹¹⁹ The DBA was probably the most recent major *Prajñāpāramitā* commentary written before Ratnākaraśānti wrote the *Sāratamā* in the 11th century.

¹²⁰ There is also miscellaneous commentary on Hevajra apparently attributed to a Dharmakīrti[-śrī ??] that might be interesting to compare with Ratnākaraśānti's *Muktāvalī*. Cf. Sobisch (2006:76). Although Bu ston and others disputed the authorship and Indian origin of this commentary, it has not been studied and might reveal connections as well.

philosophically, I would suggest that future research focus on Dharmakīrtiśrī's and Adhīśa's works, since they both may contain valuable clues about Ratnākaraśānti's own defining influences and defining contributions, even though their viewpoints differ.

2.5. Ratnākaraśānti's Work

Now that we have some idea about who he was and what may have influenced Ratnākaraśānti, we will turn toward his work. But before we move to the next chapter, we will use the biographical information discussed above to help get a basic sense of the dating of Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā* and then sketch out a rough chronology of his doxographical works.

2.5.1. Dating the *Sāratamā*

Neither the colophon of the *Sāratamā* nor any other source gives any indication of when the text itself was composed. Although it appears to critique Dharmakīrtiśrī's *Durbodhālokā* which has a *terminus ante quem* of 1005/1008 C.E., this does not help us establish the date of the *Sāratamā*.¹²¹ However, we can base our estimate on the fact that 'Brog-mi was allegedly told no later than 1020 C.E. by Ratnākaraśānti's famous student Śāntibhadra in Nepal that he should go study *Prajñāpāramitā* with the second Omniscient One Ratnākaraśānti himself, who was at Vikramaśīla at the time.¹²² From 'Brog-mi's biographies and translation record, it does seem that he studied the topic of *Prajñāpāramitā* with Ratnākaraśānti. If Ratnākaraśānti was already known for *Prajñāpāramitā* at the time, then we can expect that, in order for

¹²¹ The exact dates of Ratnākaraśānti's birth, active period, and death are unknown. The *Sāratamā* seems to have been written after the Dharmakīrtiśrī's *Durbodhālokā*, whose colophon tells us it was written in the tenth regnal year of Śrī Cuḍāmaṇivarman (d. 1005-8 C.E.) of Suvarṇadvīpa. But since the start of Cuḍāmaṇivarman's reign is unknown, we cannot date the DBA precisely. Cf. Sarkar (1986:40) on the dates of the DBA. Majumdar in AICFE II 169-70 gives similar dates for Cuḍāmaṇivarman. For more on Ratnākaraśānti's dating relative to his opponents, see Kajiyama (1999:1-8).

¹²² There are two different accounts of the year in which 'Brog-mi went to India. Grags-pa-rgyal-tshan's account suggests 1018, whereas *Blue Annals* suggests it was ten years earlier during Rin-chen-bZang po's 50th year. See Roerich (1949:205).

his reputation to have become widespread, he would have written all his *Prajñāpāramitā* works for which he was most famous before 1020 C.E.. Thus, although Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā* could have been written well before this time, this might serve as working estimate for his writing of the *Sāratamā*.¹²³

Now, since the following three chapters will explain Ratnākaraśānti's viewpoint, system, and doxography based on reading seamlessly across more than one of his doxographical works, before moving forward, I will briefly lay out my own preliminary hypothesis about the chronology of his doxographical works in order to help frame my discussion of their contents.

2.5.2. Chronology of Doxographical Works

Ratnākaraśānti was extremely prolific and wrote on a variety of topics, including commentaries on tantric theory and practice, *prajñāpāramitā*, *madhyamaka*, *yogācāra*, *pramāṇa*, metrics, and riddles. In the Tibetan *bsTan 'gyur*, forty works are attributed to his various aliases, namely Ratnākaraśānti, Śānti-pa, Rin-chen-'byung gnas-zhi-ba, or dKon-mchog-'byung-gnas.¹²⁴ Given his fame as a scholar, it is not surprising that many works attributed to him are not his.¹²⁵ Among his works laying out his doxography, I have determined only four works to be correctly attributed to him, namely the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* (PPu), the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (VMS), and *Madhyamapratipadāsiddhi-nāma-Madhyamakālamkāravṛtti* (MPS/MAv) and *Madh-*

¹²³ According to Tāranātha, *Prajñāpāramitā* scholars were revered over all others by the Buddhist Pāla kings, beginning with Dharmapāla who offered diplomas (*patras*) to them—a tradition that appears to have remained in the eleventh century at Vikramaśīla. For instance, see Chimpa (1990:304).

¹²⁴ Luo Hong (2013) states that there are thirty-seven works. He is not counting several works which appear to be repetitions.

¹²⁵ In my preliminary analysis of his works, I would suggest that we consider Ratnākaraśānti to have authored only twenty-five independent works. In the annotated subject bibliography at the end of this thesis, I have listed the works attributed to Ratnākaraśānti according to subject. There, I have also segregated the works that do not appear to have been written by him into a separate section at the end of the list of his works. This section of the bibliography also includes a brief description of a work that I believe is the only known indigenous Tibetan sub-commentary on one of Ratnākaraśānti's works. See bibliography for details on *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam par bshad pa tshig don gsal ba'i me tog ces bya ba* by bCom-ldan-[Rig-pa'i]-ral-gri (1227-1305 C.E.).

yamakālaṃkāropadeśa (MAu).¹²⁶ Due to these commentaries' relevance to his doxography and to reading the *Sāratamā*, I will present my hypothesis about the chronology of these four works mainly.

Since Ratnākaraśānti's philosophic viewpoint is internally very consistent throughout his works and since he does not appear to cite any of his known contemporaries, it is not easy to discern a chronology of his works based on internal changes of position or to deduce a possible chronology in relation to others. Instead, we must look for clues in the internal relationships between various statements within his works. Fortunately, we find within his philosophical commentaries some patterns that can help us deduce a working hypothesis for a chronology. Here, for the sake of simplicity, I will focus on the pattern of boldness in his more innovative arguments and describe a few other pieces of supporting evidence in the footnotes.

To explain, the argument that Ratnākaraśānti makes throughout his works, namely that the Yogācāra and Mādhyamika have equivalent established conclusions, appear to become bolder in three phases. First, in the PPU, he presents a more or less *defensive* argument that Yogācāra and Mādhyamika are not necessarily opposed, because Mādhyamika logic cannot refute the *Nirākāravādin* Yogācāra position.¹²⁷ Second, in the VMS, he argues *offensively* that no other Yogācāra or Mādhyamika position can defend their establishment of *Vijñaptimātratā*. Third, in the MPS/MAv, he presents an *offensive* argument that Mādhyamika proponents are not followers of Nāgārjuna unless they accept luminous reflexive awareness, because Nāgārjuna accepted the luminous reflexive awareness in his definitive verses and because luminous reflexive awareness follows from Nāgārjuna's logic. Finally, in MAu, he

¹²⁶ The bibliography contains remarks about the contents of these and other works, about their relationship to other texts, and about why I have either included or disincluded them in the manner that I have. Some of those remarks may be taken as some support for my discussion of chronology here, but they are not essential to it.

¹²⁷ I will discuss the difference between the terms *Nirākāravādin* / *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* below.

claims to have definitively refuted all other Yogācāra and Mādhyamika positions. Thus, there is a pattern moving from a defensive to a more offensive argument.

The reason why I take think pattern as indicative of chronology is because I also take Ratnākaraśānti to have been refuting his own teacher Dharmakīrtiśrī in his works. My assumption is that, as Ratnākaraśānti gained confidence through his success as a scholar, this confidence led him to make bolder and bolder claims. If I am correct, then we can understand the progression of his emphasis in argumentation to have taken place in three basic phases—1. PPU,¹²⁸ 2. VMS,¹²⁹ and 3. MPS/MAV¹³⁰ and MAU.¹³¹

Since the PPU itself can be further linked to other texts, we can fill in the chronology as follows:

Phase 1: PPU, *Śuddhimatī* (Śud) and *Sāratamā* (Sār),¹³² *Kusumāñjalī-nāma-Guhyasamājanibandha* (KAgn)¹³³

¹²⁸ The relationship of the PPU to other works has been discussed much. Cf. Kajiyama (1965:419-420), where he notes that JNA(368:6-10) cites PPU (P167b8-168a3) and JNA (387:8-23) & RNA (129:1-12) are parallel to PPU (P168a4ff). Matsumoto (1980b:176fn1) also points out that JNA(376:6-8) cites PPU (P171b4-6). According to Tani (1999:369), Jñānaśrīmitra's KBhĀ came after his SSś and Ratnakīrti's KBhS came after that, suggesting the general chronology of Ratnākaraśānti-Jñānaśrīmitra-Ratnakīrti. Cf. Tani (2004:378).

¹²⁹ The VMS is placed in the stage between the PPU, because its nomenclature appears to be a middle stage in development between the PPU and the MPS/MAV, in that it refers to a *Nirākāravijñap-timātravādin* position like PPU and to a **Sarvālikatvavādin* like MPS/MAV. Cf. VMS (D308b7) and VMS (D309a1). Cf. MPS/MAV (D108a7). Cf. PPU (D150a4). Also, the fact that VMS names opponents seems more bold. For instance, VMS (D309a2): bTsun-pa-shes-rab 'byung-gnas-sbas-pa (*Prajñākaragupta*)...

¹³⁰ The MPS/MAV and MAU are grouped together here because the latter appears to be a commentary on the former written around the same time. The MPS/MAV consists of a number of original verses, which Ratnākaraśānti glosses and explains. MAU begins by citing the same three opening verses as MPS/MAV without glossing or explaining them. It seems an obvious allusion back to the MPS/MAV, which suggests the MPS/MAV precedes the MAU but that they were written close in time as a pair. For more on this, see my remarks in the bibliography about these two texts. Cf. MPS/MAV (D2a6)=MAU (D223b3; C605): *byams pa thogs med kyis gsungs shing | klu sgrub kyis kyang bzhed pa yi || tshad ma lung dang ldan pa yis || bden pa gnyis 'dir bshad par bya || RĀŚ 1||*. Cf. MPS/MAV (D02b5)=MAU (D224a7; C606): *gnyis kyi bdag nyid thams cad med| gnyis su 'khrul pa'i bdag nyid yod ||de ni stong pa'i bdag nyid de |dbu ma'i lam du 'di bzhed do ||RĀŚ 2||* Cf. MPS/MAV (D3a2)=MAU (D224a7; C606): *kun brtags dang ni gzhan dbang dang | |yongs su grub pa 'di rnams ni| |brtags dang rgyu las skye ba dang | |mi 'gyur phyir na go rims bzhin||RĀŚ 3||*

¹³¹ There are many other reasons to posit this progression. For instance, the PPU elaborates the four stages of practice. But in the MPS/MAV and MAU, the discussion of the four stages of practice are just briefly summarized after a philosophic discussion with almost no introduction, somewhat out of context. One cannot help but notice that they seem inserted almost as a second thought, rather hastily just before the end of the texts, unmotivated by their outlines. ShPh-m (D161a5). Cf. MPS/MAV (D18a7). Cf. MAU (D230b2,b4; C620).

¹³² The *Śuddhimatī* precedes the *Sāratamā*, which says: “Since I have already explained [the topic] based on these [antidotes] in the *Śuddhimatī* (*dag ldan*), I will not explain [them in detail here].” The PPU precedes both, since they both rely on the PPU's definitions and framework. Given the way they

Phase 2: VMS, *Antarvyāptisamarthana* (AVS)¹³⁴

Phase 3: MPS/MAv, MAu,¹³⁵ and *Muktāvalī-nāma-Hevajrapañjikā* (MAhp).¹³⁶

If this analysis of the chronology of his works is correct, then we might generally characterize the three phases in Ratnākaraśānti's non-tantric works as a window, respectively, into his basic hermeneutic agenda, his epistemological justification of that agenda, and the clearest expression of his philosophy. Also, if this progression is correct, then we can understand the doxographical statements in phases two and three to be aimed at clarifying aspects of his prior commentaries that were less clearly stated or ambiguous. Establishing this direction of clarification is important, because

divide up the topic, they seem to have been conceived as a tryptich. Cf. *Sāratamā* (in my Skt./Tib.ed.53:17): *de bdag gis kyang dag ldan (P\N\Co dga' ldan\D) nyid las rnam par bshad pa yin te| 'dir ni ma brjod do|*

¹³³ KAgsn appears to directly quote or follow the *Sāratamā*. Cf. for instance, the *Nidānavākya* section in KAgsn (C1328:8-1335) with *Sāratamā* (Skt.ed:13-19 in Section1.5-1.5.1), beginning with KAgsn (C1328:8): *gzhan yang gsung rab yan lag bcu gnyis kyi nang nas 'di gang yin zhe na| 'di ni zab mo 'i don mdor stong pas na mdo 'i ste yin no|* which appears to assuming readers have read *Sāratamā* (Skt.ed:4): *dvādaśāṅgāni pravacanasya....sūtram katamat? yad gadyair arthasūcanam*. In all of these, the *Sāratamā* has greater detail than the KAgsn and is likely earlier. Since KAgsn is more similar to *Sāratamā* than the MAhp, it may suggest that KAgsn is earlier than MAhp. There is also a PPU passage citing the *Guhyasamājatantra* in close connection with its own explanation of the four stages of practice (*yogabhūmi*) suggesting perhaps that *Guhyasamājatantra* was a focus around the time Ratnākaraśānti was writing the *Prajñāpāramitā* works. ShPh-m (D161a): *dpal gsang ba 'dus pa las kyang|| de nyid tshigs su bcad pa gcig gis gsungs te| rang gi sems ni brtags pas na|| chos kun sems la rab tu gnas|| chos 'di nam mkha 'i rdo rjer gnas|| chos dang chos nyid med pa 'o||* This is followed by an explanation of how the *Guhyasamājatantra* teaches the four *yogabhūmi-s* that Ratnākaraśānti has just explained in the PPU.

¹³⁴ Cf. Kajiyama (1999:5). Cf. Tani (1999:369-70) speculates that Ratnākaraśānti's AVS was criticizing Muktākalaśa, the only prior *bahirvyāptivādin*, who used the terms *bahirvyāpti* and criticizes *antarvyāpti*, but notes that information about other *bahirvyāptivādins* is lacking. It certainly seems possible, as Tani says, that Muktākalaśa could have been a target. But it seems based on Ratnakīrti's comments that he took Ratnākaraśānti to have vigorously attacked Prajñākaragupta. Although Ratnākaraśānti takes direct aim at Prajñākaragupta in his VMS, it is only a few lines. Ratnakīrti may well have other texts, like the AVS in mind. For this reason, I have tentatively placed the AVS in this phase. Cf. RNA (130:6).

¹³⁵ MAu probably follows *Śuddhimatī*, because it delineates the transformation of the basis (*āśrayaparāvṛtti*) along the ten grounds that parallels the framework he employs in the *Śuddhimatī*. Cf. MAu (D226b1; C611): *|sa de rnam su shes pa rnam gnas gyur cing mi 'dra bar smin pa 'o.*

¹³⁶ Muktāvalī probably follows the MAu because it has virtually the same sentence as the MAu, but in the past tense. Furthermore, it does not include any of the refutations it describes and must be referring to the MAu's refutations of them. Cf. MAhp (15:23): *itare trayo mādhyamikapakṣās catvāras ca yogācārapakṣā dūṣitāḥ pramāṇāgamaśāstranipunaiḥ*. Cf. MAu (D226b5; C611): *gzhan dbu ma ltar snang ba 'i phyogs gsum dang | rnal 'byor spyod pa 'i phyogs bzhi| tshad ma dang lung dang bstan bcos la mkhas pa rnam kyi sun dbyung bar bya ste.*

it suggests that Ratnākaraśānti wished his doxographical lists in the MPS/MAv and MAu to explain the ambiguous doxography in the Ppu and VMS.¹³⁷

I have not presented here all my reasons for establishing this chronology, because it based on my presupposition that Ratnākaraśānti's arguments and doxography became bolder and clearer as he developed as a scholar, but his philosophical viewpoint did not change much, if at all. Whether this hypothesis is acceptable or not, it should be kept in mind because, to some degree, it informs the way that I use his works to analyze his viewpoint, his system, and, particularly, his doxographical classifications in the following three chapters.

¹³⁷ If one were to hypothesize that the MPS/MAv and MAu were written first, we could still say that he assumed that their doxographical classifications would apply to the VMS and Ppu, but one would have to explain why the changes of school names are not evidence of a change of opinion.

3. Ratnākaraśānti's Sheer Luminosity Viewpoint

Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā* is very elliptical and focuses primarily on interpreting the *Aṣṭa* according to his own philosophical viewpoint. However, he never really explains his own viewpoint or broader philosophical system in the *Sāratamā*. He simply presumes that we already are familiar with it from his other commentaries. For this reason, if we wish to read the *Sāratamā*, we need to understand his unique viewpoint and philosophical system based on his other commentaries. Fortunately, Ratnākara-śānti's viewpoint is relatively consistent throughout his works. Unfortunately, since he wrote many works and often gives us certain key information about his system only in particular works, one generally needs to read a large amount of material before attempting to piece together his various comments and understand the basic contours of his viewpoint. Since such background reading may not be feasible for all, this chapter will draw out the main points from his various commentaries and sketch out the way his own particular *Nirākāravādin* ("Propounding No Cognitive Images") viewpoint asserts sheer luminosity (*prakāśamātra*) to be the causally efficacious ultimate reality.

Ratnākaraśānti's commentaries often present this *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint polemically within the framework of an argument that Yogācāra and Mādhyamika, when understood correctly, share the same established conclusion. Hence, in order to sketch out Ratnākaraśānti's *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint in the beginning of this chapter, we will first look at the way he sets up this argument based on his interpretation of the three natures (*svabhāva*) and two realities (*satya*) and then look at the way that he argues his case and lays out his broader system according to his *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint that, in ultimate reality, sheer luminosity is the only causally efficacious thing. In the conclusion, we will address the question of whether his philosophic viewpoint or arguments for it were "new" or particularly "innovative."

3.1. The Yogācāra and Mādhyamika Founders were in Agreement

Ratnākaraśānti's argument that Yogācāra and Mādhyamika schools have equivalent established conclusions is so central to how he conceives of his own system that he begins both the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* (MAu) and the *Madhyamapratipadāsiddhi-Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti* (MPS/MAv) with the following opening verse:

In this [commentary], based on logic supported by scripture,
I will explain the two realities,
according to what Maitreya [and] Asaṅga taught
and Nāgārjuna also asserted. || MPS/MAv 1||¹³⁸

Although Ratnākaraśānti refers here specifically to **Maitreya, Asaṅga and Nāgārjuna**, he understands these three figures to be the founding figures of Yogācāra and Mādhyamika.¹³⁹ Hence, his opening verse is informing us that his own viewpoint will be established in these commentaries according to what the founding figures of Yogācāra and Mādhyamika schools **asserted**. With the words **based on logic**, Ratnākaraśānti hints that he will not rely on or cite subsequent Yogācāra or Mādhyamika interpretations, but will explain the founders' intentions based on his own interpretation of Dharmakīrti's (7th century C.E.) logical framework.¹⁴⁰ Like other trailblazing commentators, Ratnākaraśānti is presenting himself from the outset as a conservative, rather than as an innovator. Although Ratnākaraśānti states his intention to explain the **two realities**, he goes on in the MAu to present both the three natures (*trīsvabhāva*) and the two realities and demonstrates their overlap. Thus, before discussing his argument about the intentions of the founders of the Yogācāra and Mādhyamika schools, it will be useful to briefly sketch out his presentation of these two sets of hermeneutics. We will follow the sequence of presentation in the MAu.

¹³⁸ MAv/MPS (D02a6): *byams pa thogs med kyis gsungs shing| klu sgrub kyis kyang bzhed pa yi|| tshad ma lung dang ldan pa yis|| bden pa gnyis 'dir bshad par bya || RĀŚ 1||*

¹³⁹ Ratnākaraśānti's writings do not say the following, but it seems that he held Maitreya's MAVi to have taught a sort of Yogācāra-Mādhyamika system, insofar as it shows that Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamika system and Asaṅga's Yogācāra system were in perfect agreement. For ease, when commenting on Ratnākaraśānti's words below, I will bold any direct quotes.

¹⁴⁰ In his AVS, for instance, Ratnākaraśānti interpreted Dharmakīrti's *sattvānumāna* according to the *pramāṇa* theory of internal determination of pervasion (*antarvyāpti*).

3.1.1. The Two Realities Hermeneutic

Ratnākaraśānti explains the two realities, namely conventional and ultimate reality, according to the tradition of the *Madhyāntavibhāga* (MAVi), as follows:¹⁴¹

Now, what is the conventional reality? (1) The object that is the scope of the naive. What is ultimate reality? (2) The object that is the scope of the noble ones.¹⁴²

Here, Ratnākaraśānti frames his discussion of the two realities within the **scope** of ordinary **naive** persons and that of **noble** persons. By describing the two realities as the **object** of two different types of persons' scopes, Ratnākara implies that the difference between **conventional** and **ultimate reality** is based on what naive persons and noble persons see with regard to the same single locus. For Ratnākaraśānti, any discussion of a reality *qua* object, either conventional or ultimate, requires reference to a subject whose scope it is. Furthermore, the two realities are not mutually exclusive properties being superimposed upon a given thing. That is to say, the qualifiers “conventional” and “naive” are meant to signify that the conventional reality perceived by naive persons is not ultimately real and, in fact, is superceded by the ultimate reality perceived by noble ones, which is ultimately real. But this is not to say that the noble ones' scope is *merely* “ultimate reality” alone. Rather, while a noble ones' scope is the ultimate reality, it simultaneously includes the conventional reality and recognizes it to be unreal. That is to say, Ratnākaraśānti posits there to be an identity relation (*tādātmya*) between the ultimate reality, i.e. luminosity, and the conventional reality, i.e. cognitive images.¹⁴³ It must be clarified, however, that Ratnākaraśānti is not positing the type of identity relation in which two mutually exclusive properties superimposed upon a single locus are said to be identical. Rather,

¹⁴¹ Certainly, he is drawing from Yogācāra hermeneutics here in his explanation of the two realities, but he goes on (below) to address the difference between their interpretations.

¹⁴² PPU 2.5.2.1. (D143b4) *ci ste kun rdzob kyi bden pa gang yin zhe na| byis pa rnam kyi yul du gyur pa'i don no|| don dam pa'i bden pa gang zhe na| 'phags pa rnam kyi yul du gyur pa'i don no||*

¹⁴³ According to Buddhist logicians, an “identity relation” (*tādātmyasambandha*) or a “causal relation” (*tadutpattisambandha*) are the only two real relationships possible between entities.

he is positing an identity relation in which the direct evidence of a thing's real nature, which is not superimposed, reveals the superimposedness of that same thing's unreal nature.¹⁴⁴ Since this type of identity relation undergirds much of his argumentation—including his argument that Yogācāra and Mādhyamika schools have “equivalent” established conclusions—it should be kept in mind as we now turn to his explanation of the three natures.

3.1.2. The Three Natures Hermeneutic

Ratnākaraśānti describes the three natures according to his *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint, which is in line with the *Triṃśikā* and *Madhyāntavibhāga*. He begins by defining the imagined nature, as follows:¹⁴⁵

3.1.2.1. The Imagined Nature

That nature which mental chatter (*manojalpa*) fabricates (*kalpita*) by conflating (*samsargeṇa*) phenomena with names¹⁴⁶ is the imagined nature of those phenomena, since they are unreal (*asattva*) in the way that they are perceived (*yathālakṣaṇam*), for example, visible form, sound, and so on or an eye, ear and so on. However, in brief, it is the two (*dvaya*), namely the grasped and grasper.¹⁴⁷

If we reformulate Ratnākaraśānti's explanation, then we can understand that an ordinary sentient being **fabricates** a nature of **phenomena** by **conflating** those phenomena with the **names** that occur in their **mental chatter**. This **imagined nature** is

¹⁴⁴ See, for instance, PPU (D149a3) *yang sngon po la sogs pa gsal bzhin pa dang| bdag nyid du grub kyang brdzun pa yin te| brdzun pa dang brdzun pa ma yin pa dag rang bzhin sna tshogs kyi mthar thug pas rdzas gcig la 'gal ba ma yin no||*

¹⁴⁵ Ratnākaraśānti generally follows a *Nirākāravādin* interpretation of the three natures based on *Triṃśikā* and *Madhyāntavibhāga* and argues against the *Sākāravādin* position. It is beyond the purview here to explain either his arguments or the *Sākāravādin* side of the debate. Later *Sākāravādins*, such as Ratnakīrti, broke the three natures into a sixfold division that provided a better frame for their interpretation of luminosity and cognitive images as being inextricably related in a nondual way.

¹⁴⁶ One might be tempted to read *dharmāṇām* together with *svabhāva* and then translate *nāmasamsargeṇa* independently from phenomena as “associated with name.” However, as I understand the issue here, Ratnākaraśānti seems to be pointing toward the problem of the conflation of dharmas with names. Cf. in TSP (31) the passage beginning: *na nāma rūpaṃ vastūnām vikalpā vācakāś ca yat| viśvakalpāḥ pravartante yathābhyāsam abhedini ||31||*. Cf. also PVs, (34:18-36:18).

¹⁴⁷ PPU 2.3.1 (D138a4) *chos gang dag gi ngo bo nyid ming dang 'dris pa 'i yid kyi brjod pas brtags pa de rnam ni mshan nyid ji lta ba bzhin du med pa 'i phyir kun brtags pa 'i ngo bo yin te| 'di ltar gzugs dang| sgra dang mig dang rna ba dang zhes bya ba la sogs pa lta bu 'o|| de yang mdor bsdu na rnam pa gnyis te gzung ba dang 'dzin pa 'o||* Ratnākaraśānti commonly uses this formulation *ji lta ba bzhin du med pa 'i phyir; yathālakṣaṇam asattvāt* to mean “unreal in the way that they are marked, i.e. perceived.” This phrase does not appear to be used by others in this context. Cf. MW √lakṣ “perceive.”

unreal, because all the **phenomena** including **visible form, sound and so on** that are **imagined** by the naive ordinary beings are **unreal**. **In brief**, however, Ratnākaraśānti explains that the imagined nature consists of a **grasped and a grasper**. To explain, in Ratnākaraśānti’s terms, all phenomena are **perceived** by ordinary sentient beings as something external to be **grasped** by something internal that is their **grasper**. However, these **two**, i.e. the grasped and the grasper, are just aspects of ordinary sentient beings’ own cognitive images (*ākāra*) that arise due to beginningless latent impressions (*vāsanā*) within their mindstream. The grasped aspect of the cognitive images does not correspond to any external reality whatsoever and hence, the grasping aspect, which depends on there being something grasped, is just a figment of the imagination. For this reason, Ratnākaraśānti’s *Nirākāravādin* school holds these cognitive images themselves to be **unreal** or false.

3.1.2.2. The Dependent Nature

On the other hand (*punas*), that consciousness (*vijñāna*) [in which there is] the appearance of the two [i.e. a grasper and grasped]—despite the two not [actually] existing—arises due to the force of latent impressions (*vāsanā*) of fixation on an imagined nature.¹⁴⁸ But [it] does not arise when those [latent impressions of fixation] are eliminated. That nature of all phenomena is [said to be] dependent, because it is “dependent” (*adhīna*) on causes and conditions (*pratyaya*).¹⁴⁹

In Ratnākaraśānti’s system, even though the cognitive images are false, there is something real underlying them, namely the **dependent nature**, which is the **consciousness that arises** in the form of false cognitive images, i.e. a grasper and a grasped. He also explains the process through which this occurs. That is to say,

¹⁴⁸ It is also possible to take *dvayapratibhāsam* to be an ablative *bahuvrīhi*, since the dependent nature is both the source and location of the cognitive images. Generally, other passages, which will be examined below, suggest that in this context, Ratnākaraśānti takes it to be a locative in order to emphasize that the dependent nature is the locus for the other two. We will not discuss the differently worded explanations and *niruktis* of *paratantra* that Ratnākaraśānti gives in other contexts, since they all agree with and boil down to his explanation here and below.

¹⁴⁹ Ppu 2.3.1 (D138a5) *gang kun brtags pa’i ngo bo nyid la mngon par zhen pa’i bag chags kyi dbang gis gnyis po med par gyur kyang|| gnyis su snang bar skye ba de spangs na ni skye bar mi ’gyur ba’i rnam par shes pa de ni rgyu rkyen la rag las pa’i phyir chos thams cad kyi gzhan gyi dbang gi ngo bo nyid do||*

despite the two not existing, the consciousness appears with the two aspects due to the force of latent impressions. This consciousness is the nature of all phenomena. That nature is called dependent, since it is dependent on causes and conditions. When the latent impressions of fixation are eliminated, consciousness ceases to appear with the cognitive images of the grasper and grasped.¹⁵⁰ Ratnākaraśānti goes on to explain the freedom from those cognitive images as the truly established nature, as follows:

3.1.2.3. The Established Nature

But, that dependent [nature]’s emptiness of the imagined, its absence (*rahitatā*) of it, and its freedom (*viviktatā*) from it is the established nature (*pariniṣpanna*) of all phenomena, since that [nature] is absolutely (*ekānta*) established in that very way at all times.¹⁵¹ For there are no phenomena anywhere or at any time that are not empty of both [grasper and grasped]. Nor is there any change (*viprakāra*) [in that nature], since it is always (*sadā*) and everywhere (*sarvatra*) uniform (*ekarasa*) like space, insofar as space, since it is characterized by a lack of form, is uniform at all times and in all places. Emptiness too is uniform in the same way, because it is characterized by a lack of both [a grasper and a grasped]. For this reason, it is called the established nature (*pariniṣpanna*).¹⁵²

Thus, as in the *Triṃś* and *MAVi*, Ratnākaraśānti presents the established nature as just the dependent nature’s emptiness of the false cognitive images, such as blue patches and so on. That emptiness is always established as the nature of the mind and mental

¹⁵⁰ Ratnākaraśānti’s description of the dependent nature differs from the *Sākāravādin* interpretation in which a purified nonconceptual form of both consciousness and cognitive images (*ākāra*) remain after the latent impressions are eliminated, because they are not separable from one another. It also differs from the *gZhan-stong* interpretation of the three natures and shows that Ratnākaraśānti was not a proponent of *gZhan-stong* as some have argued. Cf. for instance, the Ratnākaraśānti chapter in Brunnhölzl (2011).

¹⁵¹ The “absolutely established” (*ekāntasiddha*) is meant here as a gloss of *pariniṣpanna*. I have followed this gloss and translated *pariniṣpanna* throughout this paper as “established nature.”

¹⁵² PPU (D138a6): *gang yang gzhan gyi dbang de kun brtags pa des dus thams cad du stong zhing dben pa ste bral bar ’gyur ba de ni dus thams cad de bzhin du gcig tu grub par ’gyur bas na chos thams cad kyi yongs su grub pa’i ngo bo nyid do|| chos gang nam yang gnyis kyis mi stong pa de ni cung zad tsam yang med la| stong pa nyid de nam yang ’gyur ba med pas| thams cad nas thams cad du nam mkha’ lta bur ro gcig par ’gyur ba ste| gang gi phyir nam mkha’ ni gzugs med pa’i mtshan nyid pas thams cad du rtag tu ro gcig pa yin no|| de bzhin du stong pa nyid kyang gnyis po med pa’i mtshan nyid kyi rang bzhin yin pas|| rtag tu thams cad du ro gcig pa’i ngo bo nyid de|| de bas na yongs su grub pa’i ngo bo nyid brjod do||*

process.¹⁵³ In Ratnākaraśānti's *Nirākāravādin* system, the **established nature** is defined as the **emptiness** or **absence** of the false cognitive images in the **nature** that is **dependent** upon causes and conditions. That is to say, cognitive images may appear in consciousness, but these are false. The consciousness is ultimately free of these. Ratnākaraśānti elaborates on the three natures as follows:

Likewise, in relation to [the above three natures], they are also taught to be the imagined form (*rūpa*), the conceptual form, and the form that is the true reality (*dharmatā*).¹⁵⁴ [These three natures are], respectively (*yang*), existent in terms of designation, existent in terms of substance, and ultimately existent.¹⁵⁵ Hence, the middle way is taught to be endowed with these three natures (*rang bzhin; svabhāva*): it is not existent in terms of [its] imagined nature, but is not nonexistent in terms of [its] dependent and established natures. Therefore, [this is the middle way] free from the two extremes as [said]—

The imagination of the unreal exists.
 The two [i.e. grasper and grasped] are not found in that
 [imagination of the unreal].
 But emptiness is found in relation to it.
 It too is found in [emptiness]. || MAVi 1.1||¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Brunnhölzl (2011) states in his “Ratnākaraśānti” Chapter that RĀŚ usually explains the three natures differently from *gZhan-stong* proponents, but that RĀŚ occasionally hints at a particular *gZhan-stong* interpretation of the three natures, in which the established nature is said to be empty of not just the imagined nature but also the dependent nature. I disagree with Brunnhölzl's conclusion, which is based on several dubious readings. For instance, Brunnhölzl (143) reads *kun tu rtog pa* (**parikalpa*) as what the established nature is empty of and notes that this is similar to *gZhan-stong*. Unfortunately, it happens to be a typo/mistake in the Tibetan for *kun tu brtag pa*. Tib.'s reading *kun tu rtog pa* here is inconsistent with other passages in Ratnākaraśānti's commentaries where emptiness is explained as empty of *kun tu brtag pa* (n.b. Brunnhölzl himself mentions this fact in the paragraph following his translation of this passage, but does not consider emending). But, here it may suffice to point out that the corresponding Sanskrit reads *parikalpita*, not *parikalpa*, as Brunnhölzl supposes, and not *vikalpa*, a synonym of *paratantra*. Also, Tib.'s unusual translation *gnyis su byar med pa dang gnyis su byar med* for the MAVi Skt. *dvayasyābhāvo dvayābhāvasya* seems to have misled Brunnhölzl.

¹⁵⁴ The *Pañca* makes clear that the term *rūpa* here refers to the first of the five aggregates, rather than to other possible referents or meanings of the term *rūpa*, such as nature, the *āyatana*, etc. Cf. *Pañca* (vi-viii:151) *yad utedaṃ parikalpitaṃ rūpaṃ idaṃ vikalpitaṃ rūpaṃ idaṃ dharmatā rūpaṃ iti, yad uteyaṃ parikalpitā vedanā iyaṃ vikalpitā vedanā iyaṃ dharmatā vedanā, yad uta iyaṃ parikalpitā saṃjñā iyaṃ vikalpitā saṃjñā iyaṃ dharmatā saṃjñā, yad uteme parikalpitāḥ saṃskārā ime vikalpitāḥ saṃskārā ime dharmatā saṃskārāḥ, idaṃ parikalpitaṃ vijñānam idaṃ vikalpitaṃ vijñānam idaṃ dharmatā vijñānam, ime yāvat parikalpitā buddhadharmā ime vikalpitā buddhadharmā ime dharmatā buddhadharmāḥ*. Cf. also PPU (D138a2): *de nyid bcom ldan 'das ma phyin ci ma log pa la dgongs pa las| kun brtags pa dang| rnam par brtags pa dang| chos nyid kyi sgras gsungs te| kun brtags pa'i gzugs dang| rnam par brtags pa'i gzugs dang| chos nyid kyi gzugs dang zhes bya ba nas| sangs rgyas kyi chos rnam kyi bar du'o zhes bya ba'o||*

¹⁵⁵ MAu (D225b4; C609): *|de ltar na de rnam la kun brtags pa'i gzugs dang| rnam par brtags pa'i gzugs dang| chos nyid kyi gzugs dang| yang btags par yod pa dang rdzas su yod pa dang| don dam par yod pa dang zhes kyang gsungs so|*

¹⁵⁶ MAu (D225b5; C609): *de lta bas na rang bzhin gsum dang ldan pa de ni dbu ma'i lam yin no zhes gsungs pa ni| kun brtags pa'i rang bzhin gyis ni yod pa ma yin zhing| gzhan kyi dbang dang yongs su grub pa'i rang bzhin gyis ni med pa ma yin te| de bas na mtha' gnyis dang bral ba'o| yang dag ma yin kun rtog yod| |de la gnyis po yod ma yin| |stong pa nyid ni de la yod| de la yang ni de yod do| Cf. MV 1.1: *abhūtaparikalpo 'sti dvayaṃ tatra na vidyate| śūnyatā vidyate tv atra tasyām api sa vidyate|**

Hence, on account of being existent, of being nonexistent, and of being existent,
 Everything is explained as not empty, but also as not
 non-empty. That is the middle way. ||MAVi 1.2||¹⁵⁷

The nature (*lus*; *śarīra*) of the conceptualization of blue patches and so on is **existent**. The [particular] characteristic of [the cognitive images of] blue patches and so on is **nonexistent**, due to being disproved—as will be explained. Therefore, [there is] an error due to malfunctioning (*bslad pa*; *viplava*)¹⁵⁸ from [former] impressions (*vāsanā*) of blue patches and so on.¹⁵⁹ Because of arising that way (*de ltar gyur pas*; *tathābhūta*), although one experiences these [cognitive images], there is an error and an experience as though [one] is experiencing [something] else (*gzhan*).¹⁶⁰

Here, Ratnākaraśānti connects the MAVi’s classic explanation of the three natures with the *Pañca* by telling us that the three natures can also be called the **imagined form (*rūpa*)**, the **conceptual form**, and the **form that is the true reality (*dharma-tā*)**. In the *Pañca* passage, the word **form** refers to the first of five aggregates, but the *Pañca* passage makes clear that all other aggregates are included. In this way, we can understand that each of the three natures is referring to the same locus of all phenomena¹⁶¹ Of the three natures, two are existent and one is nonexistent, which he explains more clearly as follows:

Among those [three natures]—

The first is nominally existent (*prajñaptisat*), since [it is] ascertained in that very way by the naive (*bāla*). [It is] neither really existent (*dravyasat*), nor existent in ultimate reality (*paramārthasat*).

The second is really existent (*dravyasat*), because it has arisen in dependence (*pratītyasamutpanna*); [it is] not nominally existent (*prajñaptisat*).

¹⁵⁷ MAu (D225b6; C609): |stong pa ma yin mi stong min| |de lta bas na thams cad bshad| |yod pas med pas yod pas na| |de ni dbu ma'i lam yin no| Cf. MV 1.2: na śūnyam nāpi cāśūnyam tasmāt sarvaṃ vidhīyate| sattvād asattvāt sattvāc ca madhyamā pratipac ca sā||

¹⁵⁸ Negi (7507: “sa” 255) *bslad pa*=*viplava*, *upaplava*.

¹⁵⁹ MAu (D225b6ff; C609): zhes gsungs so| |sngon po la sogs pa'i rnam par rtog pa'i lus ni yod pa'o| |sngon po la sogs pa'i mtshan nyid ni med pa ste| ji skad du 'chad par 'gyur ba'i gnod pa yod pa'i phyir ro| |de bas na sngon po la sogs pa'i bag chags kyis bslad pa'i dbang gis 'khrul pa'o|

¹⁶⁰ MAu (D225b7ff; C610): de ltar gyur pas de myong ba yang 'khrul pa dang gzhan myong ba lta bur myong ba'o|

¹⁶¹ Regarding the *Pañca* passage’s use of the word “form,” Ratnākaraśānti presents the classic *Nirā-kāravādin* interpretation of the three natures, in which the *paratantra*’s emptiness of the *parikalpita* is the *pariṇiṣpanna*. But the Tibetan *gZhan-stong* proponents take the same passage to imply something different, i.e. that the *pariṇiṣpanna* is empty of the *parikalpita* and of the *paratantra*.

The third is ultimately existent (*paramārthasat*), since it is the focus of purification (*viśuddhyā lambana*).¹⁶²

Here, Ratnākaraśānti's presentation is within the MAVi framework. The **first** is the imagined nature that is only **nominally existent**, meaning that it is just the cognitive images designated as existent by **naïve** confused beings. This is like, for example, the cognitive images of a tiger chasing us in a dream. These cognitive images are nominally existent in that they may give rise to fear. The **second** is the consciousness in which these cognitive images appear, which is **really existent**, meaning that it is the very substance underlying the imagined nature. This is like saying that we are not really being chased by a tiger in our dream. The dream is nothing but our consciousness appearing to itself in the form of a grasped and grasper. Thus, the consciousness is really existent, **not nominally existent** like the cognitive images. The **third** is the established nature, which is nothing but the **ultimate reality** of the dependent nature. The ultimate reality of the dependent nature is not separate from that dependent nature, but is the **focus of purification**, i.e. the scope free of cognitive images that is perceived at the time of purification. He goes on:

Furthermore, the dependent nature being focused upon (*ālambyamānaḥ*) as the established nature (*pariniṣpannarūpa*) is ultimately existent. However, [the dependent nature] being focused upon as the imagined nature is just conventionally existent (*saṃvṛtisat*), since it is the focus of defilement (*saṃkleśa*)—[understanding the “focus of defilement” to mean] (*iti kṛtvā*), it is a focus conducive toward defilement, not toward purification.¹⁶³

¹⁶² PPU 2.3.1 (D138b1) *de la dang po ni byis pa rnams kyis de bzhin kho nar brtags pas| btags pa'i yod pa ste| rdzas su yod pa yang ma yin la| don dam par yod pa yang ma yin no|| gnyis pa ni rten cing 'brel par 'byung bas rdzas su yod pa yin te| brtags par yod pa ni ma yin no|| gsum pa ni rnam par dag pa'i don du dmigs pas don dam par yod pa ste| rnam par dag par bya ba'i phyir| de la dmigs pa yin gyi kun nas nyon mongs par bya ba'i phyir ni ma yin no||* The meaning of the last line “the focus of purification” will be explained in the next passage.

¹⁶³ PPU (D138b3): *gzhan gyi dbang gi ngo bo nyid la yang yongs su grub pa'i rang bzhin gyis dmigs nas|| don dam par yod par 'gyur la kun brtags pa'i rang bzhin gyis dmigs na ni kun rdzob tu yod par 'gyur te| kun nas nyon mongs pa'i don du dmigs pa'i phyir ro|| kun nas nyon mongs pa'i phyir dmigs pa ni rnam par byang ba'i phyir ma yin no||* In my translation of the phrase *yongs su grub pa'i rang bzhin gyis*, I have translated the instrumental case as “as.” Cf. Speijer's Sanskrit Syntax p.50-1 (67.2). In my translation of the phrase *kun nas nyon mongs pa'i phyir dmigs pa ni rnam par byang ba'i phyir ma yin no*, I have translated *phyir* in the sense of the dative case as “conductive toward.” Cf. Speijer's Sanskrit Syntax p.65 (88.1).

Here, Ratnākaraśānti explains that the **dependent nature**, i.e. consciousness, can be **focused upon** (*ālambyamāna*), i.e. perceived, either **as the imagined nature**, i.e. when imagined to consist of a grasper and a grasped, or **as the established nature**, i.e. when seen as empty of grasper and grasped. The implication is that the **focus** (*ālambana*) **conducive toward defilement** is the imagined nature, whereas the **focus conducive toward purification** is the established nature. That the dependent nature is **conventionally existent** in the former case and **ultimately existent** in the latter case merely echoes—from a different perspective—the explanation of the conventional and ultimate realities, which were explained above as the “scope” (*viśaya*), respectively, for naive beings or noble ones.

3.1.3. Bringing the Two Hermeneutic Systems Together

Ratnākaraśānti demonstrates the correlations between the two hermeneutics described above, i.e. the two realities and the three natures, by subdividing the two realities into two sets of three as follows:¹⁶⁴

(1a) The conventional reality *qua* convention (*prajñapti*) is the imagined nature, because it is just daily dealings (*vyavahāra*).

(1b) The conventional reality *qua* ascertainment (*pratipatti*) is the dependent nature, due to cognizing falsely.

(1c) The conventional reality *qua* communication (*udbhāvana*) is the sign of the established (*pariniṣpanna*) nature, since it hints at the established nature.

(2a) The ultimate object (*paramārtha*) *qua* object is emptiness, because it is the scope of the supreme awareness.

(2b) The ultimate goal (*paramārtha*) *qua* attainment is *nirvāṇa*, because it is the fruit of supreme awareness.

(2c) The ultimate reality *qua* ascertainment (*pratipatti*) is the accurate awareness. [Here one should analyze the Sanskrit compound *paramārthaḥ* as a *bahuvrīhi* meaning] (*iti kṛtvā*) that of which the object (*artha*) is supreme.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ MAVi (41): ...*prajñaptipratipattitaḥ* | *tathodbhāvayodāram paramārthaṃ tu ekataḥ* || 3.10 || *artha-prāptiprapattyā hi paramārthaḥ tridhā mataḥ* | ... || 3.11 ||

¹⁶⁵ PPU (D143b5): *gnyi ga la yang rnam par gsum ste | brtags pa'i kun rdzob ni kun brtags pa'i ngo bo nyid de tha snyad tsam yin pa'i phyir ro || rtog pa'i kun rdzob ni gzhan gyi dbang gi ngo bo nyid de log pa'i shes pa yin pa'i phyir ro || gsal bar byed pa'i kun rdzob ni | yongs su grub pa'i ngo bo nyid de*

Even though the explanation of the three natures resonates with both of the two realities above, the description here of conventional reality includes all three natures. Ratnākaraśānti told us above that the established nature is the ultimate reality but that the dependent nature could be either conventional, when viewed from the perspective of the imagined nature, or ultimate, when viewed from the perspective of the established nature. Here, like the classic MAVi interpretation, he distinguishes the **conventional reality qua communication** as being just a **sign of the established nature** insofar as it just **hints at** the real **established nature**. The real established nature is a single **ultimate reality** (*paramārtha*) beyond being communicated. However, for heuristic purposes, the ultimate reality is still to be distinguished in terms of the three aspects of (2c) **accurate awareness**, (2a) its **scope** which is **emptiness**, and (2b) the **fruit** that is *nirvāṇa*. Here, his explanation of the ultimate also follows the classic MAVi interpretation, in basing itself on the two different analyses of the Sanskrit compound *paramārtha* that partially overlap with two different meanings of the word *artha*. However, in order to demonstrate Ratnākaraśānti’s use of these two sets of threefold subdivisions when interpreting other textual sources, it may help to refer to the threefold subdivision of the conventional reality as the “threefold hermeneutic model” and to the threefold subdivision of the ultimate reality as the “threefold heuristic model.”

The threefold hermeneutic model is based on an epistemological framework for the path, because the middle member, i.e. the dependent nature, is the path *qua*

ni mtshan mar gyur pa de las yongs su grub pa'i ngo bo nyid ston pa'i phyir ro|| de la don dam pa ni| stong pa nyid de ye shes dam pa'i yul yin pa'i phyir ro|| thob pa don dam pa ni mya ngan las 'das pa ste| ye shes dam pa'i 'bras bu yin pa'i phyir ro|| rtog pa don dam pa ni yang dag pa'i ye shes te| 'di la don dam pa yod pas zhes bya ba'i phyir ro|| For an explanation of how the three natures align with this explanation of the two truths in the MAVi, see the explanation that begins as follows in MAViṭ (95ff): *kalpitaparatantrayoh paramārthato 'sambhavatvam| satyaṃ punar ekasmāt pariniṣpannād eva svabhā-vād veditavyam| sa punaḥ pariniṣpannaḥ kena kāraṇena paramārtha ucyate? ity ata āha—artha-prāptipratyayā hi paramārthas tridhā mataḥ | iti | trividho hi paramārthaḥ— arthaparamārthaḥ prāpti-paramārthaḥ prayatiparamārthaś (em. to: pratipattiparamārthaś) ca| tatra...* We should probably emend *prayatiparamārthaś*, because *pratipatti* not *prayati* appears in the commentary on this term below in MAViṭ (96).

common locus through which the perception of ordinary beings and awakened beings is differentiated.¹⁶⁶ From the perspective of an ordinary person, it appears as the imagined nature.¹⁶⁷ From the perspective of an awakened being, it appears as the established nature. The implication here is that the path requires the removal of the ordinary person's misconceptions about the dependent nature. The established nature is defined only negatively with respect to the imagined nature in order to hint that the goal is beyond duality and description.

The threefold heuristic model is based on an ontological framework for understanding different aspects of the same nondual goal, because the "middle" member here, i.e. the ultimate goal (*paramārtha*), is the common locus for the objective (*viṣaya*) and subjective (*viṣayī*) aspects for awakened beings.¹⁶⁸ That is to say, the threefold heuristic model is an attempt to describe the indescribable as a single negatively defined ultimate goal, i.e. extinction (*nirvāṇa*), that has two aspects, i.e. the objective ultimate object (*paramārtha*) that is suchness and the subjective ultimate ascertainment (*pratipatti*) that is awareness, which are not distinguishable ontologically but cannot be reduced to being a single ultimate. The inability to reduce these three ontological distinctions to a single ultimate is why this threefold model is a heuristic, namely it serves only as "a rule of thumb" for recognizing the ultimate reality that is beyond description. This heuristic is what the threefold hermeneutic is hinting at by means of explaining the established nature as having two aspects, i.e. unerring and unchanging, which are part of the same ultimate *artha*.

¹⁶⁶ Here, I describe the framework as "epistemological" because it is aimed at distinguishing the imaginary from the means of reliable cognition. I describe this model as "hermeneutic," because Ratnākaraśānti uses the three natures to distinguish the implied context of one textual passage from another when commenting on the *Aṣṭa*, which does not make these distinctions.

¹⁶⁷ That is to say, even though the cognitive images merely appear *in* the dependent nature, ordinary beings just see the cognitive images *as* the dependent nature due to confusion.

¹⁶⁸ I describe the framework as "ontological" because it concerns only what truly exists. I describe this model as "heuristic" because Ratnākaraśānti relies on this threefold model as a rule of thumb for explaining all three undifferentiable, inseparable aspects of the ultimate reality as being implied by any one aspect being mentioned in a particular textual passage.

It is very useful to keep these two interconnected threefold models in mind while reading Ratnākaraśānti's commentaries on *Prajñāpāramitā*, because they are an essential part of his explanation of the topic. Since the *Sāratamā*'s explanation of *Prajñāpāramitā* switches back and forth between the two threefold models only by employing certain terminologies associated with each model, it can be very confusing for the reader unfamiliar with the vocabulary that signals the switch. However, by being aware of these two threefold models in his explanations, we can understand and navigate his explanations more easily. Thus, the distinction between these two models should be kept in mind in the following discussion of Ratnākaraśānti's system for explaining *Prajñāpāramitā*.

3.1.4. Connecting Both Hermeneutics with Yogācāra and Mādhyamika

Up to this point in the discussion, Ratnākaraśānti has cited and explained the three natures and the two realities in accord with the works of Maitreya and Asaṅga. Ratnākaraśānti now demonstrates that Nāgārjuna himself agreed with Maitreya and Asaṅga and hence, the Yogācāra and Mādhyamika founders had equivalent established conclusions, as follows:

As Nāgārjuna said:

In it, nothing arises and nothing ceases. Just the [cognitive] conditions alone (*kevala*) arise and cease.

||YṢ 21||¹⁶⁹

The primary elements and so on, which have been taught, are contained in consciousness. They disappear in awareness, surely, they are fabricated as false.

|| YṢ 34||¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ MAu (D226a4; C610): *klu sgrub kyi zhal nas kyang| dngos rnams skye ba yod min zhing| 'gag pa'ang gang na yod min pa| shes pa 'di nyid kho na ni| skye zhing 'gag par 'gyur ba yin| Cf. Yuktiṣaṣṭikā v.21. Cf. also PPU (D143a2): klu sgrub kyi zhal snga nas kyang| dngos rnams skye ba yod min zhing|| 'gag pa'ang gang na yod min te|| shes pa 'di nyid kho na ni|| skye zhing 'gag par 'gyur pa yin||*

¹⁷⁰ MAu (D226a4; C610): *'byung ba che la sogs bshad pa| rnam par shes su yang dag 'du| ye shes la ni de bral na| log par rnam brtags snye cis ma yin|| Cf. Yuktiṣaṣṭikā 34. Cf. also PPU (D143a3) 'byung ba chen po la sogs pa gang gsungs pa de dag rnam shes su yang dag par 'du ba ste| de'i nang du togs par 'gyur te| phyi rol gyi 'byung ba chen po la sogs pa med pa bzhin du yang byis pa rnams der snang ba'i rnam par shes pa skye la| shin tu ma 'khrul pa'i ye shes kyis de nub par gyur pas| log par*

These [two verses] (*zhes bya ba 'dis; ity ābhyām*) explain everything [else that Nāgārjuna wrote]. Therefore, the established conclusions of the Yogācāra [school] and the Mādhyamika [school] are in agreement. Thus, this *artha* [viz *paramārtha*] is extremely difficult to refute. That which is the established nature free of error (*phyin ci ma log pa; aviparyāsa*) is the transmundane awareness.¹⁷¹

Here, Ratnākaraśānti suggests that, among Nāgārjuna's verses, these two verses from *Yuktiṣāṣṭikā* should be accepted as definitive. For Ratnākaraśānti, these two verses mean that no imagined cognitive image actually **arises** or **ceases**. It is just the cognitive **conditions** of the dependent nature that **arise and cease**. All phenomena appearing to naive beings, such as the **primary elements and so on, disappear in the transmundane awareness**, which is the **established nature free of error**. Hence, Ratnākaraśānti argues that Nāgārjuna refuted external objects only on the basis of the transmundane awareness. Since Ratnākaraśānti believes these two verses should guide the interpretation of all Nāgārjuna's other verses, he is suggesting that he has correctly understood the seminal Mādhyamika treatises while other Mādhyamika commentators have not.

3.2. The Basic Argument Itself

Ratnākaraśānti does not just cite treatises from Maitreya, Asaṅga and Nāgārjuna in order to claim that his own *Nirākāravādin* interpretation of the two realities and three natures was held by the founding figures of Yogācāra and Mādhyamika. He

brtags te 'khrul pa'i rtog pas sngar gyi dus su brtags pa nyid kyi phyir| brdzun pa nyid yin no zhes bya ba ni tshigs su bcad pa gnyis pa'i don yin no ||

¹⁷¹ MAu (D226a5; C611): |*zhes bya ba 'dis thams cad gsungs pa yin no| de lta bas na rnal 'byor spyod pa pa dang | dbu ma grub pa'i mtha' mtshungs pa yin no| de lta bas na don 'di ni shin tu bzlog par dka' ba nyid yin no| phyin ci ma log pa'i yongs su grub pa de yang 'jig rten las 'das pa'i ye shes te. Cf. PPU (D143a5): de nyid kyis na rnal 'byor spyod pa pa rnam dang| dbu ma pa grub pa'i mtha' mtshungs pa yin no|| Cf. MAhp (Isaacson 13): iti mādhyamikānām yogācārānām ca sadṛśaḥ siddhāntaḥ śreyān. I am interpreting *de yang* to be instrumental here (since that is not uncommon in Tib. translation of Sanskrit) and I am leaving the meaning of *don/arthaḥ* open according to Ratnākaraśānti's interpretation of the compound *pāramārthaḥ* given just before in the MAu. For more on Ratnākaraśānti's interpretation of this verse, see PPU (D149b7): *de la rnal 'byor spyod pa rnam dang de bzhin du dbu ma pa rnam ni| rnal 'byor gyi sa bzhi pa| chos thams cad stong pa nyid kyis dmigs su med cing shin tu snang ba med pa gcig tu dri ma med cing mtha' yas pa| nam mkha' lta bu'i snang ba 'jig rten (D150a1) las 'das pa'i ye shes yin par 'dod do|| de skad du klu sgrub kyi zhal snga nas kyang|| 'byung ba che la sogs bshad pa|| rnam par shes su yang dag 'du|| ye shes kyis ni de bral na|| log par rnam brtags cis ma yin||**

actually argues that Yogācāra and Mādhyamika have equivalent established conclusions, because, when understood correctly, they can both be demonstrated to share his own *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint. Ratnākaraśānti’s argument that Yogācāra and Mādhyamika have equivalent established conclusions appears simple, but makes use of the generic terms Yogācāra and Mādhyamika in a very particular way. In order to understand the argument, we need to unpack what he means by these terms and understand his implied thesis. Since understanding this argument and its upshot will help to pinpoint more precisely what his *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint actually is claiming, this section will sketch out Ratnākaraśānti’s argument in three steps. First, we will deduce his implied thesis about the difference between Yogācāra and Mādhyamika. Second, we will unpack the way he proves sheer luminosity and rebuts others’ refutations of it. Third, we will see how he presents causality at the ultimate level.

3.2.1. Deducing a Thesis

Ratnākaraśānti’s PPU is perhaps the most useful commentary in the triptych of *Prajñāpāramitā* commentaries for sketching out Ratnākaraśānti’s perspective, since it provides the only real introduction to and overview of the topics contained in the other two commentaries, namely the *Śuddhimatī* and the *Sāratamā*, which are in perfect harmony with the PPU but, as word commentaries with few expository digressions, are difficult to extricate from the language in the root texts on which they are commenting. For this reason, we will focus here and below, for the most part, on deducing Ratnākaraśānti’s broader thesis from the PPU’s following statement:

For this reason, the established conclusions (*siddhānta*) of the Yogācāra proponents and Mādhyamika proponents are equivalent (*samāna*), except for a small difference (*viśeṣaleśa*) which is no more than this.¹⁷²

¹⁷² In MAu (D226a5; C611) and MAhp (Isaacson 13), Ratnākaraśānti makes similar statements, using either the term skt. *samāna* or *sadrśa*; (*mtshungs pa*), which I have chosen to translate this term as “equivalent” here (rather than “similar” or “in agreement” or philosophically “consistent”), because Ratnākaraśānti intends to prove their equivalence as will be explained below.

The Yogācāra proponents hold: phenomena are not real (*asattva*) *qua* the nature grasped by the naive, because that is false (*alīka*), but [they are] actually (*eva*) real *qua* [their] nature as luminosity (*prakāśaśarīra*), because of the law of causality (*hetuphalabhāvanīyama*) and because of the impossibility of error in the awareness of [its] own inherent nature.¹⁷³

But, the Mādhyamika proponents hold: phenomena are neither real nor unreal *qua* [their] nature as luminosity (*prakāśaśarīra*)—even though [that luminosity is] a sign of non-error because [it is] a nature (*prakṛti*) inasmuch as it is not superimposed—because even though causality and reflexive awareness exist (*sat*) in those [phenomena, the causality and reflexive awareness that exist] cannot withstand (*asahatva*) subtle (*sūkṣma*) analysis (*vicāra*).¹⁷⁴

Here, we will focus on deducing a thesis from Ratnākaraśānti’s summary. Then, we will unpack Ratnākaraśānti’s notion of luminosity and causality in the two following sub-sections. To this end, it should first be noted that, although Ratnākaraśānti speaks of Yogācāra positions and Mādhyamika positions generically in describing their “slight difference,” not all Yogācāra and Mādhyamika schools would describe their own positions this way themselves. That is to say, since the description of the Yogācāra position here does not state that both luminosity (*prakāśa*) and cognitive images are real, his description of Yogācāra is closer to a *Nirākāravādin*-Yogācāra position. On the other hand, the Mādhyamika position described here is closer to Śāntarakṣita’s Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school, since Śāntarakṣita’s school might concede that “causality and reflexive awareness exist (*sat*)” at the conventional level, insofar as they establish the nonexistence of external objects at the conventional level through their being merely cognition (*vijñaptimātratā*), but refute these at the ultimate

¹⁷³ My translation “not real” and “real” (*asattvam/sattva*) as though they were *asat/sat* is for the sake of smoother English. I take *prakāśaśarīra* here as a *karmadhāraya*.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. PPU (D143a5): *de nyid kyi na rnal 'byor spyod pa pa rnams dang| dbu ma pa grub pa 'i mtha' mtshungs pa yin no|| cha 'di tsam gyis ni tha dad pa yin te| rnal 'byor spyod pa pa rnams ni byis pas gzung ba 'i chos rnams brdzun pa 'i phyir yod pa ma yin la| rgyud dang 'bras bur nges pa dang| gnyug ma 'i rnag bzhin rang rig pa 'khrul pa dang bral bas gsal ba 'i lus ni| bden pa kho nar 'dod do|| dbu ma pa rnams ni| rgyu dang 'bras bu snang ba 'i rang bzhin dang| so so rang gis rig pa 'khrul pa 'i mtshan ma rnams sgro btags pa ma yin pa rnal ma bsal ba 'i lus kyi chos rnams kyang shin tu phra ba brtags mi bzod pas yod pa yang ma yin la| med pa yang ma yin par 'dod do||* Although the uncommon compound *prakāśaśarīram* is probably no different in meaning from *prakāśarūpam* as used by Kamalaśīla in TSP, for instance, it may be worth noting that Abhinavagupta also used this term.

level.¹⁷⁵ Thus, we might provisionally reformulate his implied thesis as: “The established conclusions of *Nirākāra*-Yogācāra and Śāntarakṣita’s Mādhyamika, when understood correctly, have only a slight difference regarding the existence of reflexive awareness and causality.”¹⁷⁶ Then, Ratnākaraśānti reformulates the difference between Yogācāra and Mādhyamika more simply, as follows:

The difference is just this much: The Yogācāra [position] is that the sheer luminosity, which is the inherent nature of phenomena, exists as a real substance, whereas the Mādhyamika [position] is that it does not exist as a real substance. This itself is a baseless quarrel of Mādhyamika [scholars] with Yogācāra. [Such a pity], the coarseness of people.¹⁷⁷

By framing the **difference** between **Yogācāra** and **Mādhyamika** positions as a **baseless quarrel** in this way, Ratnākaraśānti hints that the real dispute is whether or not **sheer luminosity** exists as a **real substance**, i.e. ultimate reality. The question of causality is secondary and flows from the existence of luminosity at the ultimate level. For this reason, we will first unpack his proof of sheer luminosity and next look at the way he explains causality in his system according to the two threefold models described above. But this implied thesis should be kept in mind throughout the rest of our discussion of his views.

3.3. Proving Sheer Luminosity

Ratnākaraśānti attempts to prove his *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint by demonstrating his interpretation of the famous statement that everything belonging to the three worlds is mind. Although this statement is often associated with the Yogācāra school, Ratnā-

¹⁷⁵ Some might argue that Candrakīrti would accept these at the conventional level too, however, Ratnākaraśānti characterizes him at the conventional level, as accepting consensus which holds external objects. Thus, he would not accept luminosity as a sign of non-error.

¹⁷⁶ The *Sākāravādin*-Yogācāras and Mādhyamikas or followers of Candrakīrti would clearly not fit within Ratnākaraśānti’s description of the two schools.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. PPU (D150a2): ‘*di ltar rnal ’byor spyod pa pa ni chos rnam kyī rang bzhin gnyug ma gsal ba tsam ni rdzas su yod par ’dod pa yin la| dbu ma pa ni rdzas de yang mi ’dod de| khyad par ’di yang ming tsam du rtogs so||des na rtsa ba med par rnal ’byor spyod pa pa rnam dang| dbu ma pa rnam lhan cig tu rtsod pa ni skye bo shin tu gnas ngan pa nyid*’ My translation of the phrase *skye bo shin tu gnas ngan pa nyid* is a bit free.

karaśānti suggests that it is implicitly accepted by Mādhyamika as well and hence, Yogācāra and Mādhyamika have equivalent established conclusions. He begins his proof as follows:

All phenomena (*sarvadharmā*) are sheer mind, [i.e.] sheer consciousness, [i.e.] sheer luminosity.¹⁷⁸

By establishing the three terms as synonyms, Ratnākaraśānti implies that the words “mind” and “consciousness” in this particular context really refer only to the **luminosity** of the mind. **Luminosity** refers to that reflexively aware nature of mind due to which any **phenomena** appear and are known. The word **sheer** can be understood to exclude cognitive images. That is to say, nothing but the luminosity of phenomena is ultimately real. If we connect this to Ratnākaraśānti’s explanation of the two realities and three natures, this assertion is understood to mean that when the established nature is realized, the ultimately real part of the dependent nature, i.e. luminosity’s reflexive awareness, is directly aware of its own emptiness of cognitive images. After giving us these three synonyms, Ratnākaraśānti attempts to prove that that sheer luminosity viewpoint is implicit in Nāgārjuna’s statements and therefore, must be accepted by Mādhyamika proponents, as follows:

Now, what is the proof here that these [phenomena] have as their nature sheer consciousness? It is taught in this [*Nirākāravādin* position] that the luminosity (*prakāśa*) of phenomena shining forth (*prakāśamāna*) is like a nature (*ātmabhūta*) established through direct experience. The nature of shining forth is [their] being known (*prakhyāna*), [their] appearing (*pratibhāsana*). This, obviously, is [their] completely clear (*parisphuṭa*) nature (*rūpa*) [that is] neither inanimate (*jaḍa*) nor inaccessible (*parokṣa*). And, if this [nature] were not established, then the unwanted consequence [would be] that nothing could be established, since nothing could be shining forth. Since [this nature must be] established, it is nothing but awareness. So, all phenomena are established as having awareness as their inherent nature.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ PPU (D145a5): *rgyal ba 'i sras dag kham s gsum pa 'di ni sems tsam mo zhes gsungs te— de bas na chos thams cad sems tsam dang| rnam par shes pa tsam dang| gsal ba tsam yin pas...* The statement cited by Ratnākaraśānti, namely *cittamātram bho jinaputrā yad uta traidhātukam*, occurs with slight variations in numerous texts, which I will neither cite nor discuss here.

¹⁷⁹ PPU (D145a6): *ci ste 'di dag rnam par shes pa tsam gyi rang bzhin no zhes bya ba 'di la rigs pa ci yod ce na| brjod par bya ste| 'di la chos rnams bdag nyid kyis gsal ba 'i ngo bo nyams su myong bas grub pa yin la| gsal ba de yang rab tu snang ba dang| so sor snang ba dang| gsal bzhin pa zhes bya 'o||*

Here, we can see that Ratnākaraśānti's **proof**, in essence, is to explain that the **luminosity of phenomena is established through direct experience**, because we experience luminosity directly in those **phenomena shining forth**. The **nature of shining forth** itself is their being **known** or **appearing**, since nothing can appear or be known with the reflexively aware **luminosity** of the mind. And, if this reflexively aware **luminosity** of the mind were not present, then nothing would be **shining forth**, i.e. nothing could appear to anyone. Without reflexive aware luminosity, **nothing could be established** because there would be no means to establish it. Thus, for Ratnākaraśānti, luminosity is proved by direct experience through reflexive awareness. In the MAu, he also explains that nothing can refute this direct experience:

Also, there is nothing that disproves (*gnod par byed pa; bādhaka*) the luminous nature of reflexive awareness, because there [can be] no other means of reliable cognition (*pramāṇa*) that surpasses it (*de las lhag pa; tato 'dhika*). And, this [luminous nature] is the direct perception (*mngon sum; pratyakṣa*) and direct experience (*yang dag tu myong ba; pratisaṃvedana/anubhava*) of reflexive awareness. Hence, this [luminous nature] is proven by means of reliable cognition to be *the* means of reliable cognition, which cannot be disproven even by one hundred means of reliable cognition. What need is there even to mention [that this luminous nature cannot be disproven] by others' (*pha rol*) mere refutations (*gnod pa*) that are not means of reliable cognition? Therefore, [the above demonstrates] the proof and disproof through the two means of reliable cognition [namely, direct perception and inference].¹⁸⁰

For Ratnākaraśānti, **proof** or **disproof** through either **direct perception** or inference depend on there being a **reflexive awareness** that is a **means of reliable cognition**. If there were no such thing as that means of reliable cognition, then what would be the

de yang bems po yang ma yin ste| lkog tu gyur pa ma yin zhing yongs su gsal ba'o|| de grub pa yin na ni| gang yang snang bar mi 'gyur bas| thams cad ma grub par thal bar 'gyur ro|| grub na ni de nyid shes pa yin pas chos thams cad shes pa'i rang bzhin du grub par 'gyur ro|| My translation “like a nature” is because: (a) Ratnākaraśānti often uses the term *ātmabhūta* (despite its being translated as *bdag nyid kyis* here) in this context to suggest that *sva* in the term *svasaṃvedana* does not entail a separate, real nature (*ātmā*) that is known like an object, and (b) *bhūta* at the end of compound often means “being like something.” Cf. MW *bhūta*.

¹⁸⁰ MAu (D226a1; C610): *|yang (yang rang P/N) rig pa gsal ba'i ngo bo la gnod par byed pa ni med de| de las lhag pa'i tshad ma gzhan med pa'i phyir ro| |de ni rang rig pa'i mngon sum yin pa dang |yang dag tu myong ba'o| |de bas na 'di ni tshad mas grub pa ste| tshad ma ni tshad ma brgyas kyang mi gnod de| tshad ma ma yin pa pha rol gyi 'dod (gnod P/N) pa tsam gyis smos kyang ci dgos| de ltar na tshad ma gnyis kyis sgrub (bsgrub P/N) pa dang sun 'byin pa yin no|*

use of a proof or disproof? To whom or what would it be proved? Thus, the very assumption of a proof or disproof is that there is a reflexive awareness that can know when something is proved or not. If that reflexive awareness is not a **means of reliable cognition**, then nothing can be proved, because it is essential to any proof or disproof. That is to say, anyone who is attempting to prove or disprove something as ultimately real or unreal implicitly presupposes a reflexive awareness as a means of reliable cognition. Otherwise, there would be no point to prove anything. For this reason also, **luminous nature of reflexive awareness cannot be disproven even by one hundred means of reliable cognition**. That is to say, even if one were to assert various other means of reliable cognition, they would all be founded on this reflexive awareness. Since that is the case, he asks rhetorically: **What need is there even to mention the fact that luminous nature of reflexive awareness cannot be disproven by others' (*pha rol*) mere refutations (*gnod pa*) that are not means of reliable cognition?**

Having demonstrated that the luminous nature of the mind is nature of the phenomena we experience and hence, the quintessential means of reliable cognition, now Ratnākaraśānti builds upon this proof and spells out why he holds that these phenomena—despite appearing to represent external objects—are, in actuality, *nothing but* luminosity. To this end, he first explains the following:

Being an object of awareness (*saṃvedya*) is nothing but being accessible [to awareness] (*aparokṣatā*) and that [being accessible to awareness] is not [a possibility] without a connection to luminosity.¹⁸¹

What Ratnākaraśānti is trying to show here in this first step is that awareness does not have unmediated access to an external object, because any object is only known through its connection with awareness' own luminosity, which is the medium through

¹⁸¹ PPU (D153a4): *gzhan yang lkog tu gyur pa ma yin pa nyid rang rig pa yin no|| de yang gsal ba dang 'brel pa ma gtogs pa med de*

which things appear. So, the first step in Ratnākaraśānti's logic seems to be that no object can present itself to awareness without awareness' luminosity. He then lays out the next step as follows:

[Insofar as] luminosity is only a clear nature, a connection with [luminosity's clear] nature is just an identity [connection with that].¹⁸² Here, Ratnākaraśānti is saying that awareness' luminosity itself is something that does not have its own appearance, but rather is a clear nature that allows other things to appear in **connection with** it. Also, whatever appears in that clear nature, such as blue patches and so on, cannot be separated from that awareness' luminosity. Hence, saying we see blue is identical to saying we are seeing the luminosity of blue. For this reason, blue patches and so on that are the seeming object of awareness cannot be established as separate from the mind and mental processes, whose nature is luminosity. In this way, they have an **identity** connection. Now he explains how this identity connection with luminosity involves reflexive awareness with two interconnected steps demonstrating concomittance and a causal relationship:

(1) If one thing (X) cannot be known without (*vinā*) another thing (Y), then that one thing (X) is known through that other thing (Y). Hence (*iti*), reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvitti*) is free of contradiction.

(2) If a certain thing (X) is known through [another thing] (Y), then that (Y) thing itself must be an awareness. Hence, nothing but the mind and mental processes that have the nature of awareness can be reflexively aware (*svasaṃvedya*) and [their] connection to luminosity can be nothing apart from an identity [with it].¹⁸³

Above Ratnākaraśānti showed that a blue appearance cannot be known without an identity connection to luminosity, which, for Ratnākaraśānti, is reflexively aware. Now Ratnākaraśānti does not spell out his logic completely, but the two interrelated sentences appear to imply the following: (1) On the one hand, if we cannot be aware of something except through luminosity/reflexive awareness, then it is through that

¹⁸² PPU (D153a4): *gsal ba ni yongs su gsal bzhin pa yin pas| gsal ba'i gsal bzhin pa rang bzhin gyi 'brel pa ni de'i bdag nyid kho na yin no||*

¹⁸³ PPU (D153a5): *gang med par gang rigs pa ma yin pa de ni des de'i rigs pa yin pa| rang rigs pa la 'gag pa ci yang med do|| gang gis ci zhig rig pa de nyid shes pa yin la| shes pa'i rang bzhin yang sems dang sems las byung ba nyid yin te| des na rang rig pa'i ngo bo yin no||*

luminosity/reflexive awareness that we are aware of it. Insofar as that luminosity has a clear nature, there is no difference between a luminosity *qua* object and a luminosity *qua* instrument and hence, there is no **contradiction** in asserting luminosity to be reflexively aware.¹⁸⁴ (2) If luminosity/reflexive awareness is aware of anything, then that luminosity/reflexive awareness can be aware of nothing but something identical to itself, i.e. that thing **must be an awareness**. That is to say, only the mind and mental processes, whose nature is awareness, can be identical with luminosity and reflexively aware. In this way, his purely deductive reasoning “proves” his premise that the mind has the nature of clear luminosity and reflexive awareness, that that mind cannot be directly aware of anything outside of itself, and that any phenomena experienced are just mind. Thus, he concludes:

Thus, sheer consciousness is established [and] for that reason, it is established that there is no external object grasped by consciousness.¹⁸⁵

In this way, Ratnākaraśānti demonstrates his own viewpoint. He holds that, since luminous reflexive awareness is the only means of reliable cognition free of grasped external objects and grasping consciousness, it is the only reliable means of cognition that can refute those external objects and hence, it must be ultimately real. Although Ratnākaraśānti has proven this in the abstract, we can know from the context of these arguments that he is simultaneously arguing that Maitreya, Asaṅga and Nāgārjuna all share the conclusions established above.

Now in order to demonstrate that this established conclusion must be held by all who wish to propound Yogācāra and Mādhyamika correctly, Ratnākaraśānti rebuts those so-called Mādhyamika proponents who claim that their proof of emptiness does not rely on a means of reliable cognition and luminosity’s reflexive awareness is false. He first entertains the objection, as follows:

¹⁸⁴ The source of this explanation will be explained just below.

¹⁸⁵ PPU (D153a6) *rnam par shes pa tsam du grub ste| de bas rnam par shes pa ma gtogs pa'i gzung ba phyi rol gyi don ci yang med par grub bo||*

[Opponent: We say everything, including luminosity, is false] because we do not assert any means of reliable cognition.

[Ratnākaraśānti:] Saying that [you are] not debating based on any means of reliable cognition is just silly talk (*bzhad gad pa nyid*).¹⁸⁶ To these [people], we [say it is] because the imagination of the unreal exists that it [can be] appropriated and designated as the aggregates and so on. [This is] because any proof or disproof is made by means of reliable cognitions, [as is said]—

Whatever is dependent arising, we call that ‘emptiness,’ the latter is the act of designation after relying (upon something) and is itself the middle path.” ||MMk 24.18||¹⁸⁷

The blue patches and so on, despite having the nature of luminosity, are [proved] false, because there is a refuter (*gnod pa; bādhaka*). The luminosity is proven to be real, because of the direct perception of an awareness [that is] free of (*bral ba; ayogena*) error. Luminosity is the own (*gnyug ma; nija*) nature [of what is] shining forth (*gsal ba sbyin pa; prakāśa*), since it is directly experienced by something that is not brought about by malfunctioning (*bslad pa; viplava*) [due to which it would be] engaging by error.¹⁸⁸

In this way, Ratnākaraśānti argues explicitly that those Mādhyamika proponents who attempt to refute luminous reflexive awareness as the means of reliable cognition on which their own ultimate refutations of conventional existence and causal efficacy must rely are not followers of Nāgārjuna’s school. For Ratnākaraśānti, Nāgārjuna’s

¹⁸⁶ MAu (D229b5; C619): *gal te bdag cag ni tshad ma mi 'dod pa'i phyir ro zhe na| tshad ma med pa'i phyir rtsod par smra ba ni bzhad gad pa nyid yin no|*

¹⁸⁷ This translation is by Mattia Salvini (2011:242). Cf. MMk (24.18) *yaḥ pratīyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatām tāṃ pracakṣmahe| sā prajñaptir upādāya pratipat saiva madhyamā||* Cf. also Moriyama (53, 63fn5).

¹⁸⁸ MAu (D229b6; C619): *'di dag <la? em.GS> bdag cag ni yang dag pa ma yin pa'i kun du rtog pa yod pas de nye bar blangs te phung po la sogs par 'dogs so| |dgag pa dang sgrub pa thams cad kyang tshad mas byed pa'i phyir ro| |de yang— gang zhig rten cing 'brel par 'byung | |de ni stong pa nyid du bshad| |de ni rgyur byas btags pa ste| |de ni dbu ma'i lam yin no||MMk 24.18| zhes gsungs so| |yang sngon po la sogs pa de bsal ba'i rang bzhin yang gnod pa yod pa'i phyir brdzun pa'o| |yang bsal ba de rig pa'i 'khrul pa dang bral ba nyid du mngon sum yin pa'i phyir dngos po nyid du grub pa yin no| |gsal ba ni gsal ba sbyin pa nyid kyis <kyi em. GS> gnyug ma'i rang bzhin te| gang gi myong ba 'di 'khrul par 'jog pa'i bslad pas bzhas pa med pa'i phyir ro| Cf. PPU (D148a5): *sngon po la sogs pa de gsal bzhin pa yin yang gnod pa yod pa'i phyir brdzun pa yang grub po|| de brdzun par grub pas na de'i bdag nyid de yang brdzun par grub po|| yang gsal ba de rig pa ni 'khrul pa dang bral bas mngon sum yin pa'i phyir dngos po nyid du grub pa yin te| gang gi phyir gsal ba ni gsal ba nyid kyis gnyug ma'i rang bzhin yin te| gang gi myong ba 'di 'khrul bar 'jog pa'i bslad pas gzhag pa med pa'i phyir ro|| yang sngon po la sogs pa'i rang bzhin yin pa'i phyir bslad pas byas par 'gyur la|| de ltar gyur pas na nge myong ba yang 'khrul par 'gyur ro|| de bas na sngon po la sogs pa la ni gnod pa 'jug pa'i skabs yod kyis gsal ba la ni ma yin no||* In translating the MAu, I have relied on the available Sanskrit in the PPU, because the MAu appears to be a translation of something extremely close and because the MAu has some obvious corruptions. My tentative emendation at the beginning of this citation is to make sense of what appears to be a corruption. I have not emended elsewhere in comparison with PPU, but just added words in brackets where MAu is unclear.*

MMk 24.18 is speaking of the fact that emptiness itself can only be proved on the basis of there being a dependent nature, which he takes as equivalent to dependent arising.¹⁸⁹ By citing the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* and interpreting it in this way, Ratnākaraśānti is suggesting that Nāgārjuna *must* implicitly have accepted luminous reflexive awareness as *the* means of reliable cognition for refuting those grasped external objects and grasping consciousnesses at the conventional level and hence must have also accepted this awareness as the ultimate *pramāṇa*.

3.3.1. Defending Luminosity from Mādhyamika Critique

Ratnākaraśānti's proof of sheer consciousness or sheer luminosity that is reflexively aware is defended against Mādhyamika critiques from the point of view of scripture and reason. We cannot go into the details of his defenses and counter-attacks, because they are lengthy and intricate.¹⁹⁰ However, one notable scriptural defense is his response to his opponent's interpretation of the famous verse in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* as follows:

[Opponent:] Just as a **sword blade** (*asidhārā*) **does not cut** itself and a **fingertip** cannot **touch** itself,¹⁹¹ just so a **mind** cannot **see** itself, due to

¹⁸⁹ See Moriyama (53-4, 63fn6), who discusses this verse and also explains that Ratnākaraśānti equates the imagination of the unreal with 'dependent designation' (*upādāyaprajñapti*) in this verse. Cf. MPS/MAv (D104b4): 'dir slob dpon klu sgrub kyis lan btab ste| gang zhig rten cing 'brel bar 'byung| de ni stong pa nyid du bshad|| de ni rgyur bcas brtags pa (btags P) ste| de ni dbu ma'i lam yin no|| MMK 24.18|| **gang zhig** gzhan gyi dbang gi ngo bo nyid **rten cing 'brel par** ('brel par om. P) **'byung ba yin la| de nyid la kun tu brtags (btags P) pa'i ngo bo (bos P) med pa'i phyir ji ltar rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba la skur ba btab par 'gyur | nye bar len pa btags pa de nyid kyang rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba yin te| yang dag pa ma yin pa'i kun tu rtog pa yod na| des nye bar len pa'i phung po la sogs pa rnams 'dogs pa'i phyir ro zhes dgongs pa yin no|| **gang zhig rten cing 'brel bar 'byung|| de nyid dbu ma'i lam yin no** zhes bya ba ni 'di ltar dgongs pa yin te| kun du brtags pa'i bdag nyid thams cad med la| gzhan gyi dbang gi bdag nyid ni med pa ma yin te| de'i phyir dbu ma'i lam zhes bya'o|| de lta bas na gang gi phyir gnyis po med par snang (smra P) ba de nyid kyi phyir yang dag pa ma yin pa'i kun tu rtog pa ni yod do|| gang gi phyir de yod pa nyid kyi phyir gnyis kyis stong pa (pa'i P) de la yod de 'di ni chos gsum gyi rang bzhin du grub par gyur pa yin no||**

¹⁹⁰ For more on these, see Moriyama (2014:58-60), where he explains Ratnākaraśānti argues against Mādhyamika scholars, like Jñānagarbha for instance, who, on the one hand, claims to prove the existence and causal efficacy of external objects and awareness at the conventional level, but on the other hand, claims to refute their existence and causal efficacy at the ultimate level. In that argument, Ratnākaraśānti agrees that the existence and causal efficacy of grasped external objects and grasping consciousnesses are refuted at the conventional level, but argues that this refutation relies on a means of reliable cognition that must itself ultimately exist and be causally efficacious—otherwise it could not refute anything.

¹⁹¹ For a counterpoint to Ratnākaraśānti's discussion, see Prajñākaramati's comments (BCAp 692:Ch.9.v.17) on these analogies within the *Āryaratnacūḍasūtra*: *kim uktam? cittaṃ cittaṃ na paśyatīti, cittaṃ svātmānaṃ na jānāti, saty apī vastutve svātmani kāritravirodhāt| katham iva ? na cchinatti yathātmānaṃ asidhārā tathā manaḥ||17|| yathā sutīkṣṇāpy asidhārā khaṅgadhārā tad anyavad ātmānaṃ svakāyaṃ na cchinatti na viḅhāṭayati, svātmani kriyāvirodhāt, tathā manaḥ|*

the contradiction of acting (*kāritra*) upon one's own self. Therefore, there is no reflexive awareness. As the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* says—

Just as a sword does not cut its own blade, just as a finger does not touch its own tip, just so is a mind when seeing itself...

[Ratnākaraśānti replies:] To this [interpretation of yours], I respond that this verse is denying the relationship (*bhāva*) between a grasped and grasper in a mind's reflexive awareness, because that [relationship] depends upon a difference (*bheda*), just as touching and cutting do. However, [the verse is] not denying the reflexive awareness itself, because that [reflexive awareness] has the nature of luminosity, given that reflexive awareness *is* [something] being known (*prakhyāna*). So, since the contradiction regards [there being] a difference [when awareness knows itself], [the reflexive awareness here is merely being] restricted to [being] a nondifference (*abheda*), [it is] not denied. For this very reason, [we have to] supply the words “does not grasp itself” to the phrase “**Just so the mind, when seeing itself.**” [—i.e. “Just as a sword does not cut its own blade, just as a finger does not touch its own tip, just so the mind, when seeing itself, does not grasp itself.”] ¹⁹²

By responding to the opponent critique in this way, Ratnākaraśānti highlights the fact that although the grasper and grasped are in reality luminosity, luminous reflexive awareness is not asserted in terms of a grasper and grasped. Rather, luminous reflexive awareness is asserted to be the inherent nature of awareness that, by definition, cannot be mistaken since it is not separate from that awareness. Whether or not one is convinced by his arguments and rebuttals of all attempts to refute luminous reflexive awareness, he then states in the MAh:¹⁹³

The equivalent established conclusion (*siddhānta*) of Mādhyamika proponents and Yogācāra proponents —i.e. that everything in the form of the two [i.e. grasped (*grāhya*) and grasper (*grāhaka*)] and in the form of the cognitive images (*ākāra*) of the two [i.e. grasped and grasper] is not real (*sat*), while everything in the form of sheer

asidhārāvaca cittam apī svātmānaṃ na paśyatīti joyyam | tathā hi na tad evaikaṃ jñānaṃ vedyavedakavedanātmavabhāvatrayaṃ yuktam | ekasya niraṃśasya trisvabhāvātāyogāt |

¹⁹² Cf. PPU (D153b1): *ji ltar ral gri rang so dang || ji ltar sor mo 'i rtse mos rang || gcod pa min zhing reg pa min || de bzhin sems kyi rang mi mthong || zhes gsungs so zhe na | 'dir brjod par bya ste | tshigs su bcad pa 'di 'i don ni sems rang rig pa 'i gzung ba dang | 'dzin pa 'i dngos po dgag pa yin te | de ni bcas pa dang reg pa bzhin du tha dad pa las gyur pa 'i phyir ro || gsal ba 'i rang bzhin yin pa 'i phyir myong ba 'i ngo bo dgag pa ni ma yin te | gang gi phyir gsal ba ni rang rig pa yin la | de yang tha dad pa 'gal te | tha mi dad pas nges pa 'i phyir dgag par 'os pa ma yin no ||*

¹⁹³ This implication is slightly different from his argument in the PPU, where he acknowledges differences between Yogācāra and Mādhyamika.

luminosity (*prakāśa*) without the two [i.e. grasped and grasper] is not unreal (*asat*)—is the best.¹⁹⁴

Although this statement occurs in a different commentary, we can understand it to be a summary of the upshot of Ratnākaraśānti's arguments outlined above. For Ratnākaraśānti, his argument proves that Yogācāra and Mādhyamika do not need to be synthesized. They just need to be correctly understood as implying the **equivalent established conclusion** that is the **best**, namely that sheer luminosity (*prakāśa*) is the ultimately reality, whereas cognitive images are merely the conventional reality.

By proving the ultimate reality of sheer luminosity, Ratnākaraśānti is simultaneously asserting that luminosity is causally efficacious, given his acceptance of Dharmakīrti's principle that anything real has causal efficacy (*arthakriyā*). Since the PPU statement from which we deduced the implied thesis in the previous section also said that Mādhyamika proponents claim that causality cannot withstand subtle analysis, Ratnākaraśānti offers several arguments to say why the causal efficacy of luminosity cannot be refuted. But, since Ratnākaraśānti told us that the reality of sheer luminosity is the main point of contention between Yogācāra and Mādhyamika, rather than go into those arguments about causality, we will turn to focus instead on the way that causality is explained within that *Nirākāravādin* system upon which, according to Ratnākaraśānti, Yogācāra and Mādhyamika agree.

¹⁹⁴ I have left the double negative “not nonexistent” in my translation of this statement, because it seems philosophically important to RĀŚ to preserve it, as I will explain below. There are different ways to read the predicate in this sentence, but we will discuss below other similar statements made in the MAu (rather than MAh) that support my interpretation here.

4. Causality in the *Nirākāravādin* System

When Ratnākaraśānti explains causality in his *Nirākāravādin* system, he does not explain the way that causes, such as seeds, produce results, such as sprouts. Rather, Ratnākaraśānti explains causality teleologically.¹⁹⁵ That is to say, he only tells us how sheer luminosity functions through repeated practice to transform awareness into the realizations of arhats, bodhisattvas, and buddhas who have realized different degrees of sheer luminosity in their being. Hence, to understand Ratnākaraśānti’s notion of causality means to understand the way that he explains the causal process of awakening—starting with ordinary persons and ending with buddhas—and the causal efficacy of a buddha’s three bodies in terms of his sheer luminosity viewpoint according to his *Nirākāravādin* system. Since Ratnākaraśānti’s teleological explanation of causality is woven into the unique doctrinal framework on which he relies but does not explicate in his interpretation of the *Aṣṭa* in his *Sāratamā*, this chapter will focus on sketching out the salient features of his notion of causality and unpacking the doctrinal framework that his explanation of *Prajñāpāramitā* presupposes.¹⁹⁶

First, we will examine the way that his interpretation of the three natures frames the causal process of awakening. Then we will unpack his implied distinction between erroneous and unerroneous causality.

4.1. Causality Implied by the Three Natures

¹⁹⁵ By “teleology,” I mean that his comments on causality presuppose the ultimate reality and ultimate aim of awakening.

¹⁹⁶ My explanation of Ratnākaraśānti’s notion of causality relies on a close reading of the philosophical sections of his major works. Rather than begin with a discussion here of these texts themselves, their relationship, and their likely chronology, I have made the choice to leave this discussion to the next chapter on Ratnākaraśānti’s doxography, so that readers can have sufficient knowledge of his own system before discussing his doxography regarding others’ systems. In the bibliography on Ratnākaraśānti’s works, I also offer some justification for why I limit my discussion of his philosophy only to the texts cited here. Hopefully, this unorthodox order of presenting information about the texts will not be too disconcerting for the reader. If so, one may read chapter five before chapter four.

Ratnākaraśānti explains the causal function of sheer luminosity by placing it within his framework of the three natures, as follows:

There is no external object to be grasped by cognition (*vijñapti*) nor is there an inherent nature (*svabhāva*) grasping cognitions. Both of those are the imagined nature of phenomena, because they are imagined through mental discursiveness (*manojalpa*).¹⁹⁷ Where is that nature imagined? [It is imagined] in the imagination of the unreal [that] has arisen as/with the cognitive image (*ākāra*) of an [external] object—even though an object (*artha*) does not exist—by force of the [prior] impressions and fixations on the imagined nature.¹⁹⁸ And, this imagination of the unreal, which is the dependent nature of phenomena, is an error, [i.e.] a confusion (*viparyāsa*) [or] a false cognition. That is to say (*tathā hi*), the cognitive image of the grasped and the cognitive image of the grasper in that [imagination of the unreal] are nothing but false. The imagination of the unreal is only appearing in that manner by force of an error due to a malfunctioning (*viplava*). That is its unreal nature. What is [its] real nature? Sheer luminosity.¹⁹⁹

In this passage, Ratnākaraśānti is explaining the three natures according to the dichotomy between the imaginary grasper and grasped, which do not exist in reality, and the imagination's luminous nature, which does exist. However, we will see that he is setting up a contrast between the **imagination of the unreal**, which is a **malfunctioning**, and **sheer luminosity**, which he will explain below as a natural functioning. That is to say, the imagination of the unreal, which appears as/with the false **cognitive images of grasper and grasped** due to an error, is a term that describes the dependent nature's role in the erroneous production of cognitive images which are not separate from its luminous nature. Since the **imagination of the unreal**

¹⁹⁷ Ppu (D142a7) rnam par rig pa'i gzung ba phyi rol gyi don yod pa ma yin pas| rnam par rig pa rnam kyang 'dzin pa'i rang bzhin du yod pa ma yin te| 'di gnyis ni yid kyis mngon par brjod pa'i phyir chos thams cad kyi kun brtags pa'i rang bzhin yin no|

¹⁹⁸ The compound *arthākāre* can also be interpreted here as either a locative or ablative *bahuvrīhi*, but these are difficult to make sense of when construed with *utpanne*. It is interesting that this sentence echoes one we saw above, but says that the *artha* does not exist, rather than the two (*dvayam*). In any event, this sentence expresses the dual nature of the imagination of the unreal, which can be described, both as a place where the cognitive image of something grasped arises and, in some sense, as the very arising of a cognitive image of itself *qua* grasper with respect to its own luminosity *qua* grasped.

¹⁹⁹ Ppu (D142b1) gang la brtags she na| don med par yang kun du brtags pa'i ngo bo nyid la mngon par zhen pa'i bag chags las skyes pa'i don du snang ba'i yang dag pa ma yin pa'i kun tu rtog pa la 'o|| yang dag pa ma yin pa'i kun tu rtog pa de ni chos rnam kyis gzhān gyi dbang gi ngo bo nyid dang| 'khrul pa dang| phyin ci log dang| log pa'i shes pa yang yin no|| 'di ltar de'i gzung ba dang| 'dzin pa'i rnam pa ni 'khrul pa dang| bslad pa'i dbang 'ba' zhiḡ gi snang bas brdzun pa'i phyir| yang dag pa ma yin pa'i kun tu rtog pa de la de skad ces bya ste| de'i rang bzhin de ni yang dag pa ma yin pa 'o|| yang dag pa nyid gang yin zhe na| bsal ba tsam mo||

is only appearing in that manner by force of an error, it is just a false cognition.

However, that is just the **unreal nature**. That is to say, in **confusion**, the dependent nature takes on the appearance of the **cognitive image of a grasper and a grasped**, which he explains further as follows:

For this very reason, the cognitive image (*rnam pa; ākāra*) is called the sign of deviation [or] the sign of proliferation (*prapañcanimitta*), because it is the object (*ālambana*) in/of error.²⁰⁰ It is also called the sign of the two (*dvaya*), because it is the [false] appearance (*pratirūpaka*) of the two [i.e. the grasped and grasper].²⁰¹

Thus, in Ratnākaraśānti's *Nirākāravādin* system, the presence of cognitive images themselves are just signs of **deviation** from the inherent nature and signs of erroneous **proliferation**. The **two** aspects of the grasper and grasped are what proliferates into manifold false appearances. That these signs are not the inherent nature of phenomena is proven, for Ratnākaraśānti, through their dissolution within a yogi's transmudane awareness, which he explains as follows:

All signs of the two vanish in the transmudane awareness (*jñāna*).²⁰² Hence, that [transmundane awareness] is called unerrorneous (*abhrānta*) and an accurate awareness. For this very reason also, that [transmundane awareness] is the established (*pariniṣpanna*) nature, since, by actualizing (*pariniṣpatti*) nonconfusion (*aviparyāsa*), the actualization of it [becomes] the state of nonerror (*abhrantatā*).²⁰³ As for suchness, [it is also] the established nature, since, by actualizing nondeviation (*avikāra*), the actualization in it (*tasyām*) [becomes] the state free of deviation (*nirvikāra*).²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ I have not taken this compound to be a bahuvrīhi, because (a) above the PPU equates the imagination of the unreal (*abhūtaparikalpa*) with “error” (*bhrānti*) and (b) in Gmmṭ (15) a similar sentence provides the less ambiguous reason *bhrānticihnativāt*. Cf. Gmmṭ (15): *ata eva bhrāntinimittam tad ucyate bhrānticittativāt* (v.l. *grāhyanimittativāt*). The palm-leaf MS of the Guṇavati has been corrected in exactly this way, i.e. ante correctionem it reads *bhrānticittativāt*, but post correctionem it reads *bhrānticihnativāt*. (Harunaga Isaacson personal communication). Cf. also PPU (D 143a3): *yang dag pa nyid gang zhe na| bsal ba tsam mo|de nyid kyis na rnam pa de ni 'khrul pa'i mtshan ma dang| spros pa'i mtshan ma zhes bya bar rjod de| 'khrul pa'i dmigs pa yin pa'i phyir ro|*

²⁰¹ PPU (D142b4) *de nyid kyis na rnam pa de ni 'khrul pa'i mtshan ma dang| spros pa'i mtshan ma zhes bya bar brjod de| 'khrul pa'i dmigs pa yin pa'i phyir ro|| gnyis kyi mtshan ma zhes kyang bya ste| gnyis ltar snang ba'i phyir ro||*

²⁰² I translate *jñāna* as “cognition” in the general context, as “cognitive instrument” in the more mechanistic context, and as “awareness” in the context of the transmudane.

²⁰³ Cf. MAViBh (41ff): *nirvikārāvīparyāsapariniṣpattito dvayam|| 3.11|| [bhāṣya—] asaṃskṛtam avikārapariniṣpattiyā pariniṣpannam| saṃskṛtam mārgasatyasaṃgrhītam avīparyāsapariniṣpattiyā punar jñeyavastuny avīparyāsāt|*

²⁰⁴ PPU (D142b4): *spros pa'i mtshan ma de thams cad 'jig rten las 'das pa'i ye shes la 'gag par 'gyur la| des na de ni ma 'khrul pa dang| yang dag pa'i ye shes su yang brjod do|| de nyid kyi phyir de yang yongs su grub pa'i ngo bo nyid yin te| ma 'khrul pa nyid kyis de yong su grub pa'o|| phyin ci ma log par yongs su grub pas na yongs su grub pa'o|| de bzhin nyid ni gang gi phyir 'gyur pa med pa nyid du*

Here, although the grasper and grasped are the fundamental duality from which all proliferations arise, when these **two vanish in the transmudane awareness**, they are seen to be false and to not be the inherent nature. However, upon their disappearance, transmudane awareness directly perceives the inherent nature of all things as its own empty nature, which is its **suchness**. Since this transmudane awareness itself is not separate from the inherent nature of suchness, these constitute the two inseparable aspects of the **established nature**, namely transmudane awareness being **a state of nonerror** and its suchness being **the state free of deviation**.

Next, since Ratnākaraśānti’s system takes Dharmakīrti’s definition of something real—i.e. causal efficacy (*arthakriyā*)—to be foundational and since unreal things cannot be causes or effects,²⁰⁵ Ratnākaraśānti explains the causality that is implied within his discussion of the three natures teleologically, as follows:

The causes of conceptualization (*vikalpa*) are “other” (*pare*), since [they] are beginningless.²⁰⁶ The causes of accurate awareness are “other” [than that] (*pare*), because from a certain point onward (*arvāk*) they are repeatedly practiced (*abhyāsa*). Therefore, the nature dependent [on other] is just the imagination of the unreal, not the accurate awareness (*samyagjñāna*). Among these [two], causality (*kāryakaraṇabhāva*) is denied with regard to the imagined phenomena and signs of proliferation (*prapañcanimitta*), because those are false. But [causality] is not [denied] with regard to the mind and mental processes (*caitta*), whose nature is luminosity (*prakāśaśarīra*).²⁰⁷

yongs su grub pas | mi 'gyur ba 'i yongs su grub pa 'i ngo bo nyid do || For a similar passage, see also MAu (D226a2; C610): *|gnyis ltar snang ba 'i phyir gnyis kyi mtshan ma zhes kyang bya ste | de 'jig rten las 'das pa 'i ye shes la 'gag par 'gyur ba dang | de ni ma 'khrul pa dang yang dag pa 'i ye shes yin pas phyin ci ma log par yongs su grub pa 'o | de 'i de bzhin nyid ni mi 'gyur ba yongs su grub pa 'i ngo bo nyid do |* Cf. MAVi (41) *nirvikārāvīpariyāsapariniṣpattito dvayam || 3.11 ||*

²⁰⁵ For more on *arthakriyā* and *satyadvaya* in Dharmakīrti and Ratnākaraśānti, see Tani (1999:374-6).

²⁰⁶ Here, the word “para” is difficult to translate, particularly because it is probably meant as an oblique gloss/explanation of the word “para” in *paratantra* and seems intended to have several meanings at once, like one thing/another thing, distant/close, far side/the near side etc. In order to show the contrast between these two occurrences of *para* and that of the next line, I have translated the second “para” as “other [than that]” and have translated *paratantra* “dependent [on other]” here, with “on other” in brackets to signal that it is the same word as dependent (*paratantra*) in my other translations of the term.

²⁰⁷ PPU (D142a7): *'dir gzhan zhes bya ba ni thog ma med pa 'i phyir rnam par mi (sic!) rtog pa 'i rgyu la bya la | yang dag pa 'i ye shes ni tshu rol te | da ltar goms pa 'i rgyu las byung ba 'i phyir | yang dag pa ma yin pa 'i kun du rtog pa kho na gzhan gyi dbang yin gyi yang dag pa 'i ye shes ni ma yin no || de la kun du brtags pa 'i chos dang | spros pa 'i mtshan ma rnams la ni rgyu dang 'bras bu dgag par bya ste | de rnams brdzun pa yin pa 'i phyir ro || gzhan du na sems dang sems las byung ba gsal ba 'i lus can rnams ni dag pa ma yin |*

Here, Ratnākaraśānti appears to deliberately use the pair of words “**other**” (*para*) and “**other [than that]**” (*para*) here in order to emphasize the fact that these are, in a manner of speaking, the flip sides of the same coin. That is to say, he seems to be giving an oblique gloss/explanation of the “other” (*para*) in the word “**dependent [on other]**” (*paratantra*), hinting that there are two types of “other,” i.e. causes and conditions, on which the “nature dependent [on other]” can depend. When these “**other**” causes and conditions are **beginningless** impressions, then the dependent nature takes the form of conceptualization or the imagination of the unreal. But, when these “**other**” causes and conditions take the form of **repeated practice** (*abhyāsa*) or the spiritual cultivation (*bhāvanā*) that counteracts the **imagination of the unreal**, then these causes bring about the attainment of an **accurate awareness** of the inherent nature as sheer **luminosity**. In this way, Ratnākaraśānti is distinguishing between two opposite types of causality affecting the dependent nature that we might call (a) the “erroneous” causality of the erroneous conceptualization of a grasper and grasped in various cognitive images, which arise continuously by force of beginningless impressions and fixations and (b) the “unerroneous” causality of the accurate awareness, which is actualized by force of “repeated practice” from a certain point forward until it realizes the established nature. On the one hand, that the **causality of conceptualization is denied** amounts to saying that the “erroneous” causality of erroneous conceptualization is based upon a misapprehension of reality. Since the content of cognitive images only appears to be functioning in a certain way due to beginningless impressions, there is no need to explain the causality of conventional appearances. On the other hand, that the “unerroneous” **causality of accurate awareness is not denied** amounts to saying that the luminosity of the mind and mental processes is the only thing truly functioning and hence, should be considered the momentary and causally efficacious ultimate reality that needs to be

explained. In this way, we can see the soteriological influence on Ratnākaraśānti's notion of causality. That is to say, his causality is not trying to explain how a sprout comes from a seed, but how it appears that a sprout comes from a seed and how awakened beings transcend the erroneous causality but act immanently within it.

Since Ratnākaraśānti's explanation of the path from ordinary being to awakened one relies on the intersection of these two notions of causality, the next two sub-sections will focus on these. Although Ratnākaraśānti does not use the terms “erroneous” and “unerroneous” causality, I will use this twofold terminology below, because it is helpful for distinguishing Ratnākaraśānti's use of the threefold models to describe the path from the perspective of ordinary people and awakened ones. But throughout this discussion of causality, we should keep in mind the soteriological nature of Ratnākaraśānti's explanation of “causality” itself in this context.

4.2. Erroneous causality

In support of his explanation of “erroneous” causality, Ratnākaraśānti explains cognition in the case of ordinary people, i.e. the starting point on the path. In particular, Ratnākaraśānti explains how it is that ordinary people can cognize something that is not the inherent nature. First he describes what is false about ordinary cognition in terms of its two aspects, namely the cognizer (*jñāna*) and the cognized (*jñeya*), as follows:²⁰⁸

For ordinary people's cognizers, [something that is] not an inherent nature (*asvarūpa*) is [what is] cognized (*jñeya*), because [their cognizers] fabricate a grasped and grasper even though [these are] nonexistent and because the cognitive images of a grasped and grasper appear in [ordinary people's cognizers] even though [they are] a not a real substance (*avastu*).²⁰⁹ [Something] that neither exists nor is a real

²⁰⁸ My translation “cognizer” (*jñāna*) here should be understood as a “cognitive instrument,” not a cognitive agent, since the immediately preceding sentence in the cited passage glosses it as instrument. Cf. Gmmṭ (15): *jñāyate 'neneti jñānam, jñāyata iti jñeyam*. It would have probably said **jñāntīti jñānam* if it were meant to be an agent.

²⁰⁹ Rather than treating the terms with the privative “a” as *bahuvrīhi* (i.e. “have no inherent nature” “have no real substance” etc), I have understood them as implying a “non” prefix because they are contrasted with *svarūpa/vastu*. But in order to avoid the awkward translation, I have rendered them “[something that is] not an inherent nature” / “[something that is] not a real substance.” The statement

substance is not the inherent nature of consciousness, but rather is superimposed by error. For this very reason, [such a thing] is called a sign of error, because it is a mark of error (*bhrānticihna*). Those, who have a cognized with no inherent nature, also have a cognizer with no inherent nature, namely an error.²¹⁰

Here, in order to explain where our ordinary cognition goes wrong, Ratnākaraśānti distinguishes the **cognitive image** itself from the content of that cognitive image, i.e. the grasper and the grasped. He explains that the cognitive image is not a **real substance**, in that it is just the unreal form that consciousness takes on when in **error**. Also, he explains that the content of the cognitive image, i.e. the notion of a grasper and the grasped, is entirely fabricated and bears no resemblance to any reality whatsoever, which is to say, the two, i.e. the grasper and the grasped, do not exist anywhere in time or space. By differentiating the cognitive content from the cognitive image, Ratnākaraśānti hints that these are the two senses in which he means that the cognitive images are “false” (*alīka*), i.e. their form is not a real substance and their content is something nonexistent.²¹¹ In this way, we can understand why Ratnākaraśānti includes both the form and content of the cognized under the rubric of the imagined nature and not under that of the dependent nature, which is where *Sākāravādins* would rather place it.²¹² Next, Ratnākaraśānti clarifies why ordinary people’s

that the cognitive images are not a real substance is not made elsewhere in Ratnākaraśānti’s writings. It seems to be emphasizing something that I mentioned before, namely that cognitive images appear “in” the cognizers despite their being a real, independent substance. Since they are not a real substance, we should understand that the cognizers, which consist in a real substance, are just appearing *as* the cognitive images through erroneous superimposition.

²¹⁰ Gmmṭ (15) *tatra prthagjanajñānānām asvarūpam api jñeyam bhavati grāhyagrāhakayor asator api taiḥ kalpanāt, avastunor api grāhyagrāhakākārayos teṣu pratibhāsāt| yac ca nāsti na vastu vā na tad vijñānasya nijam rūpaṃ kiṃ tarhi bhrāntisamāropitam| ata eva bhrāntinimittaṃ tad ucyate bhrānticittatvāt* (em. Isaacson *bhrānticihnātāt*) *yeṣāṃ asvarūpaṃ jñeyam teṣāṃ asvarūpam api jñānaṃ bhavati yaduta bhrāntiḥ|* Here I am following Isaacson’s (unpublished) edition of this passage, which cites the MS as *bhrānticihnātāt* instead of *bhrānticittatvāt* which is in the Sarnath edition. This also corresponds better with Ratnākaraśānti’s explanation above, *bhrāntyālanbatāt*.

²¹¹ *Sākāravādins*, by contrast, hold that the conceptual content, which supposes external reality, to be false.

²¹² This is how the *Sākāravādins* are generally understood, though it is difficult to find one actually making this statement. Jñānaśrīmitra does not lay out his system according to the three natures, though one might glean his position from his debates with the *Nirākāravādins*. See for instance, when he is discussing the *kāyas*, JNA (501:15) *...athavā, kāyaś ca turyo bhavet iti nirākārasākāralpītādisvabhāvatrayāc caturthaś ca svabhāvaḥ prasaktaḥ, abhūtaparikalpākhyavicitracittacakrād bhinnatvāt| tad eva cittam abhūtaparikalpo veti cet, na, asyārthasyopāyakārair apy anubheditatvāt| na cāprakāśaṃ cittam acittaṃ vā prakāśamānam iti| uktaṃ ca prāk, rūpādiṣv abhūtaparikalpasvabhāveṣv iti| tathā*

cognizers of those cognitive images are an error, but are included in the dependent nature:

Those [ordinary cognitions]—which have [something that is] not their inherent nature (*asvarūpa*) as [what is] cognized (*jñeya*)—have [something that is] not their inherent nature (*asvarūpa*) also as cognizer (*jñāna*), namely, [they have] error.²¹³ To explain, something that is nonexistent or is not a real substance appears due to [cognitive] error. Hence, that [error] is also a cognizer, insofar as [the error functions as] a cause for an appearance, [but] that error is the mind's (*buddhi*) malfunctioning (*viplava*), not the mind's own nature, because the stains [of the cognitive images] are adventitious. Therefore those [ordinary people] have as their cognizer [something] in addition (*api*) [that is] not the inherent nature.²¹⁴

Here, Ratnākaraśānti is explaining that neither the cognizer nor the cognized of naive beings is the **inherent nature**, because something **nonexistent** or **unreal** is being **cognized** by an **error qua cognizer**. Since this **error** is **not the mind's nature**, the **error qua cognizer** that ordinary people have is **in addition** to the mind's **inherent nature**. That is to say, in Ratnākaraśānti's system, although the **inherent nature** of the **mind** is sheer luminous reflexive awareness, by force of beginningless impressions and the tendency to fixate etc., this luminosity malfunctions and produces an error in the form of an ordinary person's momentary, reflexively aware cognizers that cognize the various false cognitive images that appear in the form of a grasper and a grasped. Since the various momentary cognitive images are constantly changing, do not remain in consciousness, and hence are not its inherent nature, they are called **adventitious** "stains." When reflexive awareness is has its own luminosity as its focus, the erroneous cognizers and the false cognized images cease. At that time, the luminous reflexive awareness remains. For Ratnākaraśānti, this shows that

kalpitavikalpitadharmatārūpādiprastāvo madhyāntavibhāge 'nusartavyaḥ| vyākhyānam anyatheti cet? bhavatu na tu nyāyākṣarānurodhīti ucyate| kiṃ ca evam apy ākārārāśir eva pṛthaksvabhāvo 'likākh-yaḥ syāt.

²¹³ I have placed the "also" in this sentence here, because it ambiguous. It may be interpreted either as connecting the cognition (*jñāna*) to the previous sentences about the cognized or as signifying that the cognition cannot just be error, because there must be also some reflexive awareness operating within that cognition.

²¹⁴ Gmmṭ (15): *tathā hi bhrāntivaśād asad avastu vā prakhyāti| tataḥ sāpi jñānaṃ prakhyātau kāraṇatvāt| sā tu bhrāntir <buddhiviplavaḥ, na (ms. Isaacson) > buddher nijaṃ rūpaṃ āgantukatvān malānām| tasmād asvarūpaṃ api teṣāṃ jñānaṃ|*

error can produce false images within the luminous inherent nature, but not be either truly existent or the inherent nature. Hence, when awareness is seeing cognitive images of blue patches, it is in error. When it ceases to see those and sees nothing but its own luminous inherent nature, it is a perfectly accurate awareness. In order to explain this further, Ratnākaraśānti contrasts the ordinary person's cognition with a noble one's cognition/awareness in the state of awakening as follows:

But the *bodhicitta* at the ultimate level (*pāramārthika*) has the nature of a cognizer/awareness free of proliferations. Proliferations are error. Therefore, since no proliferations exist in that [awareness], the cognizer/awareness for [a buddha (*vīra*)] is [something that is] the inherent nature alone. [There is] no the error in addition (*api*) [to that inherent nature], because of the nonappearance of any proliferations since they disappear when that [awareness arises].²¹⁵ That [*bodhicitta*'s] cognized/awareness is the inherent nature alone. [It is] not also [something] nonexistent or [something that is] not a real substance.²¹⁶

Here, Ratnākaraśānti is explaining that, when the cognitive error disappears, a buddha's awareness, i.e. the ***bodhicitta* at the ultimate level**, is the pure luminosity free of signs and proliferations. It is the luminous reflexive awareness that perceives its own inherent nature alone, which it recognizes as the emptiness of cognitive images and the suchness of sheer luminosity. When ordinary person's erroneous cognizers cease in light of this ultimate awareness, the ordinary person's cognizers are seen to be merely the conventionally existent (*saṃvṛtisaṭ*) aspect of the dependent nature, i.e. the imagination of the unreal. Since the **cognizers'** luminous reflexive awarenesses endure when this suchness *qua* ultimate nondual object is realized, this awareness is the dependent nature's ultimately existent (*paramārthasaṭ*) aspect. In this way, Ratnākaraśānti explains the "erroneous" causality of ordinary cognition, in

²¹⁵ The passage that I have cited here from the Gmmṭ is actually speaking about Vajradhara here. But, this statement probably still applies to his notion of a tathāgata in the general Mahāyāna sense, because Ratnākaraśānti tends to treat a *tathāgata* in the same way as a Vajradhara when speaking at this ultimate level.

²¹⁶ Gmmṭ (15): *pāramārthikaṃ tu bodhicittaṃ niṣprapañcājñānātmakam| prapañco bhrāntiḥ| tataḥ sarvaprapañcānāṃ tatrābhāvāt svarūpam eva tasya jñānam na bhrāntir api sarvaprapañcanimittānāṃ tatrāstamayād apratibhāsāt| svarūpam eva tasya jñeyam nāsad avastūnām* (ms. Isaacson *asadavastunī*) *api*|

as the conventionally existent aspect of dependent nature that is adventitious and superceded by the awareness *qua* inherent nature of the mind.

4.3. Unerroneous Causality

When speaking about the “unerroneous causality,” the dependent nature is said to cease, because it must give way to the accurate awareness of all aspects of everything. This is attained through “repeated practice” (mentioned above) as follows:

At the conclusion (*niṣṭhā*) of the repeated practice (*abhyāsa*) of nonfixation (*anabhiniveśa*) upon those imputed [natures] (*kalpiteṣu*) when [there is] a complete cessation (*sarvathā nivṛttau*) of the dependent [nature] which arises (*janmanah*) from the fixation (*abhini-veśa*) on that [imputed nature], then a bodhisattva attains the State of Awareness of All Aspects (*sarvākārajñatā*)—this is the overall meaning [of the attainment].²¹⁷

Here, Ratnākaraśānti explains that an ordinary person’s dependent nature ceases due to **repeated practice** along the ten bodhisattva grounds. After this cessation of the mind and mental processes occurs, the state of awareness of a buddha dawns. Thus, the path to attaining buddhahood is the **non-fixation** undertaken by bodhisattvas. In this way, Ratnākaraśānti elucidates unerroneous causality of the bodhisattvas’ path through the threefold hermeneutic by negatively defining the attainment.

Then, in order to provide a bridge from this threefold hermeneutic explanation of the bodhisattvas path to his threefold heuristic explanation of the goal *qua* buddhahood, Ratnākaraśānti explains the process not merely negatively as a cessation of the ordinary person’s dependent nature, but positively as a set of three types of continuation that occur through an awakened person’s transformation of the basis (*āśrayaparāvṛtti*), as follows:

What is the cessation of that [mind]? [It is] a transformation of the basis (*āśraya*), [where] the defiled part of the mental stream (*cittasantāna*) *qua* the basis ceases (*nivṛtti*) and only the purified part

²¹⁷ Sār (GS 141:4): *kalpiteṣu anabhiniveśābhyāsaniṣṭhāyām*, (2) *tadabhiniveśajanmanah paratantrasya sarvathā nivṛttau*, (3) *sarvākārajñatā bodhisattvena prāpyata iti samudāyārthaḥ*.

continues (*pravṛtti*) as long as [there is] space (*yāvadākāśa*). At that time, thanks to eliminating the latent impressions [that are] the seeds for all the defiled dharmas, the basis then lets go of being the *ālaya* consciousness bearing those [seeds]. Due to eliminating [those] seeds, defiled qualities do not arise [again]. At that time, the basis [comes to be] called *the* elemental source (*dhātuḥ* < *hetu*) free of negative influences.²¹⁸ Like space, it is uniform (*ekarasaḥ*).²¹⁹ Since the cognitions (*jñāna*) [in which there is] the appearance of environments, sense objects, and bodies do not arise due to elimination of [their] seeds, [the new basis] is called the liberation body (*vimuktikāya*).²²⁰

In this way, Ratnākaraśānti describes the fundamental **transformation of the basis** *qua* dependent nature as entailing the elimination of the cognitive images and the attainment of the **liberation body**, which is **the elemental source free of negative influences**. For all buddhas, śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas whose mindstreams are transformed in this way, there is no longer the appearance of environments, sense objects, or ordinary bodies. It might seem that the attainment of this liberation body without cognitive images is what Ratnākaraśānti's *Nirākāravādin* system envisions as the final stage. However, in the KTt, he makes clear that buddhas actual undergo a transformation of three bases. There, he explains all three bases' transformation as a ceasing (*nivṛttiniyama*) of something and as a proceeding (*pravṛttiniyama*) of something else, as he explains:

(1) The [first] transformation (*parāvṛtti*) of the basis (*āśraya*) [of negativities (*dauṣṭhulya*)] is: (a) the rule of ceasing (*nivṛttiniyama*) in terms of the nature (*ātmanā*) of that mindstream, which is (i) [initially] called the “repository” (*ālaya*) as long as [it is] the locus (*ādharma*) of the seeds of defiled dharmas and their impressions known as negativities (*dauṣṭhulya*) [and] (ii) subsequently not called the “repository” (*ālaya*), due to the dissolution of those [seeds of defiled dharmas] through the noble path [being] cultivated for a long time without proliferations, due to the disappearance of those cognitions

²¹⁸ PPU (D140a6): *chos ni 'phags pa'i chos rnam so|| de rnam kyī rgyu yin pas na dbyings te|*

²¹⁹ The common translation “single flavor” (*ekarasaḥ*) does not really work for space. I mean “uniform” in the sense of “having a single character.”

²²⁰ PPU (D141a7): *log pa ji lta bu (D141b1) zhiḡ ce na| gnas gyur pa ste sems kyī rgyun gyi mtshan nyid kun nas nyon mongs pa'i gnas su gyur pa'i cha log nas rnam par byang ba'i cha nam mkha' ji srid pa'i bar du 'jug pa ste| kun nas nyon mongs pa'i chos thams cad kyī sa bon du gyur pa'i bag chags yang dag par (D141b2) bcad pas| kun gzhi rnam par shes pa de'i dngos po de'i gnas su gyur pa spangs pa ni sa bon zad pas kun nas nyon mongs pa'i chos thams cad skye bar mi 'gyur te| de'i tshen de ni nam mkha' lta ro gcig pa nyid kyis zag pa med pa'i dbyings zhes brjod la| sa bon zad (D141b3) pas lus dang| gnas dang longs spyod du snang ba'i rnam par shes pa skye bar mi 'gyur te| rnam par grol ba'i sku zhes bya bar yang brjod do||*

appearing as the place, body, and enjoyments, [due the disappearance] of other defiled dharmas which had arisen, and due to the nonarising of [dharmas] that have absolutely (*atyanta*) not [already] arisen and (b) the rule of proceeding (*pravṛtti*) absolutely in terms of the infinite nature of luminosity free of proliferations like a pure sky. This is the transformation of the basis of negativity for the buddhas. That itself is called the elemental source (*dhātu*) free of negative influences (*anāśrava*), because [it is] the locus (*ādhāra*) for the seeds of a buddha's qualities (*dharma*) that are free of negative influences (*anāśrava*).²²¹

This first **transformation of the basis** is the same one that he explained above as resulting in the liberation body. But here he describes in greater detail the process that leads to the cessation of the dependent nature as the “repository consciousness” (*ālayavijñāna*) *qua* source of all negativity (*dauṣṭhulya*) and to its proceeding as the “elemental source free of negative influences” (*anāśravadhātu*) from which the buddhas' positive qualities can spring forth. He goes on to explain the second transformation as follows:

(2) Also, those [buddhas] have the basis that is the path. The transformation of that (a) absolutely ceasing in terms of the mundane nature [and] (b) absolutely proceeding (*pravṛtti*) in terms of the transmundane [nature].²²²

Here, the **transformation of the path** refers to the bodhisattva path, which is transmundane during the meditation sessions, but mundane in the post-meditation practice of the *pāramitās* and so on. Whereas the first transformation correlated to seeing the dependent nature's emptiness of the imagined nature in order to counteract the negativities which might be connected with the achievement of the path of seeing, this transformation appears to be a result of the path of cultivation. On the path to buddhahood, the bodhisattva alternates between transmundane and mundane

²²¹ KTṭ (231): *sā cāśrayaparāvṛttilakṣaṇā. āśrayaḥ śarīram. sa teṣāṃ trividhaḥ. tatra cittasantāna-lakṣaṇasyāśrayasya yāvat sāmkleśikadharmabījānaṃ tadvāsanānāṃ dauṣṭhulyākhyānāṃ ādhāras tāvad ālayākhyasya paścād āryamārgeṇa niṣprapañcena cirabhāvitena tāsāṃ parikṣayād anālayākhyasya sataḥ pratiṣṭhādehabhoganirbhāsānāṃ vijñaptīnāṃ itareṣāṃ ca sāmkleśikānāṃ dharmānāṃ utpannānāṃ astaṃ-gamād anutpannānāṃ cātyantam anutpādāt tenātmanā nivṛttinīyamaḥ, viśuddha-gaganopamena tu niṣprapañcena prakāśātmanānantena pravṛttinīyamaḥ parāvṛtīḥ. sā buddhānāṃ dauṣṭhulyāśrayaparāvṛtīḥ saiva teṣāṃ anāśravo dhātur ucyate, anāśravānāṃ buddhadharmānāṃ bījādhāratvāt. Cf. Tucci (1954:766). Here the word “rule” (niyama) indicates something that is always the case, or perhaps we could say non-reverting.*

²²² KTṭ (231): *so 'pi mārgas teṣāṃ āśrayaḥ. tasya parāvṛttir laukikena rūpenātyantikī nivṛtīḥ, lokotta-reṇa cātyantikī pravṛtīḥ.*

awareness, but in buddhahood there is no longer any alternation from mundane to transmundane. A buddha is **ceasing** to be on a path of mundane learning based on antidotes to negativity, but is **proceeding** as a transmundane path of no more learning without any antidotes. This transmundane awareness is sheer luminosity. Ratnākaraśānti then describes the third transformation:

(3) Also, those [buddhas] have the basis that is the suchness of all qualities (*sarvadharmāḥ*). Their transformation of that is the absolute purity of all the adventitious obstructions.²²³

Here, the **absolute purity of all adventitious obstructions** is the natural purity that is suchness. Although Ratnākaraśānti does not state it as a rule of what ceases and what continues, we can understand that there is some small final obstruction that ceases here—through the Vajra-like concentration (*vajropamasamādhi*) at the end of the bodhisattva grounds—and the **absolute**, i.e. natural, **purity** continues on. This is the moment where the buddha achieves the body of qualities (*dharmakāya*), as Ratnākaraśānti explains:

That transformation of (1) the basis of negativity, (2) the basis of the path, and (3) the basis of suchness of the buddhas is precisely their awakening, precisely their body of qualities (*dharmakāya*), [understanding the Sanskrit compound to mean] the body, i.e. basis, of the qualities of a buddha. It also is called [a buddha’s] natural body (*svābhāvikakāya*), given that suchness and luminosity remain (*avasthāna*) absolutely in [their] own nature.²²⁴

²²³ KTṭ (231): *sarvadharmatataṭhāpi teṣāṃ āśrayaḥ. tasya parāvṛttir āgantukasarvāvaraṇaviśuddhir ātyantiki.*

²²⁴ KTṭ (231): *yeyaṃ buddhānāṃ dauṣṭhulyāśrayasya mārgāśrayasya tathatāśrayasya ca parāvṛtṭiḥ saiva teṣāṃ bodhiḥ saiva dharmakāyaḥ, buddhadharmānāṃ kāya āśraya iti kṛtvā. svābhāvikaḥ kāya ity apy ucyate, tathatāprakāśayoḥ svarūpeṇātyantam avasthānāt. Cf. ASbh (93:par.106) nirantarāśrayaparivṛtṭividhā 'śaikṣamārgalābhinaḥ| cittāśrayaparivṛtṭir dharmatā, cittasya prakṛtiprabhāsvarasyāśeṣāgantukopakleśāpagamādyā parivṛtṭiḥ, tathatāparivṛtṭir ity arthaḥ| mārgāśrayaparivṛtṭiḥ pūrvaulaukiko mārgo'bhīsamayakāle lokottaratvena parivṛtṭaḥ śaikṣaś cocyate sāvaśeṣakaraṇīyatvāt| yadā tu nirhatāśeṣavipakṣo bhavati traidhātukavairāgyāt tadāsyā mārgasvabhāvāsyāśrayasya paripūrṇā parivṛtṭir vyavasthāpyate| dauṣṭhulyāśrayaparivṛtṭir ālayavijñānasya sarvakleśānuśayāpagamena parivṛtṭir veditavyā. Cf. MSA (Ch.8v60): trividhaḥ kāyo buddhānāṃ| svābhāviko dharmakāya āśrayaparivṛtṭilakṣaṇaḥ| sām̐bhogiko yena parśanmaṇḍaleṣu dharmasām̐bhogaṃ karoti| nairmāṇiko yena nirmāṇena sattvārthaṃ karoti| Cf. Trīmś (v.29cd-30): āśrayasya parāvṛtṭir dvidhā dauṣṭhulyahānitaḥ || 29 || sa eva ānasravo dhātur acintyaḥ kuśalo dhruvaḥ| sukho vimuktikāyo asau dharmākhyo ayaṃ mahāmuneḥ || 30 || Cf. MAViṭ (65ff): āśrayaparāvṛtṭir bodhiḥ āśrayo nirmalatathatā| atra kāraṇam āha - akopyatvād iti| yāval lokas tāvad avasthānād akopyatvaṃ, nā 'nyathā bhavati vinivartate vā| śrāvakādīnān tu bodhiḥ svasantāna eva kṛtārthatvād vyāvartate| bodhisattvā hi sarvasattvahita-sukhādhyāśayena sambhāreṣu pravartamānā āśrayaparāvṛtṭilakṣaṇatvād bodher yāvat sattvās tāvad avatiṣṭhantīty ucyate| na tv anutpattimātratvāc chrāvakādivat. Ratnākaraśānti’s description of dharmakāya as “the body of the buddha qualities” (and hence my translation) may seem unfamiliar to readers,*

Among the transformations of the three bases, the first basis being transformed leads to the liberation body, which fulfills a buddha’s own benefit, and to the **body of qualities** (*dharmakāya*)—here a synonym of the **natural body** (*svābhāvikakāya*)—which allows a buddha to benefit others. The second and third bases appear to correlate to the realization of the two inseparable aspects of the established nature, namely (2) the **transformation of basis** of the path, which is the realization of the transmundane awareness, i.e. sheer luminosity, and (3) **the transformation of basis** that is **suchness**, which is the realization of the absolute suchness of everything as luminosity.²²⁵ Based on these transformed bases, Ratnākaraśānti explains the distinctiveness of a buddha’s “body of qualities” compared to the liberation body of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas as follows:

Since the [blessed buddhas, śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas] all have a liberation body that is not different (*nirviśeṣa*) in terms of [its] resemblance (*saṃkāśa*) of a pure crystal, the blessed buddhas are not superior to the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas by way of [their] liberation body. [Rather] they are superior [to them] due to [their] *dharmakāya*. That is to say (*tathā hi*), due to eliminating [their] defilements, they all have the transformation of the basis *qua* liberation body. But the perfect buddhas also have the *dharmakāya*—[understand the Sanskrit compound *dharmakāya* here as] (*iti kṛtvā*) “the body of qualities” [meaning] the basis for a buddha’s qualities.²²⁶

Although it may have seemed as though the superiority of a buddha’s **liberation body** is what distinguishes him from other arhats, this passage tells us that it is his “**body of qualities**” (*dharmakāya*) that makes him **superior**. Of course, the body of

in that it differs from Haribhadra’s more well known system, which posits four kāyas and interprets the transformation of the basis differently. In this usage, the term dharma refers to all the “qualities” with which a buddha appears. Cf. BHS *dharmā* = “qualities.” For Haribhadra’s comparison of the different systems, see his AA v (105ff): *sarve cāśrayaparāvṛtṭyā parāvṛtṭā bodhipakṣādayo niṣprapañcajñānātmakā dharmakāyo ’bhidhīyata iti kecit | anye tu...*

²²⁵ Ratnākaraśānti does not make it explicit here, but these three transformations also echo the threefold ultimate reality discussed above and his interpretation of the three types of *sarvajñatā* in the AA, namely *sarvajñatā*, *mārgajñatā*, and *sarvākārajñatā*.

²²⁶ PPU (D141b3): *de nyid kyi na sangs rgyas bcom ldan ’das rnam kyī rnam par grol ba’i sku ni nyan thos dang| rang sangs rgyas dag las bye brag med de| thams cad kyī rnam par grol ba’i sku shel dag pa lta bu khyad par med pa’i phyir ro|| chos kyī sku ni de dag las khyad par ’phags te| ’di ltar sangs rgyas rnam ni rnam par grol ba’i sku thams cad du gnas gyur pa dag ni kun nas nyon mongs pa zad pa’i phyir ro|| yang dag par rdzogs pa’i sangs rgyas kyī chos kyī gzhir gyur pas chos kyī sku yang yin te| chos kyī sku ni sangs rgyas kyī chos rnam kyī rten byed pas so||*

qualities is not a separate body that a buddha has in addition to a liberation body. The liberation body of a buddha is just an aspect of his body of qualities (*dharmakāya*). It is called a body of qualities, because his realization does not just bring liberation for himself, but shines forth qualities in the ten directions that liberate beings through the *saṃbhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*. Since the body of qualities is the result of all three transformations of the bases, these are the purview only of the buddhas, not of other arhats who only possess the first transformation of the basis. Here, since the buddhas' body of qualities is often thought to be formless, one might wonder:

How come those [buddhas even] have a basis? [They have a basis] because [of it being] a locus (*ādhāra*) for [their] accumulation of immeasurable merit and knowledge (*jñāna*), aspirations, and strengths (*bala*). [Insofar as they are] being distinguished [from those śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas] due only to [their] body of qualities (*dharmakāya*), they are superior to them because of the limitless buddha qualities contained in the enjoyment body (*saṃbhogakāya*) and the emanation body (*nirmāṇakāya*).²²⁷

In Ratnākaraśānti's three vehicle system (*triyāna*), the mindstreams of arhats apparently undergo the first irreversible transformation, in which all the false cognitive images dissolve into transmundane awareness. The liberation body that results from this is all that arhats need as the basis for their permanent liberation, because they pass out of this world permanently.²²⁸ However, a buddha needs a basis for all his buddha qualities in order to benefit beings. Hence, his realization of the body of qualities serves as a basis/locus for all the buddha qualities that are based on/located in that luminosity and suchness. Since the different buddha qualities appear to bodhisattvas in the form of the *saṃbhogakāya* and to ordinary sentient beings in the form of the *nirmāṇakāya*, we can see that the irreversible transformation

²²⁷ Ppu (D141b5): *ci'i phyir de rnams kyi rten yin zhe na| dpag tu med pa'i bsod nams dang ye shes kyi tshogs dang| smon lam gyi stobs bskyed pa'i phyir rol| chos kyi skus khyad par du gyur pas (em. GS khyad par du mi gyur pas) na longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku dang| sprul pa'i skus bsodus pa'i sangs rgyas kyi chos dpag tu med pas| de dag las khyad par du 'phags pa ni 'di lta ste|*

²²⁸ We can see in this description of the transformation of the basis Ratnākaraśānti's commitment to the "three vehicle" (*triyāna*) view that the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* have their own terminal paths, as opposed to the single vehicle (*ekayāna*) view of, for instance, Haribhadra, who holds that *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* take up the Mahāyāna at a later time.

of the basis is the process for attaining all the three bodies of buddhas. However, it must be emphasized here that in Ratnākaraśānti's system the *sāmbhogakāya* and the *nirmāṇakāya* are not the direct result of that transformation, but rather the indirect results that manifest within the sphere of “erroneous” causality.²²⁹ Hence, the “unerroneous” causality of repeated practice that Ratnākaraśānti described above leads only to a liberation body or to a body of qualities. But the *sāmbhogakāya* and the *nirmāṇakāya* are the fruit of a body of qualities and these teach beings of different levels how to do that repeated practice in order to become liberated. Thus, we might say that Ratnākaraśānti is explaining the causal process of attaining the three bodies based on the threefold hermeneutic model.

In order to explain Ratnākaraśānti's interpretation of causality of the three bodies themselves based on a threefold heuristic model, it will be necessary, first, to unpack his explanation of the similarities and differences between his explanation of the path of bodhisattvas and of a buddha's simultaneous transcendence and immanence.

4.3.1. Transcendence and Immanence

In order to explain a buddha's particular type of transcendence, Ratnākaraśānti highlights the difference between a buddha's transmudane awareness and an ordinary person's false cognitive images. However, his explanation of transcendence presents some challenges for him to resolve in his explanation of a buddha's immanence. In this subsection, we will look at how Ratnākaraśānti addresses the challenges by making the noble path of bodhisattvas a common locus for a buddha's own sense of transcendence and an ordinary sentient being's experience of a buddha's immanence. To explain these, Ratnākaraśānti first identifies those places in which a

²²⁹ Ratnākaraśānti's position here generally follows MSA (Ch.9:vv.60ff): *svābhāviko 'tha sāmbhogyaḥ kāyo nairmāṇiko 'paraḥ| kāyabhedā hi buddhānām prathamā tu dvayāśrayaḥ||60|| trividhaḥ kāyo buddhānām| svābhāviko dharmakāya āśrayaparāvṛtilakṣaṇaḥ| sāmbhogiko yena parśanmaṇḍaleṣu dharmasāmbhogaṃ karoti| nairmāṇiko yena nirmāṇena sattvārthaṃ karoti|*

bodhisattva experiences the transmudane awareness and where he does not. He

explains these by paraphrasing a passage in the *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* as follows:

When [a bodhisattva] is on the ground of non-appearance, on the grounds with the noble motivation of purification (*Śuddhi*), on the special grounds, and in the Vajra-like concentration, [it is said:]

[It is through transmudane awareness that] he sees everything (*sarvadhārmā*) as having a homogenous surface like space (*ākāśasamātala*). [But in the post-meditation] it is through pure mundane awareness (*dag pa 'jig rten pa'i ye shes*)²³⁰ that he sees everything as being like the eight similes, [i.e.] illusion [and so on].²³¹

²³⁰ Here, *dag pa 'jig rten pa'i ye shes* is based on my tentative emendation of the Tibetan (D). This emendation is supported by much evidence, but most immediately by Ratnākaraśānti's gloss *de la dag pa 'jig rten pa'i ye shes zhes bya* that follows. Cf. MAu: *de la dag pa 'jig rten pa'i ye shes zhes bya ste| ye shes des de kho na nyid yongs su gcod pa nyid kyis dag pa yin la| 'khrul ba nyid kyis 'jig rten pa yin no*. The emendation is also supported by both *Sāratamā* and PPU where Ratnākaraśānti explains this exact same *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* passage as contrasting the *lokottarajñāna* and the *śuddhalaukikena jñānena* that sees things as illusion and so on. Cf. PPU (D160b4) *de'i rjes las skyes pa* (em. *thob pa*) *zhes bya ba ni 'jig rten las 'das pa'i stobs kyis thob pa yang dag pa 'jig rten pa'i ye shes kyis* (em. GS *stobs kyis thob pa dag pa'i 'jig rten pa'i ye shes kyis=śuddhalaukikena*) *so|| de la sgyu ma lta bur mthong ba ni sems cad kyi 'jig rten de| bden pa ma yin pa'i skyes pa dang| bud med la sogs par snang ba'i phyir ro||*

²³¹ MAu (D226a6; C610ff): *| de yang snang ba med pa'i sa dang | lhag pa'i bsam pa rnam par dag pa'i sa dang | khyad par kyi sa dang | rdo rje lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin gyi dus der| chos thams cad nam mkha'i dkyil dang mtshungs par mthong ngo || 'jig rten las 'das pa'i ye shes pas* (em. GS *'jig rten pa'i ye shes*) *ni| chos thams cad sgyu ma'i dpe brgyad dang 'dra bar mthong ngo zhes gsungs so| I have placed the second half of the passage in quotation marks based, because that is the part to which zhes gsungs so; iti applies. It is not a direct quote, but Ratnākaraśānti is paraphrasing the *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* that he cites, names and explains more precisely in *Sāratamā* and PPU. See Ny-Ch (D108r)/ *Sāratamā* (Jaini Ch.8-end): *dvividhā Prajñāpāramitā lokottarā śuddhā laukikī ca| yathoktaṃ drumavikalpapraveśāyām* (em.– *avikalpapraveśāyām*) *dhāraṇyām— “avikalpadhātupratīṣṭhito bodhisattvo jñeyanirviśiṣṭeṇa jñānena ākāśasamātālān sarvadharmān paśyati| tatpr̥ṣṭhalabdheṇa māyāmarīcisvapnapratibhāsapratiśrutkāpratibimbodakacandranirmitasamān sarvadharmān paśyati.” ato lokottarām adhiḥkṛtyāha ākāśasyetyādi| śuddhalaukikīm adhiḥkṛtyāha| tat kīm ityādi|* “Prajñāpāramitā is of two types, transmudane and pure mundane. The bodhisattva, who is established (*pratiṣṭhita*) in the nonconceptual source, sees all entities as uniform [like] space, through awareness [which is] not distinguished with regard to [objects] to be known. Through [the cognition] attained after that (*tatpr̥ṣṭhalabdha*), he sees all entities as magical illusions (*māyā*), mirages (*marīci*), dreams (*svapna*), light reflections (*pratibhāsa*), echoes, image reflections (*pratibimba*), moons in water, magical creations (*nirmita*). For this reason, regarding the transmudane awareness, [in the root text] he says **space** and so on. Regarding the pure mundane [awareness], he says **what** and so on.” MAu: *nam mkha'i dkyil dang mtshungs par mthong ngo* correlates to Tib. Ny-Ch(D107v): *<shes bya> dang| khyad par med pa'i ye shes kyis| chos thams cad nam mkha'i dbyings dang mtshungs par mthong ngo*, which translates Sār (J Ch. 8-end) *bodhisattvo jñeyanirviśiṣṭeṇa jñānena ākāśa-samātālān sarvadharmān paśyati*. Here, I have translated *ākāśasamātālān* “having a homogenous surface like space” according to Ratnākaraśānti's explanation of the term in the PPU. He also cites the same *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* and gives three possible interpretations of the compound *jñeya-nirviśiṣṭaṃ* in PPU (D160a7) *'dir shes bya dang| khyad par med pa zhes bya ba la| shes bya ni chos thams cad do|| de dang khyad par med pa ni de rnams kyi ro gcig pa'i de bzhin nyid tsam mthong ba ste| 'jig rten las 'das pa'i ye shes so|| yang na shes bya de bzhin nyid tsam yin la| de dang khyad par med pa ni de dang 'dra bar ro gcig pa'o|| yang na shes bya ni de bzhin nyid tsam de dang khyad par med cing dbyer med pa ste| de dang tha mi dad par snang bas chos dang chos can gyi mtshan ma rnams nub pa'i phyir||* For more on *śuddhyadhyāśayaḥ*, see BBh (1512): *tatra paripācakāḥ pudgalāḥ katame? samāsataḥ ṣaṭ. bodhisattvaḥ ṣaṭsu bodhisattvabhūmiṣu vyavasthitāḥ sattvān paripācayanti. adhimuktīcaryābhūmisthito bodhisattvo 'dhimuktīcārī. śuddhyadhyāśayabhūmisthito bodhisattvaḥ śuddhyadhyāśayaḥ. caryāpratītibhūmisthito bodhisattvaḥ caryāpratīpanaḥ. niyatabhūmisthito bodhisattvo niyatapatitaḥ. niya-**

In this [passage], [the term] **pure mundane awareness** [refers to] the **awareness** that is **pure**, due to delimiting suchness, and that is **mundane**, insofar as [it is] an error (*'khrul ba nyid kyis; bhrāntatvena*).

In Ratnākaraśānti's system, during the meditation periods, a bodhisattva's transmudane awareness has no cognitive images and hence, he has the direct perception of the ultimate reality *qua* object that is suchness. However, during the post-meditation periods, a bodhisattva's awareness has cognitive images—produced by the imagination of the unreal in error—and hence, his post-meditative awareness is not transmudane, but rather a **pure mundane awareness**. Here, Ratnākaraśānti is introducing a distinction between the two aspects of a bodhisattva's awareness. It is **mundane**, because it is an error that produces cognitive images, which, for Ratnākaraśānti, is what it means to perceive conventional reality as illusions and so on during the post-meditation periods. But, the bodhisattva's awareness is also **pure**, because, due to the after-effect of the transmudane awareness, the bodhisattva sees the suchness of these cognitive images and knows them to be false. In this way, Ratnākaraśānti describes a bodhisattva as having an awareness like an ordinary sentient being, but due to seeing the suchness of those during the post-meditation period a bodhisattva's awareness is different from that of ordinary being. Now, since the alternation between the in-meditation and post-meditation awareness of a bodhisattva is ultimately a stepping stone toward the awareness of a buddha that remains the same during and after meditation, Ratnākaraśānti next gives us a clue as to how his system explains a bodhisattva to be simultaneously like a buddha and different from a buddha, as follows:

In the same way [as the bodhisattvas on those grounds], [for someone] on the ground of a buddha, it is by force of [his] aspirations (*dgongs pa'i dbang gis; abhiprāyavaṣena*) that complete awakening [also

involves] a slight error, insofar as it [too] consists in [something] pure and mundane.²³²

In Ratnākaraśānti's *Nirākāravādin* system, a **buddha** does not just attain the state of transmudane awareness. He intentionally maintains a pure form of **mundane** awareness that involves a **slight** bit of **error** in order to benefit beings. Ratnākaraśānti's explanation of a buddha—as participating in a small amount of error due to his prior aspiration to awaken for the benefit of sentient beings—is a notion of a buddha markedly different from that of other Mahāyāna systems. However, for Ratnākaraśānti, this is just part of the threefold hermeneutic model from the perspective of unerring causality that explains how a bodhisattva's aspirations on the path produce a buddha who is both a transcendent and immanent being. By emphasizing the aspiration as the cause, Ratnākaraśānti is clarifying that a buddha's error derives from no fault of his own, but from his compassionate aspiration to help beings. Thus, Ratnākaraśānti's system attempts to bridge the gap between the false and true worlds by suggesting that a buddha's compassionate aspiration takes the form of his participation in ordinary beings' error on the conventional level through pure mundane awareness, which he further explains as follows:

The awareness (*shes pa*; *jñāna*) on [all these] grounds are both transformations of the basis (*gnas gyur pa*; *āśrayaparāvṛtti*) and different ripenings [of the fruits of previous actions] (*mi 'dra bar smin pa*; *vipāka*<*visadṛśaḥ pāka*). Thus, there are two awarenesses, [i.e.] the mundane awareness and the transmudane awareness. Under the [rubric of] mundane awareness, there is the impure mundane awareness and the pure mundane awareness. This system is *Nirākāra*.²³³

²³² MAu (D226a7; C611): *de la dag pa 'jig rten pa'i ye shes zhes bya ste| ye shes des de kho na nyid yongs su gcod pa nyid kyis dag pa yin la| 'khrul ba nyid kyis 'jig rten pa yin no| |de bzhin du sangs rgyas kyis sa la dgos (P/S/N dgongs) pa'i dbang gis rdzogs pa'i byang chub cung zad 'khrul pa yin te| dag pa 'jig rten pa'i bdag nyid yin pa'i phyir ro|* Either *dgos pa* or *dgongs pa* make sense and mean roughly the same thing, when connected with the idea that it is for sentient beings' sake that a buddha maintains error. But, I have chosen to translate *dgongs pa*, which seems a more likely reading, given the commonness of *dgongs pa'i dbang gis*; *abhiprāyavaśāt/abhiprāyavaśena*. Note also that I have translated the phrase *mi 'dra bar smin pa* here as merely a gloss of *rnam par smin pa* on the assumption that the Tibetan translator saw the common gloss of the term, i.e. *vipāko*<*visadṛśaḥ pākaḥ*, but did not translate the gloss separately. Cf. LC *mi 'dra bar smin pa*=*vipāko visadṛśaḥ pākaḥ*. Cf. also LC *'khrul ba* = *bhrānta*, *bhrānti*. LC *'khrul pa* = *bhrānti*.

²³³ MAu (D226b1; C611): *|sa de rnams su shes pa rnams gnas gyur cing mi 'dra bar smin pa'o| |de ltar shes pa ni gnyis te| 'jig rten pa'i shes pa dang | 'jig rten las 'das pa'i shes pa'o| |'jig rten pa'i shes*

Here, Ratnākaraśānti is suggesting that his *Nirākāra* system is unique in distinguishing these particular three types of awareness.²³⁴ The first one is the **impure mundane awareness** that an ordinary sentient being possesses, while the other two—**pure mundane awareness** and the **transmundane awareness**—belong to a noble bodhisattva and to a buddha.

As for a noble bodhisattva, during the meditation sessions, he perceives sheer luminosity through transmundane awareness, but during the post-meditation periods he perceives cognitive images as suchness through pure mundane awareness. He always has access to the transmundane awareness, but must re-charge that awareness in meditation sessions so that he can maintain the pure mundane awareness during the post-meditation. For our subsequent discussion below, it is important to keep in mind that Ratnākaraśānti also explains these two—i.e. the transmundane and pure mundane awarenesses—as the two aspects of *Prajñāpāramitā*.²³⁵ It is also for this reason that the post-meditative period of each ground is said to contain its own pure mundane appearances that mature for a bodhisattva from his seeds, as he gradually transforms the three bases through the practice of the various *pāramitās*.

As for a buddha, he has both a pure mundane and a transmundane awareness simultaneously. A buddha's transformation of the second basis results in the elimination of the mundane path and his transformation of the third basis becomes suchness itself. Along with these and his transformation of his basis for negativity, he ceases to be an ordinary sentient being or even a bodhisattva, but still continues to experience maturations of others.

pa yang | ma dag pa 'jig rten pa'i shes pa dang | dag pa 'jig rten pa'i shes pa'o | lugs 'di ni rnam pa med pa yin te de yang—

²³⁴ The use and mis-use of the terms *Nirākāravāda* and **Alīkāravāda* in the Mahāyāna context have a complex history too difficult to address here, especially since “*Nirākāravāda*” is also a way to describe both Sthiramati's position and that of the Vaibhāṣikas also.

²³⁵ Cf. Sār (J Ch.8-end): *dvividhā Prajñāpāramitā lokottarā śuddhā laukikī ca*.

In this way, Ratnākaraśānti sets up an explanation of *Prajñāpāramitā* according to a threefold hermeneutic model. In that explanation, various bodhisattvas' transmudane and pure mundane awarenesses are like the two aspects of the middle member, i.e. they are like the conventional and ultimate aspects of the dependent nature purified to different degrees. On the other hand, a buddha's transmudane and pure mundane awarenesses are like the two aspects of the final member, i.e. the established nature that at the ultimate level is not separate from the dependent nature. How are they not separate? Ratnākaraśānti describes a buddha, whose dependent nature is thoroughly transformed, as arising as an all-pervasive being who is both transcendent and immanent in the following verse summarizing his *Nirākāravādin* system:

After the cognitive images dissolve into transmudane awareness, the very same [awareness] arises as an All-Pervasive One (*khyab bdag; vibhu/vyāpin*) free of appearances, free of the two [i.e. grasper and grasped], and free of [conceptual] proliferations.²³⁶ Even though [we assert a buddha's] mundane awareness [to have] cognitive images, since those cognitive images are delimited as false and unreal, [this is the system] called *Nirākāravāda* ("No Cognitive Images").²³⁷

Many people understand *Nirākāravāda* to be asserting that a buddha has “no cognitive images.” Although this may be true for other *Nirākāravādin* systems, Ratnākaraśānti explains that in his system, a buddha's pure **mundane awareness** has **false cognitive images**. According to Ratnākaraśānti, when a buddha's three bases are transformed, the **cognitive images**, i.e. signs of proliferation, completely **dissolve**

²³⁶ Once again, this translation is based on my emendation from *'jig rten pa yi ye shes* to *'jig rten las 'das pa'i ye shes*. This emendation is supported by many statements that Ratnākaraśānti makes. For instance, PPU (D142b4): *spros pa'i mtshan ma de thams cad 'jig rten las 'das pa'i ye shes la 'gag par 'gyur la*.

²³⁷ Cf. MAu (D226a7; C610ff): |'jig rten pa yi ye shes (em. GS 'jig rten 'das pa'i ye shes) la| |rnam pa dag ni nub gyur nas| |de nyid gnyis med spros pa med| |khyab bdag snang ba med pa skye| |'jig rten shes pa rnam bcas kyang| |rnam pa dag ni brdzun pa dang| |bden min rnam par gcod pas na| |de ni rnam pa med par brjod| I have translated *khyab bdag* (*prabhuh*) as “All-Pervasive One,” rather than Lord, Master, or whatever, because it is here both an epithet of a buddha and a description of the form that a buddha's awareness takes on. For a similar explanation of Vajradhāra, see MAht (ch.3v24): *prabhuṃ vajradharaṃ bodhicittasvabhāvatvād advayaprakāśamātralakṣaṇatvād dharmāṇāṃ sarvaṃ vyāpya tiṣṭhati tathāpi dvayapratibhāsatvān māyārūpīva bhāti*.

into the transmundane awareness. After that dissolution, that awareness arises as a buddha with both a transmundane and a pure mundane awareness *simultaneously*. In Ratnākaraśānti's *Nirākāravādin* system, it seems, the simultaneity of a buddha's transmundane and his pure mundane awareness is what distinguishes him from a bodhisattva and makes him an **All-Pervasive One** (*khyab bdag; prabhu*). The arising as an All-Pervasive One is due to his compassionate aspiration to benefit beings. His pure mundane awareness is necessary to fulfill his compassionate activity for the sake of beings everywhere.²³⁸ Although a bodhisattva has the same pure mundane awareness as a buddha, the extent of his realization of the transmundane awareness does not permit him to function in an all-pervasive way. Thus, for Ratnākaraśānti, an all-pervasive buddha is someone who has so fundamentally transformed his three bases that he can benefit beings in both an immanent and a transcendent way at the same time. It should be pointed out that Ratnākaraśānti's notion of an immanence and transcendence that involves a buddha's possession of cognitive images is not far from Śāntarakṣita's notion of an illusion-like buddha's functioning in the world. The difference is that in Ratnākaraśānti's causal system, a buddha must have a real awareness in order to delimit those cognitive images as illusion. Ratnākaraśānti's thesis, mentioned above, about the equivalent established conclusions of both schools implied that the *Nirākāra-Yogācāra* and Śāntarakṣita's *Mādhyamika* are only slightly different. Here, we can see that at the functional level of bodhisattvas and buddhas, that difference would be negligible. The difference is in how those functions are explained.

In order to explain how Ratnākaraśānti explains the functional aspects of immanence and transcendence, we will now turn to unpack his explanation of the causality of three bodies and their connection with *Prajñāpāramitā*.

²³⁸ Cf. Sār (J 173:14): *tasyaiva sattvārthavaśitām vyāpinityatvaṃ cādhikṛtya śāstram... iti kāritra-vaipulyād buddho vyāpī nirucyate| akṣayatvāc ca tasyaiva nitya ity api kathyate ||8-11|| ... kāritra-vaipulyaṃ sarvabhavyeṣu kāritram.*

4.3.1.1. The Three Bodies

As is probably evident by now, Ratnākaraśānti does not subscribe to Haribhadra's innovative system of four bodies (*kāya*), in which the body of qualities (*dharmakāya*) and the natural body (*svābhāvikakāya*) are considered to be two separate bodies of a buddha.²³⁹ Rather, Ratnākaraśānti follows the earlier MSA model that asserts only three bodies, namely the *svābhāvikakāya*, *sāmbhogikakāya*, and the *nairmāṇīkakāya*.²⁴⁰ However, his explanation of these, which differs slightly from the explanation in the MSA, brings the three bodies in line with his MAVi influenced interpretation of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.²⁴¹ In this way, Ratnākaraśānti's notion of the three

²³⁹ Contra Haribhadra, Ratnākaraśānti explains a buddha's awareness as the nondual, uncompounded, unproduced Sheer Luminosity, which is undifferentiable from suchness itself. From the buddha's own perspective, his awakening has no particular qualities (other than luminosity). Hence, for Ratnākaraśānti, the qualities of a buddha can indeed be described *phenomenally* (i.e. through a dualistic perspective) by subdividing it into three kāyas according to the three different epistemological categories, namely: (1) The *svābhāvikakāya*, which has eighteen unique (*āveṇika*) qualities experienced only by a buddha. (2) The *sāmbhogikakāya*, which possesses the qualities known as thirty-two major and eighty minor marks that are experienced only by bodhisattvas. (3) The *nairmāṇīkakāya*, which performs the twenty-seven beneficial activities perceived by fortunate sentient beings. Cf. AA 8.40 for the twenty-seven activities listed in the *Pañca*. Cf. Makransky (1998:189-257). According to Makransky, from the time when the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* was composed up until the time of Haribhadra, the term *dharmakāya* was used only in two ways: (1) it was used *exclusively* (as a synonym of *svābhāvikakāya*) to mean a buddha's realization, which was contrasted to the *rupakāya* and (2) it was used *inclusively* to refer to a threefold subdivision of *dharmakāya*—namely, *svābhāvikakāya*, *sāmbhogikakāya* and *nairmāṇīkakāya*.

²⁴⁰ Cf. MSA (9.60ff): *trividhaḥ kāyo buddhānām* | *svābhāviko dharmakāya āśrayaparāvṛttilakṣaṇaḥ* | *sāmbhogiko yena parśanmaṇḍaleṣu dharmasāmbhogaṃ karoti* | *nairmāṇiko yena nirmāṇena satvārthaṃ karoti* | Some of the citations below use different terminology, so it is useful to keep in mind that when referring to the first of the three bodies as the *svābhāvikakāya*, Ratnākaraśānti uses the adjectival terms *sāmbhogika/sasāmbhoga-*, *nairmāṇika-* for the other two bodies. But when referring to it as the *dharmakāya*, he prefers the substantive terms *sāmbhoga-*, *nirmāṇa-*. Hopefully it will not be too confusing that I also will switch terminologies whenever he does.

²⁴¹ Sār (J 172:1): *svābhāvikaḥ sasāmbhogo nairmāṇika iti tridhā* | *dharmakāyaḥ sakāritrāś caturdhā samudīritāḥ* || AA 1.17 || *iti* | **dharmo mārgaḥ**, *sa ceha prakaraṣagateḥ prakaraṇāc ca saptābhisamayalakṣaṇo grhyate. dharmalabhyaḥ kāyo dharmakāyaḥ. kāyaḥ śarīram, trīṇi śarīrāṇi buddhānām trayāḥ kāyāḥ, uktaṃ hi mahatyor bhagavatyoḥ--*"sarvākārapariśuddhānām anāsravāṇām sarvadharmāṇām yā prakṛtiḥ sa tathāgato 'rhansamyaksambuddho vedītavayaḥ. punar aparāṃ teṣāṃ eva dharmāṇām adhigamād anuttarāṃ samyaksambodhim abhisambudhya dvātriṃśatā lakṣaṇair aśītyānuvyañjanair alaṅkṛtakāyas tathāgato 'rhansamyaksambuddho bodhisattvānām paramaṃ mahāyānadharmam anuttararatipṛītiprāmodyasukhopabhogāya deśayati. punar aparāṃ teṣāṃ eva sarvadharmāṇām adhigamād anuttarāṃ samyaksambodhim abhisambudhya tathāgato 'rhansamyaksambuddho daśasu dikṣv anantāparyanteṣu lokadhātuṣu sarvakālaṃ nānānirmāṇameghena sarvasattvānām arthaṃ karoti" *iti. uktaṃ ca sūtrālamkāre--*"tribhiḥ kāyaiś ca vijñeyo buddhānām kāya-saṅgrahaḥ | *sāśrayaḥ svaparārtho 'yaṃ tribhiḥ kāyair nidarśitaḥ* || Ratnākaraśānti glosses **dharmo** as "the path" (*mārga*) and gives the creative explanation **dharmalabhyaḥ kāyaḥ** that we might take to mean "body to be obtained through the path." In general though, Ratnākaraśānti is citing the MSA verse as support for his explanation of the term *dharmakāya* in AA 1.17 as only referring to three

bodies comes to differ slightly from the MSA, in that he presents them according to both the threefold hermeneutic and heuristic models at once.²⁴² In terms of the hermeneutic model, whereas in the MSA and other systems all three bodies are different aspects of a buddha, in Ratnākaraśānti’s system, we might loosely say that it seems as if the *svābhāvikakāya* and one half of the *sāmbhogikakāya* are the real buddha, whereas the other half of the *sāmbhogikakāya* and the *nairmāṇikakāya* are *not* actually the buddha, but merely what beings perceive of his verbal and physical activity alone. Thus, Ratnākaraśānti’s notion of the three bodies demonstrates how *Prajñāpāramitā* correlates to and operates at the level of the three natures.

First, in order to explain Ratnākaraśānti’s notion of a buddha’s immanence and transcendence in three bodies with respect to the three natures, it may be easiest just sketch out the way that he lays out the three bodies in the *Sāratamā*.²⁴³ Since the *Sāratamā*’s explanation of the three bodies is embedded within his comments on the *Aṣṭa* and based on the language of the AA, we will not be able to deal with all aspects

bodies, rather than as a body separate from the *svābhāvikakāya* as Haribhadra interpreted. Cf. AAv (9, 103-114). According to Makransky, Haribhadra’s *Ālokā* was the first commentary to posit four separate *kāyas*—namely, the *svābhāvikakāya*, *jñānadharmakāya*, *sāmbhogikakāya* and *nairmāṇikakāya*. Ratnākaraśānti sticks with the early notion that there are three *kāyas* (in the final chapter of *Śuddhimatī*). For a discussion of Ratnākaraśānti’s views on the three *kāyas*, see Makransky (1998:432n50).

²⁴² In the early MSA model, the term *dharmakāya* can be used either just as a synonym of *svābhāvikakāya* exclusively or as referring to all three bodies inclusively at once. This may be because the term *dharmakāya*, when understood as the “body of qualities,” can refer to itself alone or imply the manifestation of the other two bodies in which those “qualities” appear. Whatever the case, Ratnākaraśānti uses the term mainly in the exclusive sense, but also glosses and explains the term *dharmakāya* in a other ways according to later glosses, similar to those seen in MAViṭ, and puts forth his own creative etymological explanation as mentioned above. Cf. Sār (J 199:5) ***dharmakāyā iti dharmatākāyāḥ*** | Cf. MAViṭ (143): *prāptyavasthā buddhānāṃ dharmakāya iti sarvāvaraṇaprahāṇāt tat pratipakṣānāsravadharmabījapracayāc cāśrayaparāvṛtityātmakaḥ sarvadharmavartyānālaya iti buddhānāṃ dharmakāyāḥ. tena dharmapravedhaniṣṭhādhiḡamanāt prāptyavasthety ucyate. anye tu niḥśeṣāgantukamalāpagamāt suviśuddho dharmadhātur eva dharmatākāyo dharmakāya iti varṇayanti. sarvasmīn api jñeye ’saktāpratihatapravṛttiviśiṣṭaṃ jñānaṃ dharmakāya ity apare. Cf. AAA (105): sa eva dharmatākāyo dharmakāya iti bhāvapratyayalopād vyapadiśyata iti vyākhyāya ke punas te ’nāsravā dharmā yeṣāṃ prakṛtilakṣaṇo dharmakāya ity āśaṃkya **bodhipakṣyetyādikārikām avatārayanti.***

²⁴³ We should not go too far in drawing parallels between Ratnākaraśānti’s presentation of the three bodies and his presentation of the three natures. However, it may be heuristically useful to point out that his notion of *svābhāvikakāya*, *sāmbhogikakāya*, and the *nairmāṇikakāya* and their relationship to one another seem like a “pure” version, respectively, of established (*pariniṣpanna*), dependent (*paratantra*), imagined (*parikalpita*) natures and their relationship to one another.

of his commentary here. However, we will focus on and extract only that information which is relevant to a general overview of his presentation of the three bodies.

4.3.1.2. The Natural Body

First, Ratnākaraśānti cites AA verse 8.1 and explains the natural body (*svābhāvīkākāya*) as follows:

The natural body is known as the primordial nature (*prakṛti*) of those [buddha] qualities (*dharmā*) free from negative influences (*anāśrava*) that have attained the purity with all the aspects. ||AA.8.1||

The primordial nature of those [qualities] is the true nature (*dharmatā*) [of those qualities], which is the source of qualities (*dharmadhātu*).²⁴⁴

Here, the most relevant information for understanding Ratnākaraśānti’s system is that the primordial nature, the true nature, and the source of qualities are all considered synonyms.²⁴⁵ However, Ratnākaraśānti knows that his equating of the buddha’s **natural body with the source of qualities (*dharmadhātu*)** might not sit well with some opponents. So, he entertains the following objection to his system:

[Objection:] The Tathāgata [can] not *be* the source of qualities, since [this would entail] extremely absurd logical consequences (*atiprasaṅgāt*). Rather, [he must be] the purity/purification (*viśuddhi*) of the source of qualities. Hence, it says in the *Buddhabhūmisūtra*:

O Susamudita, the attainment (*saṃgraha*) of the ground of a buddha can be recognized through five aspects.²⁴⁶ Through which five [aspects]? [The attainment is recognized] through the purity of the source of qualities, the mirror[-like] awareness, the awareness of sameness, the awareness of thorough consideration (*pratyavekṣaṇā*), and the awareness of doing what needs to be done (*kṛtyānuṣṭhāna*).

²⁴⁴ Sār (J 172:19): *sarvākārāṃ viśuddhiṃ ye prāptā dharmā nirāśravāḥ* | *svābhāvīko mataḥ kāyas teṣāṃ prakṛtilakṣaṇaḥ* || AA 8.1 || *teṣāṃ prakṛtir dharmatā dharmadhātuḥ*.

²⁴⁵ Sār (J 171:6): “*bodhiḥ sūnyatā tathatā bhūtakoṭir dharmatā dharmadhātuḥ*” *iti tatra sūnyatā lakṣaṇataḥ, tathatā nirvikāratvāt, bhūtakoṭis tattvaśikharatvāt, dharmatā dharmaprakṛtīvāt, dharmadhātur āryadharmāṇāṃ hetutvāt*. Sār (J 165:18): *dharmadhātuś cālambyamāna āryadharmāṇāṃ hetur bhavati. ata eva dharmadhātur ity ucyate*. My translation of *dharmadhātuḥ* as “source of qualities” follows Ratnākaraśānti’s gloss of *dhātu* here (and elsewhere) as *hetu*.

²⁴⁶ The name “Susamudita” refers to the bodhisattva to whom the Buddha is speaking in the sūtra.

[Ratnākaraśānti's reply:] The purity/purification of the source of qualities is the pure/purified source of qualities. [And] “the true nature (*dharmatā*) of the pure/purified qualities” has no difference in meaning.²⁴⁷

Here, Ratnākaraśānti is demonstrating that the fine distinction between the purity of the **source of qualities** and the pure **source of qualities** itself is negligible. It seems that Ratnākaraśānti makes this distinction clear, because he would like to separate his own explanation from the MSA, in which the purity of the source of qualities (*dharmadhātuviśiddhi*) appears to be understood as a term that implies all three bodies along with their activity and function, not just the natural body (*svabhāvikakāya*) as Ratnākaraśānti limits it here.²⁴⁸ The reason for this seeming limitation only becomes clear in his descriptions of the other two bodies. But before moving on to those, Ratnākaraśānti explains a second aspect of the natural body. In particular, he highlights the difference between the power of a liberation body and that of a body of qualities (*dharmakāya*) in the sense of the natural body, according to the *Aṣṭa* metaphor of a sun and moon, as follows:

The shining forth of [what is] limitless should be understood [to be] just like the shining forth of [what is] limitless by the sun's garland of rays.²⁴⁹ Any (*sarva*) crystals that lack the faults of fear and so on are [to be considered] pure. Among those, the metaphors for the liberation body of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas are [something] other than the sun and the moon. The sun and the moon too are pure

²⁴⁷ Sār (J 172:20ff): *nanu na dharmadhātus tathāgato 'tiprasaṅgāt, kiṃ tarhi dharmadhātuviśuddhiḥ| tathā cōktam ārya buddhabhūmisūtre—“pañcabhir ākārāiḥ susamudita buddhabhūmeḥ saṅgraho vedī-tavyaḥ| katamāiḥ pañcabhiḥ? dharmadhātuviśuddhayā ādarśajñānena samatājñānena pratyavekṣaṇā-jñānena kṛtyānuṣṭhānājñānena ca” iti. dharmadhātuviśuddhiḥ suviśuddho dharmadhātuḥ, suviśu-ddhānām dharmānām dharmateti nārthabhedāḥ kaścit.*

²⁴⁸ Cf. MSA (Ch.9:vv.56-58): *dharmadhātuviśuddhau catvāraḥ ślokāḥ| sarvadharmadvayāvāratatha-tāśuddhilakṣaṇaḥ| vastujñānatādāmbavaśitākṣayalakṣaṇaḥ||56|| eṣa svabhāvārtham ārabhyaikaḥ ślokaḥ| kleśajñeyāvaraṇadvayātsarvadharmatathatāviśuddhilakṣaṇaś ca| vastutadāmbanājñānāyor akṣayavaśitā lakṣaṇaś ca| sarvatastathatājñānabhāvanā samudāgamāḥ| sarvasattvadvyādhānasarva-thākṣayatā phalam||57|| eṣa hetvartham phalārtham cārabhya dvitīyaḥ ślokaḥ| sarvatas tathatājñāna-bhāvanā dharmadhātuviśuddhihetuḥ| sarvata iti sarvadharmaparyāyamukhaiḥ| sarvasattvānām sarva-thā hitasukhadvyādhānākṣayatā phalam| kāyavākcittanirmāṇaprayogopāyakarmakaḥ| samādhidhā-raṇīdvāradvyāyameyasamanvitaḥ||58||* Due to space issues, I am not citing here the third and fourth verse is about the activity (*karma*) and function (*vṛtti*) of the purity of the source of qualities. Note also that below in his comments on the *nairmāṇikakāya*, Ratnākaraśānti cites the last part of this passage and re-interprets it his own way.

²⁴⁹ I have translated this sentence this way so that the gloss and explanation that follows can be understood.

crystals.²⁵⁰ [But the sun and the moon here] is [referring to something] superior to those two [crystals of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas], in that these two [crystals, i.e. the sun and the moon,] produce a lattice of light rays pervading the ten directions. Thus, the [metaphor of the sun and the moon] is for comparing (*upamāna*) [the liberation body of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas to] the liberation body of the buddhas, which gives rise to the infinite awareness whose scope is the infinite object of awareness (*jñeya*). For this very reason, that [liberation body] is called the body of qualities (*dharmakāya*), because it is the basis (*āśraya*) of infinite qualities (*dharmā*).²⁵¹

Here, Ratnākaraśānti explains, through the *Aṣṭa* metaphor of the **sun** and the **moon**, that a buddha's **liberation body** differs from that of the **śrāvakas** and **pratyekabuddhas**, because it has **infinite awareness**, i.e. transmundane awareness, that applies to the **infinite object of awareness**, i.e. suchness. Thus, we can understand that he takes them both to be pure, but the buddha's purification of the crystal has resulted in a truly luminous and glowing presence that extends infinitely, whereas the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas' purification, despite having removed the faults, does not shine forth in the same way. Ratnākaraśānti now explains the power of the body of qualities' shining forth of infinite qualities through the metaphor of the sun and its rays, while glossing and explaining the terms in the *Aṣṭa* sentence as follows:

Here, that infinite awareness, which is born from the purity of the source of qualities (*dharmadhātu*), is *Prajñāpāramitā*. The **shining forth** of her (*tasyā*) **limitless** object of awareness should be known through the example, i.e. **just like the shining forth of [what is] limitless by the sun's garland of rays**. To explain, for the buddhas' qualities, the utterly pure source of qualities (*dharmadhātu*) is like a sun. The discernment (*prajñā*) born from that [source of qualities] is *Prajñāpāramitā*, [which is] like **the sun's garland of rays**. That which is shining forth due to her (*tayā*) is **like the shining forth of [what is] limitless by the sun's garland of rays**. So, by this [sentence in the *Aṣṭa*], the natural body (*svābhāvikaḥ kāya*) is [shown to be] the utterly pure source of the qualities of the buddhas and its power

²⁵⁰ The sun and moon are considered to be types of crystals, which also had earthly counterparts in the sun stone and the moon stone.

²⁵¹ Sār (J 173:4): *sūryaraśmimaṇḍalāparyantāvabhāsanatayā prajñāpāramitāparyantāvabhāsanatā 'nugantavyeti sarva eva trāsādidośarahitāḥ sphāṭikāḥ śuddhāḥ. tatra candrasūryābhyām anye śrāvakaḥpratyekabuddhānāṃ vimuktikāyasyopamāḥ. sūryācandramasāv api śuddhasphāṭikau. tayor etad adhikaṃ yat tau daśadigvyāpīraśmijālaṃ janayataḥ. tatas tāv anantajñeyaviṣayam anantaṃ jñānam utpādayato buddhānāṃ vimuktikāyasyopamāne. ata evāsau dharmakāya ity abhidhīyate, anantadharmāśrayatvāt.*

(*vaśitā*) of awareness is shown [to be] in regard to the object of awareness in all [directions]. It alone possesses the power of benefitting beings and the pervasive ever-presence (*vyāpinityatvam*) [to do so]...²⁵²

Here, Ratnākaraśānti presents *Prajñāpāramitā* as the natural body's natural glow of infinite awareness which discerns the suchness of all objects of knowledge. In this way, his explanation implies a threefold heuristic model of the natural body, i.e. subjective aspect *qua* awareness, the objective aspect *qua* suchness, and the utterly pure source of all qualities *qua* natural *nirvāṇa*. That is to say, the power to produce the two other bodies is contained within the natural body in the form of *Prajñāpāramitā* that is born from it. Thus, the heuristic model of the natural body provides a soteriological justification for Ratnākaraśānti's notion of "unerring causality," suggesting that the established nature is not just a cause of awakening when taken by bodhisattvas as the focus for repeated practice, but also is a result of awakening that in turn becomes the natural body's causal efficacy to awaken others through the other two bodies. In this way, the metaphor of the sun completes the circle of Ratnākaraśānti's notion of causality and serves as the bridge for explain the ontological nature of the natural body in terms of both the threefold hermeneutic and heuristic models. That is to say, for Ratnākaraśānti, the natural body is the pure source of qualities itself, which cannot be separated from the luminosity born from it, like the sun and its rays. The causal aspect of the natural body's luminosity is called *Prajñāpāramitā*, because it discerns the infinite suchness of everything in all directions. But the true nature of that luminosity, which is inseparable from emptiness, must also be understood as that which takes the form of an ordinary being, a bodhisattva or a buddha at the various moments on the path:

²⁵² Sār (J 173:10): *tad iha dharmadhātuviśuddhijam anantaṃ jñānaṃ prajñāpāramitā. tasyā aparyantajñeyāvabhāsanatā veditavyā sūryaraśmimaṇḍalāparyantāvabhāsanatayā dṛṣṭāntena, tathā hi buddhadharmāṇāṃ suviśuddho dharmadhātuḥ sūryavat. tajjā prajñā prajñāpāramitā sūryaraśmimaṇḍalavat. tayā yad aparyantāvabhāsanam tad raviraśmimaṇḍalenāparyantāvabhāsanavat. tad anena buddhānāṃ suviśuddho dharmadhātuḥ svābhāvikaḥ kāyas tasya ca sarvatra jñeye jñānavāśitā darśitā. tasyaiva sattvārthavaśitāṃ vyāpinityatvam cādhiḥkṛtya śāstram...*

At the time of attainment, all the [dharmas] are apprehended as not separate from emptiness and hence (iti) [the Aṣṭa says they are not] **anywhere other than their not coming into being**, since [they] are not separate from emptiness. The meaning of this is as follows: At the time [of realizing the purity of the nature], the very emptiness of everything [that is] undifferentiated (*avyatirekenī*) from the thoroughly pure awareness is known (*khyāti*). [The words here] (*anena*) also suggest this: It is the true nature (*dharmatā*) of that luminosity which is perpetual, because, just like the source of qualities (*dharmadhātu*), that [luminosity] continues in the condition of an ordinary person, a bodhisattva or a buddha. It is said that the true nature of the dependent is there as long as the dependent (*paratantra*) is there. [But] thereafter (*paratas*), it is called the true nature of the buddhas and the natural body of the buddhas.²⁵³

In this way, Ratnākaraśānti suggests that the **true nature of luminosity** is both the undifferentiated awareness and emptiness that appears in different forms along the path. But the power of the **source of qualities** to turn sentient beings into buddhas is *Prajñāpāramitā*. Since we know from above that *Prajñāpāramitā* is said to be born from the **source of qualities** like the sun and its rays, there is a seemingly deliberate ambiguity here about whether *Prajñāpāramitā* should actually be included in the natural body or in the enjoyment body. We will see it included in both the other bodies.

4.3.1.3. The Enjoyment Body

Next, Ratnākaraśānti explains the enjoyment body (*sāmbhogikakāya*) in a way that we might correlate to the conventional and ultimate perspectives of the dependent nature, in relation to another *Aṣṭa* sentence as follows:

[The Aṣṭa reads:] **The limitlessness of *Prajñāpāramitā* should be understood due to the limitlessness of all words (*śabda*)**. [In this sentence], ***Prajñāpāramitā*** [means] the realization (*saṃbodha*) of the supreme Mahāyāna Dharma which belongs to [both] the teacher

²⁵³ Cf. Sār (GS 148:8): *sarva ete prāptikāle 'nabhinirvṛtito 'nyatreṭi śūnyatāvyatirekeṇa nopalabhyante. suviśuddhajñānāvyatirekiṇī sarvaśūnyataiva tadānīm khyātīy arthaḥ. idam apy anena sūcītam. ya eṣa buddhabodhisattvapṛthagjanāvasthānānugāmitvād dharmadhātuvaḥ eva śāśvataḥ prakāśas tasyāsau dharmatā. yāvat paratantras tāvat paratantradharmatā ucyate. parato buddhadharmatā svābhāvikaś ca kāyo buddhānām ucyate. The svābhāvīkākāyaḥ=dharmatā of the buddhas and although *paratas* means “thereafter” it has a double meaning suggesting the flip side of the paratantra after the transformation of the basis. I have not cited the actual *Aṣṭa* passage to which the lemma *anabhinirvṛtito 'nyatra* refers here, because it would be too long and require too much context and explanation to be clear.*

teaching [it] and the bodhisattvas listening [to it]. That [realization] itself is the enjoyment, because it is [thing] causing enjoyment. However, the experience of the enjoyable feeling (*sukha*) of pleasure, joy and delight characterized by mild, medium and exceeding mental satisfaction which are born from that [*Prajñāpāramitā*] is the main [meaning here of] enjoyment.²⁵⁴ [Hence] **the limitlessness of that *Prajñāpāramitā*** should be known (*veditavya*).²⁵⁵

Here, Ratnākaraśānti explains that *Prajñāpāramitā*, which we know is born from the natural body, is a **realization** that causes **enjoyment** for both the **teacher**, i.e. a buddha, and **the bodhisattvas**. Insofar as that enjoyment is a realization shared equally, albeit from two different perspectives, by both a buddha **teaching it** and the **bodhisattvas listening to it**, echoes the way that the dependent nature is seen differently by a buddha and ordinary sentient beings. The fact that *Prajñāpāramitā* is like the rays born from the sun of the source of qualities (*dharmadhātu*) at the level of the natural body and is the direct cause for the enjoyment at the level of the enjoyment body suggests that, for Ratnākaraśānti, there is little difference between the natural body and the enjoyment body, at least, from the side of a buddha.²⁵⁶ Next, however, Ratnākaraśānti explains that there is another more mundane aspect of the enjoyment body that is different from the natural body, insofar as *Prajñāpāramitā* takes on an infinite variety of forms when expressed through words. He states:

[The interlocutor in the *Aṣṭa* also] explains how [that limitlessness can be understood through the phrase] **due to the limitlessness of all words**—[here take the instrumental case] in the sense of a cause (*hetau tṛtīyā*). Since the **limitless words** of the teachings are [both what is] generating and generated, respectively, for those two realizations [i.e. of a tathāgata and of his retinue of bodhisattvas,] [the

²⁵⁴ *Sukha* can be understood in different ways. I have translated it here as “enjoyable feeling” (*sukha*) in the sense of the three types of possible feelings (*vedanā*), i.e. pleasurable/enjoyable, painful/unenjoyable and neutral feelings.

²⁵⁵ Sār (J 173:20): *sāmbhogikasya kāyasya bahuvaktavyam. tatra sambhogam adhikṛtyāha-- sarvaśabdāparyantatayā prajñāpāramitāparyāntatānugantavyeti* (=corr. J- *prajñāpāramitā* 'payantatā 'nugantavyeti) *śāstur deśayataḥ śṛṇvatām ca bodhisattvānām yaḥ paramamahāyānadharmasambodhaḥ sā prajñāpāramitā* (MS A *sa prajñāpāramitā p.c.*; *sa prajñāpāramitāḥ a.c.*). *sa eva sambhogāḥ sambhogakāraṇatvāt. yaḥ punas tājjanām mṛdumadhyādhimātrasaumanasyalakṣaṇānām ratipṛītiprāmodyānām sukhasya cānubhavaḥ sa mukhyaḥ sambhogāḥ. tasyāḥ prajñāpāramitāyā aparyantatā veditavyā.*

²⁵⁶ This seems to be related to the fact that an All-Pervasive one, explained above, is the pure mundane awareness into which the transmudane awareness has dissolved. This first aspect of the enjoyment body correlates to the **pure** part of that awareness. The next aspect correlates to the **mundane** aspect of that awareness.

question arises] what are those [words] **all** like? [They are all] varied, because [they] appear (*prathana*) in/through all forms/cognitive images (*ākāra*) in conformance with [the minds of] disciples.²⁵⁷ How are [they] **limitless**? [They are limitless] because the teaching by that endless body is unlimited (*niravadhika*). Also, the realization of the tathāgata is **limitless**.²⁵⁸

In Ratnākaraśānti’s commentary on the passage, he is explaining the limitlessness of words from the mundane perspective based on the threefold hermeneutic model. The teacher’s pure mundane awareness is expressing the singular nature of *Prajñāpāramitā* that he has realized, but it is **generating** unlimited words from the perspective of bodhisattvas, who have different maturations according to the stage (*bhūmi*) that they are on. Insofar as the bodhisattvas’ awareness is mundane and depends upon hearing teachings from an external source through words, the bodhisattvas have error. Thus, although the bodhisattvas’ error is relatively minimal in the buddhafiels, a variety of forms/cognitive images are **generated** by it. Still, since the bodhisattvas’ awareness is pure by force of their meditation, they understand the suchness of those words. Thus, through the causal framework of generator and generated, we can understand Ratnākaraśānti’s description of the enjoyment body as a sort of pure dependent nature—though he certainly does not call it this—in which bodhisattvas experience the same infinite pure mundane awareness of a buddha as generating and its infinite objects as generated.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ The word *ākāra* definitely refers more generally to “forms” and does not have to refer to cognitive images here. However, I have written both “forms/cognitive images” (*ākāra*) because, as will be shown below, the teachings appear to different sentient beings through their different types of cognitive images and this is related to that discussion.

²⁵⁸ Sār (J 173:26ff): *katham ity āha-- sarvaśabdāparyāntatayeti (sarvaśabdāpayantatayeti J) hetau tṛtīyā. yatas tayoh sambodhayor yathākramam aparyantā deśanāśabdā janyā (deśanāḥ śabdajanyā J) janakāś ca te kathaṃ sarve? nānā vineyānurūpaiḥ sarvair ākārāiḥ prathanāt. katham aparyantāḥ ? anidhanena tena kāyena deśanāyā niravadhikatvāt. tāthāgatasyāpi sambodhasyāparyantatā. kuta ity āha-- sarvabuddhadharmasamudāgamāparyantatayā (savabuddha° J) prajñāpāramitāparyantatā yathoktaḥ śāstur eva mahāyānadharmasambodha iha prajñāpāramitā, tasyā aparyantatā.*

²⁵⁹ Here, his notion of “generating and generated” seems to be like a pure form of duality—like ordinary sentient beings’ perception of the dependent nature as “a grasper/grasping and a grasped.”

4.3.1.4. The Creation Body

When describing this third body, Ratnākaraśānti glosses the term *nairmāṇīkakāyaḥ* as the “body brought forth through creation.” This probably means that he understands a *nairmāṇīkakāyaḥ* as a “created body”—i.e. created by the power of the luminosity that is undifferentiable from the natural body.²⁶⁰ He then puts forth a nuanced and unusual interpretation of the creation/created body—which echoes what we might call, but he does not, a pure imagined nature—starting with the AA verses 8.33-4, which he cites and explains as follows:

That sage’s creation body, through which he causes the various benefits of the world impartially, is uninterrupted until the end of existence.||8.33||

Likewise, his activity is also asserted [to be] uninterrupted until the end of saṃsāra. ||8.34ab||²⁶¹

In the *Sāratamā*, Ratnākaraśānti does not provide any glosses or explanation of these lines of verse, but rather uses several consecutive sentences in the *Aṣṭa* to bring out his own viewpoint as follows:

For this reason, the sūtra [says]: **The limitlessness of *Prajñāpāramitā* should be understood as the limitlessness of all the dharmas.** [The phrase] **all the dharmas** [here means] all (*yāvanta*) those **dharmas** comprised of the body or speech of beings either moving or stationary on the earth, in the water, or in the atmosphere that are created (*nirmīta*) in infinite world systems by the blessed one in order to tame beings. **The limitlessness** of the blessed one’s **discernment** (*prajñā*) [here in this sentence] is known **from the limitlessness** of those [physical and verbal *dharmas*].²⁶²

Here, it is very important to note that Ratnākaraśānti restricts the multiple created bodies to comprising only the physical and verbal *dharmas* of beings throughout the

²⁶⁰ Sār (J 172:15): *nirmāṇa nirmītiḥ. tena nirvṛtaḥ kāyo nairmāṇīkaḥ.*

²⁶¹ Sār (J 184:13): *karoti yena citrāṇi hitāni jagataḥ samam| ā bhavāt so 'nupacchinnaḥ kāyo nairmāṇīko muneḥ||8-33|| tathā karmāpy anucchinnaṃ asyāsaṃsāram iṣyate||8-34ab||*

²⁶² Sār (J 184:15): *ataḥ sūtram-- sarvadharmāparyantatayā prajñāpāramitāparyantatā 'nugantavyeti yāvantaḥ sthalajalāntarikṣacarāṇāṃ sthāvarajaṅgamānāṃ sattvānāṃ kāyavākṣaṃgrhītā dharmāḥ sattvānāṃ vinayanāya bhagavatānanteṣu lokadhātuṣu nirmītaḥ te sarvadharmāḥ. teṣāṃ aparyantatayā bhagavataḥ prajñāyā aparyantatā veditavyā.*

universe. He explains the *Aṣṭa* sentence as excluding mind and mental process from among the created bodies' *dharmas*, as follows:

From what are those [*dharmas*] created? [The next sentence reads:] **The limitlessness of *Prajñāpāramitā* should be understood [as being] from the limitlessness of emptiness.** [This sentence means that] just as the bodies created by the tathāgata are infinite, so too is their emptiness infinite. What are [those bodies] empty of? [They are empty] of independent (*svādhīna*) minds and mental processes, like an illusory person [is empty of a mind and mental processes]. For this reason, as previously, the **limitlessness** [of *Prajñāpāramitā*] is from the **limitlessness** of that [emptiness] (*tasyā*) also.²⁶³

In this way, Ratnākaraśānti states here very clearly that a buddha's created bodies do not have minds or mental processes of their own. To ordinary beings, *Prajñāpāramitā* appears to take on an infinite variety of verbal and physical forms, but this illusion is created out of the emptiness by a buddha's awareness. Thus, the verbal and physical *dharmas* that constitute the created bodies are just objective aspects of a buddha's subjective awareness that have no minds separate from his own, which remains in a state of nirvāṇa. In this way, Ratnākaraśānti's explanation can be connected with the threefold heuristic model.

On the other hand, Ratnākaraśānti's general notion appears to be drawing on the discussion in the AKBh about yogis attaining minds of creation (*nirmāṇacitta*) through meditation (*dhyāna*) that enable them to mentally create fictive bodies that manifest in various realms.²⁶⁴ Aside from the AKBh discussing what meditation masters at various levels can and cannot create, it puts forth the central principle that those created (*nirmita*) bodies do not have a mind of their own and hence, only the creator of those created bodies can make them act and speak.²⁶⁵ Although the

²⁶³ Sār (J 184:19): *katamasyāḥ te nirmitāḥ? śūnyatā 'paryantatayā prajñāpāramitāparyantatā 'nugantavyeti. yathā tathāgatena nirmitāḥ kāyā anantās tathā teṣāṃ śūnyatāpy anantā. kena śūnyatā? svādhīnaiś cittacaitasikair* (MS corr. *cicaitasikair* J) *māyāpuruṣavat. atas tasyā api* (=em.; *tasyāpi* – MS, J) *aparyantatayā 'paryantateti pūrvavat*. The MS reads *tasyāpi*. I have emended it to *tasyā api* referring to emptiness (*śūnyatā*), rather than take it to refer to the illusory person or another masculine noun.

²⁶⁴ See discussion in AKBh (426:10–428:19).

²⁶⁵ See AKBh (427:4), where it comments on the following: *[svabhūmikenā nirmāṇaṃ bhāṣaṇaṃ tv adhareṇa ca| nirmātraiva sahāśāstur adhiṣṭhāyānyavarttanāt|VAkK 7.51|--nirmāṇacittād api śuddha-*

buddhas' superior abilities exempt them from certain mechanical requirements involved in making their created bodies act and speak, the buddhas' created bodies still can only start and stop speaking at his will (*yatheccha*). In the AKBh, the implication is that even the created bodies belonging to a buddha do not have a mind of their own. Rather these created bodies are more or less life-like puppets controlled by invisible strings. Although Ratnākaraśānti's idea of a buddha's creation of created bodies is a bit more nuanced than this, it appears to follow the basic AKBh principles regarding the causality of created bodies, albeit from his own sheer luminosity perspective. Of course, Ratnākaraśānti knows that his causal interpretation of the creation bodies of buddhas runs contrary to what his opponents say, he entertains their questions and objections as follows:

[Opponent:] How can [you say] their minds and mental processes are not also created in the manner that [their] body and speech are created?

[Ratanākaraśānti's reply: Minds and mental processes are not created] because there is no material cause (*upādāna*) for them (*tad*) and because there is never a coming into existence of any sentient being that has not [existed] before.²⁶⁶

Here, Ratnākaraśānti's reply to the objections is merely applying the AKBh principle that creating created beings begins with magically empowering a material cause. Since the AKBh discussion assumes that there can be no material cause (*upādāna*) for creating a mind or mental processes, insofar as that would effectively create a real sentient being, Ratnākaraśānti also invokes the AKBh statement that no new being

kaṃ dhyānaṃ nirmāṇacittaṃ cotpadyate nānyat. na hi samādhiphalasthitasvāpraviśya punaḥ samādhiṃ tasmāt vyutthānam asti. sarvasya ca nirmitasya svabhūmikena nirmāṇaṃ nānyabhūmikena nirmāṇacittena-nyabhūmikaṃ nirmāṇaṃ nirmīyate. bhāṣaṇaṃ tv adhareṇa ca svabhūmikena ceti ca-śabdaḥ, kāmadhātuprathamadhyānabhūmiko hi nirmitaḥ svabhūmikenaiḥ citta bhāṣyate.

ūrdhvabhūmikas tu prathamadhyānabhūmikenā, ūrdhvaṃ vijñaptisamutthāpakābhāvāt, bahūnāṃ nirmītanāṃ bhāṣaṇaṃ, nirmātraiva saḥāśastuḥ buddhād anyasya nirmāṇaṃ nirmātrā saha bhāṣate. yadā ca bahavo nirmitā bhavanti tadā yugapat bhāṣante. ekasya bhāṣamāṇasya bhāṣante saha nirmitaḥ. ekasya tūṣṇīmḥtasya sarve tūṣṇīm bhavanti ta" iti gāthā. buddhasya pūrva paścād vā yathecchaṃ nirmitā bhāṣante. yadā bhāṣaṇacittaṃ tadā nirmāṇacittābhāvo nirmāṇacittābhāvān nirmitābhāva itī katham enaṃ bhāṣayanti ? adhiṣṭhāyānyavarttanāt, nirmāṇaṃ adhiṣṭhāyāvasthānakāmatayā 'nyena manasā vācaṃ pravartayanti.

²⁶⁶ Sār (J 184:22): *yathā teṣāṃ kāyavācau nirmite tathā cittacaitasikā api kin na nirmīyante? tadupādānābhāvāt, apūrvasattvāprādurbhāvāc ca. Cf. AKBh (113:21): kiṃ punar ekam eva traidhātukam? traidhātukānāṃ anto nāsti, yāvadākāśaṃ tāvanto dhātavaḥ. atha eva ca nāsty apūrvasattvaprādurbhāvāḥ.*

can come into existence within the three worlds. This is to say, a mind cannot be created. In this way, Ratnākaraśānti justifies his interpretation of a buddha's created body on basic causal principles in the AKBh. Since the opponent does not like the AKBh answer, he objects on the basis of a perhaps more pertinent scriptural authority, as follows:

[Opponent:] The creation of minds and mental processes is also asserted to belong to the buddhas, according to the [following] words:

[It is] active through the skill in means of employing (*prayoga*) a magical creation of a body, speech and mind || MSA 58||

[Ratnākaraśānti's reply:] True, [this] is asserted. Nevertheless, when there is a material cause [present], it is like [someone's mind and mental processes] seeing [something] in a dream due to the blessing of a deity and it is like making the referent of words known through words.²⁶⁷

Here, with the dream analogy, Ratnākaraśānti reframes the question of causality within his sheer luminosity system, in which luminosity is the only material cause. In this system, any being seen acting or speaking in a dream must be based on the material cause, i.e. the luminosity of one's own mind, being shaped or formed, as it were, by one's own latent impressions in order to produce false cognitive images of a grasper and a grasped that are separate from the mind. However, Ratnākaraśānti's analogy implies that there is another miraculous causal process through which luminosity can be magically empowered by deities outside the dreamer's mind. But in that case, the dreamer's mind is what serves as the material cause for whatever appears. Thus, Ratnākaraśānti's dream analogy seems to be suggesting that the seeming appearance of a buddha as an external being with a body, speech, and mind of his own has as its material cause nothing but the luminosity of the dreamer's mind, but the words and actions of that buddha may be caused by something external.

²⁶⁷ Sār (J 184:24ff): *nanu cittacaitasikanirmāṇam apīṣyate buddhānām-- "kāyavākcittanirmāṇaprayogopāyakarmakaḥ"* ||MSA 9.58|| *iti vacanāt. satyam iṣyate, kin tu saty upādāne devatādhiṣṭhānena svapnadarśanavat, vācā vāgarthanivedanavac ca.*

The second analogy of making “the referent of words known through words” suggests that one never gets at a real referent behind words through other words. Hence, since one can only see signs of the buddhas’ minds but never see their minds oneself, Ratnākaraśānti seems to be suggesting that the MSA is speaking of a buddha’s created body, speech, and mind as mere signs of a buddha’s creation, rather than as real creations. In this way, we can say that the material cause of understanding the referent of words is always just one’s own mind. Thus, Ratnākaraśānti suggests that the *nairmāṇīkākāyaḥ/nirmāṇakāyaḥ* of the buddhas is using the luminosity of disciples’ own minds and mental processes as material causes in his miraculous creation of physical and verbal phenomena that appear to be buddhas with minds of their own, but are not. Although these bodies are really created by the buddhas only through their skill in means, they ultimately benefit disciples by causing them to realize that these cognitive images of buddhas consist in nothing but their own minds’ luminosity. Therefore, we might describe Ratnākaraśānti’s idea of created bodies—though Ratnākaraśānti certainly would not describe them this way—as pure forms with an imaginary nature. These forms are true causes, since they point out to disciples the nature of luminosity that becomes the focus for repeated practice and leads to the transformation of the basis. In this way, Ratnākaraśānti’s notion that a buddha’s participation in the “unerroneous” causality of luminosity outshines the disciples’ “erroneous” causality based on a pure threefold hermeneutic model.

4.4. Conclusion: The Significance of Ratnākaraśānti’s System

The upshot of Ratnākaraśānti’s interpretation of *Nirākāravāda* is extremely clear. In crude terms, it is that a buddha’s small amount of error leads him to experience false cognitive images, but that very buddha is unaffected by these cognitive images due to his constant recognition of their suchness. It is not clear, however, whether this or anything else about Ratnākaraśānti’s system is unprecedented and, in itself,

historically significant. This question may not be answered until further research can be undertaken on the debate between the three masters, namely the *Nirākāravādin* Sthiramati, the *Sākāravāda* Dharmapāla, and the elusive and mysterious “third” possible position, whose name is unknown.²⁶⁸ Whatever the results of that research, however, we can say that, even if we were to find among these an exact precedent for Ratnākaraśānti’s established conclusion, we would not likely to find anything like Ratnākaraśānti’s post-Dharmakīrtian arguments, based on his particular interpretation of *pramāṇa* and internal pervasion (*antarvyāpti*), in support of that position. Furthermore, his particular argument that the established conclusion of *Nirākāra* was taught by Nāgārjuna and that it was shared by all true Yogācāra and Mādhyamika proponents is provocative, if not unprecedented.²⁶⁹ Finally, his particular critique of Candrakīrtian Mādhyamika seems to be unprecedented as well.

Aside from the historical value of Ratnākaraśānti’s systematic explanation of his own viewpoint, there is philosophic value in his arguments against all the extant Mādhyamika positions and in his response to those Mādhyamikas who try to refute luminosity, because they provide modern scholars a rare glimpse into the so-called other side of the debate between Yogācāra and Mādhyamika proponents. Since the extant record of indigenous Tibetan writings bears a decidedly Candrakīrtian Mādhyamika bias that has infected many modern scholars’ conceptions of Indian

²⁶⁸ Funayama (2007) and Almogi (2014) have discussed the question of whether there was always a third position implied to be placed somehow between *Sākāravāda* or *Nirākāravāda* on one side or the other. A full consideration of their valuable contributions is not possible here and must be left for another occasion. However, in sum, further research is necessary to determine how close the position of Ratnākaraśānti might be to the prior “third position” masters that Funayama and Almogi suggest. According to Shinya Moriyama (personal communication), Chinese sources suggest three different opinions about the *Sākāra/Nirākāravādin* of the mundane awareness that is attained after the enlightenment. Moriyama has kindly summarized for me the way they are described in Kuiji’s commentary on the *Viṃśikā*, as follows: (1) Sthiramati (*Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin*) says: The buddha’s mundane awareness has no cognitive images of a grasped (*grāhya*) and grasper (*grāhaka*). (2) Someone else says: The mundane awareness has only a cognitive image of a grasper, by which the Buddha can know directly the object. (3) Dharmapāla (*Sākāravijñaptimātravādin*) says: The mundane awareness has both a cognitive image of a grasped and a grasper. Nevertheless, because the Buddha is free of any attachments, he perceives the cognitive image of objects as they are.

²⁶⁹ According to Mattia Salvini (personal communication), a commentary on the *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* attributed to Sthiramati is extant only in Chinese and needs further study to determine whether Sthiramati made similar arguments.

philosophy and intellectual history, Ratnākaraśānti's voice provides a useful corrective that calls for a reconsideration of basic presuppositions about what is at stake in the controversy. Whether we believe or not that Ratnākaraśānti has correctly interpreted Nāgārjuna, we should realize that his arguments are, in fact, attempting to prove that Candrakīrti's and Śāntarakṣita's schools are interpreting Nāgārjuna's works in ways which are not defensible logically and which distort Nāgārjuna's intent. Although this sort of foundationalist argument is common among religious interpreters who wish to present themselves as conservative, Ratnākaraśānti's arguments, particularly in the MPS/MAv and MAu, demonstrate that he is serious in wanting us to consider him to be a true follower of Nāgārjuna. That is to say, we might dismiss his claims about Nāgārjuna's intent as a mere polemic attempt to colonize the Mādhyamika in the way that Śāntarakṣita colonized the Yogācāra. But Ratnākaraśānti's underlying justification is that no one has the right to call themselves a Mādhyamika unless they can demonstrate their interpretation of Nāgārjuna's works based on *pramāṇa* and commonly accepted hermeneutic principles of what is provisional and definitive. Thus, Ratnākaraśānti's general argument that Yogācāra and Mādhyamika have equivalent established conclusions is both a rebuttal of Yogācāra and Mādhyamika interpreters who disagree with this thesis and an attempt to establish his own interpretation of both schools as valid and correct. Furthermore, in making this argument, Ratnākaraśānti lays down a gauntlet for others to demonstrate a more consistent system for interpreting the major Mahāyāna scriptures and treatises that also coalesces with the mantra methods.²⁷⁰

²⁷⁰ Historically, we know that Jñānaśrīmitra accepted the gauntlet and produced a brilliant response, which produced an interesting debate over the nature of determination (*adhyavasāya*) and the type of logic that should be employed by Buddhists. Unfortunately, we have little space to address that debate here. See Tani (1999) and (2004) for an excellent comparison of Jñānaśrīmitra's and Ratnākaraśānti's different logical systems. Although Tani pays closer attention to Jñānaśrīmitra's system, toward which he has an affinity, his characterization of the two systems seems to be spot on.

Aside from Ratnākaraśānti’s philosophical position, if we are trying to find something “unprecedented” in what he has to say, we will find it primarily in the way that he explains his interpretation of *Nirākāravāda* with respect to the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras. His particular explanation of the three types of awareness—namely mundane, pure mundane, and transmundane—and his association of *Prajñāpāramitā* with the latter two seems to be distinctive. That is to say, Ratnākaraśānti interprets *Prajñāpāramitā* within the natural body as being inseparable from the source of qualities (*dharmadhātu*), like the rays of the sun born. He speaks of *Prajñāpāramitā* within the enjoyment body as the actual enjoyment experienced by both the buddha and the bodhisattvas according to their maturations. Finally, Ratnākaraśānti explains *Prajñāpāramitā* within the created bodies as manifesting in the form of verbal and physical signs, according to a buddha’s intention. Thus, rather than distinguishing the three bodies purely on the basis of ordinary beings’ illusory causality as Haribhadra’s system does, Ratnākaraśānti defines *Prajñāpāramitā* as a causally efficacious path that connects buddhas, bodhisattvas, and sentient beings through a shared reality that is perceived in different ways. By framing his interpretation of *Prajñāpāramitā* causally in this way, Ratnākaraśānti sets up his “new” way of defining the term *Prajñāpāramitā* itself that serves as the foundation for the *Sāratamā*’s interpretation of the *Aṣṭa* along the lines of the two threefold models mentioned above.

5. Ratnākaraśānti's Doxography

Like most scholars, Ratnākaraśānti often defines and establishes his own position through differentiating it from others' positions and through addressing their objections in order to demonstrate the superiority of his own position. Since the *Sāratamā* rarely ever characterizes opponent positions, it is helpful before reading it to have some idea of what Ratnākaraśānti's doxographical framework is and who his philosophical opponents are. This chapter will put forth my own hypothesis about how we can map his classification lists onto the specific refutations found in his texts in order to get a more precise idea about his opponents and their positions.

Unfortunately, piecing together Ratnākaraśānti's precise doxographical framework from his other commentaries is hard work, because Ratnākaraśānti often does not name his philosophical opponents, describes their positions elliptically, and classifies them differently from other known doxographers. Furthermore, he often claims to have refuted more than one opponent when he has refuted only a single position. Because of the difficulties involved, there has been some debate in modern scholarship about how to map Ratnākaraśānti's doxographical classification lists onto the specific refutations that are found in his works. Since scholars have put forth many different hypotheses about how to do so and since my hypothesis differs from theirs, I will not merely state my conclusions here, but argue for them based on analyzing both some information that other scholars have discussed and some information that they have not.²⁷¹ In this regard, my analysis will first clarify the classification of Ratnākaraśānti's own position, then discuss Ratnākaraśānti's classification of the four Buddhist schools, next try to map his doxographical classification list of three

²⁷¹ Much of the scholarship is available only in Japanese, which I do not read. However, through the help of Kenichi Kuranashi and Kengo Harimoto, I have been able to understand the various theories and debates. I will not cite these scholars individually, but will try to cover many of the issues that they argue about. In the end of the chapter, I will address information that may seem contradictory to my hypothesis and on which many scholars have focused. For a basic introduction to the debate, see Matsumoto (1980) and Katsura (1981).

Mādhyamika proponents and four Yogācāra proponents onto the named and unnamed opponents that he refutes consistently throughout his works, and finally describe where his refutation of his teacher Dharmakīrtiśrī fits in.

5.1. Ratnākaraśānti's Classification of his Own Viewpoint

We have already been speaking of Ratnākaraśānti as a *Nirākāravādin* ("Proponent of No Cognitive Images") based on his self designation in the MAu. But elsewhere, such as in the MPS/MAv, he makes statements which suggest that he should be classified as both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika, since the founding figures of Yogācāra and Mādhyamika—Maitreya, Asaṅga and Nāgārjuna—all shared his same established *Nirākāravādin* conclusion. Whether or not we agree with Ratnākaraśānti's classification of his own viewpoint in this way, it is important to understand the reasons behind his classification so that we can unpack his statements about others. Thus, we will begin by re-examining the MAu statement that we saw already above in order to tease out the criteria for classification that he applies. The MAu statement reads:

Even though [we assert a buddha's] mundane awareness [to have] cognitive images, since those cognitive images are delimited as false and unreal, [this system is] called *Nirākāra*.²⁷²

In order to understand the implications of Ratnākaraśānti's statement here and make use of it in outlining his doxographical classifications below, we need to understand the following four points.

First, Ratnākaraśānti's statement implies that the name of his own school should be based on how it defines ultimate reality, not what it holds to be the conventional reality. This is an extremely important point, because much debate in scholarship about Ratnākaraśānti's doxography has assumed that Ratnākaraśānti

²⁷² Cf. MAu (D226b2; C610ff): *lugs 'di ni rnam pa med pa yin te de yang--'jig rten pa yi ye shes* (em. GS 'jig rten 'das pa'i ye shes) *la* | *rnam pa dag ni nub gyur nas* | *de nyid gnyis med spros pa med* | *khyab bdag snang ba med pa skye* | | *'jig rten shes pa rnam bcas kyang* | | *rnam pa dag ni brdzun pa dang* | | *bden min rnam par gcod pas na* | *de ni rnam pa med par brjod* | I have not translated the first line here, but added the word "system" (*lugs*) to the last sentence because of it.

names schools on the basis of their viewpoint at the conventional level like other classification systems.²⁷³ Thus, although other doxographical classification systems have different criteria for classification, this MAu statement strongly suggests that he himself names and classifies schools *only* based on what he considers to be their viewpoint of ultimate reality, not what he considers them to hold at the level of conventional truth.

Second, Ratnākaraśānti's statement implies that he was aware that opponents might characterize his viewpoint as something other than *Nirākāravādin* and for this reason, it suggests that he felt the need to clarify his own classification criteria as being based on the ultimate. This justification may have been a response to others, who characterized his viewpoint differently.²⁷⁴ For instance, the opening line of Ratnakīrti's *Citrādvaitaparakāśa* (CAP) distinguishes Ratnākaraśānti's position from *Nirākāravijñānavāda* and calls it an *alīkākārayogin pāramārthikaparakāśamātra* viewpoint—a name that seems to have influenced subsequent scholars to classify it as **Alīkākāravāda* (Tib. *rnam brdzun pa*).²⁷⁵ Whatever the cause, if we understand Ratnākaraśānti's statement to be correcting others about the basis for the name

²⁷³ Cf. Moriyama (2013:55) where he speaks of the difference of opinion between Matsumoto (1980) and Katsura (1981) regarding how to understand the names mentioned in the PPU sentence that we will examine below. Aside from the debate between Katsura and Matsumoto, there are many scholars, including Kajiyama in his articles after 1989, who seem to take for granted that the names of positions are meant to refer to what a school holds on the conventional level. Whether this is true elsewhere, it does not seem to be the case for Ratnākaraśānti.

²⁷⁴ If I am correct about the chronology, then after writing the PPU, Ratnākaraśānti may have faced questions about his school and attempted to clarify them here. Whatever the chronology, this statement seems to imply that a clarification was needed because an earlier work was unclear in this regard.

²⁷⁵ I do not intend to suggest that CAP was written before MAu, but future research might clarify this point. I merely provide Ratnakīrti's classification of Ratnākaraśānti's position as an example of an opponent's attempt to classify him differently from how he classifies himself. His position is the third of five in RNA (122): (1) *sakalajaḍapadārtharāśau pratyākhyāte*; (2) *nirākṛte ca nirākāra-vijñānavāde*; (3) *pratihathe cālīkākārayogini pāramārthikaparakāśamātre*; (4) *samyagunmūlīte ca sākāravijñānālīkatvasamārope*; (5) *pratisantānaṃ ca svapnavad abādhitadehabhogapraṭiṣṭhādyākāraparakāśamātrātmake jagati vyavasthite...* Note: This is not the place for an analysis of this text. But it may be worth pointing out that *alīkākārayogin pāramārthikaparakāśamātra* is not an indicator that either **Alīkākāravāda* was a genuine school or would apply to Ratnākaraśānti's school. Firstly, Ratnakīrti's names for his opponents might not necessarily have been acceptable to his opponents. Secondly, Ratnakīrti does not use these opening terms in the body of his explanation, except for *Nirākāra-vijñānavāda*, which he seems to use to describe the generic *śrāvakayāna* viewpoint. Thirdly, the term **Alīkākāravāda* could just as well be interpreted as more appropriate for the *Sākāra* position, namely *sākāravijñānālīkatvasamāropa*, that follows Ratnākaraśānti's viewpoint in the opening list and in his explanation. Cf. the doxographical distinctions presented in Almogi (2009).

Nirākāravādin, we can understand that his doxographical classifications may have been considered unusual even in his own time.

Third, Ratnākaraśānti refers to his own viewpoint here only as a *Nirākāravādin* and does not classify this explicitly with either the Yogācāra or Mādhyamika viewpoint. However, the precise context of this statement is significant. Since Ratnākaraśānti argues throughout the MAu and the MPS/MAv that he is the correct interpreter of Maitreya, Asaṅga, and Nāgārjuna and since he argues just prior to the (above) statement that Yogācāra and Mādhyamika are the same *because* Maitreya, Asaṅga, and Nāgārjuna held this *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint, he is implying that the *correct* understanding of both Yogācāra or Mādhyamika viewpoint can be subsumed within the *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint.

Finally, insofar as Ratnākaraśānti refers to his own viewpoint only as a *Nirākāravādin*—i.e. not as a *Nirākārajñānavādin* or a *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* or whatever—he does not preclude others from being called *Nirākāravādins*, but affirms his own *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint as the correct logical expression of that viewpoint. That is to say, Ratnākaraśānti’s statement here is implicitly acknowledging that his own viewpoint may not be what others call *Nirākāravāda* but it is the *true Nirākāravāda* viewpoint, not some “new” viewpoint that he is proposing.

Whether or not we ultimately agree with Ratnākaraśānti’s classification of his own viewpoint as *Nirākāravādin*—or, for instance, decide that he was merely trying to avoid the possible criticism that he was proposing a new position—Ratnākaraśānti’s own justification for this classification seems to shape the way that he classifies others’ positions. If I have reasoned correctly about the principles of his self-classification, then we are ready to look at his classifications of opponent positions. We will not immediately apply the criteria involved in his self-

classification that we have considered here, but they should be kept in mind throughout the discussion and will be applied later in this chapter.

5.2. Doxographical Classifications of Opponent Positions

Ratnākaraśānti characterizes his opponents slightly differently within his various commentaries, but he seems to be describing the same basic positions in all of them. In order to map his doxographical classifications onto the specific opponent positions that he refutes, it is important first to understand his two interrelated doxographical “lists” aimed at clarifying his own doxography, namely the MPS/MAv doxographical list of the four Buddhist schools which is then clarified in the MAu by the list of the different Yogācāra and Mādhyamika positions. Since these two lists will be used to frame the discussion for the rest of the chapter, we will unpack them individually first before comparing them and deducing the positions to which the names apply.

5.2.1. The MPS/MAv Doxographical List of the Four Buddhist Schools

Ratnākaraśānti’s list of the four Buddhist schools is polemic. The precise context in which it is found within the MPS/MAv is particularly significant, because Ratnākaraśānti presents it as the very conclusion of his long argument in that text. That argument begins with Ratnākaraśānti’s assertion that the founders of Yogācāra and Mādhyamika agreed with his viewpoint. After that Ratnākaraśānti refutes all other Mādhyamika positions besides his own and claims that they are not true students of Nāgārjuna. He then concludes his polemic as follows:

Thus, the four [types of] Buddhists [should be understood] in this way:

(1) The Vaibhāṣikas who hold that an object [of cognition], such as blue patches and so on, is known by consciousness without mental cognitive images (*nirākāra*).

(2) The Sautrāntikas who hold that an object is known through experiencing the mental cognitive images of reflections (*pratibimba*) insofar as these are projected (*phan btags pas*) by objects.

(3) The Mādhyamika proponents of the three natures and the Yogācāra [proponents], who do not hold an object such as blue patches and so on to be external to consciousness but who do hold that, despite their having the nature of consciousness, blue patches and so on are produced by force of beginningless latent impressions.

(4) The Pseudo-Mādhyamika [proponents] (*dbu ma pa ltar snang ba*; **mādhyamikābhāsa*) who hold that everything is false.²⁷⁶

Before discussing the implications of this polemic list, there are two things to note about the list's organization. Firstly, the number of schools is significant, because the number "four" had come to be widely accepted early on as an enumeration of all the Buddhist schools. Because of this, we can clearly understand here that Ratnākaraśānti is polemically subverting what I will henceforth call the "ubiquitous list" of the four Buddhist schools, namely the Vaibhāṣika school, the Sautrāntika school, the Yogācāra school and the Mādhyamika school.²⁷⁷

Secondly, in Ratnākaraśānti's reformulation, the first two schools, namely the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika schools, match those in the ubiquitous list of the four Buddhist schools. However, Ratnākaraśānti re-presents the third Buddhist school as

²⁷⁶ Cf. MPS/MAv (D120a2-4): *de lta bas na sangs rgyas pa bzhi ji ltar yin | gang zhig rnam pa med pa'i shes pas sngon po la sogs pa'i don rig par 'dod pa ni bye brag tu smra ba'o || gang zhig don gyis phan btags pas gzugs brnyan gyi rnam pa nyams su myong bas don rig par 'dod pa nyid ni mdo sde pa'o || yang gang zhig rnam par shes pa las phyi'i don sngon po la sogs pa mi 'dod kyi | 'on kyang 'di dag rnam par shes pa nyid yin mod kyi | thog ma med pa'i bag chags kyi stobs kyes sngon po la sogs pa bskyed pa yin par smra ba de dag ni rnal 'byor spyod pa pa yin la rang bzhin gsum du smra ba ni dbu ma pa'o || yang gang zhig thams cad brdzun par smra ba ni dbu ma ltar snang ba yin no ||* Rig-pa'i-ral-gri's subcommentary on the MPS/MAv cites this passage as though the third school were the Yogācāra school and the fourth school were the Mādhyamika school that holds the three natures. Those citations appear to be clear cases of hyper-editing. A close reading of the MAV easily demonstrates Ratnākaraśānti's statement here to be polemical in the way I have interpreted it. Like these corrupt citations, Brunnhölzl (134) interprets Ratnākaraśānti's exact comments here ...*de dag ni rnal 'byor spyod pa pa yin la rang bzhin gsum du smra ba ni dbu ma pa'o* regarding this third school to be describing the two separate schools. This reading assumes that the Pseudo-Mādhyamika, referring to Candrakīrti's school, was a fifth school meant to be excluded from being Buddhist, because it is deeply misguided. However, MAV makes clear that this Pseudo-Mādhyamika school entails being Buddhist, but not a correct Mādhyamika interpretation. If Brunnhölzl were correct that Ratnākaraśānti's list means to exclude the Pseudo-Mādhyamika as a non-Buddhist school, then one should also consider Ratnākaraśānti's list to exclude the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas, since they too are incorrect. Unfortunately, this would mean it is no longer a doxographic list of the four Buddhist schools. Contrary to Brunnhölzl, one must understand the "la" in "yin la" as a straightforward conjunction intended to suggest a single viewpoint accepted by both the true Yogācāra and true Mādhyamika. Cf. Moriyama (2011:17), whose reading agrees with mine, not Brunnhölzl's.

²⁷⁷ For example, see Brahmāsūtra-Ratnaprabhāvyaḥkāyā (2:2.4.18): *sautrāntiko vaibhāṣiko yogācārī mādhyamikaś ceti catvāraḥ śiṣyāḥ*. This example also happens to be a rare occurrence of a reference to a "yogācārin" position, rather than a *yogācārah* that draws into question the universality of Jonathan Silk's well known conclusion that the term *yogācārin* never occurs.

subscribing to particular Yogācāra and Mādhyamika positions that are implied to be in perfect harmony with one another, whereas he discounts the fourth school as being Pseudo-Mādhyamika ostensibly because it holds Mādhyamika to be superior to Yogācāra—which is implied within the ubiquitous list by placing Mādhyamika fourth in the hierarchy. Thus, in order to reflect his own classificatory concerns which are centered around the reality or unreality of cognitive images (*ākāra*) and not around the divide between Yogācāra and Mādhyamika, Ratnākaraśānti’s list redraws the distinction between the two Mahāyāna schools for the sake of framing the concerns of his own polemics.

Setting aside the list’s polemic structure, it is also worth noting four features implied by Ratnākaraśānti’s particular way of classifying the two Mahāyāna schools.

First, Ratnākaraśānti’s doxography of the four Buddhist schools includes no school which holds an exclusively Yogācāra viewpoint. This is in harmony with Ratnākaraśānti’s general argument throughout his works that Yogācāra and Mādhyamika proponents share the same established conclusions. Thus, we can understand Ratnākaraśānti’s list to be subverting the distinction made between Yogācāra and Mādhyamika in the “ubiquitous list” and for this reason, we will henceforth refer to the third school as a “Yogācāra-Mādhyamika” school.

Second, the third school on Ratnākaraśānti’s list describes a Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school that holds both a *Nirākāravādin* Yogācāra position—i.e. that cognitive images are produced *solely* by latent impressions—and a Mādhyamika position that upholds the three natures. Since this school’s description is the precise viewpoint for which Ratnākaraśānti argues in the MPS/MAv and since it leaves no room for *Sākāravāda* viewpoint to be included, we can understand that the third “school” in the list simply represents his own *true* Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ Furthermore, one might interpret that, in naming his commentary *Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti*—a title obviously aimed at subverting Śāntarakṣita’s commentary of the same name—and for ending this very

But also since Ratnākaraśānti classifies his own school as simply “*Nirākāravāda*” in the MAu passage discussed in the overview, we can infer that this *true* Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school should also be subsumed under the rubric of *Nirākāravāda*. Thus, Ratnākaraśānti’s description of the third school also subverts the concerns of the “ubiquitous list,” which would place *Nirākāravāda* under the heading of Yogācāra, instead of placing Yogācāra-Mādhyamika under the rubric of *Nirākāravāda*.

Third, Ratnākaraśānti’s description of the fourth school as the Pseudo-Mādhyamika school is a polemic characterization, not a name that the members of this so-called school would accept for themselves. By examining his use of this name within his arguments, we can also see that this one indeterminate classification is used to encompass all Mādhyamika positions opposed to his own *Nirākāravāda* viewpoint. By listing the Pseudo-Mādhyamika school as the fourth school that holds everything to be false, he does not place the four Buddhist schools in ascending hierarchical order, but rather subverts the “ubiquitous list,” which holds the Mādhyamika to be a higher viewpoint, as if to mock them for having gone too far in the direction of nihilistic nonexistence.²⁷⁹

Fourth, although one might find room for a *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika or a *Nirākāravādin*-Mādhyamika position within the Pseudo-Mādhyamika school, Ratnākaraśānti’s doxography leaves no place for either an exclusively *Nirākāravādin*-Yogācāra or a *Sākāravādin*-Yogācāra position to fit in to the list anywhere. In this

commentary with this polemic list of the four schools, Ratnākaraśānti aims to suggest that his is the *true* Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school, not Śāntarakṣita’s, because it presents the schools as having the same viewpoint, not as part of a hierarchy in the way that Śāntarakṣita presented them.

²⁷⁹ It may seem confusing to use this same term Yogācāra-Mādhyamika to refer to Ratnākaraśānti’s position, but I have done so for two reasons: (a) Ratnākaraśānti is proposing a new interpretation of Nāgārjuna’s statements that he argues is more rational and plausible than other interpreters and (b) the term Yogācāra-Mādhyamika seems to capture well Ratnākaraśānti’s own agenda, which was to take this school over in a coup by composing *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*-[*kārikā*-*sva*-]vṛtti, a name that immediately evokes Śāntarakṣita’s treatise, and by suggesting that Śāntarakṣita was not a true disciple of Mādhyamika. See my comments about this text’s relationship to the MAu in the bibliography. There were other authors besides Ratnākaraśānti who wrote texts called *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*, which, as the name suggests, were commentaries meant as “adornments” (*alaṃkaraṇa*) to what had already been taught concerning Madhyamaka. Perhaps they all had a similar agenda.

way, we can understand Ratnākaraśānti's description of the third Buddhist school to be polemically excluding an independent Yogācāra position from being a Mahāyāna "school." This interpretation of the MPS/MAv list is supported by the fact that the MPS/MAv does not refute an independent Yogācāra position.

Therefore, Ratnākaraśānti's doxographical list might seem at first glance to be based upon a division between two Mādhyamika schools, one which upholds Yogācāra and the other which does not. But Ratnākaraśānti's polemic doxography of the Mahāyāna is actually based upon a dividing line between his true *Nirākāravāda* and anything that is not his true *Nirākāravāda*. That is to say, the list makes no attempt to account for various distinct Yogācāra and Mādhyamika positions. Instead, it implies polemically that his own *Nirākāravāda* viewpoint can be understood as the *true* Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school. The list's contrast of the *true* Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school with the Pseudo-Mādhyamika school is deceptive, in that its general aim is to subvert the ubiquitous list that suggests that Yogācāra and Mādhyamika are distinct "schools."

If I have reasoned correctly here, then we are now ready to unpack the other doxographical list that he gives in the MAu in light of these conclusions.

5.2.2. The MAu Doxographical List of Mādhyamika and Yogācāra Positions

Ratnākaraśānti gives another doxographical list in the MAu that aims to demonstrate the specific positions that he refutes in the MPS/MAv. In that second list, he contrasts his own *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint with other Buddhist schools as follows:

The others, who are Buddhists, assert the following [positions].

The Vaibhāṣikas are those who hold that the objects blue patches and so on are known without [the mediation of] cognitive images.

The Sautrāntikas are those who hold that the objects are known [through] experiencing the images (*rnam pa*) of reflections that are projected by objects.²⁸⁰

The others are the three Pseudo-Mādhyamika positions and the four Yogācāra positions, who are to be refuted by those conversant in logic, scripture, and treatise.²⁸¹

At first glance, it may appear that Ratnākaraśānti is just providing a similar list to his above doxography of the four schools, in that the first two schools, namely the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas, are the same. However, rather than dividing the two Mahāyāna schools between Yogācāra-Mādhyamika and Pseudo-Mādhyamika, the MAu list is presenting another polemical classification of Mahāyāna schools that distinguishes his own viewpoint from that of the “three Pseudo-Mādhyamika positions and the four Yogācāra positions.” Before trying to discuss precisely who these “three Pseudo-Mādhyamika positions and the four Yogācāra positions” are, it will be helpful to point out three features of this MAu list.

First, the MAu list uses the term “others” and the term “positions” (*pakṣa*) here. For Ratnākaraśānti, the term “other” indicates that these are *false* Yogācāra and *false* Mādhyamika positions, not the *true Nirākāravāda* viewpoint. The term “positions” (*pakṣa*) can be contrasted with the actual “systems of practice”/“schools of thought” (*mata*; *lugs*) that were taught by the founders of Yogācāra and Mādhyamika.²⁸² Thus, we should understand his polemic use of the term “positions”

²⁸⁰ Cf. PPU (D146a6).

²⁸¹ MAu (D226b4; C611): |gzhan dag sangs rgyas pa rnams 'di skad du smra ste| gang zhig rnam pa med pa 'i shes pas sngon po la sogs pa 'i don rig par 'dod pa ni bye brag tu smra ba 'o| |gang zhig don gyis phan btags pa 'i gzugs brnyan gyi rnam pa nyams su myong ba don rig par 'dod pa nyid ni mdo sde pa 'o| |gzhan dbu ma ltar snang ba 'i phyogs gsum dang | rnal 'byor spyod pa 'i phyogs bzhi| tshad ma dang lung dang bstan bcos la mkhas pa rnams kyis sun dbyung bar bya ste|... (continues with a long quote). Cf. MAhp (15:23): *itare trayo mādhyamikapakṣāś catvāraś ca yogācārapakṣā dūṣitāḥ pramāṇāgamaśāstranipuṇaiḥ*. It is grammatically possible to read itare/gzhan as referring only to Mādhyamika proponents here, but this reading seems less likely given the overall point being made in the prior sentences in both the *Muktāvalī* and MAu.

²⁸² For example, PPU (D151b4): *rnal 'byor spyod pa 'i lugs 'di ni shin tu bzlog par dka' bar 'gyur ro*. Cf. MAu (D226a5; C610) |de lta bas na rnal 'byor spyod pa pa dang | dbu ma grub pa 'i mtha' mtshungs pa yin no| |de lta bas na don 'di ni shin tu bzlog par dka' ba nyid yin no| Cf. MAu (D226b1; C611): *lugs 'di ni rnam pa med pa yin te de yang*. The Yogācāra system (*mata*) and the *Nirākāravādin* system (*mata*) are not mutually exclusive terms. Ratnākaraśānti does not use the term *Mādhyamikamatam* anywhere that I am aware of, but criticizes all Mādhyamika positions as not being

(*pakṣa*) in the phrase “three Pseudo-Mādhyamika positions and the four Yogācāra positions” to be referring not to seven bona fide different schools of thought, but to seven incorrect ways of interpreting the *true* systems/schools propounded by the founders of Yogācāra and Mādhyamika.

Second, whereas his contrast of his own position to Pseudo-Mādhyamika proponents in the MPS/MAv list does not leave room for Yogācāra positions, his contrast of his own viewpoint to the “others” in this polemic MAu list includes both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika positions. That is to say, there is no way to map the two polemic lists directly onto one another, because there is no place for four independent Yogācāra positions in the MPS/MAv’s polemic list of the four Buddhist schools. Thus, Ratnākaraśānti’s two lists are irreconcilable unless they are interpreted.

Third, as in the MPS/MAv polemic list where Ratnākaraśānti kept the number of Buddhist schools at “four” because that number had become a standard enumeration, the number “three” for Mādhyamika positions and the number “four” for Yogācāra positions could also be similarly “standard” enumerations that he is trying to subvert. If this were the case, then Ratnākaraśānti’s mention of these seven would be suggesting simply that his refutations apply to “all” the known “positions” of Yogācāra and Mādhyamika commentators subsequent to the founders. In other words, he would be suggesting that his precise explanation of the *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint has not been expressed by anyone previously, but that he would like us to see it as being in perfect harmony with the Yogācāra and Mādhyamika founders’ intentions—as we saw in the previous chapter. This agenda is supported by the fact that he cites and explains only authoritative scriptures and the works of Nāgārjuna,

students of Nāgārjuna, who was, in Ratnākaraśānti’s eyes, a *Nirākāravādin*. Cf. MPS/MAv (D111b3):
gang zhig phyi rol gyi rang gi gzugs kyi phung po ’dod pa dang | gzhan phung po gzhi zad pa’i mtshan nyid ’khrul ba bzlog par ’dod pa de dag ni | klu sgrub kyi slob ma ma yin te | shes pa yod pa la sogs pa dgag par brjod pa’i phyir dang | sa la sogs pa sgro btags par bstan pa’i phyir ro || yang gang zhig sngon po la sogs pa dang | de shes pa gnyis brdzun par ’dra ba nyid dang | gnas par ’dra bar smra ba de dag kyang | klu sgrub kyi slob ma ma yin no ||

Maitreya, and Asaṅga (and occasionally Dharmakīrti), but does not cite earlier authors who may well have held a similar viewpoint.

We will now attempt to map these various classifications onto various sections of Ratnākaraśānti's works.

5.3. Mapping the Classifications onto the Refuted Positions

Among the central questions plaguing scholars of Ratnākaraśānti's works is what the “three Mādhyamika positions” and the “four Yogācāra factions” are that Ratnākaraśānti claims to refute and how to map these seven classifications onto the specific positions that Ratnākaraśānti refutes. The main difficulty in answering these questions derives from two basic problems. First, in the MAu and each of Ratnākaraśānti's other philosophical works, we find descriptions of only three distinct Mahāyāna positions that Ratnākaraśānti refutes, two of which he generally describes as being held by both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika proponents. Second, Ratnākaraśānti tends to paraphrase his opponents' viewpoints rather than discuss their whole system and focuses only on their weak spots in order to draw out absurd consequences *prasaṅga* style.²⁸³ Thus, although it is possible to deduce the general assumptions against which Ratnākaraśānti is arguing at most times, it is very difficult to detect in these refutations any sort of response to a real contemporary opponent within his writings.

For this reason, in trying to figure out precisely what seven positions in the MAu list Ratnākaraśānti has in mind, there are two basic approaches that have been adopted. The first approach has been to take Ratnākaraśānti's seeming refutation of a single position to be a refutation only of the central tenets held in more than one position. The second approach has been to look within Ratnākaraśānti's refutations

²⁸³ This style of characterization, though not uncommon, is unlike, for instance, Kamalaśīla, who methodically lays out the opponents' argument and then refutes it point by point, and is unlike his opponents Jñānaśrīmitra or Ratnakīrti who quote Ratnākaraśānti himself verbatim. Ratnākaraśānti also does not frame his arguments systematically like these opponents do, eg., in terms of there being two, three or four possibilities (*vikalpa*).

of each of these three positions to see whether sub-positions can be discerned in the various opponent statements within what seems to be a single refutation. Since both of these approaches would require a detailed analysis of many more texts than can be dealt with here, a more complete discussion of this will have to be left for another occasion. For now, I will focus instead on unpacking the way that Ratnākaraśānti characterizes the very same opponents within each text and consider these characterizations in light of our analysis of Ratnākaraśānti's self-classification and the two lists above.

But before trying to map these “three Mādhyamika factions” and “four Yogācāra factions” onto Ratnākaraśānti's three basic refutations, it will be helpful to briefly compare the nomenclature that he uses for these positions in the three different phases mentioned above. On the next page is a chart of the names of the three different Mahāyāna positions that Ratnākaraśānti refutes in each commentary within his philosophical works.²⁸⁴

²⁸⁴ In the following chart, the vertical columns represent the three Mahāyāna positions named in each commentary. In the MAu (3) there are two names which appear to have been equated. Since many of these are characterizations more than they are actual names, Ratnākaraśānti may not have put these into compounds as I have done here for the sake of ease. Furthermore, of the many overlapping characterizations in the MPS/MAv, I have chosen only three for simplicity's sake.

PPu	VMS	MPS/MAv ²⁸⁵	MAu
(1) An unnamed Certain Mādhyamika proponent bahirarthavādins ²⁸⁶	(1)*Sarvālikatvavādin (<i>thams cad brdzun par smra ba</i>) ²⁸⁷	(1)*Sarvālikatvavādin (<i>thams cad brdzun par smra ba –</i>	(1) An unnamed certain Mādhyamika proponent characterized as *Sarvālikatvavādin (<i>thams cad brdzun par smra ba</i>) ²⁸⁸
(2) Sākārajñānavādins who are Yogācāra and Mādhyamika proponents	(2) Prajñākara—no other name given for Sākāravādin position. ²⁸⁹	(2) <i>thams cad yod par smra ba</i>	(2) *Sākārajñānavādin (<i>dbu ma pa shes pa rnam pa dang bcas par smra ba</i>) who are Yogācāra and Mādhyamika proponents ²⁹⁰
(3) Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins	(3) *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins (<i>brdzun pa'i rnam par rig pa tsam du smra ba</i>). ²⁹¹	(3) = <i>thams cad sgyu ma lta bur 'dod</i> ²⁹²	(3) *Nirākāravādins (<i>dbu ma pa rnam pa med par smra ba</i>) who are Yogācāra and Mādhyamika proponents ²⁹³ =(= <i>thams cad sgyu ma lta bu nyid</i>)?? ²⁹⁴

²⁸⁵ For more on these MPS/MAv positions, see Moriyama (2013) and Moriyama (2014). Cf.

MPS/MAv (D108a7): *thams cad brdzun par smra bas de dag smra na rang gi grub pa'i mtha' dang 'gal te| de dag gzhan rtogs pa'i rgyu yin pa'i phyir ro| |thams cad brdzun na thams cad rgyu med pa'i phyir ro|* Cf. MPS/MAv (D108b5): *thams cad yod par smra bas brjod pa| gang rig par bya ba de ni brdzun ma yin te| shes pa'i ngo bo bzhin no|* Cf. MPS/MAv (D107b6): *shes pa thams cad med snang na| |mngon sum rjes su dpag pa 'ang med| |rgyu med thams cad brdzun smra ba'i| |smra ba nyid ni gang las 'gyur| |zhes bya ba ni thams cad brdzun par smra bas yang grub pa smras pa.* Cf. MPS/MAv (D104b4) *thams cad med pa ma yin no zhes bdag cag smra 'o|* Cf. MPS/MAv (D120a4): *yang gang zhig thams cad brdzun par smra ba ni dbu ma ltar snang ba yin no|* Cf. MPS/MAv (D103b2): *de ji ltar kun rdzob tu yod ces brjod| gzhan yang don dam par thams cad med par smra ba|*

²⁸⁶ The PPU/VMS use of the term *bahirarthavādin* is for polemic characterization, rather than naming.

²⁸⁷ Cf. VMS (D309a1): *dngos po dang dngos po med pa de'i bdag nyid du 'gal ba'i phyir sngon po la sogs pa yang dngos po nyid du grub pas thams cad brdzun par smra ba (Sarvālikatvavādin) yang sun phyung ngo.* Cf. VMS (D309a2): *btsun pa shes rab 'byung gnas sbas pa.* Cf. VMS (D308b6): *dngos po dang dngos po med pa'i bdag nyid yin par 'gal ba'i phyir brdzun pa'i rnam par rig pa tsam du smra ba bsal to.*

²⁸⁸ MAu (D228b3; C616): *|gang yang dbu ma pa kha cig na re 'jig rten las grags pa ni kun rdzob yin te|phyi rol gyi don yang 'jig rten la grags pa yin pas| sems dang sems las byung ba bzhin du de yang kun rdzob tu yod pa yin no|*

²⁸⁹ VMS (D309a2) *btsun pa shes rab 'byung gnas sbas pa.*

²⁹⁰ Cf. MAu (D228a3; C615).

²⁹¹ VMS (D308b7) The Tibetan term *brDzun pa'i rnam par rig pa tsam du smra ba* is will be treated by me as a translation of *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin*, since (a) it is not uncommon to find Sanskrit *nirākāra* translated as *rNam pa brdzun pa* or *brDzun pa'i rnam pa* in Tibetan literature and (b) the position it describes here as being refuted corresponds directly to the position described in our Sanskrit witness of the PPU as *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin*. I will discuss this sentence further in the section on viewpoint. Although there has some debate about whom this term *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin*; *brDzun pa'i rnam par rig pa tsam du smra ba* refers to, scholarly consensus seems to agree that this is the same as the *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* in the PPU. See, for instance, Moriyama (2013:56,65fn14), Iwata 1991: Teil I:199. For the Sanskrit passage regarding this position in the PPU, see Luo Hong's forthcoming Sanskrit edition of the PPU.

²⁹² MPS/MAv (D119b3): *gzhan ni 'di ltar 'dod de| ji ltar sgyu ma'i glang po snang ba ni yod pa ma yin no||de bzhin du chos thams cad kyang yod pa ma yin te| de ni med pa snang ba yin par smra ste| |de bas na sgyu ma lta bu nyid chos thams cad dbu ma'i lam yin no zhes zer ro.* Cf. DBA (C580:9): *|'dis cir 'gyur zhe na| de ltar zhes bya ba la sogs pa smos pa yin te| sgyu ma'i glang pos sgyu ma'i glang po gzhan zhig pham par byas pa bzhin du zhes bya ba ni ji ltar brdzun gyis glang po dang 'thab pa ni zil gyis mnan pa de bzhin du phyin ci log pas zhes bdrzun gyis lam brdzun gyi bdag tu lta ba las skyes pa'i nyon mongs pa las skyes pa'i phyir ci log spong ba'i rgyus na de kho na nyid mthong ba na ste| thams cad du 'gro ba'i bdag med pa mthong zhing mos pa ni rnam par grol bar 'gyur te| yang dag pa'i ye shes thob par 'gyur ro| bdag cag gi phyog ltar na chos thams cad sgyus ma lta bu yin la de bas na nyon mongs pa la sogs pa'i sgyu ma lam gyi sgyu mas ldog pa yin pas dngos po de kho na nyid la re bar mi mthun pa'i phyogs dang gnyen por gyur pa med do| de'i phyir kho bo cag la sngar smras pa'i thar pa mi 'thad pa'i nyes pa yod pa ma yin no zhes bya bar dgongs so|*

²⁹³ MAu (D228b3; C616): *|rnal 'byor spyod pa pa dang | dbu ma pa rnam pa med par smra ba rnam rnam par rtog pa'i lus rdzas (rjes su P/N/G) su med par smra ste.*

²⁹⁴ MAu (D229b1; C619): *gzhan yang dbu ma pa chos thams cad sgyu ma lta bu nyid dbu ma'i lam yin no zhes zer te|* Cf. TRĀ (1) where Advayavajra refers to *Māyopamādvayavādins*.

Here, we can see that, despite the fact that Ratnākaraśānti claims to refute four Yogācāra positions and three Mādhyamika positions, he never delineates those positions and refutes them. Also, Ratnākaraśānti only refutes one Mahāyāna scholar by name, i.e. Prajñākaragupta (750-810 C.E.) in the VMS. Since Prajñākaragupta was not his contemporary and since he only names two other opponents, i.e. Śubhagupta (8th Century) and Dharmottara (740-800 C.E.), neither of whom were his contemporaries, we might speculate that, even if he has contemporary opponents in mind, he takes aim at the founders of the tradition, rather than the interpreters of it.²⁹⁵ Keeping this chart in mind, we will now examine how the four Yogācāra positions and the three Mādhyamika positions might be said to match up with these three refuted positions in the various texts and to try to associate those positions with specific scholars.

5.3.1. The Four Yogācāra Positions

In the chart above, we can see that Ratnākaraśānti only ever refutes two positions that he explicitly calls Yogācāra—namely the *Sākāravādin* position in the PPU and the *Sākāravādin* and the *Nirākāravādin* positions in the MAU. Furthermore, he only refutes a single *Sākāravāda* position that applies to both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika proponents and a single *Nirākāravāda* position that applies to both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika proponents. Hence, if we would like to understand him to have actually refuted four Yogācāra positions, we can only do so by assuming that his refutation of the two positions, i.e. *Sākāravāda* and *Nirākāravāda*, applies to all the sub-positions within each school. In this section, we will examine what Ratnākaraśānti's possible notion of the four Yogācāra positions could be by looking first at three different

²⁹⁵ Śubhagupta and Dharmottara are not shown in this chart of Mahāyāna characterizations, because Ratnākaraśānti refutes them as non-Mahāyāna external object proponents (*bahirarthvādins*) in the VMS.

groupings of “four” Yogācāra positions, namely those of Śāntarakṣita’s *MAk*, Bodhibhadra’s *JSSn*, and Ratnakīrti’s *CAP*.

5.3.1.1. Śāntarakṣita’s *MAk*

The first extant evidence of an enumeration of “four” Yogācāra positions of which I am aware is found in Śāntarakṣita’s *MAk*. First, Śāntarakṣita refutes the four epistemological positions of the realists, which include a single *Nirākāravādin*, namely the Vaibhāṣikas, and three *Sākāravādins*, namely the Sautrāntikas. Next, he refutes a single *Nirākāravādin* and three *Sākāravādin* Yogācāra proponents whose epistemological positions are virtually the same except that they are idealists attempting to explain the level of a buddha, not an ordinary being. Although Śāntarakṣita does not name these different Yogācāra epistemological positions, for our limited purposes here, it may be useful to distinguish them by name, somewhat anachronistically, according to later Tibetan analysis. The four Yogācāra positions refuted by Śāntarakṣita are:²⁹⁶

- 1) *sGo nga phyed tshal*—*Sākāravijñānavādin*-Yogācāra position that propounds the grasped and grasper are like the two halves of a single egg.
- 2) *gZung ’dzin grangs mnyam pa*—a *Sākāravijñānavādin*-Yogācāra position that propounds many grasped and graspers in equal number.

²⁹⁶ I have used the names that later Tibetan sources apply to both Sautrāntika and Yogācāra positions discussed in *MAk* vv. 22-34, in *MAś*, and in *AAĀ* (Cf. *AAĀ* Section beginning: *atha vā sākārajñānavādipakṣe codyate ...*), because there are no standard Sanskrit names for these four positions, despite their being mentioned with respect to Sautrāntika/Vaibhāṣika theories of perception, eg., in *HBtĀ* (173:13): *idānīm ekajñānasamṣargād ity atraikaśabdārthaṃ nirūpayitum āha tatretī| ekāyatanasamgrhīta ekarūpādyāyatanasamgrhīto ’nekatrāpi ekam evendriyajñānam iti | nirākārapakṣe dvyaḍisamkhyānirāsārtha ekah śabdah sākārapakṣe ’pi citrādvaitavādimatena tathavaiikaśabdah*. For an example of a Tibetan source that holds there to be two types of *Nirākāravādin*, see Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa’s *brGyud grub pa’i shing rta* (14a): *gnyis pas de ltar na nang shes pa la bltos pa’i gzung ’dzin rdzas gzhan khas blangs pas chos kyi bdag med mi ’byung bas rnam pa de dag skra shad ltar brdzun pa nyid du smras nas gnyis med kyi ye shes sam rnam shes nyid bden grub par smra ’o| de’i dang po la sgo nga phyed tshal pa dang| gzung ’dzin grangs mnyam pa dang| sna tshogs gnyis med pa gsum byung la| gnyis pa la ye shes de la gzung ’dzin gyi rnam pas ma gos kyang| de lta’i kun mkhyen ye shes la yul snang mi snang las dri bcas rnam rdzun dang| dri med rnam rdzun pa gnyis byung ba yin no*. For a discussion of Śāntarakṣita’s viewpoint of these positions, see pp. 91-99, 121-124 in Blumenthal’s *The Ornament of the Middle Way*. Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca: 2004.

3) *sNa tshogs gnyis med pa (citrādvaita)*—a *Sākāravijñānavādin*-Yogācāra position that propounds luminosity and diversity as nondual.²⁹⁷

4) *Nirākāravijñānavādin*-Yogācāra—a position that posits an identity relationship between awareness and cognitive images at the conventional level, but refutes them at the ultimate level.

In Śāntarakṣita’s list, the division between the various *Sākāravādin* positions is based on epistemological differences with respect to how the cognitive images (*ākāra*) are causally connected with awareness. But the *Nirākāravādin* position, which denies the cognitive images’ ultimate existence, does not have sub-positions, because this position claims that consciousness and cognitive images share an identity relation (*tādātmyasambandha*) with one another, rather than a causal relationship (*tadutpattisambandha*).

However, in Ratnākaraśānti’s refutation of Yogācāra positions, he never actually describes or refutes all three of these *Sākāravādin* sub-positions or the fourth *Nirākāravādin* position. Nonetheless, his refutation of the Sākāra “one” or “many” epistemology in the VMS could be interpreted as refuting the issues central to the three *Sākāravādin* sub-positions refuted in Śāntarakṣita’s MAk.²⁹⁸ Furthermore, his clarification in the PPU that he does not posit an identity relationship between awareness and cognitive images at the conventional level could also be interpreted as refuting the issues central to the *Nirākāravādins* of Śāntarakṣita and mentioned in the MAu.²⁹⁹ That is to say, Ratnākaraśānti’s notion of an identity relationship between

²⁹⁷ Jñānaśrīmitra’s *citrādvaitaprakāśa* position seems to propose innovations to the type of determination and connection propounded in (3) *sNa tshogs gnyis med pa*, but further research of this point is required.

²⁹⁸ The refuted sub-positions would be those contained in Ratnākaraśānti’s final summary verse. VMS (D309b2): |*re res thams cad rtogs min yang*| |*sde yis sde rtogs min nam ci*| |*nyer len tha dad can nyid phyir*| |*tshogs rnams kyis ni bkod ma yin*||

²⁹⁹ Some might also argue that the MAu’s brief refutation of a *Nirākāravādin* might be interpreted as refuting a *Nirākāravādin*-Yogācāra position in Śāntarakṣita’s MAk as well. Cf. MAu (D228b3; C616). Cf. PPU (D149a3): |*ji ltar ba lang nyid brdzun pa la*| |*ba lang gi blo gsal zhing de’i bdag nyid du gyur*

awareness and cognitive images is one in which the direct evidence of the ultimate reality *qua* awareness reveals the superimposedness, i.e. the conventional reality, of cognitive images. Thus, one might argue that even though Ratnākaraśānti does not name and argue against this *Nirākāravādin* position, he considers himself to refute the *Nirākāravādin* position—which is mentioned separately in the MAu but not separately mentioned in the PPU—merely by distinguishing his own notion of the identity relation from the notion of that *Nirākāravādin* Yogācāra position mentioned in Śāntarakṣita’s MAk.

Since Ratnākaraśānti does not argue explicitly against these four Yogācāra positions in either MAu or PPU, it may be worth considering two other enumerations of four Yogācāra positions, respectively, by Bodhibhadra and Ratnakīrti.

5.3.1.2. Bodhibhadra’s JSSn

Another well known grouping of four Yogācāra positions derives from Bodhibhadra (eleventh century), who appears to have been a contemporary of Ratnākaraśānti at Vikramaśīla. Bodhibhadra states:³⁰⁰

Here, there are two kinds of Yogācāra positions, namely the *Sākāra* and the *Nirākāra*. Of these,

(1) The *Sākāra* [position] is propounded by Dignāga and his followers, because they teach that mental cognitive images (*ākāra*) are the dependent nature (*paratantra*), as he says: “Whatever appears as if it were externally existent has the nature of an internal object of

pa dang| de las tha dad pa ma yin bzhin du yang dngos po med pa dang| sgro btags pa ma yin pa de bzhin du| gsal ba yang sngon po la sogs pa gsal bzhin pa dang| bdag nyid du grub kyang brdzun pa yin te| brdzun pa dang brdzun pa ma yin pa dag rang bzhin sna tshogs kyi mthar thug pas rdzas gcig la 'gal ba ma yin no|| ci ste de'i bdag nyid kyi gtan tshigs tsam gyi dngos po nyid dang| sgro ma btags pa nyid du bsgrubs na ni| ba lang nyid la sogs pas ma des par 'gyur la| yang sgro ma btags pa de'i bdag nyid du gtan tshigs nyid du 'dod na ni ma grub par 'gyur ro|| de bas na chos 'di dag thams cad ni gzung ba dang| 'dzin pas stong pa'i rnam par rig pa tsam zhes bya ba 'di gnas pa yin no||

³⁰⁰ Cf. Kajiyama (1965:419), where Kajiyama relied on Bodhibhadra’s division of Yogācāra into two schools to classify Ratnākaraśānti’s and Jñānaśrīmitra’s viewpoints respectively as *Nirākārajñānavāda* and *Sākārajñānavāda*. Many subsequent scholars, such as and reports that the passage was first cited by “S. Yamaguchi in *Chūkan Bukkyō Ronkō*, 308 ff.” Cf. also Funayama (2007:187) who traces the reliance on Bodhibhadra back to the mid-19th century in his discussion of the history of scholarship on these schools.

knowledge” and so on.³⁰¹ (1a) They are proponents of six kinds of consciousness.³⁰²

(2) The *Nirākāravādin* [position] is propounded by Acarya Ārya Asaṅga and his followers, because he asserts that mental cognitive images are the imagined nature (*parikalpita*), like the hair strands for one with cataracts disease (*rab rib can*) and so on, as he says: “If the mental object were established as external, there would be no nonconceptual awareness (*nirvikalpakajñāna*).³⁰³ Without that awareness, Buddhahood cannot be reached.” And likewise he says: “Since absolutely (*yang*) all objects disappear (*snang ba med*) in nonconceptual awareness, one should realize (*khong du chud pa*) objects do not exist. Since objects do not exist, representation (*vijñapti; rnam rig*) does not exist.”³⁰⁴ (2a) They propound eight consciousnesses, but (2b) some propound a single consciousness.

(1b) Some of the *Sākāravādins* also hold there to be only a single consciousness.³⁰⁵

Here, Bodhibhadra is suggesting that the four types of Yogācāra positions are (1) *Sākāravādins* who propound six consciousnesses (*vijñāna*) (2) *Sākāravādins* who propound one consciousness (3) *Nirākāravādins* who propound eight consciousnesses and (4) *Nirākāravādins* who propound one consciousness. Clearly, Bodhibhadra’s perspective is that the difference between the sub-positions is minor and based primarily upon epistemological differences, which, as a Mādhyamika, he considers subordinate to their ontological similarity. Given that Ratnākaraśānti does not appear to describe sub-positions of *Sākāravāda* or *Nirākāravāda* in these terms, it is difficult to see how these sub-positions might even correlate to the viewpoints he describes. Still, since Ratnākaraśānti considers his own school to be *Nirākāravādin*, while he

³⁰¹ In Kajiyama (1965:419), this citing was identified as Dignaga *Ālambanaparikṣā* v. 6.

³⁰² The second sub-type of the *Sākāravādins* is mentioned below at the end of this quote at 1b.

³⁰³ Cf. Frauwallner (1951:405), where he identifies *Madhyāntavibhāga* as the *Nirākāravādin* source and *Mahāyānasamgraha* as the *Sākāra* source. Cf. also Almogi (2009:151fn38).

³⁰⁴ I have translated *vijñapti* as “representation” to emphasize the logical connection with the refutation of objects. Elsewhere I usually just translate it as cognition.

³⁰⁵ Cf. JSSn (P51:b3ff.): *dir rnal 'byor spyod pa ni rnam po gnyis te-- rnam pa dang bcas pa dang| rnam pa med pa 'o| de la rnam pa dan bcas pa ni slob dpon phyogs kyi blang po la sogs pa dag gi 'dod pa ste| rnam pa gzhan gyi dbang du ston pas ji skad du-- nang gi shes bya 'i ngo bo ni| phyi rol ltar nang (snang?) gang yin te don yin zhes bya ba la sogs pa ste rnam par shes pa 'i tshogs drug tu smra ba 'o| rnam pa de med pa ni slob dpon 'phags pa thogs med la sogs pa ste| de dag rnam pa kun tu brtags pa rab rib can gyi skra shad la sogs pa ltar smra bas| don ni don tu grub 'gyur na, mi rtog ye shes med par 'gyur| de med pas na sangs rgyas nyid, thob par 'thad pa ma yin no| de bzhin du, mir rtog ye shes rgyus ba la| don kun snang ba med phyir yang| don med khong du chud par bya| de med pas na rnam rig med ces brjod cing| rnam par shes pa 'i tshogs brgyad dang| kha cig cig pur smras ba ste| gcig pu nyid ni rnam par dang bcas pa dag la yang kha cig go|*

refutes another *Nirākāravādin* position, Bodhibhadra’s classifications of two *Nirākāravādin* positions could be what Ratnākaraśānti has in mind.

5.3.1.3. Ratnakīrti’s CAP

Ratnakīrti is likely later than Ratnākaraśānti but close enough in time, perhaps, to have reflected eleventh century notions of the four Yogācāra schools. Hence, it may be worth examining briefly the four different positions Ratnakīrti mentions in *Citrādvaitaparakāśa* (CAP), namely:

- 1) *Nirākāravijñānavāda* position
- 2) A position that holds ultimate sheer luminosity connected with false cognitive images (*alīkākārayogin*).
- 3) A *Sākāravijñānavāda* position that holds there to be a false superimposition on top of true consciousness and its true cognitive images.
- 4) A *Sākāravijñānavāda* position that holds nonduality of luminosity and variegated cognitive images.³⁰⁶

Here, Ratnakīrti does not call these positions Yogācāra. This may be because this list intends to represent “all” the possible positions on cognitive images (*ākāra*) but not to exclude these positions from being held by a member of the Mādhyamika school. Also, it is worth noting that Ratnakīrti describes his own position as number (4), whereas he describes Ratnākaraśānti’s position in (2) and actually cites him. Since Ratnakīrti does not call Ratnākaraśānti’s position either *Nirākāravāda* or *Sākāravāda*, it is not clear whether Ratnakīrti would consider it to be a sub-position of either

³⁰⁶ Cf. RNA (122): *iha khalu sakalajaḍapadārtharāśau pratyākhyāte nirākṛte ca nirākāravijñānavāde pratihate cālīkākārayogini pāramārthikaparakāśamātre samyagunmūlīte ca sākāravijñānālīkatvasamārope pratisantānaṃ ca svapnavadabādhitadehabhogapraṭiṣṭhādyākāraparakāśamātrātmake jagati vya-vasthīte yasya yadā yāvadākāracakrapratibhāsam yadvijñānaṃ parisphurati tasya tadā tāvadākāracakraparīkaritāṃ tadvijñānaṃ citrādvaitam iti sthitiḥ*. I have not translated the first position *sakalajaḍapadārtharāśau* in this list, since it is not a Yogācāra position.

Nirākāravāda or *Sākāravāda*.³⁰⁷ One might interpret Ratnakīrti’s mention of *alīkākāra* as an indication that he classifies Ratnākaraśānti’s position as **Alīkākāravādin*. But this interpretation assumes that Ratnakīrti would name Ratnākaraśānti’s position based upon its establishment of cognitive images at the conventional level, not its establishment of “sheer luminosity” at the ultimate level, which is equally central to the CAP’s characterization of Ratnākaraśānti’s position. Hence, it seems unlikely that even Ratnakīrti would have actually called Ratnākaraśānti an **Alīkākāravādin* and more likely that he considered Ratnākaraśānti’s position to be a sub-position of *Nirākāravāda*. If this is so, then Ratnakīrti’s list, just like Bodhibhadra’s list, would be suggesting that *Nirākāravāda* and *Sākāravāda* each contained two sub-positions. But, since Ratnakīrti’s list lacks the distinction between Yogācāra and Mādhamika and since his way of describing the positions in these four schools is very different from Bodhibhadra’s, Ratnakīrti’s list of four schools is very different from both of the other lists of four. Furthermore, if we ask whether Ratnākaraśānti might have been refuting Ratnakīrti’s four positions, the answer is likely no, because Ratnākaraśānti’s own position is *included* among the “four.” Thus, although Ratnakīrti’s list suggests that he—like Śantarakṣita, Bodhibhadra, and Ratnākaraśānti—considered there to be four positions that we might associate with Yogācāra, these four schools cannot be the four to which Ratnākaraśānti refers in the MAu, simply because Ratnākaraśānti purports to refute four positions, while Ratnakīrti only lists three positions beside Ratnākaraśānti’s. For this reason, Ratnakīrti’s lists only help us glean that “four” might have become a standard number of epistemological positions that scholars addressed, but they do not help answer the question of which four refuted positions Ratnākaraśānti claimed to refute.

³⁰⁷ It is significant that Ratnakīrti does not call his own or Ratnākaraśānti’s viewpoint either Yogācāra or a Mādhyamika and includes his own position among those four positions. This suggests that, like Ratnākaraśānti, the main doxographical division for him was along the lines of *Nirākāra* and *Sākāra*.

5.3.1.4. Ratnākaraśānti's Refutation of Four Yogācāra Positions

If we want to figure out to what four Yogācāra positions Ratnākaraśānti refutes, we must read between the lines of his arguments themselves. In this regard, since Ratnākaraśānti's PPU and MAU appear to distinguish his own position from the *Nirākāravādin* position in Śāntarakṣita's list and his VMS appears to refute the three *Sākāravādin* positions all at once, we can surmise that Ratnākaraśānti considers himself to be refuting all four positions in Śāntarakṣita's list. We can also surmise that, since neither Bodhibhadra's nor Ratnakīrti's lists of four Yogācāra positions shows any awareness of the three *Sākāravādin*-Yogācāra positions in Śāntarakṣita's list, it seems unlikely that Śāntarakṣita's notion of four Yogācāra positions actually existed on the ground in the eleventh century when these scholars all wrote. But also, given the discrepancy between all their lists, we might question whether four distinct Yogācāra positions were actually thriving at all in the eleventh century. It could be that Ratnākaraśānti merely wished to defend *Nirākāravāda* from the well rehearsed Mādhyamika refutation found in Śāntarakṣita's and his followers' works. Also, by saying that he had refuted all four Yogācāra positions in Śāntarakṣita's list, Ratnākaraśānti effectively dissociated his own position from that refuted *Nirākāravāda* school and the particular identity relation between awareness and cognitive images they supposedly accepted. But by calling his own position *Nirākāravādin* while refuting another *Nirākāravādin* position, he must have presented other doxographers, like Bodhibhadra and Ratnakīrti, with a challenge, since they could no longer just classify his position as the same as the *Nirākāravādin* position described by Śāntarakṣita. Being a Mādhyamika, Bodhibhadra seems to have accepted Śāntarakṣita's four Yogācāra positions as a standard number but amended the contents to include Ratnākaraśānti's position, thereby creating a new standard list with two *Sākāravādin* and two *Nirākāravādin* positions. Later, perhaps, being a

Sākāravādin, Ratnakīrti seems to have accepted Bodhibhadra’s lists division in two *Sākāravādin* and two *Nirākāravādin* positions, but let Yogācāra and Madhyamaka be implicitly subsumed within those.

If my hypothesis about the progression of lists is roughly correct, we can understand Ratnākaraśānti’s refutation to be aiming not at four particular Yogācāra “scholars” in his own time, but at the four Yogācāra “positions” refuted in Śāntarakṣita’s time. Although Śāntarakṣita refutes three supposed *Sākāravādin* sub-positions one by one with the same basic argument, Ratnākaraśānti could have considered the VMS refutation of Prajñākaragupta—as the sole explicator of the logic underlying the *Sākāravāda* position—to have simultaneously refuted all three sub-positions with a single argument as well. From the perspective of Ratnākaraśānti’s list of four buddhist schools, the third school includes both Yogācāra proponents who propound Nirākāra and Mādhyamika proponents who accept the three natures according to Ratnākaraśānti’s explication of them. We can understand the MAu’s refutation of *Nirākāravādins* to correspond to the single *Nirākāravādin* position refuted by Śāntarakṣita in MAk. We can also interpret the VMS refutation of Prajñākaragupta’s *Sākāravādin* position in the VMS and those *Sākāravādins* in the PPU who rely on the same epistemological presupposition—either in a Yogācāra explanation of the ultimate or a Mādhyamika explanation of the conventional—to correspond to the three *Sākāravādin* sub-positions refuted by Śāntarakṣita in MAk, because they all ultimately incur the same faults.

To summarize, concerning the mysterious identity of the four Yogācāra positions mentioned as “refuted” in the MAhp, I have hypothesized here that Ratnākaraśānti likely had Śāntarakṣita’s list of four positions in mind. Although the three *Sākāravādin* sub-positions and the one *Nirākāravādin* position refuted by Śāntarakṣita must have been elucidated before Śāntarakṣita’s time, Ratnākaraśānti

appears to have refuted Prajñākaragupta as chief among the *Sākāravādins*, who were proponents of Yogācāra and Mādhyamika, along with the three sub-positions that relied on the same logical framework. The fact that Ratnākaraśānti does not name any opponents among his contemporaries does not mean that he did not also have had in mind actual contemporary scholars. But his general refutation strategy seems to have been to paraphrase and refute a seminal figure’s central assertion held by several sub-positions on the conventional or ultimate level. In this way, Ratnākaraśānti not only politely avoided direct criticism of his eleventh century contemporaries, but kept the discussion more theoretical and focused on his efforts to rebut Mādhyamika proponents who claim to have refuted or sublated Yogācāra and to re-interpret Mādhyamika in line with his own *Nirākāvādin* position.

5.3.2. The Three Mādhyamika Positions

In the chart, if we take the positions in the PPU, the VMS, the MAU and the MPS/MAV individually, we can discern three issues that must be addressed in order to map Ratnākaraśānti’s mention of three Mādhyamika positions onto the refutations we find in his works and to identify possible opponents. First, neither VMS nor the MPS/MAV explicitly names any positions “Mādhyamika.” Second, the PPU has only two positions that are explicitly named “Mādhyamika.” Third, the MAU alone contains three positions that are explicitly named “Mādhyamika,” i.e. (1) a certain Mādhyamika, whose position is characterized as propounding external objects, due to espousing consensus at the conventional level and as being nihilistic at the ultimate level, (2) a *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika position, and (3) a *Nirākāvādin*-Mādhyamika position. Thus, before attempting to map the “three Mādhyamika positions” onto the refutations in Ratnākaraśānti’s works, we must address the first question of whether or not the commentaries that do not contain opponents named “Mādhyamika” are

consistent in refuting the same three opponent Mādhyamika positions as those in the MAu.

This question of doxographical consistency among Ratnākaraśānti's various works cannot be adequately addressed here without going into much greater detail, but it may be worth stating that my initial research has uncovered no significant difference in any of the three positions, as refuted, within any of his commentaries—the PPU, VMS, MPS/MAV, and MAu—listed in the three different phases of the chart above.³⁰⁸ If my preliminary conclusion on this matter can be provisionally accepted as correct, then we can move to focusing the second question of who these positions appear to refer to. Among the three positions, most scholars seem to agree that (1) refers to someone from the school of Candrakīrti.³⁰⁹ Given Ratnākaraśānti's tendency to focus on founding figures, I would suggest that, although he may have had someone more contemporary in mind while writing, we simply take him to be refuting the Mādhyamika position of Candrakīrti as the colophon to the MAu

³⁰⁸ For instance, the following Tibetan MAu passage probably represents the exact same underlying Sanskrit as the PPU passage below. Cf. MAu (D228a3; C615): *rnal 'byor spyod pa pa dang | dbu ma pa shes pa rnam pa dang bcas par smra ba kha cig na re| sngon po gsal ba dag brdzun pa dang brdzun pa ma yin par 'gyur na chos 'gal ba nyid kyis na de'i bdag nyid du 'thad par mi 'gyur la| de'i bdag nyid ma yin na| sngon po la sogs pa gsal bar mi 'gyur na| sngon po la sogs pa ni gsal ba yin no zhe na| sgro ma btags pa 'am dngos por 'gyur ba 'i gsal ba las gzhan ma yin pa 'i phyir| sngon po la sogs pa ni sgro ma btags pa 'am| dngos por 'gyur ba yin no zer te| de dag gi ltar na gsal ba thams cad phyin ci ma log pa 'i rang gi ngo bo myong ba 'i phyir 'khrul pa gtan med par 'gyur ro| |des na sems can thams cad gtan du grol zhing yang dag par rdzogs pa 'i sangs rgyas nyid du 'gyur ro. Cf. PPU (D148b1): *rnal 'byor spyod pa pa dang| dbu ma pa shes pa rnam pa dang bcas par smra ba kha cig na re| sngon po dang gsal ba dag brdzun pa dang brdzun pa ma yin par gyur na| chos 'gal ba nyid kyis na de'i bdag nyid du 'thad par mi 'gyur la| de'i bdag nyid ma yin na yang sngon po la sogs pa gsal bar mi 'gyur na sngon po la sogs pa ni gsal ba yin te| sgro btags pa 'i dngos por gyur pa 'i gsal ba las gzhan ma yin pa 'i phyir sngon po la sogs pa ni sgro ma btags pa 'i dngos por gyur pa yin no zhes zer te|**

³⁰⁹ Cf., for instance, Moriyama (2013:55) who cites Matsumoto as agreeing with this identification. Compare also PPU (D152b2) with Candrakīrti's *dBu ma la jug pa* 11.vv.12-18 (D216a) : *|gang tshe zhi ba de nyid yin na de la blo gros 'jug mi 'gyur| |blo ma zhugs par shes bya 'i yul can nges par rigs pa 'ang ma yin la| |kun nas shes med pa ni shes par ji ltar 'gyur te 'gal bar 'gyur| |mkhyen po med par khyed kyis gzhan la 'di lta 'o zhes su zhig ston|| 11v.12 || ...|zhi sku dpag bsam shing ltar gsal gyur zhing| |yid bzhin nor bu ji bzhin rnam mi rtog| 'gro grol bar du 'jig rien 'byor slad rtag| 'di ni spros dang bral la snang bar 'gyur || 11v.18 || Cf. also Prasannapadā (152-7). Cf. Śāntideva's BCA (9.36): *cintāmaṇiḥ kalpatarur yathecchāparipūraṇaḥ| vineyapranīdhānābhyāṃ jinabimbaṃ tathekṣyate|*. Cf. also Prajñākaramati's commentary on that verse: *... prañīdhānavaśāc ca, yat pūrvaṃ bodhisattvā-vasthāyāṃ anekaprakāraṃ bhagavatā sattvārthasampādanam prañihitam tasyākṣepavaśāt, kulālacakrabhramaṇākṣepanyāyena anābhogena pravartanāt sarvasattvahitasukhasampādanam upapadyate|* Prajñākaramati's potter's wheel (*kulālacakra*) analogy is not mentioned in PPU, but represents the same idea and is used throughout this school.*

suggests.³¹⁰ In the section discussing the ambiguous PPU statements below, we will take up the question of how Ratnākaraśānti means to characterize his school. Before that, however, it may be helpful to discuss the evidence of PPU’s refutation of (2) the *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika position and (3) the *Nirākāravādin*-Mādhyamika position and to address the issues raised about that evidence in the ongoing debate in Japanese scholarship about whom Ratnākaraśānti was referring to there.³¹¹ In order to do so, we will look at each of the two positions individually.

5.3.2.1. Sākāravādin-Mādhyamika Position

One of the central issues to address in identifying the representative of the single *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika position involves us being able to understand, on the one hand, why Ratnākaraśānti does not attach the distinction of either “Yogācāra” or “Mādhyamika” to Prajñākaragupta when he refutes him by name in the VMS, and on the other hand, why Ratnākaraśānti refutes virtually the same position as Prajñākaragupta’s in the PPU and in the MAU without mentioning Prajñākaragupta at all, but claims that this position belongs to both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika proponents who are *Sākāravādins*.

Two solutions to this puzzle have been proposed in Japanese scholarship. The first solution takes the PPU’s *Sākāravādin*-Yogācāra position to refer to Prajñākaragupta’s position who is thought to have held a *Sākāravādin* position at the ultimate level and takes the PPU’s *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika position to refer to some unnamed Mādhyamika opponent from Śāntarakṣita’s school, who is thought to have held a *Sākāravādin* position at the conventional level. The second solution suggests

³¹⁰ Since Candrakīrti was not writing in the time of Ratnākaraśānti, he cannot be considered an “opponent” in the strict sense of the word, since he does not argue with Ratnākaraśānti. If we are seeking more contemporaries representatives of Candrakīrti’s Mādhyamika school, the *rNam thar yongs grags*, mentions three close contemporaries of Ratnākaraśānti associated with the Mādhyamika position of Candrakīrti, namely Bodhibhadra, Vidyākokila, and Adhīśa. In DBA, we can see also that Dharmakīrtiśrī cites Candrakīrti.

³¹¹ Once again, see Katsura (1981) and Matsumoto (1980) for a basic idea of the disagreement here.

that the PPU's *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika position refers to Prajñākaragupta's position and the PPU's *Sākāravādin*-Yogācāra to refer to someone else.

I cannot entirely solve the puzzle here, but I would argue that, whether or not we take Prajñākaragupta to be a Yogācāra or a Mādhyamika proponent, we can eliminate Śāntarakṣita's school as a possible *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika proponent, on the basis of Ratnākaraśānti's own explanation of the naming of his own viewpoint. That is to say, Ratnākaraśānti stated that his own viewpoint is classified as *Nirākāravāda* due to its position at the ultimate level, not the conventional level. Hence, we can take this criterion as a rule that applies to his classification of other schools, because, if he did not apply the same principle to other schools, he would have trouble defending his justification for naming his own school on the same grounds. Thus, since Śāntarakṣita's school refutes cognitive images at the ultimate level, it is unlikely that Ratnākaraśānti would call Śāntarakṣita a *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika (as some have suggested) and more likely that Ratnākaraśānti would call him a *Nirākāravādin*-Mādhyamika.³¹²

If my point about naming positions according to the ultimate level is clear, then it raises another question, namely, "Is it even possible that a Mādhyamika would hold cognitive images to be real at the ultimate level?" In answer to this question I would acknowledge that it is certainly difficult to imagine such a Mādhyamika according to the common notion of what that means, but it is a curious thing that the MPS/MAv argues against a Mādhyamika position for propounding everything to exist (*thams cad yod par smra ba*) at the ultimate level.³¹³ The implication of this characterization in the context of the MPS/MAv is that propounding "everything" to

³¹² Keep in mind here that among various doxographical classification systems, both traditional and modern, naming conventions are not follow Ratnākaraśānti's provision that it refer to the ultimate position. Hence, naming agreed upon by all parties and often are contested. Cf., for instance, Brunnholz (2011: 157), where he classifies Ratnākaraśānti as "Nirākāra-Madhyamaka" while arguing that this was a form of *gZhan-stong*.

³¹³ Cf. MPS/MAv (D108b5): *thams cad yod par smra bas brjod pa| gang rig par bya ba de ni brdzun ma yin te| shes pa 'i ngo bo bzhin no||*

exist means propounding both luminosity and cognitive images to be real—as opposed to Ratnākaraśānti’s position which holds only luminosity to be real. Hence, this MPS/MAv “everything exists” position likely refers to a *Sākāravādin-Mādhyamika*. Given that this “everything exists” ultimate position cannot be differentiated from the ultimate position that Prajñākaragupta holds, we cannot exclude Prajñākaragupta from being considered a representative of *Sākāravādin-Mādhyamika* in Ratnākaraśānti’s particular way of classifying schools. Thus, although Ratnākaraśānti may have had a particular *Sākāravādin-Mādhyamika* proponent in mind, Ratnākaraśānti clearly considers Prajñākaragupta to have been the common authority for both *Sākāravādin-Yogācāra* proponents and *Sākāravādin-Mādhyamika* proponents, who shared the same notion of ultimate reality. It may be for this reason that Ratnākaraśānti only needs to refute Prajñākaragupta in the VMS and hence, we can consider him to be refuting the same single position in the PPU, the VMS, the MPS/MAv and the MAu.³¹⁴

Furthermore, by refuting only a single position that applies to both *Sākāravādin-Yogācāra* proponents and *Sākāravādin-Mādhyamika* proponents, Ratnākaraśānti may be telling us that he does not really believe that the *Sākāravādin-Mādhyamika* proponents qualify in the first place as *real* Mādhyamika proponents at all.³¹⁵ This is supported by the fact that he refutes three Mādhyamika positions in the MPS/MAv, but noticeably claims that only the two non-*Sākāravādin-Mādhyamika* proponents are *not* followers of Nāgārjuna—i.e. they are not *really* Mādhyamika

³¹⁴ Ratnakīrti’s CAP suggests that he takes Ratnākaraśānti’s refutation of Prajñākaragupta to be the main *Sākāravādin* target. Cf. RNA (130:6) *nanv atasmims tadgraho 'pi bhramah svākāraparyavasitajñānādatirikto bahubhir bahudhā vicāryam pratyākhyātaḥ| tat katham tasminn api pakṣe na bhrāntikṣatir yenedānīm eva muktprasāṅgo na syād iti cet| tad etad bhagavato bhāṣyakārasya matavidveṣaviṣavyākulavikrośitam atikātarayati kṛpāparavaśadhiyaḥ|* Trans.—“This [thing that you] have screamed aloud (*vikrośita*)—filled (*vyākula*) with the poison of hatred (*vidveṣaviṣa*) for the system of the blessed commentator [Prajñākaragupta] whose mind obeyed [his] compassion—shows [your] extreme cowardice!”

³¹⁵ That Prajñākaragupta is the same opponent as mentioned in the PPU is supported by the fact that Ratnākaraśānti’s refutations of the two Sautrāntika positions in the PPU are the same as those referred to by name as Śubhagupta and Dharmottara in the VMS. Cf. VMS (D308a2): *|bitsun pa dge bsrungs (Śubhagupta)*. Cf. also VMS (D308a3): *bitsun pa chos mchog (Dharmottara)*.

proponents. It is also supported by the MPS/MAv doxography of the four Buddhist schools, in which we find no room for *Sākāravāda*-Yogācāra. In other words, Ratnākaraśānti may have focused on refuting only Prajñākaragupta in the VMS, because he regarded his contemporaries—who followed Prajñākaragupta’s epistemology but claimed themselves to be *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika proponents—as nothing more than *Sākāravādin*-Yogācāra proponents, who simply establish the same ultimate position through different hermeneutics.³¹⁶

Thus, although I have not solved the mystery of who the *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika proponents are, I have argued here that Śāntarākṣita cannot be their representative, because, in Ratnākaraśānti’s doxographical classifications based on his own concerns, the *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika proponents must uphold the same ultimate position as Prajñākaragupta and his followers. I am also suggesting that if in the future we are to find someone among Ratnākaraśānti’s contemporaries who fits this description, we must look for parallels in the texts of someone—not unlike Jñānaśrīmitra—who uses Mādhyamika hermeneutics to argue along the lines of Prajñākaragupta.³¹⁷

5.3.2.2. The *Nirākāravādin*-Mādhyamika Position

To solve the puzzle of who *Nirākāravādin*-Mādhyamika is, we must first reconcile the different nomenclature attached to the *Nirākāravāda* refutations found in the PPU, VMS, MAu and MPS/MAv. As the above chart shows, in both the PPU and VMS, Ratnākaraśānti names and refutes a *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* position that denies

³¹⁶ MPS/MAv (D111b3): (1) *gang zhig phyi rol gyi rang gi gzugs kyi phung po 'dod pa dang| gzhan phung po gzhi zad pa'i mtshan nyid 'khrul ba bzlog par 'dod pa de dag ni| klu sgrub kyi slob ma ma yin te| shes pa yod pa la sogs pa dgag par brjod pa'i phyir dang| sa la sogs pa sgro btags par bstan pa'i phyir ro ||(2) yang gang zhig sngon po la sogs pa dang| de shes pa gnyis brdzun par 'dra ba nyid dang| gnas par 'dra bar smra ba de dag kyang| klu sgrub kyi slob ma ma yin no||*

³¹⁷ Since Jñānaśrīmitra’s SSs appears to criticize Ratnākaraśānti’s PPU and AVS (as suggested by Tani), one might suppose that Jñānaśrīmitra could not have been an opponent in any of Ratnākaraśānti’s works. However, further research is needed to determine whether Ratnākaraśānti’s and Jñānaśrīmitra’s other works (apart from the SSs, PPU and AVS) show evidence of a back and forth conversation. To this end, we should analyze whether the *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika position in the MPS/MAv is a paraphrase of any statements found in a work by Jñānaśrīmitra.

the reality of both luminosity and cognitive images at the ultimate level.³¹⁸ In the MAu, Ratnākaraśānti does not use the name *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* at all, but characterizes a similar position held by Yogācāra and Mādhyamika simply as a *Nirākāravādin*. Finally, in the MPS/MAv, he does not mention *Nirākāravāda*, but refutes a different aspect of a similar position as holding “everything to be illusory.” A close comparison of these positions in all four texts cannot be made here, but all three contain Mādhyamika arguments against luminosity being substantially existent, i.e. ultimately real, and they all appear to be arguing from the same Mādhyamika position at the conventional and ultimate level.³¹⁹ If this is correct, then the two refutations of the *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* position in the PPU and VMS can be equated with the refutation of the *Nirākāravādin* in the MAu and of the “everything is illusory” position in MPS/MAv.³²⁰ But even if all these positions appear to hold virtually the same single Mādhyamika position, we must question whether Ratnākaraśānti does wishes them all to be associated with Yogācāra or Mādhyamika exclusively, or with both inclusively. In answer to this question, Ratnākaraśānti’s MAu includes a refutation of a single *Nirākāravādin* position held by both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika proponents. Given that Ratnākaraśānti classifies positions according to their ultimate position, we would expect *Nirākāravādin*-Yogācāra or

³¹⁸ The issue surrounding the Tib. translation of *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* in the VMS was discussed in a footnote 291 above.

³¹⁹ Each of these texts has a slightly different agenda and hence, Ratnākaraśānti appears to be focusing on different aspects of the same opposing *Nirākāravādin* position and its arguments against his own viewpoint. For instance, cf. the argument beginning in PPU (D151b5) *gal te gsal ba rdzas su yod par gyur na...* “[Objection:] if luminosity were substantially existent, then....,” and cf. MAu (D228b2): *|rnal 'byor spyod pa pa dang| dbu ma pa rnam pa med par smra ba rnams rnam par rtog pa 'i lus rdzas (rjes su P/N) su med par smra ste| de dag gi ltar na yang mngon sum gyi tshad ma ni skad cig ma dang po 'i rtog pa dang bral ba yin la| rjes su dpag pa ni med pa 'i phyir rnam pa 'di ni thams cad du dgag par nus pa ma yin no|* In the MAu passage, we should understand the phrase *rnam par rtog pa 'i lus rdzas su med par smra* “propound the nature (*lus*; *śarīra*) of conceptualization (*vikalpa*) as not substantially existent” where *vikalpa* refers to the imagination of the unreal, i.e. the dependent nature.

³²⁰ Moriyama cites Iwata *Teil I* (1991:200) as having demonstrated that the VMS and PPU are referring to the same position, since both the VMS and PPU opponent takes the luminous nature and false cognitive images to be absolutely identical. If this is correct, which it seems to be, then the single *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* position in the PPU and VMS is precisely the same as the *Nirākāravādin* position in the MAu. I agree with most of Moriyama’s excellent analysis of this passage, but not his conclusion that the *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* can be classified as a Yogācāra position. My reasons will be explained below.

Nirākāravādin-Mādhyamika proponents to hold a similar ultimate position, but to argue for it based on either Yogācāra or Mādhyamika hermeneutics. However, when we analyze the passage refuting the *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins* in the PPU, we see that Ratnākaraśānti probably considers the *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins* to represent the school of Śāntarakṣita or his followers, such as Kamalaśīla, Haribhadra, and Dharmakīrtiśrī—likely the most recent representative of this school with whom Ratnākaraśānti was in contact.³²¹

Some scholars might question whether the PPU argument against the *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* is really directed toward a Mādhyamika and whether that characterization could possibly be describing a position held by Śāntarakṣita or his followers. For this reason, we will now turn to look in greater detail at the three ambiguous PPU statements that might lead some to contest the identification that I have proposed.³²²

³²¹ Cf. MPS/MAv (D119b3): *gzhan ni 'di ltar 'dod de | ji ltar sgyu ma'i glang po snang ba ni yod pa ma yin no || de bzhin du chos thams cad kyang yod pa ma yin te | de ni med pa snang ba yin par smra ste || de bas na sgyu ma lta bu nyid chos thams cad dbu ma'i lam yin no zhes zer ro || (opponent=DBA?) de yang bden pa ma yin te | 'di ltar gal te 'di dag tshad ma med par grub na de'i phyir 'gas kyang yod par sgrub par ni mi nus so (Ratnākaraśānti's reply) || Cf. MAu (D229b1): *gzhan yang dbu ma pa chos thams cad sgyu ma lta bu nyid dbu ma'i lam yin no zhes zer te | 'di ltar gal te 'di dag tshad mas med par grub (bsgrub P/N?) na de'i phyir 'gas kyang yod pa bsgrub par mi nus so. Cf. DBA (C52-581:6): sgyu ma'i glang pos sgyu ma'i glang po gzhan zhig pham par byas pa bzhin du zhes bya ba ni ji ltar brdzun gyis glang po dang 'thab pa ni zil gyis mnan pa de bzhin du phyin ci log pas zhes brdzun gyis lam gyis rdzun gyi bdag tu lta ba las skyes pa'i nyon mongs pa las skyes pa'i phyin ci log spong ba'i rgyus na de kho na nyid mthong ba na ste | thams cad du 'gro ba'i bdag med pa mthong zhing mos pa ni rnam par grol bar 'gyur te | yang dag pa'i ye shes thob par 'gyur ro | bdag cag gi phyogs ltar na chos thams cad sgyu ma lta bu yin la de bas na nyong mongs pa la sogs pa'i sgyu ma lam gyi sgyu mas ldog pa yin pas dngos po de kho na nyid la re bar mi mthun pa'i phyogs dang gnyen por gyur pa med do |**

³²² In the following section, I present my own interpretation of statements that have been debated in Japanese scholarship for forty years. The point of dispute is what the names are and what they are referring to. My understanding of these articles in Japanese has been aided by summaries from Kenichi Kuranishi, Kazuo Kano, Shinya Moriyama, and Kengo Harimoto and discussions with them. I have cited the main articles in the bibliography. Unfortunately, given the limitations of this thesis, neither Ratnākaraśānti's long argument in the PPU nor the modern debate about the PPU argument can be recounted here or discussed in detail in order to give all readers a fuller sense of the issues involved. However, please keep in mind that my paraphrase of the relevant parts of the passage is intended to provide a summary of aspects of the argument that are not in dispute. My interpretation applies primarily to the way the names and their referents should be understood, so that my reading may contribute to that debate. For this reason, I will attempt to explain only the relevant aspects and explain my reading without reference to the arguments put forth, so that those familiar with the debate can see an alternative interpretation that may not have been considered in precisely the way I will formulate it. Once again, for a description of the basic debate, see Matsumoto (1980), Katsura (1981), Moriyama (2013).

5.3.3. The Ambiguous Statements in the PPU

Since my mapping of the doxographical classifications of all three Mādhyamika positions above depends upon the way that I understand three ambiguous statements in the PPU, I will demonstrate my interpretation of these ambiguities here. We will not be able to discuss them in detail because these three ambiguous statements apply to very large sections of text and involve interpretations of the structure of Ratnākaraśānti's argument that runs throughout the PPU. For this reason, this section will mainly attempt to sketch out my interpretation of the ambiguous statements and point readers toward the passages that guide my interpretation. First, I will give a brief summary of the three ambiguous statements to contextualize them. Then I will explain my interpretation of each sentence in a separate subsection below. To that end, the first two ambiguous statements that begin the section and the third ambiguous statement that ends it, as I interpret them, can be translated as follows:

(1) Among these [quarreling proponents of Yogācāra and Mādhyamika], the *Mādhyamika* [proponents] who assert external objects (*bahīrarthavādin*) and assert awareness with cognitive images (*sākārajñānavādin*)—[both of whom] are outside the scriptures and treatises—were refuted also by logic just before. (2) The Mādhyamika [proponents] who assert mere cognition without cognitive images (*nirākāravijñaptimātravādin*) [remain to be refuted]. To them too [I ask], why is luminosity false?³²³

...

(3) Hence, this Yogācāra system is difficult to refute.³²⁴

³²³ Cf. Moriyama (2013b:64fn10) cites Luo Hong's unpublished Sanskrit edition of the PPU: *tatra bahīrarthavādināḥ sākārajñānavādināś ca mādhyamikāḥ śāstrāgamabahīrbhūtāḥ pramaṇair api prāg eva nirastāḥ. nirākāravijñaptimātravādināḥ pariśiṣyante. teṣāṃ api...* PPU (D150a4): *de la phyi rol gyi don yod par smra ba dang| shes pa rnam pa dang bcas par smar ba dbu ma pa dag ni| lung bstan bcos dang tshad ma dag las phyi rol du gyur par sngar bzlog zin to|| rnam pa med par smra ba'i sems tsam pa 'ba' zhig lus par 'gyur te| de dag kyang ci'i phyir gsal ba brdzun pa yin par 'dod do?* I should mention here that my reading of *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* as a Mādhyamika is not accepted by all. There has been some debate about how to read the grammar in this admittedly ambiguous sentence. My interpretation that the word Mādhyamika carries over to modify *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* does not ignore the fact that the argument ends with *rnal 'byor spyod pa'i lugs 'di ni shin tu bzlog par dka' bar 'gyur ro* as will be discussed below.

³²⁴ PPU (D151b4): *rnal 'byor spyod pa'i lugs 'di ni shin tu bzlog par dka' bar 'gyur ro*. An extensive argument about luminosity's existence is found between statements (2) and (3), hence the ellipsis.

Among the three statements, the first contains a grammatical ambiguity regarding the conjunction “*ca*” which concerns the question of how Ratnākaraśānti names the two opponent positions of a “certain Mādhyamika proponent,” i.e. Candrakīrti, and the *Sākāravādins* discussed above. The second statement contains a semantic ambiguity regarding whether or not Ratnākaraśānti meant for the word *mādhyamika* to be carried over from the prior sentence and applied to *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins*. The interpretation of this second statement’s ambiguity hinges upon how we interpret the third ambiguous statement, whose ambiguous phrase ‘**this Yogācāra system**’ can be interpreted either as a reference (a) to the Yogācāra system in general, which Ratnākaraśānti has just demonstrated is simply not refuted by Nāgārjuna’s Mādhyamika logic when understood correctly or, contrary to what I have explained above, (b) to a purely Yogācāra system that belongs to Ratnākaraśānti himself. Since one might be able to interpret these three ambiguous statements in a way that contradicts my identifications of the three Mādhyamika positions and their relationship to Ratnākaraśānti’s own position, I will now address these three ambiguities individually below, provide some of the reasons for interpreting them the way that I have, and then piece these interpretations together into a single coherent explanation of the three statements.

To address the ambiguity of the first statement translated as “**Among these [quarreling proponents of Yogācāra and Mādhyamika] (*tatra*), the Mādhyamika [proponents]...were refuted also by logic just before,**” we must break it into four smaller ambiguities.³²⁵

First, the Sanskrit word *tatra* is clearly partitive but its referent is slightly ambiguous. Given the refutation that follows, it could refer to Madhyāmika proponents alone or to both Yogācāra and Madhyāmika proponents since the prior

³²⁵ For this boldface lemma and all others below, please refer back to footnotes 323 and 324 for the Sanskrit and to the main text connected with those for the full English translation.

passage and verse describes a quarrel between Yogācāra and Madhyāmika proponents. I have translated it as referring to Yogācāra and Madhyāmika, because the MAu makes clear that, at least in the case of *Sākāravādins* and *Nirākāravādins*, Ratnākaraśānti sees little difference between Yogācāra and Madhyāmika proponents at the conventional or ultimate level.

Second, the placement of the word *ca* is ambiguous, in that the word *bahirarthavādin* could be interpreted as either a freestanding noun describing proponents of external objects or as an adjective qualifying Mādhyamika proponents. Although one might argue about which reading is more likely, both are certainly possible.³²⁶ Hence, the way in which we interpret the grammar here will depend upon whether we take Ratnākaraśānti to be characterizing Śrāvakayāna proponents of external objects or referring to Mādhyamika proponents of external objects.³²⁷ In this case, given that **among those (*tatra*)** refers to Mādhyamika proponents, the term *bahirarthavādin* must be an adjective modifying Mādhyamika.

Third, the phrase **refuted also... just before** is ambiguous, because, “just before” in the previous section, Ratnākaraśānti only refutes proponents of external objects in general and does not explicitly refute any position normally associated with Mādhyamika, much less a **Bahirarthavādin*-Mādhyamika position. Nonetheless, at the beginning of the previous section Ratnākaraśānti does dismiss a certain Mādhyamika proponent, “outside scriptures and treatise,” who asserts that external objects (*bahirartha*) exist on a conventional level. Since he immediately goes on to refute external objects and concludes that the Mādhyamika proponents **outside the scriptures and treatises were refuted also by logic**, we can understand Ratnākaraśānti here to be indicating that his general refutation of external objects should be

³²⁶ For the various uses of “*ca*,” see, for instance, Hock (1991:2).

³²⁷ Cf. Moriyama (2013:55-6), where he takes the *Bahirarthavādin* as a reference to a certain Mādhyamika position identified with Candrakīrti and suggests that Matsumoto (1980) and Katsura (1981) do the same.

retrospectively understood to apply to both Śrāvakayāna proponents of external objects and to Mādhyamika proponents of external objects at the level of the conventional. Here, we should be clear that, even though Ratnākaraśānti characterizes the conventional position of that “certain Mādhyamika” as amounting to an acceptance of external objects, he does not explicitly name that “certain Mādhyamika” position **Bahirarthavādin* there or anywhere else in his other commentaries when refuting it. This is not surprising since Ratnākaraśānti also implies in the MAu that a school name is based on what it holds at the ultimate level, not the conventional level, and we can surmise that Ratnākaraśānti would also likely not name the position of this the “certain Mādhyamika” according to its implied conventional viewpoint here—possibly because his characterizes the position of nothing existing at the ultimate level as implying the absurd consequence that the external objects at the conventional level would exist, insofar as they are not superceded by any ultimate reality. That is to say, Ratnākaraśānti forces the position of this the “certain Mādhyamika” into propounding external objects and characterizes it that way, but would not likely call the school **Bahirarthavāda*, except as a polemic characterization. This is why when focusing on other aspects of the school of this “certain Mādhyamika” in his subsequent commentaries, Ratnākaraśānti does not name the school, but refers to them and refutes their ultimate position of this same school as a form nihilism (**Sarvālikatvavādin*). Therefore, the fact that Ratnākaraśānti’s summary of prior refutations in the sentence above only mentions Mādhyamika proponents and does not mention his refutation of Śrāvakayāna proponents of external objects suggest that we should understand Ratnākaraśānti’s real target in the preceding refutation of external objects to be the refutation of *any and all* Mādhyamika proponents of external objects, headed by that “certain Mādhyamika,”

whom Ratnākaraśānti goes on to refute at the ultimate level in the next section after claiming to have refuted them already.³²⁸

Fourth, there is ambiguity in the characterization ***Mādhyamika* proponents who propound awareness with cognitive images (*sākārajñānavādin*)**. When Ratnākaraśānti refutes the corresponding *Sākārajñānavādin* position in the previous section, he tells us that he is refuting *Sākārajñānavādins* who are both Yogācāra proponents and *Mādhyamika* proponents. Hence, by claiming in the above sentence *only* that he has refuted the ***Mādhyamika* proponents who propound awareness with cognitive images (*sākārajñānavādin*) just before**, there is some ambiguity in why Ratnākaraśānti would neglect to mention his refutation of the Yogācāra proponents who propound awareness with cognitive images just before. Like his mention of having already refuted the *Mādhyamika* proponents of external objects, Ratnākaraśānti actually only refutes a general *sākārajñānavāda* position in the prior section and applies it to *Mādhyamika* proponents to suggest that these were his main target.³²⁹ Hence, we might understand him to have refuted only the conventional position of the *Mādhyamika* proponents who propound awareness with cognitive images. However, unlike his mention of having already refuted the *Mādhyamika* proponents of external objects, Ratnākaraśānti does not go on to refute an ultimate position of *Mādhyamika* proponents of *sākārajñānavāda*. Thus, it is not possible to

³²⁸ In his VMS too, he refers to and refutes the position of Dharmottara and Śubhagupta as **Arthavādins* (*don yod par smra ba*) but goes on just afterward to refute a nihilistic ultimate position with a single line. VMS (D308b6): *don yod par smra ba* (= *arthavādins) *thams cad bsal*. Given that Ratnākaraśānti never explicitly refutes the position of Bhāvaviveka, some might conclude that he was unaware of Bhāvaviveka's position. However, if we take into account the fact that Ratnākaraśānti's student Adhiśa apparently saw Candrakīrti and Bhāvaviveka not as opponents—as modern scholars influenced by Tibetan doxography tend to—but as less correct and more correct members of the same school, then we can understand why Ratnākaraśānti could have considered his refutation of the two types of *bahirarthavādin* positions, i.e. Vabhāṣika and Sautrāntika, to include a refutation of Bhāvaviveka, especially given the fact that he retrospectively calls his refutation of these *bahirarthavādins* in the prior section a refutation of *Mādhyamika*. If Ratnākaraśānti did see them as part of a single school but was aware of the different implications of their establishment of the conventional external objects, it would explain why he might also delineate the ultimate position of “a certain *Mādhyamika*” from that general school as deserving separate and special refutation. For more on the Adhiśa's non-distinction between Candrakīrti and Bhāvaviveka, see Vose (2009:23-5).

³²⁹ PPU (D148b1) *rnal 'byor spyod pa pa dang| dbu ma pa shes pa rnam pa dang bcas par smra ba kha cig na re|*

understand his prior refutation as merely applying to the conventional level of Mādhyamika proponents of *sākārajñānavāda*. Furthermore, since Ratnākaraśānti’s list of the four Buddhist schools in MPS/MAV does not leave room for an independent Yogācāra position, I would argue that he intends what we might call the *Sākārajñānavādin*-Mādhyamika position to be inclusive of a *Sākārajñānavādin*-Yogācāra position. This is important to note, because in refuting only a single *Sākāravādin* position that correlates to Prajñākaragupta’s viewpoint and belongs to both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika, we saw in the previous section of this chapter that Ratnākaraśānti’s distinction between a *Sākārajñānavādin*-Yogācāra position and a *Sākārajñānavādin*-Mādhyamika position might not have amounted to much. Here, we see that, despite Ratnākaraśānti’s separation of the words Yogācāra and Mādhyamika in his PPU description, Ratnākaraśānti’s non-refutation of any *Sākārajñānavādin*-Mādhyamika position at the ultimate level suggests that he really thinks of them as a single *false* Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school—much in the same way that his MPS/MAV list presents no alternative for an independent Yogācāra—that propounds awareness with cognitive images at the ultimate level.³³⁰

Now we turn to the second ambiguous statement:

(2) The [Mādhyamika] proponents of mere cognition without cognitive images (*nirākāravijñaptimātravādin*) remain [to be refuted]. To them too [I ask], why is luminosity false?³³¹

³³⁰ Unlike the Mādhyamika proponents of *bahirarthavāda* Ratnākaraśānti would likely refer to it by the name *Sākāravāda* or *Sākārajñānavāda* since this Mādhyamika school would actually propound cognitive images at the ultimate level. For this reason, I use the abbreviated name *Sākārajñānavādin*-Mādhyamika, but not the name **Bahirarthavādin*-Mādhyamika.

³³¹ Cf. Moriyama (2013b:64fn10) cites Luo Hong’s unpublished Sanskrit edition of the PPU: *nirākāravijñaptimātravādinah pariśiṣyante. teṣāṃ api...* Some may be inclined to think *teṣāṃ api* refers not to the opponents as *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins* but to Ratnākaraśānti’s own position as *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins*. This reading is grammatically unlikely, since *teṣāṃ* requires an antecedent and since his own school would probably be expressed with some pronoun referring to “we” not “they.” Furthermore, it is based on the false idea that Ratnākaraśānti would not refute a school that shares his own *Nirākāravādin* ultimate position. In the MAU, however, we see that he does refute a school of *Nirākāravādin* that is held by both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika proponents. Thus, this interpretation of *teṣāṃ api* is highly unlikely. Cf. Umino (1968), who takes *teṣāṃ* as referring to Ratnākaraśānti’s own position.

In this second statement, the ambiguity is not, strictly speaking, grammatical. However, given that the *tatra* need not apply to the second sentence here, there is a slight ambiguity as whether or not Ratnākaraśānti intends us to understand him to be refuting *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins* who are Mādhyamika proponents, Yogācāra proponents, or both.³³² On the face of it, the force of the contrast between the two types of Mādhyamikas and the *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins* who “remain” would suggest that the *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins* are meant to be understood as Mādhyamikas. However, the answer to this ambiguity lies in whether we interpret the content of the opponent position (*pūrvapakṣa*) to be Mādhyamika—particularly the section of it leading up to his summarizing statement “This Yogācāra system is difficult to refute.”³³³ As can be seen from my translation of the sentence above, I take the term *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin*—as in the case of the *Bahirarthavādins* and the *Sākārajñānavādins* in the previous sentence—to be referring to a Mādhyamika position. However, I would argue that the characterization of *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins* who are Mādhyamika proponents refers only to a single *false* Yogācāra-Mādhyamika position, because Ratnākaraśānti never goes on to refute the *Nirākāravādins* at the conventional level and because his single refutation in the MAu of the Yogācāra and Mādhyamika proponents of *Nirākāra* suggests that they both hold the same position at the ultimate level. Nonetheless, we should note that Ratnākaraśānti’s refutation of the ultimate position of *Nirākāra*-Mādhyamika implies something different and operates in reverse of his refutation of the *Sākāravādins*. That is to say, like his refutation of *Sākārajñānavādin*-Mādhyamika, Ratnākaraśānti’s refutation of Mādhyamika proponents of *Nirākāravijñaptimātravāda* must be understood as a refutation of *Nirākāra*-Yogācāra-Mādhyamika in the sense that it

³³² Cf. Moriyama (2013:55-6), who takes this as referring to a Yogācāra opponent who is a *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin*.

³³³ PPU (D151b4): *rnal 'byor spyod pa 'i lugs 'di ni shin tu bzlog par dka' bar 'gyur ro*

applies obliquely to the *Nirākāra*-Mādhyaṃika conventional position and the *Nirākāra*-Yogācāra.³³⁴

To explain, when we look at the content of Ratnākaraśānti's argument against the *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins*, we can see that the opponent is someone from Śāntarakṣita's school because the opponent tries to prove luminosity is false based on the two inferential marks (*hetu*) used by scholars in Śāntarakṣita's school. That is to say, in the first part of the PPU argument, Ratnākaraśānti rebuts the opponent's argument that luminosity (*prakāśa*) is false, i.e. "because it is not separate" (*avyatirekāt*) from the cognitive images that are false. In the second part of the PPU argument, Ratnākaraśānti rebuts the opponent's argument that luminosity is false "because of not [being] one or many" (*gcig dang du ma dang bral ba yin no zhe na; ekānekatvaviraha*).³³⁵ Likewise in the first *Bhāvanākrama*, Kamalaśīla refutes consciousness at the ultimate level based on the very same two interrelated inferential marks (*hetu*)—i.e. "because it is not separate" (*avyatirekāt*) from something false and "because it is empty of the nature of one or many" (*ekānekasvabhāvaśūnyatvena*).³³⁶ Thus, although Ratnākaraśānti's paraphrase of the *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins* in the PPU may have been influenced by his knowledge of other commentators' arguments, it seems safe to say based on its parallels to Kamalaśīla's argument that the opponent

³³⁴ When refuting *Sākāravāda*, Ratnākaraśānti only refutes what we might have thought should be called *Sākāravāda*-Yogācāra position or a *Sākāravāda*-Mādhyaṃika position at the conventional level. But since he never refutes a *Sākāravāda*-Mādhyaṃika position at the ultimate level, he excludes a separate *Sākāravāda*-Mādhyaṃika position at the ultimate level. That implied exclusion is the reverse of this *Nirākāra*-Mādhyaṃika refutation and hence, the implications are that his refutation *includes* *Nirākāra*-Yogācāra. One might argue that *Nirākāra*-Yogācāra is merely left out because that is the position that Ratnākaraśānti holds himself. However, since the MAu mentions *Nirākāra*-Yogācāra separately from *Nirākāra*-Mādhyaṃika, we cannot understand Ratnākaraśānti to suggest that *Nirākāra*-Yogācāra is the only position left standing after all others have been refuted. Rather, we must understand him to be suggesting that his version of *Nirākāra*-Yogācāra-Mādhyaṃika is best.

³³⁵ PPU (D150b6).

³³⁶ BhK1 (203ff): *athavā tatrālīkā evāmī rūpādaya ākārah pratibhāsanta ity abhyupagamyate, tadā vijñānam apy alīkaṃ prāpnoti, vijñānasya tatsvarūpavyatirekāt, na hi svayaṃprakāśamānarūpatāvya-tirekeṇānyad vijñānasya rūpam asti. svayaṃ ca na nirbhāsante rūpādayaḥ. teṣāṃ ca vijñānasvarūpā-pannānām alīkatve sarvaṃ eva vijñānam alīkaṃ abhyupetaṃ syāt. tasmān "māyopamaṃ ca vijñānam" ity uktaṃ bhagavatā. tasmād ekānekasvabhāvaśūnyatvena paramārthato 'līkā evāmī sarvabhāvā iti niścitam etat| ayaṃ cārtha ukto bhagavatā laṅkāvatāre--"yathaiṃ darpaṇe rūpam ekatvānyatvavar-jitam| drśyate na ca tatrāsti tathā bhāveṣu bhāvatā|"* ity ekatvānyatvavarjitam iti ekatvānyatvavarhitam ity arthaḥ.

position in the PPU is a Mādhyamika proponent, like Kamalaśīla, who follows Śāntarakṣita's school. If we would like to know what other contemporary *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins* Ratnākaraśānti might have had in mind, it would have to be someone who holds the same position in the ultimate and argues along these two lines.³³⁷

Some modern scholars might question whether anyone from Śāntarakṣita's school can be appropriately classified as *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins*, since Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla often seem to hold *Sākārajñānavāda* on the conventional level. Here, it is necessary to recall what I have mentioned above about Ratnākaraśānti naming positions according to his own doxographical classification principles. For this reason, it is irrelevant whether Śāntarakṣita or Kamalaśīla would call themselves *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin*. Secondly, since Kamalaśīla establishes *Vijñaptimātratā* on the conventional level and refutes cognitive images (*ākāra*) on the ultimate level, the name *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* is appropriate for Kamalaśīla's position according to Ratnākaraśānti's doxographic principles and concerns.³³⁸ This means that even if Śāntarakṣita or others hold *Sākārajñānavāda* at the conventional level, they should be called *Nirākāravādin* according to Ratnākaraśānti, since they refute those cognitive images at the ultimate level. Thirdly, in the middle of the argument against the *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin*, Ratnākaraśānti tells the opponent that his stated position is inadvertently leading him into holding a *Sākāra* position that

³³⁷ It is not clearly stated, but some modern scholars seem to take these two inferential marks as two different opponents trying to refute Ratnākaraśānti. For instance, see Moriyama (2013:56) who seems to read the first inferential mark as belonging to a Yogācāra opponent and the second inferential mark as belonging to another Mādhyamika opponent. Given that Kamalaśīla uses both inferential marks together in dependence upon each other, I do not see the justification for assigning these two inferential marks to two different opponents under one name. Certainly, the "neither one nor many" argument can be used by anyone to refute a position that they disagree with. But the use of these two inferential marks together by Kamalaśīla is significant for identifying the opponent in this particular passage.

³³⁸ Despite their differences, there are many other similarities between Ratnākaraśānti's notion of the *Nirākāravādin* position and Kamalaśīla's. They both refute external objects by proving the *Vijñaptimātratā* and then disprove the cognitive images as conventional, not ultimate. Also, in doing so, they both rely on the *Nirākāravādin* arguments *vyāpakaviruddhopalabdhi* or *vyāpakānupalabdhi* in contrast to those employed by *Sākāravādin*-s like Prajñākaragupta.

was just refuted.³³⁹ Ratnākaraśānti’s comment here suggests that, despite his own characterization of Śāntarakṣita’s school as *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin*, Ratnākaraśānti was aware that Śāntarakṣita’s position veered close to the *Sākārajñānavādins*. Thus, whether one thinks that Ratnākaraśānti truly believed the school of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla was *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* or that he just was polemically calling them that name, it seems quite likely that this is how he wanted their school to be understood in the PPU.

(3) “This Yogācāra system is difficult to refute.”³⁴⁰

There is one last point to address with regard to the identity of Ratnākaraśānti’s own position and that of the *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins*, because some scholars have pointed to Ratnākaraśānti’s conclusion to the argument against the *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins* as a sign that he regards himself as a pure Yogācāra debating with another pure Yogācāra. Simply stated, the problem with this interpretation regarding Ratnākaraśānti’s own position is that it neglects Ratnākaraśānti’s agenda to prove that his own school is the *true* Mādhyamika position. The statement here that the Yogācāra system is difficult to refute should be interpreted in line with his other statements in the PPU that frame this section. Firstly, we know that “this Yogācāra system is difficult to refute” does not mean that Ratnākaraśānti sees his own viewpoint as purely Yogācāra, because in the MAu after claiming that the seminal Mādhyamika and Yogācāra scholars all held his same *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint, Ratnākaraśānti also states, “The *artha*—that [both] Yogācāra and Mādhyamika hold as equivalent established conclusions—is difficult to refute.”³⁴¹ Secondly, we must understand Ratnākaraśānti’s conclusion of the argument in light of the PPU’s thesis statement that introduces the argument against *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins*.

³³⁹ PPU (D151a1): |de lta na ni sngon po dang gsal ba la bye brag med pa’i phyir rnam pa dang bcas pa’i tshul khas blangs par ’gyur te| de yang sngar bzlog zin to||

³⁴⁰ PPU:(D151b4): |rnal ’byor spyod pa’i lugs ’di ni shin tu bzlog par dka’ bar ’gyur ro||

³⁴¹ MAu (D226a5; C610) |de lta bas na rnal ’byor spyod pa pa dang | dbu ma grub pa’i mtha’ mtshungs pa yin no| |de lta bas na don ’di ni shin tu bzlog par dka’ ba nyid yin no|

Previously, we had provisionally reformulated Ratnākaraśānti’s implied thesis as: “The established conclusions of *Nirākāra*-Yogācāra and Śāntarakṣita’s Mādhyamika, when understood correctly, have only a slight difference.”³⁴² But, right before the argument against *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins*, Ratnākaraśānti explains the slight difference as follows:

The difference is just this much: The Yogācāra [position] is that the sheer luminosity, which is the inherent nature of phenomena, exists as a real substance, whereas the Mādhyamika [position] is that it does not exist as a real substance. This itself is a baseless quarrel of Mādhyamika [scholars] with Yogācāra.³⁴³

The agenda is expressed in the final line, i.e. “This itself is a baseless quarrel of Mādhyamika with Yogācāra.” Given that this is introducing the argument, we can see that Ratnākaraśānti’s intention here is to demonstrate that Mādhyamika cannot refute Yogācāra, so that he can put forth his own interpretation of Nāgārjuna and claim that he is both a Yogācāra and a Mādhyamika, as he does with his MPS/MAv doxographical list of the four Buddhist schools. Ratnākaraśānti’s thesis statement also shows that he considers *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* itself to be the viewpoint of a Mādhyamika, who is trying to refute Yogācāra. Thus, if we read the PPU sentence “this Yogācāra system is difficult to refute” in light of these two statements by Ratnākaraśānti, then we can see that he is merely concluding his rebuttal of the arguments put forth in Śāntarakṣita’s so-called Yogācāra-Mādhyamika position by reformulating the *Yogācāra* part of the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika position “correctly” in terms of his own *true* Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school.³⁴⁴ Furthermore, Ratnākara-

³⁴² The *Sākāravādins* and Candrakīrti school are not really included in his thesis that the Yogācāra and Mādhyamika schools have the same established conclusion. We will look below out how he addresses those positions.

³⁴³ Cf. PPU (D150a2): |’di ltar rnal ’byor spyod pa pa ni chos rnams kyi rang bzhin gnyug ma gsal ba tsam ni rdzas su yod par ’dod pa yin la| dbu ma pa ni rdzas de yang mi ’dod de| khyad par ’di yang ming tsam du rtogs so||des na rtsa ba med par rnal ’byor spyod pa pa rnams dang| dbu ma pa rnams lhan cig tu rtsod pa ni sbye bo shin tu gnas ngan pa nyid|

³⁴⁴ Since Amogha calls the MAu *Vijñaptimadhyamakopadeśa* in his colophon, he may have seen Ratnākaraśānti’s agenda as re-explaining Śāntarakṣita’s *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādinmadhyamaka* in his own way. Moriyama (2014) has convincingly shown that Ratnākaraśānti effectively does this with the one and many argument in the MPS/MAv.

śānti's classification of his own viewpoint—in the third place among the four Buddhist schools—as both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika is really just to say that both Yogācāra proponents and Mādhyamika proponents hold his same single *true Nirākāravādin* viewpoint, which subsumes the correct understanding of both Yogācāra and Mādhyamika. Thus, this statement about this Yogācāra system being difficult to refute is not indicating that his own viewpoint is merely Yogācāra.

Therefore, whether or not we agree with Ratnākaraśānti's doxographical classifications, it is important to understand his statements completely in his own terms before attempting to interpret them. In the MAu, Ratnākaraśānti says that the same *Sākāravādin* position belongs to both Yogācāra proponents and Mādhyamika proponents. He also says that the same *Nirākāravādin* position belongs to both Yogācāra proponents and Mādhyamika proponents. But in the first case, Ratnākaraśānti refutes only Prajñākaragupta's *Sākāravādin*-Yogācāra position in the VMS and claims it refutes *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika proponents too in the MAu. Likewise, in the second case, Ratnākaraśānti refutes only Śāntarakṣita's *Nirākāravādin*-Mādhyamika position and claims that, through this, he has also refuted the *Nirākāravādin*-Yogācāra position. Given that Ratnākaraśānti pays little if any attention to refuting either a *Sākāravādin*-Mādhyamika or a *Nirākāravādin*-Yogācāra, I would argue that, when he says that a position belongs to both Yogācāra proponents and Mādhyamika proponents, it is because he does not see a real boundary between proponents who argue for similar positions based on either Yogācāra and Mādhyamika hermeneutics and because he aims to argue, most explicitly in the MAu and MPS/MAv, that there is only one *true Nirākāravādin* system that can be explained based on either Yogācāra or Mādhyamika hermeneutics. Although he may have had in mind contemporaries who called themselves either Yogācāra or Mādhyamika in both *Sākāravādin* and *Nirākāravādin* positions, his polemic agenda is aimed at re-

drawing the map of Buddhist schools—as his polemic MPS/MAv list of the four Buddhist schools tells us at the end of his arguments—and for this reason he attacks mainly founding figures of various schools rather than less well-known contemporaries, whom he probably considered too far beneath his level to even bother attacking. Certainly, his MPS/MAv and MAu commentaries were arguing that no published Mādhyamika philosopher before him had ever understood Nāgārjuna correctly.

We may adopt other doxographical systems different from Ratnākaraśānti's and argue that he is really just a Yogācāra propounding something akin to **Alīkākaravāda*. Certainly, there is some truth to this, if we step outside of his classification system. However, if we do call him either **Alīkākaravāda*-Yogācāra or *Nirākāra*-Yogācāra, then we should be clear that we are making this assessment based on doxographical presuppositions that are not his own.³⁴⁵ Also, we should be very careful to not interpret the statements he makes within his commentaries, based on our own assessment of what his system boils down to.

Thus, in his own polemic terms, the three Pseudo-Mādhyamika (*dbu ma'i ltar snang ba*) positions are:

(1) Candrakīrti is just a plain Pseudo-Mādhyamika who does not hold any view and hence, implies the consensus view that external objects are real.

(2) Prajñākaragupta is, by default, a *Sākāravādin*-Yogācāra-Pseudo-Mādhyamika who holds everything to be real.

(3) Śāntarakṣita is a *Nirākāravādin*-Yogācāra-Pseudo-Mādhyamika who holds everything to be false like an illusion.

³⁴⁵ The doxographical classifications of his various Mādhyamika opponents, such as Advayavajra or Sahajavajra, for instance, will not tell us how Ratnākaraśānti understands the schools. Many times they are based on different criteria for their divisions. Cf. Matsumoto (1980/1981).

We can find other more contemporary Mādhyamika proponents who Ratnākaraśānti might have also had in mind, but their viewpoints at the ultimate level will not differ substantially from these three. Since Ratnākaraśānti is just paraphrasing the Mādhyamika positions opposed to his own, for our general purposes, we can understand him to be aiming his arguments at all commentators who follow those founders.³⁴⁶

This concludes the section on mapping the three Mādhyamika proponents and four Yogācāra proponents onto the positions refuted in the text. The last brief section of this chapter will consider the role of Ratnākaraśānti's teacher Dharmakīrtiśrī in how he refutes two of these positions.

5.4. Dharmakīrtiśrī's Viewpoint

In the previous sections of this chapter, I argued that Ratnākaraśānti's refutations primarily take aim at the founding figures of the various schools that he refutes. However, it is interesting that even while his arguments got bolder, Ratnākaraśānti never mentions any personal names in connection with Śāntarakṣita's or Candrakīrti's positions. In this section, I will just briefly sketch out why this may have had something to do with his personal relationship with his teacher Dharmakīrtiśrī and the viewpoint that he held, so that it can open up possible avenues for future research.

Little is known about Dharmakīrtiśrī's viewpoint and I have not been able to examine Dharmakīrtiśrī's works in detail, but from my reading, the fact that Dharmakīrtiśrī was an eclectic Mādhyamika scholar, is attested in the three sub-commentaries that he wrote. The first sub-commentary is the DBA, in which he closely follows the AAv by Haribhadra who explains the Prajñāpāramitā in accord with Śāntarakṣita's philosophical position. The other two sub-commentaries concern

³⁴⁶ In Śāntarakṣita's school, this would include Kamalaśīla, Haribhadra, or even slightly variant positions like that of Jñānagarbha or Kambala. In Candrakīrti's school, this might include Śāntideva and Prajñākaramati.

the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* by Śāntideva, who follows Candrakīrti's position.³⁴⁷ Since Tibetans appear to classify Dharmakīrtiśrī as both as a *Vijñānamātravādin* and as a Mādhyamika, one might wonder whether Dharmakīrtiśrī wrote sub-commentaries on these authors' works in order to interpret them differently somehow.³⁴⁸ However, we can easily see that Dharmakīrtiśrī is outspokenly dedicated to Mādhyamika in his DBA, where he cites Candrakīrti as follows:

This too is explained in the *Madhyamakāvātāra*:

Outside of the path directly from Nāgārjuna, there is no means for [attaining] peace. It lacks the [teachings on] conventional and ultimate reality. Because of lacking those, it is not [something that] accomplishes liberation.

And it is said:

The reality (*de kho na nyid; tattva*) of Mādhyamika is reasonable (*rigs pa; yukta*) for those with the predisposition (*rigs pa; gotra*) for it (*tat*). Due to this, even if just an ordinary person hears of emptiness, [he or she] will attain inner joy again and again. [His or her] eyes will pour forth with tears. [His or her] body hairs will also be made to stand [on end].

It was by force of his disposition that Noble Asaṅga explained (*pratipanna*) [his viewpoint] based on Maitreya, who was like a

³⁴⁷ **Bodhisattvacaryāvatāraṣaṭtrimśatpiṇḍārtha* (*byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i don sum cu rtsa drug bdsus pa*) and **Bodhisattvacaryāvatārapīṇḍārtha* (*byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i don bdsus pa*). For more information, see Eimer (1981:74). I have not been able to examine his commentaries on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* since they came to my attention too late. More research is needed to see how closely he follows Candrakīrti, but Eimer (1981:78) highlights his use of the term *prādhānyārtha* to describe his commentary on *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*. Since the idea of a *prādhānyārtha* is a major concept for Haribhadra, as we will see in the last chapter of this thesis, my suspicion would be that Dharmakīrtiśrī comments upon *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* from the perspective of Śāntarakṣita/Haribhadra.

³⁴⁸ The Tibetan evidence about his classification that I have been able to find is scarce and not very reliable, but suggests that Dharmakīrtiśrī was classified both a Yogācāra and a Mādhyamika scholar. For instance, see Pha-bong-kha-pa dpal-bzang-po's comments in *gDams ngag bdud rtsi'i snying po* (D334b3): *gser gling pa ni dang por sems tsam pa'i lugs kyi lta ba 'dzin pa la| phyis dbu ma par zhugs par gsung yod*. Eg, according to Thub-bstan-lhun-po's *Grub pa'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa gsal bar bshad pa* in ACIP 6-s0063m (011a3): *gser gling pa las brgyud pa'i blo sbyong 'ga' zhig gi lta ba'i 'gros ni sems tsam rnam rdzun pa'i lugs dang mthun par snang ngo ||* I have been only able to access an electronic copy of this text through TBRC under the name *Bod sil bu'i byung ba brjod pa shel dkar phreng ba*. Another unnamed text in ACIP s6370me8 reads: *bdun pa gser gling pa'i lta ba rang sde sems tsam rnam rdzun pa'i lta ba yin tshul gzhung tshad ldan mang por bshad pas de mu stegs pa dang mthun tshul byung ba la yid brtan med dam snyam lags*. Also, *Kun gyi bcud bsdus gdams ngag bdud rtsi'i snying po* ACIP s0004m (334b3): *gser gling pa ni dang por sems tsham pa'i lugs kyi lta ba 'dzin pa la / phyis dbu ma par zhugs par gsungs yod|* Some Tibetan sources classify him as *Sākāravāda-vijñānavādin*.

completely, perfect Buddha, for the sake of beings. Hence, there is no fault.³⁴⁹

Here, Dharmakīrtiśrī is explaining that Mādhyamika is superior, but the Mind Only position of Asaṅga should not be faulted, because it was taught for the sake of beings. It is interesting that Dharmakīrtiśrī considers the adoption of a particular viewpoint as deriving from an inherent predisposition (*gotra*).³⁵⁰ It might suggest that, despite being a Mādhyamika proponent, he held ideas about *gotra* that were closer to Yogācāra explanations of it. Whatever the case, his citation of Candrakīrti should not be taken as indicating that he was following Candrakīrti's school in interpreting Haribhadra's AAv, but rather that Dharmakīrtiśrī is slightly eclectic in his approach. But no matter how eclectic he may be, he uses only Mādhyamika hermeneutics and does not even mention cognitive images—one of the primary concerns of Ratnākaraśānti. It is also difficult to discern any real difference in Dharmakīrtiśrī's writings from Haribhadra's AAv and Śāntarakṣita's MAk.³⁵¹ For instance, Dharmakīrtiśrī establishes the two

³⁴⁹ DBA (52-366): *de yang dbu ma la 'jug pa las| slob dpon klu sgrub zhal snga'i lam nas ni phyi rol gyur pa'i zhi ba'i thabs ma yin| de ni kun rdzob yang dag bden las nyams| de las nyams pas thar pa grub yod min| zhes bshad pa dang| dbu ma'i de kho na nyid ni de'i rigs kho na la rigs pa yin te| 'di nyid las so so'i skye bo nyid na'ang stong nyid thos| nang gi dga' ba yang dang yang du thob| dga' ba las byung mig ni mchi mas brlan| lus kyi spu ldang ba yang skye bar 'gyur| zhes gang bshad pa yin no| 'phags pa thogs med kyi zhal snga nas kyi (kyis P/N) dang| 'phags pa byams pa las yang dag par rdzog pa'i sangs rgyas dang 'dra bar rang gi bsam pa'i dbang gis sems can gyi don du rtogs pa yin pas nyes pa med do| Cf. DBA Guan di/Hodo Nakamura (unpublished edition): *yad uktaṃ madhyamakāvatare--ācāryānāgarjunapādāmārggād bahirgatānām na śivābhyupāyaḥ| bhraṣṭā hi te samvṛtītatvasatyāt tadbhṛansataś cāstī na mokṣāsiddhiḥ|| 6.79 || madhyamakatatvaś ca tadgotrānām eva yuktaḥ| yad uktaṃ atraiva| pṛthagjanatve 'pi nīsamya śūnyatām pramodam antar labhate muhur mmuhuh| prasādajāsrāvilajātalocanas tanūruhotphullatanuś ca jāyate|| 6.4 || āryāsaṅgapādā apy āryamaitreyāt sambuddhād iva svāśayavaśena vijñān[Tib.=sattv]ārthapratipannā ity adoṣaḥ| Tib. differs from the Skt. MS in the last sentence in a significant way.**

³⁵⁰ It is interesting in light of what we saw above, namely that Adhīśa expressed his adoption of Candrakīrti's viewpoint despite Ratnākaraśānti's attempts to convince him otherwise, as a matter of his own "faith." In both their statements, we can see the tacit recognition of the fact that reason is always guided by intuition. Certainly, that Adhīśa, Ratnākaraśānti, and Jñānaśrīmitra all adopted different viewpoints from their own teacher suggests that despite their natural indebtedness to their teacher, they were dedicated to spelling out their own intuitions through logic. That Dharmakīrtiśrī's students were all devoted to him but propounded different viewpoints may be testimony to his having been a great minded teacher who encouraged them all to argue whatever made sense to them rather than taking it personally that they did not agree with his own viewpoint. Given that Nag-tsho suggests that he sent Adhīśa to study with Ratnākaraśānti, Dharmakīrtiśrī may have even been later convinced by Ratnākaraśānti's arguments.

³⁵¹ Cf. for instance, DBA (C52-579): *dbu ma'i rgyan las| rnam par dag pa'i rgyu las ni| |'bras bu rnam par dag pa 'byung| yang dag ltas byung tshul khrims kyi| |yan lag la sogs rnam dag bzhin| zhes bya ba dang| rnam 'grel las| lan 'ga' thabs ni rnam pa zhig| dus kyang namg du 'di yis ni| bsalabs pas de la yon tan dang| nyes pa bsal bar gyur pa yin| zhes gang bshad pa yin no| This section contains*

realities according to the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika of Śāntarakṣita's school, as he explains when commenting on Haribhadra's words as follows:³⁵²

Due to that and so on [means the following.] There is the nature of under-estimation (*skur pa 'debs pa; apavāda*), due to that cause [which is thinking] it is impossible to be liberated from fixation on the things just explained and it is unfeasible to awaken. [There is also the nature of] over-estimation (*sgro 'dogs pa; samāropa*), [which is thinking] that the ultimate reality and so on is a [real] disprover (*gnod pa byed pa; bādhaka*) in regard to the absence of self. **Due to that** [nature], [one should] (a) remove (*bsal*) [the under-estimation and over-estimation] by seeing suchness through the reasoning of the [absence of] a singular or multiple nature and so on in order to clear away (*bsal*) doubts regarding a real nature (*ngo bo nyid yod pa*) [and one should] (b) come to know *this* alone without making the conventional or ultimate reality a disprover (*gnod pa byed pa; bādhaka*) in regard to the absence of self and so on for any phenomena at all. [Then one] should contemplate and meditate upon the nature [of everything being] like an illusion [which means that] the form aggregate (*gzugs kyi phung po; rūpaskandha*), due to arising from the twelve links of ignorance and so on, is interdependently arisen as the form aggregate and so on and [that] the real nature (*yang dag pa'i ngo bo nyid*) at the conventional [level] is superficial (*vyavahāra*), empty (*dben pa; viveka*), and essenceless (*rang bzhin med pa; asvabhāva*).

He also states:

This is [what Haribhadra and I] think: If the awareness that is the Blessed [*Prajñāpāramitā*] has the nature of existing, then because of grasping existence, [one] will not come to be perfectly liberated and the [*Prajñāpāramitā/Abhisamayālaṃkāra*] text will come to have a

DBA discussion of causality. Cf. DBA (C52-580): ... ngo bo nyid yod par dogs pa bsal na gcig dang du ma'i rang bzhin la sogs pa'i tshad mas de kho na nyid mthong bas bsal...

³⁵² DBA (C580:9): **gang gi phyir zhes bya ba la sogs pa smos pa yin te| gang gi phyir bshad ma thag pa'i dngos po la mngon par zhen pa las grol bar mi 'thad cing byang chub pa mi rung ba rgyu de'i phyir skur pa 'debs pa ste| bdag med pa la gnod pa byed pa'i don dam par yod pa la sogs pa sgro 'dogs pa'i ngo bo ste| ngo bo nyid yod par dogs pa bsal na gcig dang du ma' rang bzhin la sogs pa'i tshad mas de kho na nyid mthong bas bsal cing chos gang la yang bdag la sogs pas gnod pa kun rdzob dang don dam par ma byas par 'di nyid shes par gyur pa na ma rig pa la sogs pa yan lag bcu gnyis las kun tu 'byung ba yin pa'i phyir gzugs kyi phung po la sogs pa ste| gzugs kyi phung po la sogs pa rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba yin zhing kun rdzob tu yang dag pa'i ngo bo nyid de tha snyad du dben pa rang bzhin med pa ste| sgyu ma dang mtshungs pa'i ngo bor brtag par bya zhing bsgom par bya'o|** He continues on here with the common Śāntarakṣita example that Ratnākaraśānti cites in MPS/MAv. | *dis cir 'gyur zhe na| de ltar zhes bya ba la sogs pa smos pa yin te| sgyu ma'i glang pos sgyu ma'i glang po gzhan zhig pham par byas pa bzhin du zhes bya ba ni ji ltar brdzun gyis glang po dang 'thab pa ni zil gyis mnan pa de bzhin du phyin ci log pas zhes bdrzun gyis lam brdzun gyi bdag tu lta ba las skyes pa'i nyon mongs pa las skyes pa'i phyir ci log spong ba'i rgyus na de kho na nyid mthong ba na ste| thams cad du 'gro ba'i bdag med pa mthong zhing mos pa ni rnam par grol bar 'gyur te| yang dag pa'i ye shes thob par 'gyur ro| bdag cag gi phyog ltar na chos thams cad sgyus ma lta bu yin la de bas na nyon mongs pa la sogs pa'i sgyu ma lam gyi sgyu mas ldog pa yin pas dngos po de kho na nyid la re bar mi mthun pa'i phyogs dang gnyen por gyur pa med do| de'i phyir kho bo cag la sngar smras pa'i thar pa mi 'thad pa'i nyes pa yod pa ma yin no zhes bya bar dgongs so|*

provisional meaning.³⁵³ It is only due to the nature of illusion-[like] nondual awareness that the explanation through the literal meaning alone (*sgra ji bzhin pa nyid*) can be easily realized and [one] will come to be perfectly liberated due to the lack of fixation (*mngon par zhen pa; abhiniveśa*) on the extremes of existence and nonexistence and so on.³⁵⁴

Thus, Dharmakīrtiśrī follows Haribhadra closely and we might consider him among the followers of Śāntarakṣita's school that are refuted as *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādins*, although he clearly also had some affinity for Candrakīrti's thought. This raises the question: Was Dharmakīrtiśrī the reason that Ratnākaraśānti does not call the two Mādhyamika opponents by name? Is it possible that Ratnākaraśānti did not state their names out of some sort of deference to his teacher that wore thinner as he gained confidence as a scholar?³⁵⁵ Does Ratnākaraśānti's naming of the opponent position *Nirākāravijñaptimātravādin* have anything to do with the fact that he saw himself as part of the same school as his own teacher?

Further research is needed to determine whether any aspect of Dharmakīrtiśrī's eclecticism can give us a clearer picture of Ratnākaraśānti's and Dharmakīrtiśrī's relationship. But whatever the case, for now, we are safe in considering him to be a Yogācāra-Mādhyamika who holds a position very similar to Śāntarakṣita and Haribhadra. He is likely just being refuted along with every other follower of that school—but might represent a special case whose works should be further examined.³⁵⁶ That said, even though the annotated translation in the final chapter will

³⁵³ The *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* is a summary of *Prajñāpāramitā* and is not distinguished here from the sūtra.

³⁵⁴ DBA (52-365:22ff): 'di snyam du sems te| gal te bcom ldan 'das yum gyi ye shes yod pa'i ngo bo yin na ni yod par 'dzin pas yang dag par grol bar mi 'gyur zhing gzhung yang drang ba'i don du 'gyur ro| sgyu ma lta bu'i gnyis su med pa'i ye shes kyi ngo bo nyid kyi (kyis P/N) ni sgra ji bzhin pa nyid yin pa'i phyir bshad pa rtogs sla ba dang| yod pa dang med pa la sogs pa'i mtha' la mngon par zhen pa med pa'i phyir yang dag par grol bar 'gyur ro|

³⁵⁵ It certainly could be the case, since Ratnākaraśānti tells us by name who held the *Sautrāntika* and *Sākāravādin* positions that he refutes.

³⁵⁶ I have had little time to read the commentary, but I find no evidence of Dharmakīrtiśrī having held an opinion about the *dharmakāya* that was substantively different from Haribhadra's, as Adhīśa suggests in the DBA (C52-609:21ff) as follows while commenting on *dharmakāya*: **chos** ni dran pa nye bar gzhas pa la sogs pa 'o| de'i bdag nyid can gyi sku gang yin pa ni ye shes kyi phra rab bsags pa 'o| de mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa ni **ye shes** so| de yang ngo bo nyid kyi sku la sogs pa 'i dbye bas rnam pa bzhi yin pass zhes by ba yang dag par na gcig yin du zin kyang ngo bo nyid kyi sku

unpack Ratnākaraśānti's refutation of only Haribhadra as the seminal explicator of *Prajñāpāramitā* in Śāntarakṣita's school, we will see that the fact that Dharmakīrtiśrī made Haribhadra's definition of *Prajñāpāramitā* the centerpiece of his commentary may have influenced Ratnākaraśānti to re-define *Prajñāpāramitā* in response.³⁵⁷

Having described Ratnākaraśānti, his viewpoint, his doxography, his likely main opponents, and a possible reason for his deference, we are now ready to look at the introductory section of the *Sāratamā* and see how Ratnākaraśānti debates Haribhadra's definition of *Prajñāpāramitā*. However, prior to turning to the annotated translation, it may be useful to explain the MSS on which my Sanskrit and Tibetan editions are based and to introduce the translation.

la sogs pa'i bye brag gi rgyus yod pas rnam pa bzhi yin no | Cf. DBA (C52-610:08): *ye shes kyi bdag nyid 'jig rten las 'das pa ni phyi'i 'jig rten pa'i ngo bo nyid med pa'i phyir ro* | *chos kyi dbying kyi ngo bo nyid kyi zhes bya ba ni gnyis su med pa'i ye shes kyi bdag nyid can yin pa'i phyir ro*. Commenting on Cf. Amano (103:25a3): *iti akṛtimārthena māyopamavijñānasarvadharmapratipatyādihigataḥ svābhāvikaḥ kāyaḥ* DBA (C611:13): *de bas na lam gyi 'bras bu yin pa'i phyir ngo bo nyid kyi sku ji ltar 'grub ce na* | **rnam par shes pa** zhes bya ba la sogs pa smos te | **rnam par sgyu ma lta bus** dmigs par bya ba la sogs pa rang bzhin gyis stong pa'i sems kyi **chos thams cad** cas bya ba dran pa nye bar gzhas pa la sogs pa rtogs shing mthong ba gang yin pa des thob pa ni shes pa yin no (P/N na) | *phyi rol lta ba rnams kyi ni gnyi ga yod pas yul dang yul can nyid dang* | *rgyu dang 'bras bu'i dngos po'i mtshan nyid du 'thad pa yin gyi* | *'dir ni sgyu ma'i skyes bu ltar spyad par bya'o* | zhes smos pas yang dag par na yul dang yul can med pa'i phyir lam gyi yul nyid ma yin no | *de bas na kun rdzob tu de'i yul yin na yang ngo bo nyid kyi sku 'bras bu nyid ma yin pas bcos ma ma yin par ji ltar 'gyur zhes bya bar dongs so* | DBA (C382:7): *don de dag nyid skad cig ma gcig gis rtogs pas na skad cig mngon rdzogs byang chub po* | *skad cig ma gnyis par bcos ma ma yin pa'i mtshan nyid 'dzin pa'i ye shes kyi skur mngon par byang chub pas chos nyid kyi bdag nyid can gyis sku ni chos kyi sku'o* | Dharmakīrtiśrī speaks here of a *ye shes kyi sku*, instead of Haribhadra's *ye shes cho sku*. Cf. DBA (C381:8) **kun tu 'gro ba ni chos kyi dbyings khyab pa'i shes pa'o** | **de rtogs pa ni mngon sum du byed pa'o** | Dharmakīrtiśrī is commenting here on Haribhadra's AAv(7:2b5): ... *sarvatragadharmadhā-tuprativedhalakṣaṇapramuditādibhūmyadhigamānukramaṇa sarvākāraṇa sākṣatkurviran*.

³⁵⁷ See Adhīśa in PhD (99-674:4): *gser gling śānti rnam gnyis kyi* | *mngon rtogs bdag nyid bdun yang ste* | *shes rab pha rol phyin bdag 'dod* | | *'bras bu chos sku mdzad pa yin* | *brgyad ka mngon rtogs seng bzang dang* | *bud dha shri' dzā na 'ng bzhed*

PART TWO: The Sāratamā

6. Preface to the Editions

In the appendix to the dissertation, I have provided a Tibetan edition of the entire first chapter of the *Sāratamā*, a Sanskrit edition of the folios extant in the first chapter, and a Sanskrit edition of the *Aṣṭa* that has been included in the Sanskrit edition of the *Sāratamā* for the sake of easy reference. In the following three subsections, I will discuss the reasons why these three new editions are needed and the sources on which they are based.

6.1. The *Sāratamā* Edition

6.1.1. The Problems with the *Editio Princeps* of the *Sāratamā*

In 1979, Padmanabh Jaini made a pioneering step toward elucidating Ratnākaraśānti's views on the *Aṣṭa* by publishing the Sanskrit *editio princeps* based on the two extant Sanskrit MSS of the *Sāratamā*.³⁵⁸ Despite Jaini's significant contribution, there are several areas where his edition can be improved. Firstly, Jaini's critical apparatus is rudimentary. It often does not record variant readings or his own silent emendations. It also sometimes misreads or misreports *akṣaras* in the MSS. In this way, the reader gets little support from the apparatus to understand the MSS or Jaini's editorial decisions, which are incorrect on a number of occasions. Secondly, the edition contains no attempt to reconstruct missing *akṣaras* in many places, even when the missing *akṣaras* are relatively few in number. Because of this, readers are left with ellipses mid-thought and sometimes the length of the ellipsis is unknown. Thirdly, since Jaini himself did not read Tibetan, he was unable to read the *PPu*, the *Śuddhimatī* or the majority of the *Sāratamā*'s first chapter, which is missing from the extant Sanskrit manuscripts.³⁵⁹ Since these all lay out the framework for Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā* but are only available in Tibetan, Jaini was unable to

³⁵⁸ (Jaini 1972)

³⁵⁹ Cf. Luo Hong (2013): There appear to be Sanskrit MSS of these two texts, though it is not certain how complete they are. Luo Hong's Sanskrit edition of the *PPu* will be published soon.

make use of them for clarification of difficult or ambiguous points in preparing his edition. Finally, Jaini's edition includes a number of typos and printing errors. For these reasons, a new edition is a desideratum.

6.1.2. The Sanskrit Materials for a New Edition

On May 25, 1936, Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana discovered 25 volumes of palm leaf Sanskrit MSS under a thick layer of dust in the Chags pa'i lha khang of the Lha khang chen mo at Sa skya Monastery in Tibet.³⁶⁰ Among the volumes were two Sanskrit palm leaf manuscripts of the *Sāratamā*, MS A and MS B, which Jaini used for his edition.³⁶¹ Since these are the only two Sanskrit witnesses for the first chapter, they are also the only Sanskrit MSS on which my edition is based.

6.1.2.1. MS A

The colophon of MS A tells us a bit of the manuscript's own history:

(Siddham)³⁶² samvat ā to 3 rājñāḥ śrīharṣadevarājye³⁶³ | śrīgaṇḍigulma-
viṣaye| kulaputrakāyasthaḥ |paṇḍitaśrījīvandharasimhasya pustako
'yam iti ||

Hence, MS A tells us that it was copied in 1092/3 C.E. during King Śrī Harṣadeva's reign (1085-1098 C.E.) by a scribe from the *kāyastha* caste in the administrative domain (*viṣayādhipati*) of Gaṇḍigulma.³⁶⁴ The precise location of Gaṇḍigulma is not known for certain, but appears to have fallen within the Gulmi district, whose eastern

³⁶⁰ Sāṅkrtyāyana (1937: 4-6). Sāṅkrtyāyana does not specifically mention the *Sāratamā* here in his account, but describes the general discovery in this section of his chronicle. Note: For the sake of stylistic consistency with the various sources cited, I have used numerals, instead of spelling out numbers that are mentioned throughout this essay.

³⁶¹ Sāṅkrtyāyana 1937: Section VIII, 200 and IX 201: 24-5). In Sāṅkrtyāyana's numbering, MS A= MS 200; MS B = 201.

³⁶² The auspicious symbol for *siddham* appears in the MS.

³⁶³ śrīharṣadevarājye] *em.*, śrīharṣadevarāje MS A. Note: a copper-plate in the same period also appears to read *rājai* or *rāje*. Cf. "Two Earliest Copper Plate Inscriptions from Nepal" by Mahes Raj Pant & Aishvarya Dhar Sharma (p.8).

³⁶⁴ (Pant and Sharma 1977:18,21). In post-Licchavi Nepal, *viṣaya* appears in inscriptions as the shortened form of *viṣayādhipati*, which were administrative units. (It might be worth noting that Pant and Sharma cite MS A's mention of *viṣaya* as contradicting Petech's suggested location of a Gulmi district near Patan, which falls within a different *viṣaya* and does not explain the *Gaṇḍi* before the *gulmi*). Min Bahadur mentions a "Ratnākara monastery" in Patan which seems to have upheld Ratnākara's lineage. See Introduction to (Shakya 1997) Note: The Newari samvat began on the 20th of October, 879 C.E. Since the year 213 began 20th of October 1092 and since there is no month specified, the MS could have been completed in either 1092 or 1093.

boundary is the Kali Gandak river, in the modern day Lumbini zone of mid-western Nepal.³⁶⁵ The colophon states that this codex (*pustaka*) belonged to the *Paṇḍita Śrī Jīvandharasimha*.³⁶⁶ But it is not clear how, when, and through whom the MS made its way to Sa skya monastery in Tibet.³⁶⁷

Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana identified the script of MS A as a *kuṭilā* script, probably based on the designation *kuṭila lipi* mentioned by Ojha. But modern scholars might call it a proto-Bengali *cum* Maithili script or just an Eastern script.³⁶⁸ Whatever the name given to MS A's script, the entire manuscript has been copied in the same relatively high quality handwriting with small exceptions of an editorial or corrective hand.³⁶⁹ The reference to Gaṇḍigulma in Western Nepal and to King Harṣadeva in the Newari era (*saṃvat*) make it more than likely to have been copied in Nepal. The 23 x 2.5 in. palm leaves contain mostly 8 lines per folio (one folio has 7 lines and another has 9 lines).³⁷⁰ Of the original 103 folios, 39 folios (1-21, 39, 51-58, 63-72) are missing.³⁷¹ Thus, of the Sāratamā's first *parivarta*, MS A contains only 6 ½ folios, i.e. the 13 sides from 22r to the end of 28r, where the second *parivarta* begins.

³⁶⁵ (Pant and Sharma 1977: 20). *Gaṇḍi* appears to be the shortened form of *Gaṇḍakī* or *Gaṇḍikā*. The Sanskrit words are known today either as Gandaki or Gandak.

³⁶⁶ I have found no other references to this *Paṇḍita Śrījīvandharasimha*. Jaini emends the Sanskrit to read *kāyasthasya Paṇḍitaśrījīvandharasimhasya* suggesting that *Paṇḍita Śrījīvandharasimha* was the *kāyastha* who copied the manuscript. Some *kāyastha* may well have been *Paṇḍitas*, but the poor grammar in this colophon itself militates against such a conclusion and emendation. Cf. (Stearns 2001: 48).

³⁶⁷ It may have been purchased and carried to Tibet by rNgog-lo-tsa-ba who returned to Tibet from Nepal in 1092. Further research is needed to establish any connection. Whatever the case, if the codex became the property of Sa skya within ten years of its being copied, it would have arrived there during the time of the founder of Sa skya, Khon dKon mchog rgyal po (1034-1102), who was a direct student of the two Kaśmīri *Paṇḍitas* who helped translate Ratnākaraśānti's main *Prajñāpāramitā* commentaries.

³⁶⁸ Sāṅkrtyāyana (1937: 24-5). Cf. Ojha (1959: plate XIX). Cf. Roy (1971: 14). Based on Ojha, Roy suggests that it is properly called a *kuṭila lipi*, derived from the *curled* (*kuṭila*) upper part of many of its *aṅśaras*.

³⁶⁹ The handwriting does vary (sometimes greatly) on certain folios. But, to my eye, this variation is still within the range of a single scribal hand and possibly derives from a long period of copying with many breaks.

³⁷⁰ These measurements come from Sāṅkrtyāyana. I have not been able to measure them myself yet. The script of MS A is not dissimilar to other Nepali MSS in this era. See also Pant and Sharma (1977: 2, 6), for the earliest copper plate inscription (1100 C.E.) in a similar "early Newari script" found in Gaṇḍigulma, Nepal (see plate in Appendix).

³⁷¹ There have been multiple cataloguing errors regarding the MS. Sāṅkrtyāyana mistakenly wrote "200 *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāpamjikā* (Ratnākaraśānti) 1-103 (2-21, 51-55, 57-79 =48)" on the manuscript and copied this error when he listed it in his catalogue and photographed it the following

In the early 1960s, MS A was evidently carried out of Tibet by Tibetan refugees and is presently held in the Namgyal Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sikkim. Although Sāṅkrtyāyana's 1938 photographs of the MS are relatively legible, I now have new color photographs at a higher resolution. A comparison of the new scans with Sāṅkrtyāyana's early photographs shows additional marginalia. That is to say, aside from the 'correctional footnotes' in the hand of the original scribe (marked by "x" or specific line numbers), the folios are now numbered 1-65 in roman numerals written in pencil. These numerals correspond neither to the correct order of the folios nor the total number of folios in the original manuscript MS A. Each folio also bears a red accession stamp from the Namgyal Institute library (in Tibetan *dbu chen* script).³⁷² On the last 63 sides of the extant folios and on 7 of the first 63 sides, the right string hole is found within a box of text in a manner sometimes associated with MSS from Vikramaśīla.³⁷³ Elsewhere the string holes appear in the middle of empty columns with no text above or below. On the whole, the manuscript is in excellent condition. A small number of folios have water damage, which does not inhibit legibility for the most part, but incomplete erasures make some *akṣaras* more difficult to read in these sections. The right side of folio 23r/v has been torn off in an irregular pattern and is missing.³⁷⁴

year. The folio numbers and number of missing folios are both incorrect. Jaini repeated Sāṅkrtyāyana's mistake and incorrectly assumed that new photographs of MS A had been revealed with newly found folios. Bandurski noticed the problem with the incorrect number of folios, but did not correct the problem with the numbering of the folios or other assumptions in Jaini's report. Cf. Sāṅkrtyāyana (1937: 24-5). Cf. Jaini (1972: 2). Cf. Bandurski (1994: 90).

³⁷² Tucci (who photographed the very MS one year after Sāṅkrtyāyana did) appears to have written these roman numerals, since they do not appear in the Sāṅkrtyāyana photographs. Sāṅkrtyāyana had written the incorrect number of folios missing on the backside of the title page; Tucci may have noticed the error and written these roman numerals as a method of counting the folios. These numbers do not correlate to the proper order of the text, but rather to the order in which the folios were found by Tucci. My edition has not relied at all on the photographs by Tucci, since they are often too blurry to read at the right and left ends of the folio and since they contain no folios that are not available to me in better photographs. For more information about the numbering errors, see my forthcoming article "The Case of the Missing Folios."

³⁷³ I thank Kengo Harimoto for pointing out to me that this box type of string hole may be connected with Vikramaśīla.

³⁷⁴ In the new scans of MSA, the preceding and subsequent folios show through where there is a missing piece of 23r/v. Since the lines almost match up, it is difficult to tell at first where the edge of the tear is for some lines, particularly in 23r.

6.1.2.2. MS B

The end of MS B reads “sāratamānāmapañjiketi” and has no colophon. Sāṅkrtyāyana identified MS B as being written in a *kuṭilā* script on 23 x 2 in. palm leaves with 6 lines per folio and two string holes are placed within blank columns. Since MS B lacked any datable evidence in the colophon, Sāṅkrtyāyana dated it paleographically to the 13th century based on its particular Newari features.³⁷⁵ Within Sāṅkrtyāyana’s photographs of MS B, there are presently 103 out of approximately 175 leaves represented.³⁷⁶ The penultimate folio of MS B is numbered 84, because the manuscript itself contains four different sets of numberings in at least two different handwritings.³⁷⁷ There is some variation in spacing and size of *akṣaras*, but it does not appear that more than one scribe was involved in copying. There are only two ‘correctional footnotes’ in the entire MS. Since these footnotes occur in the first two folios, it may be the case that the MS was not proof-read or edited carefully. There are no marginalia, except for several numbers written in a horizontal list at the bottom of the last folio.³⁷⁸ On the whole, the manuscript is in good condition. Given the large number of folios with small amounts of damage and tearing, I will only point out here, generally, that there is blotting throughout; the first 10 folios have shredding at the right end of the leaves; 1 folio has had the left end torn off; and there is some blotting and buckling that make the MS difficult to read in spots.

³⁷⁵ I am far from being a paleographic expert, but Sāṅkrtyāyana’s dating may be a bit too conservative, based on comparison with other datable manuscripts from Nepal in that period. Further research is needed to determine precise dating of this manuscript.

³⁷⁶ The folios of MS B were photographed out of order. Since many folio numbers have broken off, since there is evidence of fresh folio number at four places, and since the last of the 103 extant folios is numbered 85, it was very difficult to figure out what folios were present. All three scholars who tried—Sāṅkrtyāyana, Jaini, and Bandurski—made mistakes in collating the folios. Thus far, I have identified one place where Jaini entirely skipped a folio and marked it only with ellipsis in his edition. In the appendix, I have attached a comparative accounting for all the folios extant in the photographs. I have estimated that MS B must have originally contained close to 175 leaves when it was complete, based on the fact that MS B has roughly 40% fewer *akṣaras* per leaf than MS A.

³⁷⁷ The last folio shows an “8” (probably from “85”) which is very faint. Jaini’s introduction to his edition states that there were at least three different sets of fresh numbering.

³⁷⁸ The significance of this list of numbers is unclear to me. Further analysis is required to determine whether they correspond to missing folios or issues with the numbering.

Thus, taking together the extant folios from these two partial MSS, a total of 66% of the original Sanskrit *Sāratamā* is still extant today and the rest of the *Sāratamā* exists only in its Tibetan translation.³⁷⁹ Unfortunately, only 9 folios—i.e. MS B folios 1v-2v and MS A folios 22r-28r—in the first *parivarta* are extant.³⁸⁰ Since the first *parivarta* of MS A begins on 1v and ends on 28r, in MS A terms, the *lacuna* would amount to approximately a 19 folio deficit, meaning that roughly 70% of the first *parivarta* is missing. Furthermore, since there is no overlap between the MS A and MS B anywhere in the first *parivarta*, the only witnesses for comparing the Sanskrit MSS' readings are those found in the Tibetan woodblock editions. For this reason, my Sanskrit edition of the *Sāratamā*'s first *parivarta* is primarily based on the extant Sanskrit folios in MS A and MS B. However, since there are no overlapping sections in the first *parivarta* between the two MSS, my Sanskrit edition involves no comparison of MSS A and B. Instead, my critical apparatus compares the MSS with the Tibetan translation, Jaini's *editio princeps* and the root texts of the *Aṣṭa* and the AA on which the *Sāratamā* comments.

6.1.2.3. The Tibetan Materials for a New Edition

The Tibetan translation itself is extant in the sNar thang, sDe dge, Peking, Co ne, and Golden editions of the bsTan 'gyur. All editions are readable, but far from perfectly clear and certain letters—such as the “pa” and “ba” or “nga” and “da”—are not always distinguishable as is common in xylographic reproduction.³⁸¹ The printout of the Peking edition is especially blotchy and difficult to read in spots. The total length

³⁷⁹ Generally speaking, *Parivarta 1* has the largest lacuna. *Parivarta 12* is missing its last 30% and the short chapters *Parivarta 13* and *Parivarta 14* are missing entirely. For more details, see my chart in the appendix.

³⁸⁰ As is common, the text begins on folio 1v and folio 1r was left blank. Since the first chapter also ends on a *recto*, i.e. 28r, the total number of folios is 27.

³⁸¹ I have recorded only those differences between similar letters—such as, for instance, *nga* and *da*—when one syllable or the other seems clear to me. For the others, I applied the principle of charity when a stroke seemed too long or too short.

of the Tibetan translation is 230 folios (sDe dge edition) and 253 folios (Peking edition).

According to its colophon, the Tibetan translation of the *Sāratamā*, called the *'phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa'i dka' 'grel snying po mchog*—*sNying po mchog* (Ny-Ch), was made by the Tibetan scholar 'Khon-Śākya-blo-gros and the *Paṇḍita* Subhūtiśānti (a direct disciple of Ratnākaraśānti?).³⁸²

6.1.2.4. Dating the Tibetan translation of the *Sāratamā*

The colophon of the *sNying po mchog* provides no specific information for ascertaining the precise year it was completed, but the colophon of the *Śuddhimatī* tells us that Subhūtiśānti and 'Khon Śākya-blo-gros also worked on the translation of that text along with a second translator rMa dGe-'ba'i-blo-gros. Given the fact that the AA verses are the focus in the *Śuddhimatī* and these frame the discussion of the *Aṣṭa* in the *Sāratamā*, it is likely that 'Khon Śākya-blo-gros translated both texts simultaneously with the help of rMa dGe-'ba'i-blo-gros. Based on the information about these three, we can narrow down the dates.

Little is known about the Tibetan translator 'Khon Śākya-blo-gros, who was the sole translator for the *Sāratamā*. He is known to have lived in Yar klung mkhar stabs in the early eleventh century and to have fathered two sons—namely 'Khon Rog-shes-rab-tshul-khrims (ca. b.1015?) and 'Khon dKon-mchog-rgyal-po (1034-1102 C.E.), who founded the Sa skya monastery.³⁸³ From the dates of his sons, we might deduce that 'Khon Śākya-blo-gros was born in the late 10th C.E.(?). His exact date of death is not known, but he was reputedly killed by Rwa lo-tṣā-ba rDo-rje-

³⁸² The colophon reads Śākya-blo-gros, but appears to be the same person known as 'Khon Śākya-blo-gros. Further research is needed to determine the Indian scholar Subhūtiśānti's relationship to Ratnākaraśānti himself. See Martin (2004:1065) under the heading Subhūtiśānti. See also my footnotes 22 and 23 above.

³⁸³ My estimate of b.1015 for 'Khon Shes-rab-tshul-khrims is based on the fact that he was a significantly older brother and early teacher to 'Khon dKon-mchog rGyal-po (1034-1102 C.E.). For this reason also, I take 'Khon Śākya-blo-gros to have been born in the late 10th century. Cf. Tseten (2011:230).

grags (c.1016-1198?!). Since he appears to have been killed prior to the education of his second son 'Khon dKon-mchog-rgyal-po, we might surmise that he was killed around 1050 C.E.³⁸⁴ If this date is correct, we can estimate that the *Sāratamā* and the *Śuddhimatī* were translated before 1050 C.E. If the work was incomplete upon his death, it is possible that *Śuddhimatī*'s junior translator rMa dGe-'ba'i-blo-gros (b. early 11th -1098 C.E.) continued to work on the translation until he was killed by poisoning in 1089 C.E., possibly also by Rwa lo-tsā-ba rDo-rje-grags.³⁸⁵

However, an earlier completion date is supported by what we know about the Kaśmīri Subhūtiśānti, one of the first great Indian *Paṇḍitas* to visit Tibet in the later translation period (*gsar ma*),³⁸⁶ who came there at the invitation of Lha-lde, whose reign lasted until 1024 C.E.. Although Subhūtiśānti had a relatively long career and is credited with having guided the translations of a number of major works—aside from his translation of the *Aṣṭa* and other works on *Prajñāpāramitā*—the *Śuddhimatī* states that Subhūtiśānti and the Tibetan translators actually translated that work at the command of King 'Od-lde, who reigned from 1024-1037 C.E.³⁸⁷ If this is correct, then the *Śuddhimatī* would have been translated before 1037. Since the colophon of the *Śuddhimatī* also says that the editing was done by Śāntibhadra (d. 1050?)³⁸⁸ and 'Gos Khug-pa-lhas-btsas, we can surmise that, if Śāntibhadra's dates are correct, then even the editing of that text might have occurred while Ratnākaraśānti was still alive.

³⁸⁴ Powers and Templeman (2012:211).

³⁸⁵ I say “possibly” killed by Rwa-lo because there is conflicting information that I have not been able to sort out. The TBRC entry for rMa-dGe-'ba'i-blo-gros says that he was killed by poisoning in 1089, leaving behind his wife Ma-gcig-zha-ma. However, according to Stearns (2001), Ma-gcig-zha-ma was married to rMa-lo-tsā-ba-cho-'bar who died in 1089. So, there may be a confusion between the two translators from the rMa clan. Rwa-lo-tsā-ba-rdo-rje-grags was also the translator of record for a *maṅḍalavidhi* misattributed to Ratnākaraśānti. See “Ratnākaraśānti's works” in the bibliography for more information.

³⁸⁶ He is also mentioned by the name Subhūtiśrīśānti, for instance, in the Blue Annals.

³⁸⁷ Śud (colophon): |*dbang phyug dam pa'i mnga'i bdag lha btsan po khri bkra shis 'od lde btsan kyi bkas rgya gar gyi mkhan po śrī subhūtiśānti'i zhal snga nas dang| lo tsā ba dge slong sākyā blo gros dang| dge slong dge ba'i blo gros bzgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa*| Cf. Roerich (1988:69-70). Cf. Martin Tib-skrit, (2004:1065)

³⁸⁸ This date is based on Templeman (1992:371).

This means that the works were likely translated initially during the time when Ratnākaraśānti was alive and were both based on early Sanskrit manuscripts very close in time to the autograph. This is an important point that we will take up in our discussion of the relationship between the witnesses.

6.2. A Tibetan Edition

Since so little of the Sanskrit in the first chapter is available, I have taken it upon myself to provide a Tibetan edition of the entire first chapter of the *sNying po mchog* not just the portions that match my Sanskrit edition. Giving the time constraints, however, my Tibetan edition is rudimentary and records only the readings of the xylographic editions of the sDe dge (54 folios), the Peking (59 folios) and the Snarthang (61 folios). Into my Tibetan edition, I have also inserted, unedited, the entire sDe dge (19 folios) edition root text of the *'Phags pa Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa (brGyad stong pa)* in sections at appropriate locations for the reference ease of the reader.

Given the size of such an undertaking and the limited time, my Tibetan edition is must be considered preliminary. The critical apparatus is positive, so that all the readings have been recorded and are available to readers. The goal of the edition is to make the different Tibetan readings accessible, not to produce a new Tibetan translation that matches the Sanskrit. I do not emend the Tibetan except in extremely rare cases where there appears to be a *lacuna* or corruption in the xylographs. Even when the Tibetan differs markedly from the Sanskrit text, I merely choose the reading from the Tibetan witnesses that is the closest to the Sanskrit, although this sometimes makes for a less idiomatic sounding Tibetan. Where the sDe dge, the Peking, and sNar thang editions themselves have substantive differences, I often, but not always, find the Peking readings superior. Where the sDe dge, the Peking and sNar thang editions have negligible or mere spelling differences, I often prefer to leave the

spellings from the sDe dge edition. Although the sNar thang readings often agree with those of the Peking, there are occasions where the sNar thang readings appear superior to the other two.

In making this edition, I have also systematically compared the sDe dge, Peking, and sNar thang readings that I found to those reported in the *dPe bsdur ma* collation of the sDe dge, Peking, and sNar thang.³⁸⁹ However, it is worth noting that my critical apparatus records the *dPe bsdur ma* readings, only when they differ from my readings of the same block prints. Finally, although I have occasionally checked the Golden and Co ne editions on difficult points that were difficult to resolve, a systematic check of the Golden and Co ne editions has not been undertaken here and must be left for a future publication with a more complete apparatus, in which I hope to provide more parallels also.³⁹⁰

6.3. A New Aṣṭa Edition

A Sanskrit *editio princeps* of the *Aṣṭa* was published in 1888 by Mitra. In his own preface, Mitra himself described all the codices at his disposal and indicates the *lacuna* in his own edition as follows:

[Bendall ADD. 866] is a work of great merit, and highly useful to those who are engaged in the study of Nepalese bibliography.³⁹¹ I regret, however, that owing to the codices [Add.1693] and [Add.866]

³⁸⁹ I did not initially plan to enter the sNarhang readings since they seem to contain few useful readings. But just before my thesis deadline, I decided to include them based on Dorji Wangchuk's suggestion that it would make this draft of the edition more useful. Unfortunately, due to several time consuming problems encountered and the looming thesis deadline, I was only able to record the sNarhang readings in the first 20 folios carefully. In the sNarhang's last 41 folios, I had to read very quickly and to focus mainly on double checking the sNarhang readings as reported in the *dPe sdur ma*. Hence, my reporting of the sNarhang readings (and the *dPe sdur ma* reporting of them) should be accurate, but in reading the other parts more hastily, I could easily have missed readings of the sNarhang that were not reported in the *dPe sdur ma*. Rather than leave the sNarhang readings out of this edition altogether, I decided to provide them here as a work-in-progress. I plan to provide a more exhaustive study of the sNarhang in a future publication.

³⁹⁰ In my preliminary analysis of the Golden and Co ne editions, the Golden appears to contain some useful readings, whereas the Co ne edition appears to contain fewer useful readings. Furthermore, given the Co ne's derivative nature, its readings may be editorial conjecture, rather than based on different MS sources.

³⁹¹ Mitra has not given the Bendall catalogue numbers, but rather has given general descriptions. Although Mitra's descriptions are at variance with Bendall's catalogue descriptions, I have made an educated guess as to which MSS Mitra referred. Although these Bendall numbers are likely, further research is required in order to verify this.

having come to hand at a late period, I have not been able to make use of them in the collation of the earlier part of my text.”³⁹²

Mitra’s critical apparatus itself helps clarify what he meant by “the earlier part of my text.” The references to the Bendall ADD. 866 and 1693 codices start at the beginning of *parivarta* 7 on p.100. Rājendralāla Mitra’s edition of the first six chapters is incomplete by Mitra’s own account, in that his *parivartas* 1-6 do not record some of the useful readings found in these two codices. An entire folio worth is ‘missing’ from the 28th *parivarta* of Mitra’s edition, possibly due to printing errors. Beyond Mitra’s own admission of incompleteness, Wogihara states:

Mitra’s edition has so many hundreds of misprint (sic!) and of letter (sic!) to be corrected that these errata have been corrected with reference to the commentary or with the coherence of the context.

Thus, Wogihara suggests that his improvement of Mitra’s edition is based on Haribhadra’s commentary alone and did not refer to any MSS of the *Aṣṭa*, much less those that Mitra neglected.³⁹³ In this way, although Wogihara’s edition is superior, it is not a new edition and, unfortunately, it also does not provide the missing folio.³⁹⁴

In 1960, Vaidya published an edition that referenced Mitra’s and Wogihara’s editions, but did not refer to the MSS directly and did not include Conze’s transcription of the missing folios.³⁹⁵ Although Vaidya’s edition corrected many of Mitra’s typos and standardized some of the sandhi, its critical apparatus is extremely rudimentary and elides many variant readings reported by Mitra and differences with

³⁹² (MITRA 1888: xxvi)

³⁹³ Cf. AAĀ (Preface p.1).

³⁹⁴ As mentioned in Conze (1978:46) and Conze (XXfn15), the appendix of Conze (1952:261-2) presents a transcription of the Sanskrit text of the missing section in *parivarta* 28 based solely on the Bodleian MS Sansk.a.7(R) folios 165v-166r in the Winternitz collection. I thank Jack Petranker for pointing this out to me.

³⁹⁵ Vaidya also incorrectly states in his footnote within *parivarta* 28 that the folios were “missing in all MSS.” Karashima (2013) points out the fallacy of Vaidya’s statement and provides a new transcription of the missing section. Unfortunately, Karashima seems to have been unaware that Conze had already pointed out the problem and transcribed the missing section in his 1952 appendix.

Wogihara.³⁹⁶ Vaidya's publication is also incomplete, in that it failed to provide the section 'missing' from parivarta 28 in Mitra's edition.³⁹⁷

Thus, since Vaidya was the most recent publication, but is filled with errors, there remains no reliable edition today.³⁹⁸

Therefore, since Mitra's, Wogihara's and Vaidya's *Aṣṭa* editions lacked the Bendall Add. 866 readings and failed to apply *sandhi* systematically, my new edition of the *Aṣṭa*'s entire first *parivarta* is based on a comparison of these editions with the Bendall Add. 866. Since there are too many other *Aṣṭa* witnesses extant, it is not possible to collate them all and prepare a more complete edition of the *Aṣṭa* at this time.

6.4. The Hybrid Sanskrit and Tibetan Edition

Only the first 2 folios from MS B and the last 9 folios from MS A out of the total 28 folios that once constituted the first *parivarta* of the *Sāratamā* are extant. Since very little of that extant Sanskrit concerns the *Aṣṭa*, the root text on which the *Sāratamā* is meant to comment, I have decided to produce a hybrid Tibetan and Sanskrit edition of the whole chapter. The beginning and end of the hybrid edition consists of the edited Sanskrit text found in MSS A and B. The middle 70% of the first *parivarta*, which is no longer extant in either Sanskrit MS, has been supplied from my Tibetan edition of this chapter. But throughout the first *parivarta*, my Sanskrit edition of the *Aṣṭa* root text and Amano's edition of the AA root text will be inserted before the corresponding commentary by Ratnākaraśānti either in Sanskrit.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁶ Haribhadra and Vaidya (1960: viii).

³⁹⁷ In 2003, the Nepali Lotus Research Centre published an edition of the entire *Aṣṭa* that includes the section 'missing' from Mitra's edition. Although the Nepali edition appears to have many seemingly correct readings, it also has mistakes; its sources are unclear; it lacks any apparatus with variant readings; and its editorial method and choices are silently imposed. For these reasons, this publication has extremely limited value for scholars.

³⁹⁸ Below, I will discuss the limited contribution that I will make to chapter one only in my new edition.

³⁹⁹ I have also inserted into the Tibetan commentary other extant Sanskrit verses or quotations, when identifiable and available in Sanskrit.

It is hoped that by creating this hybrid edition of the first chapter, it will give a complete, albeit imperfect, edition of the first chapter, which will increase the edition's usefulness as a reference work for future research.

Also, within the hybrid edition of the *Sāratamā*, I have presented my own backtranslation, from Tibetan into Sanskrit, of the *bodhicitta* and *acitta* sections extant only in Tibetan. These two extended backtranslations are italicized and marked in all caps before and afterward, so that they are not confused with the Sanskrit edition of the extant Sanskrit MSS. My backtranslation of the Tibetan into Sanskrit is based on a close comparison of *sNying po mchog*'s translation style and various Sanskrit, Tibetan and Pāli parallels that demonstrate similar wordings and vocabulary.⁴⁰⁰ Even though my backtranslations within this hybrid edition correspond only to a small part of the missing Sanskrit sections, it is hoped that they will serve as a hypothetical sample for the difficult project of backtranslating the entirety of the missing portions in the first *parivarta* in the future. The purpose and usefulness of my backtranslation of these two sections is not to produce a new Sanskrit document and to claim that it is historically more valuable than an extant Tibetan translation. My aim is provide an analysis of the Tibetan translation that can help us understand Ratnākaraśānti's thought and its place in intellectual history better. While this aim is narrow in its scope, it may be worth explaining my four main reasons here, lest my project be misconstrued.

First, the *Sāratamā* is a *pañjikā* or perpetual commentary, which aims in a large part to clarify Sanskrit ambiguities, grammatical irregularities, heuristic etymologies, and double meanings and to narrow the range of possible meanings of Sanskrit

⁴⁰⁰ In the backtranslation section, the parallels are meant to support my choice of Sanskrit translation. They are not meant as proof of Ratnākaraśānti's sources, although in some cases they might have been. This is particularly important to keep in mind in regards to my backtranslation of grammatical comments which are often obscure in Tibetan translation. There, I am merely trying to justify the word choices for my very tentative backtranslations, not cite his sources or explain the grammatical principles.

words. The Tibetan translation of the *Sāratamā* does not contain these same ambiguities and hence, large portions of the work are virtually incomprehensible to readers of Tibetan alone. No useful translation of the *Sāratamā* into English can be made without footnoting, referencing and explaining the Sanskrit ambiguities that the text appears to be addressing and which form the basis of that English translation. The best and most complete way of recording the assumptions and hypotheses underlying my English translation of the Tibetan is to provide a complete backtranslation as a record of what Sanskrit I am reading behind the Tibetan and basing my English translation on. Anyone who is trained only in reading classical Tibetan by indigenous Tibetan writers who is skeptical about the necessity of such a project can judge for him or herself whether the Tibetan is entirely comprehensible or not. Try, for instance, to make sense of the following extant Tibetan and translate it into meaningful English without first backtranslating it:

|dgra bcom pa nyid ni nyon mongs pa'i dgra rnams bcom pa dang ldan pas na dgra bcom pa'o| |yang na mi skye zhing yang skye ba med pas na dgra bcom pa'o| |yang na de bzhin gshegs pa la sgrub pa'i mchod pa yang dag par mchod pas mchod par byed pas na dgra bcom pa'o| |yang* na lha dang mi rnams kyis mchod pa dang| sbyin gnas su 'os pas na dgra bcom pa'o||⁴⁰¹*

Any Tibetanist should be readily able to see that these multiple heuristic etymologies (*nirukti*) of *arhat* are incomprehensible in Tibetan alone and must be backtranslated into Sanskrit and further into Pāli or Prakrit to make any sense. In order to demonstrate this, I will present my English translation of the Tibetan, based on my tentative Sanskrit backtranslation:⁴⁰²

[The various heuristic etymologies of] Arhat (*arahant* Pāli) are:

An arhat is [someone who] has eliminated (*hatavān*) those enemies (*arayaḥ*), [which are] the emotional infections (*kleśa*).⁴⁰³

⁴⁰¹ My Tibetan edition (22).

⁴⁰² Hybrid edition (27): *arayaḥ kleśās tān hatavān ity arhan. athavā arohad na punar rohatīty arhan. athavā tathāgatapratipattipūjāsampūjanair arhaṇam karotīty arhan. athavā devamānuṣapūjādakṣiṇārhanīya ity arhan.*

⁴⁰³ This heuristic etymology plays on the plural enemies “*arayaḥ*” + the double meaning of the verb √han “destroy” “eliminate” (in the past tense) = *ara-han* (agent). Among all these etymologies, it is most comprehensible, but redundant in Tibetan since *dgra bcom pa* already incorporates the meaning.

Alternatively (*yang na*), an arhat, in the sense that [he is] not born again, is [someone] **free of birth** (*arohat*).⁴⁰⁴

Alternatively, an arhat is someone who is **venerating** (*arhaṇaṃ karoti*) the Tathāgata through perfectly offering (*yang dag par mchod pa; saṃpūjāna*) the offering of practice (*pratipattipūjā*) [to him].⁴⁰⁵

Alternatively, an arhat is someone **worthy** (*arhaṇīya*) to be the object of [others'] generosity (*sbyin gnas*) and offerings [of veneration] (*pūjā*).⁴⁰⁶

Here, we can see that without a backtranslation into Sanskrit, no English translation could have been given. Furthermore, even if my tentative Sanskrit backtranslation is not entirely correct, it is an approximation close enough to allow for the explication of these heuristic etymologies in English translation in a way that allows readers greater access to the intent and meaning of this *Sāratamā* passage than through the Tibetan alone. But aside from this example of a backtranslation helping to draw meaning from Tibetan phrases that would otherwise be opaque, a reader of the Tibetan alone will often be confused by the fact that the Tibetan *lemmas* are redundant with their glosses and the Tibetan root texts do not always match the lemmas in the Tibetan translations commenting upon them. That is to say, without reference to the Sanskrit root texts and a notion of how Ratnākaraśānti's own Sanskrit *lemmas* might correlate to his comments, one cannot understand even more straightforward points made in the commentary that follows. Hence, these examples show that one must consider the Sanskrit 'behind' the Tibetan in order to make any sense of many passages extant only in Tibetan.

Second, since the 30% of the Sanskrit palm leaf folios are missing and most of those are missing from the *Sāratamā*'s introductory section, the value of the remaining 70% extant text is greatly diminished. Since Sanskrit and English readers would

⁴⁰⁴ This heuristic etymology appears to play on privative *a* + the participle *rohat* from the Dhātupada 334 \sqrt{ruh} = janana, or "arising" or "birth" Cf. also BHSD *rohati* (with negative)=fruitless.

⁴⁰⁵ This heuristic etymology appears to play on the agent/action noun formation of \sqrt{arh} in one of its meanings, namely "venerating." Cf. Apte \sqrt{arh} = (7) to worship.

⁴⁰⁶ This heuristic etymology plays on a *kṛtya* formation based on a different meaning of \sqrt{arh} =to be worthy. Cf. Apte \sqrt{arh} = (1) to deserve.

appreciate an improved understanding of the way Ratnākaraśānti frames and explains the root text in the beginning, any effort to make these introductory sections more understandable will help them understand the other parts of the text that are still extant.⁴⁰⁷

Third, the backtranslation of these Tibetan sections into Sanskrit is an attempt to make transparent, explain, and justify my interpretation of the Tibetan words and sentences which inform my evolving understanding of Ratnākaraśānti's thought. By providing a full accounting of the assumed Sanskrit that I am seeing behind the Tibetan, I allow others to understand the way that I have arrived at my conclusions about the meaning of the text through analysis of the data at hand. In this way, they can make use of other evidence extant now or in the future to improve upon my readings of the Tibetan and to formulate a plausible hypothesis themselves that can also be falsified or improved by future scholars. It is incumbent upon anyone making an English translation or drawing conclusions about intellectual history based on Tibetan alone to provide a justification for his or her interpretation of Tibetan sentences as found on the page. In the case of the *Sāratamā*, there are numerous Sanskrit parallels that exist. By basing our interpretations on these and his comments in other texts, we can indeed get closer to the intent Ratnākaraśānti's statements and we can exclude many things that he is not likely to have intended. Although I myself do not provide an English translation of these backtranslated sections within my present study due to my lack of time and space here to do so, these initial backtranslations will hopefully form the basis for a future translation of the entire chapter.

⁴⁰⁷ In fact, Jaini's own efforts to edit the text were often marred by his not having understood the introduction to the text he was editing. Cf. Griffiths (1999:143-5), where he discusses the incomprehensibility of the *Sāratamā*. One wonders whether his reliance on Jaini's edition contributed to his conclusion.

Fourth, after studying and analyzing the style, method, and word choice of the translators of the *Sāratamā* into Tibetan, I have culled valuable information about his translation practices that should be recorded so that others can have an aid to approach this text and others like it. By making known my understanding of the possible Sanskrit underpinnings of the Tibetan, it provides others valuable information useful for studying Sanskrit texts extant only in Tibetan translation. When there is enough data from my own and others' attempts to backtranslate Tibetan into Sanskrit, we will also be able to collate this information and use it to provide Tibskrit grammar guidance for Tibetanists. In this way, my backtranslation aims to contribute to the training of Tibetologists, Indologists, and Buddhologists in the skills to read and make greater use of these types of textual evidence in their own work.⁴⁰⁸ Thus, the limited goal of my sample backtranslation of two important sections in the first chapter is aimed at recording my own analysis of the Tibetan for the sake of Sanskrit, Tibetan and English reading scholars alike.

6.5. The Relationship of the Witnesses – Toward a Stemma

There is no overlap of MS A and MS B in any of the sections that I have edited and hence, to speak of a relationship between the Sanskrit witnesses will have to wait until I edit the other chapters. That said, some preliminary remarks about the Tibetan translation and its relationship to the two Sanskrit MSS may be in order for the sake of framing future attempts to produce a stemma.

The Tibetan translation was too early to have been based on either MS A or MS B, but appears to have been based on a high quality MSS near the time of the autograph. Although there is no editor listed in the colophon of the *sNyiding po Mchog*,

⁴⁰⁸ For intellectual historians, outside of learning to understand the Tibskrit, there are very few other ways to use these types of translated texts. But even for those who are not interested in intellectual history, there is no way to make use of the information about social, geographic, economic, or political history in these texts, without understand the meaning of the words and sentences. Thus, one either makes use of these texts in this way or one ignores their evidence altogether.

the lemmas matching the root text appear to have been updated to more modern translations than those seen by the translator of Ratnākaraśānti's commentary.

On MS B folio 1v, there are cancellation marks surrounding verse 2, which is badly damaged and illegible toward the end of line 1. Since all Tibetan editions also omit this verse, it is possible that MS B was used to edit the *sNying po mchog*. My hypothesis is that the verse 2, which has three relative pronouns and only two correlatives, may have seemed corrupt to the later Tibetan editor. If MS B was already damaged by that time, he might not have been able to make out or otherwise deduce the *akṣaras* because the *āryā* meter of the verse was too difficult to reconstruct. Rather than leave what he thought was a corrupt verse in the Tibetan, he may have removed it and placed the cancellation marks in MS B himself. If this is correct, then an already damaged MS B was used to update readings. However, it may be that wherever the MS B was difficult to read or seemed correct to the Tibetan editor, he left the readings from the first translation. This could also have been the case in several spots in MS B where larger and thicker *akṣaras* have been written over either smudges or damaged spots. In the two spots corresponding to verse 1 and verse 4, MS B's readings have an extra illegible syllable or are corrupt. This means that Tibetan readings are eclectic and where there is partial or complete damage in MS B, the Tibetan readings are more than likely from the early translation. Whatever the cause, the Tibetan translation seems particularly poor and implausible for the opening verses in comparison with MS B.

As for the extant portions of MS A, the variant readings seem to occur in philosophically difficult sections, suggesting that either the Tibetan editor or the Sanskrit scribe tried to correct something that did not make sense. Further research is necessary to see whether these patterns hold true for majority of the extant folios.

Until then, the relationship of between MSS and the Tibetan translation cannot be established.

7. Sāratamā Translation

Preface to the Translation

The translation of the introductory section of the *Sāratamā* will be divided into the main sections in the Sanskrit and Tibetan edition namely the title, the auspicious verses, the purpose, the topic, and the argument against a single topic. Each of these sections will be preceded by my own introduction and followed by my explanatory commentary in order to clarify and contextualize Ratnākaraśānti's specific statements. My commentary focuses on highlighting, from Ratnākaraśānti's perspective, what might be at stake in his debate against Haribhadra. Haribhadra's entire argument for a single unifying topic has been inserted, so that Ratnākaraśānti's critique can be fully considered in contrast. Although this format has the drawback of creating a very long chapter in which the flow of Ratnākaraśānti's own exegesis is interrupted by separating his own comments from one another, it has the benefit of keeping Ratnākaraśānti's text in order and allowing his own commentaries to play a supporting role, while bringing in information when needed. The explanation of Ratnākaraśānti's definition based on the *Śuddhimatī* has been placed in a short concluding chapter.

Notes to the Translation

The translated text that corresponds to my critical edition of the *Sāratamā* will be single spaced, indented .5 in., and introduced with [S#], eg. [S1], [S2] and so on. These *sigla* can be found in the editions provided in the appendix.

All Ratnākaraśānti's in-text citations of verse will be single spaced, indented 1 in.. Ratnākaraśānti's in-text citations of the AA will be single spaced, indented 1 in., numbered and will have no corresponding Sanskrit in the footnotes.

The translated text of other works will be single spaced, indented .5 in, introduced by name and cited in the footnotes.

In either the *Sāratamā* or the translated text of other works, any glossed words will be made bold.

My own running commentary will be double spaced at the far left margin. In my commentary, words glossed from the immediately preceding citations, whether from the *Sāratamā* or other works, will also be made bold.

My comments on other relevant issues, such as translation, will be placed in the footnotes.

Section headings from the Skt. edition have not been inserted into the translation. However, item numbers in the individual lists within the translation and editions should match.

Translation

The title reads:⁴⁰⁹

THE *SĀRATAMĀ*
A PERPETUAL COMMENTARY
ON THE *PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ* SCRIPTURE
IN EIGHT THOUSAND VERSE LENGTHS

Why does Ratnākaraśānti call his commentary the *Sāratamā*? The word *sāratamā* is extremely rare and can be interpreted in many ways. Ratnākaraśānti was likely aware of this fact and—as an erudite scholar who wrote books on riddles and poetics that sought to condense metrical definitions into short verses—he may well have chosen this word as a title because of its potentially multiple meanings. Furthermore, since Ratnākaraśānti does not explain his unusual title anywhere, it seems he left it for us as a riddle to figure it out for ourselves. The riddle of the word *Sāratamā* seems to have perplexed many, including the Tibetans who rendered it as *Sārottamā* in Tibetan transliteration, possibly as an attempt to make the title term more comprehensible in its Sanskrit form, despite the fact that both Sanskrit MSS found in Tibet bear the title *Sāratamā*.⁴¹⁰ Whatever the case though, Ratnākaraśānti’s title can be interpreted as containing a whole world of meaning and as implying something unique about Ratnākaraśānti’s interpretation of *Prajñāpāramitā*. For this reason, it may first be worth unpacking the term a bit before we move on to collect further clues.

In this regard, grammatically, the word *sāratamā* in the title consists of the word *sāra* with the superlative *taddhita* suffix °*tamaḥ* ("most") in the feminine because it modifies the word *pañjikā*. According to Monier-Williams, the word *sāra* is either masculine or neuter, probably derives from a lost root meaning ‘to be strong,’

⁴⁰⁹ This title is found only at the end of the chapter in the MS, but is placed here and explained in accord with Western convention.

⁴¹⁰ It is also possible that the word “Sarottama” that appears as the Sanskrit title in the opening lines of the Tibetan translation was not a transliteration of the original Tibetan translator, but actually added later when the MSS were no longer available. Though this seems less likely in this case, it is not uncommon to find Tibetan titles that are backtranslations of Tibetan back into Sanskrit.

and has the basic meaning of the solid core, pith or essence.⁴¹¹ But, the word *sāra* often is used as an adjective meaning “essential” “best” or “firm” and also carries an adjectival sense even when used as a noun, as in the common expression “the most essential of the essential” or “the best of the best” (*sārāt sāra*).⁴¹² In relation to these meanings also, something that is/has *sāra* is to be also considered valuable, like a jewel, and something that is/has no *sāra* is worthless.⁴¹³ In this sense, *sāratamā* can be understood as “the quintessential” or “the very best.”⁴¹⁴ Although the Tibetan *sNying po mchog* took “the quintessential” to be the main meaning of the title and we may well do the same, Ratnākaraśānti may have been alluding to the use of the word as found in related Prajñāpāramitā literature.

As for the use of the word *sāra* in the *Aṣṭa*, one example is when the Buddha is asked why those who devote themselves to *Prajñāpāramitā* experience many hindering forces (*antarāya*). In reply, the Buddha explains the reason for the hindering forces as follows:

O Subhūti, great jewels (*ratna*) have many contenders (*bahupratyarthikāni*) and [even] heavier contenders according to [their respective] value (*yathāsāra*). O Subhūti, *this* jewel, namely *Prajñāpāramitā*, [has the heaviest contenders since She] is unsurpassed in the world, [insofar as She] brings happiness and benefit to the world.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹¹ An example of the neuter “essence,” see, eg., *Catuṣṣatikāṭikā* (295): *tat kasya hetoḥ? kim asmin māyākṛte sāram astīti*. The notion of *sāra* as a solid “core” is seen, eg., in the third of the famous nine similes of *tathāgatagarbha* explained in Ratnagotravibhāga (68ff): *kathaṃ ca tathāgatadhātor buddhabimbādi sādharmyam anugantavyam iti| tat padmaṃ mṛdi saṃbhūtaṃ purā bhūtvā manoramam|aramyam abhavat paścād yathā rāgaratis tathā|| 134 || bhramarāḥ prāṇino yadvad daśanti kupitā bhrśam |duḥkhaṃ janayati dveṣo jāyamānas tathā hṛdi|| 135|| śālyādīnāṃ yathā sāram avacchannaṃ bahis tuṣaiḥ| mohāṇḍakośasaṃchannaṃ evaṃ sārārthadarśanam|| 136 ||*

⁴¹² See for instance, Yogaratnamālā (104): *tathā coktaṃ bhagavatā vajraśekhara. dṛḍhaṃ sāram asaūśṛsyam acchedyābhedyalakṣaṇam||*

⁴¹³ Cf. *Sikṣasamuccaya* (200): *lābhā me sulabdhā yasya me 'sārāt kāyāt sāram ādattaṃ bhaviṣyati. na punar ime vyādamṛgāḥ śakyā mayāmiṣeṇa toṣayitum mama māmsaṃ bhakṣayitvā sukhasparśaṃ vihariṣyanti*. Cf. Ratnamālāvadana (234:18.159): *puṇyaṃ vinātra saṃsāre kiṃ sāram janma nisphalam. bhuktvāpi kiṃ sukhāny atra suciraṃ jīvite nanu*.

⁴¹⁴ At the end of compound, *sāra* can also just indicate a “commentary.” But there is no compound here and this meaning would be a bit redundant with *pañjikā*.

⁴¹⁵ *Aṣṭa* (9th ch.): *tathā hi subhūte bahupratyarthikāni mahāratnāni bhavanti|yathāsāraṃ ca gurutarapratyarthikāni bhavanti. anuttaraṃ cedam subhūte mahāratnaṃ lokasya yaduta prajñāpāramitā, hitāya sukhāya pratipannā lokasya*.

Here, the word *sāra* can be interpreted to mean different things, such as “hardness,” but seems to be expressing value in this context.⁴¹⁶ For this reason, I have translated the word *ratna* as jewel, but *ratna* can refer to any precious thing. On the other hand, in the context of the *Aṣṭa*’s *sāra* chapter (*sāraparivarta*), Ratnākaraśānti tells us to understand the word *sāra* as etymologically related to the verb \sqrt{sr} ‘to go’ with the meaning of a ‘course’ in the sense of an easy or accessible way of proceeding even when faced with challenges or hardship. Thus, we might say that he interprets the *sāra* chapter’s opening sentence to mean the following:

Alas, Subhūti, a bodhisattva mahāsattva who goes along (*carati*) in *Prajñāpāramitā* (viz the transcendent state of discernment) goes along in an [easy] way of proceeding (*sāra*).⁴¹⁷

Ratnākaraśānti’s notion of *sāra* as a course, way, or path has resonances with his explanation of *Prajñāpāramitā* as the essential realization that constitutes the path to awakening, as Ratnākaraśānti’s final verse of the *Sāratamā* suggests:

This is my clear (*sphuṭā*) and condensed (*ghanā*) running commentary, called the *Sāratamā*, concerning the realization (*abhisamaya*) of the short (*pramita*) *Prajñāpāramitā* with eight thousand [granths of syllables].⁴¹⁸

This verse does not explain the title, but we can interpret it as implying a few different meanings. First, as a **running commentary** on the **short** (*pramita*) *Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Sāratamā* gets its name because it comments on the “pith,” i.e. the

⁴¹⁶ Cf. MW *sāra* (masc/neuter): where *sāreṇa* means “according to value.” Perhaps a *ratna*’s value is derived from its “hardness” (*sāra*). It may also be possible to interpret *yathā sāram* also as “as the best” but this seems a stretch. It is also possible to understand here *yathā+āsāra* in the sense of “enemy,” but this seems less likely since it would not explain what is unique about *Prajñāpāramitā*.

⁴¹⁷ In the above, I am summarizing my understanding of Ratnākaraśānti’s comments on this line and what follows in the *Aṣṭa* (AAĀ 845:3): *atha khalv āyusmān sārīputra āyusmantam subhūtim etad avocat - sāre batāyam āyusman subhūte bodhisattvo mahāsattvaś carati, yaḥ prajñāpāramitāyāṃ carati*. Cf. Sār (J 142:14): *saraṇam sārāḥ, karma dharmāḥ, gamyatā sudharṣaṇatety arthaḥ. viparyayād asāro durdharṣaṇatā. ataḥ pāramitānāṃ durdharṣaṇatve sa carati yaś carati prajñāpāramitāyāṃ. sā hi tāsāṃ parigrahasamarthā, tadyathā strīṇāṃ sadhūrtake nagaramārgē śāstrapāṇīpuruṣa iti pratipakṣaḥ. anyathā sudharṣaṇāḥ syur iti parigrahābhāvavikalpaḥ*. Ratnākaraśānti’s explanation of *durdharṣaṇatā* is setting up the following sentence in the *Aṣṭa*: *anenāpi paryāyeṇa duṣkarakāraḥ bodhisattvā mahāsattvā veditavyāḥ, ye dharmāṇāṃ dharmatāyāṃ caranti, na ca tāṃ dharmatāṃ sākṣātkurvanti*. Cf. MW *sāra*=course, motion.

⁴¹⁸ Sār (J 204:9): *prajñāpāramitāyāḥ pramitāyā daśaśatībhīr aṣṭābhīḥ. sāratamety abhisamaye sphuṭā ghanā pañjikeyaṃ me*. This verse appears to be unmetrical. I have not had time yet to figure out how to fix it.

shortest of the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras interpretable through the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*. Second, as a **running commentary** that is **clear and condensed**, the *Sāratamā* gets its name because it tells us only what is “quintessential.” Third, as a **running commentary** about the single **realization** that defines the path to awakening, the *Sāratamā* gets its name because it describes the “course.” In whatever way we interpret the word *sāra*, as we come across further clues, we should keep in mind that Ratnākaraśānti may have had the other motives, meanings or notions of *sāra* in mind when titling his commentary the “Quintessential Commentary (*pañjikā*).”⁴¹⁹

7.1. The Auspicious Verses

Immediately following the title and the standard “Homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas” [S1], there are four auspicious verses, each composed in a different meter. Although these verses demonstrate Ratnākaraśānti’s renowned mastery of poetics, they also metaphorically situate the *Sāratamā* within Ratnākaraśānti’s own particular approach to the topic.⁴²⁰ Once again, Ratnākaraśānti himself does not explain the details and imagery of his verses. However, for the sake of capturing the richness of these verses and how they might be interpreted, I will briefly sketch out different possible interpretations.⁴²¹ Each time, I will change the translation slightly

⁴¹⁹ There are several uses of the term *sāratamā* in other contexts by other authors that may also be related to Ratnākaraśānti’s use of it here. We will not be able to discuss these at length, but the YRps’ alchemical use of the term is interesting and should be kept in the back of one’s mind. See YRps v. 3.41: *vighaṭayed atha lohasudarviṇā tadanu mocadalopari dhālyate. bhavati sāratamā rasaparpaṭī sakalarogavighātakarī hi sā*. As an example of a usage much less pertinent for our purposes, I also found the following passage in the Vedānta text *Cintāmaṇi Adhikaraṇa* which reads:

siddhaśārīrakārtha iti jagaccharīrah paramātmā śārīrah, tatpratipādakaṃ śāstram śārīrakam tasya sāratamārthasamgrāhakatvena siddhatvān nāsad arthapratipādakatvam ity abhiprāyah.

⁴²⁰ Given Ratnākaraśānti’s attested interest in poetics and riddles, it seems possible that he might have used these different meters as a way to inform the content of each verse or to associate it with a particular textual point of view. For instance, since this commentary interprets *Prajñāpāramitā* according to the AA, we might see in the use of the *śārdūlavikrīḍita* meter an echo of the AA’s famous homage and in the use of the *anuṣṭubh* meter an echo of all the other AA verses. No echoes of the Mālinī or Āryā meters jump out at me.

⁴²¹ All my introductory comments will be based upon my preliminary understanding of Ratnākaraśānti’s own explanation of his views in a variety of texts. However, since his poetry is often intended to communicate many levels of meaning simultaneously, it should be noted that I do not suppose there to be only one way to interpret these verses or to preclude others.

and draw on other passages in Ratnākaraśānti's works or on other information about his life as support.

7.1.1. The First Auspicious Verse

The first verse is in *mālinī* meter. The verse expresses the threefold nature of *Prajñāpāramitā* that Ratnākaraśānti is undertaking to comment upon. Like many *maṅgala* verses, it can be interpreted on several levels to express more than one meaning and Ratnākaraśānti may well have meant it in more than one of these ways. I will offer four interpretations.⁴²²

At the most basic level, the *Sāratamā*'s auspicious verse can be interpreted as praise of the Buddha as follows:

Although the world has (*bhavati*)⁴²³ many (*bahutara*) celestial bodies (*arka*),⁴²⁴ [there is] only [one] (*kevala*) due to whose full ripening in arising [and] due to [whose] setting, [there is] day and night. May that buddha's awakening (*bodha*)—which is pure (*śuddhimān*),⁴²⁵ free of attachment, and pervading all domains (*viśaya*)—arise for you [as] the treasury of venerable (*guru*) qualities.⁴²⁶

⁴²² Ratnākaraśānti comments upon the sun metaphors that occur in the *Aṣṭa* as a way of contrasting the realizations of buddhas and *arhats* and as a description of the relationship between the *dharmadhātu* and *Prajñāpāramitā*.

⁴²³ We can take *bhavati* either as a locative participle or as an indicative.

⁴²⁴ I have considered emending *bahutarārke* to *bahukarārke*. However, based on the occurrence of *bahutara* here and elsewhere, based on the Tibetan *nyi ma mang po* and based on the similar verse attested in the PPU, I have decided not to emend, despite the fact that in MS B, the word *bahutarka* (a.c.) and its correction to *bahutarārka* (p.c.) are written over faded letters, suggesting that this part of the verse may have been written after damage to the original. Instead of damage, it is also possible that a scribe merely tried to re-use an old palm leaf and erased this portion to start the *Sāratamā*. However, if this were the case, the *namo buddha* part would probably be smudged too. Furthermore, if the prior letters had been intentionally erased, the scribe probably would have erased the dark horizontal line that presently precedes the word *bhavati* in the MSS. In any event, *bahukara* and *bahutara* are easily and commonly confused in both directions. Cf. BHS *bahukara* where Edgerton describes a similar confusion in *Śata*, in which all Nepalese MSS contain *bahutara* in place of *bahukara*.

⁴²⁵ The use of this adjective *śuddhimān* offers support for the title that I have been using, *Śuddhimatī*, in place of the Tibetan title **Śuddhamati*. If the title were *Śuddhamati*, the Tibetan title would have been *dag pa'i blo* rather than *dag ldan*. However, the Tibetan title of the commentary is *dag ldan* and this same title is referenced by the *Sāratamā* in the Tibetan. The Tibetan *ldan* translates the *-mant* suffix suggesting the feminine *-matī*. The word **Śuddhamatī* has been used, but this does not appear to be a proper Sanskrit formation. Even if some might argue that **Śuddha* could be used as a neuter noun meaning “anything pure” and hence **Śuddhamatī* could technically exist, it seems unlikely that the adjectival character of *śuddha* would be ignored and such a term is unattested. Given that the Tibetan transliteration of the title as **sarottama* does not match the title *Sāratamā* that appears in both Sanskrit MSS, we should not be surprised if its transliteration **Śuddhamati* does not either.

⁴²⁶ From PPU (opening verse 4) *viśiṣyate bodhir gurubhis guṇaiḥ* and his comments elsewhere, we know that *guruguṇanidhir* is a metaphor for *dharmakāya* or *dharmadhātu* when comparing it to the *vimuktikakāya*. Jaini's edition reads *nidher*, which is plausible and allows for a nice image of the sun coming out from the ocean, but I have chosen to accept the manuscript's reading °*nidhir* which is supported by Tibetan. Although the body of qualities/ocean of qualities cannot generally “arise,” we can take “arise for you” metaphorically here as meaning ‘may you realize the *dharmakāya*.’ Such a wish for all of us does go against his *triyāna* system and his usual dedication of merit to beings

As we saw in the chapter on his viewpoint, Ratnākaraśānti explained that the sun metaphor can be used to compare the **buddha’s awakening** with the awakening of arhats and others.⁴²⁷ That is to say, **in the world** where there are **many celestial bodies**, i.e. stars, which represent the awakening of arhats and so on, **there is only one sun**, i.e. the buddha’s awakening. It produces **day**, i.e. it outshines the light of every other celestial body **due to its full ripening in arising**, and it also produces **night**, i.e. it allows those other celestial bodies to shine forth, **due to its setting**, i.e. due to its absence.⁴²⁸ A sun that has fully arisen in the sky is **pure**, i.e. brilliant, **free of attachment**, i.e. impartial, and **pervading all domains** (*viṣaya*), shining in all directions. Similarly, a **buddha’s awakening** is **pure**, i.e. luminous, **unobstructed**, i.e. free of obscurations, and **pervading all domains** (*viṣaya*), i.e. aware of all knowable objects (*viṣaya*). Just as the sunlight allows for all things in the world to appear clearly, that **buddha’s awakening** is the **treasury of all venerable qualities**—i.e. the body of qualities (*dharmakāya*), the natural body (*svābhāvikakāya*), or the pure source of qualities (*dharmadhātu*) of a buddha—that enables a buddha to appear **in the world**.⁴²⁹ Because of being the source of these qualities, the **awakening**, i.e. realization, of a **buddha**, i.e. his *dharmakāya*, is superior to the liberation body (*vimuktikāya*) of arhats. Since the sun is unsurpassed in this way, Ratnākaraśānti wishes that it, i.e. the **buddha’s awakening**, **arise for you**, i.e. the budding bodhisattvas who wish to enter the Mahāyāna by studying this commentary

attaining one of the three results, if we assume the intended audience of the *Sāratamā* to consist, only of those with the bodhisattva *gotra* and possibly, the indeterminate *gotra* (*aniyata*).

⁴²⁷ We can see a similar use of this imagery in PPU v.4. in Luo Hong (2013:21) <*bhavo yathevāsuci tāmrabhājanam | athāpi hīnaḥ sphaṭiko > pamaḥ śamaḥ | prabhābhir arkeṣu ravir viśiṣyate*|| Luo Hong’s reconstruction of Tibetan works well, but I would suggest a different reconstruction with *śodhita* to bring out the resonances with *śuddhi/śuddha*, which is an important word for Ratnākaraśānti: <*bhavo ’śubho ’śodhitalohabhāṇḍavan nihīnabhūtaḥ sphaṭiko > pamaḥ śamaḥ | prabhābhir arkeṣu ravir viśiṣyate*||

⁴²⁸ Night and day can also be interpreted differently, but this should suffice for a basic meaning.

⁴²⁹ Ratnākaraśānti equates these three, i.e. the *dharmakāya*, the *svābhāvikakāya*, and the *viśuddhadharmadhātu*, as we saw above in the context of AA. 8.1.

on Prajñāpāramitā. In other words, he wishes that we may realize the awakening of a buddha ourselves.⁴³⁰

Aside from the above interpretation, we may interpret the verse as a praise of *Prajñāpāramitā*, which is sheer luminosity, by taking a few terms differently.⁴³¹ For this, we have to read *ārka* (instead of *arka*) and take it to mean something that belongs to the sun, i.e. “luminosity.”⁴³² If this reading is allowable, then we might be able to interpret this *mālinī* verse as praising *Prajñāpāramitā* as follows [S1]:

Although there is nothing but (*kevala*) its (*yasya*) abundant (*bahutara*) luminosity (*ārka*),⁴³³ in the world there is day due to its maturation (*saṃrddhyā*) in arising [and] night (*rātri*) due to [its] disappearance (*astamgamena*).

May the treasury of exalted (*guru*) qualities arise for you [as] the realization of a buddha, pure, free of attachment, and pervading each domain (*viṣaya*).

Here, we might perhaps understand the **realization of a buddha** (*bodha*) to refer specifically to *Prajñāpāramitā* rather than to the ‘awakening of a buddha’ in its entirety.⁴³⁴ That *Prajñāpāramitā*, which sees emptiness, is the **abundant luminosity**,

⁴³⁰ This wish is limited to readers of this commentary, who are assumed to have the bodhisattva *gotra*. At the end of the PPU, Ratnākaraśānti’s verse dedicates the merit so that all beings attain realization appropriate to their various *gotras*. Cf. PPU (D162a7) *thob pa’i dge ba gang yin de yis bdag ni bde gshegs go ’phang thob gyur nas|| sna tshogs khams ldan skye bo ma lus rnam kyang theg pa gsum gyis nges ’byung shog|*

⁴³¹ We might be able to understand the opening verses of the PPU and *Śuddhimatī* also to praise the Buddha in terms of his three bodies and simultaneously as a praise of *Prajñāpāramitā*. Cf. Śud (C191): *lo ma me tog dang ldan pa’i yongs ’du’i (P/N ’du) shing bzhin mtshan mchog gis| bsod nams sku brygan rnam par ’byes (P/N ’byed)| yan lag brygan pa rgyal gyur cig|* Here *yongs ’du’i shing* correlates to the body of qualities, whereas *bsod nams sku* correlates to the enjoyment and creation bodies. But the pairing of *brygan (alamkāra)* and *brygan pa (alamkrta)* suggests a simultaneous praise of *Prajñāpāramitā* or the AA. Cf. Luo Hong (2013:20): *yaḥ śirasi bhāti kṛtināṃ mokṣadvār-ghakusumareṇur iva| jayati suramaulimṛgyaḥ sa pādapāmsur daśabalasya|* By praising the “dust” (*pāmsu*) of the Buddha, he is simultaneously praising *Prajñāpāramitā qua Sarvajñatā* which he explains below in the Śud as the path to be sought (*mṛgya*). Cf. Śud (C194:3): *de ji ltar lam du ’gyur| |brtsal bar bya bas lam yin gyi| |tshol bar byed pas na lam ni ma yin no|* In this passage, Ratnākaraśānti is explaining the AA’s lemma *sārvākārajñatāmārgaḥ* and seems to be explaining *mārga* as implying the first of two possible interpretations of the name, i.e. *brtsal bar bya = mṛgyaḥ* rather than *tshol bar byed pa = mārgaka*. Like the PPU and Śud, we do not have to read the words differently to see the praise of *Prajñāpāramitā*, but I have done so in order to make it more explicit.

⁴³² This metaphor of *Prajñāpāramitā* as the halo of the sun was seen previously in Ratnākaraśānti’s explanation of the *svābhāvikakāya* as *raviraśmimaṇḍala*. But is also employed in PPU verses 2 and verse 4. Cf. Luo Hong (2013:21): *sphuratprabhāmaṇḍalalāñchanāya v.2 and prabhābhir ravir v.4.*

⁴³³ It is not necessary, but may also be possible to interpret *bahutarārke* as a *bahuvrīhi* to *loke* in the sense of *lokane* “seeing,” since Ratnākaraśānti defines *Prajñāpāramitā* as “seeing emptiness” as we shall see in the final section describing his definition below.

⁴³⁴ For the use of **bodha** to refer to *Prajñāpāramitā*, see for instance, Sār (J 173:20): *sāmbhogikasya kāyasya....yaḥ paramamahāyānadharmasaṃbodhaḥ sā prajñāpāramitā...* It may be splitting hairs to

i.e. the full awareness, born from the **treasury of exalted qualities**, i.e. from the *dharmadhātu* when it is purified—even though these two are inseparable like the sun and its luminous halo.⁴³⁵ **Although nothing but** this luminosity truly exists ultimately, **in the conventional world** there appears to be **night due to the disappearance** of the sun, i.e. what ignorant beings experience due to not realizing the *dharmadhātu*, and **day, due to the maturation of its arising**, i.e. what noble ones experience in various degrees according to their level of realization of it. We can look at this maturation from two perspectives. First, as the realization of the bodhisattva progresses on the grounds, the light of **day** appears to undergo a process of **maturation (saṃṛddhi)** in the **arising** through the cultivation of Prajñāpāramitā *qua* transmundane and pure mundane awarenesses. Next, when the **treasury of exalted qualities** becomes fully purified through the complete **maturation of arising**, all phenomena completely dissolve into the transmundane awareness and *that* very same transmundane awareness instantly re-arises as the pure mundane awareness in the form of an All-Pervading One (*vyāpin*). When it arises, the **realization of the buddha is pure**, insofar as it sees only suchness, **free of attachment** insofar as out of sheer compassion it retains a small amount of error, and **pervading all domains (viśaya)**, in that it knows infinite objects of awareness to be suchness.⁴³⁶ Finally,

differentiate these two here, but there is a slight ambiguity in the mention of *buddhabodha* that may be worth exploiting in this second interpretation.

⁴³⁵ Cf. Sār (GS 148:8): *sarva ete prāptikāle 'nabhinirvṛtito 'nyatreti sūnyatāvyatirekeṇa nopalabhyante, suviśuddhajñānāvyatirekiṇī sarvaśūnyataiva tadānīm khyātīty arthaḥ. idam apy anena sūcitam. ya eṣa buddhabodhisattvapṛthagjanāvasthānānugāmitvād dharmadhātuvaḍ eva śāśvataḥ prakāśas tasyāsau dharmatā. yāvat paratantras tāvat paratantradharmatā ucyate, parato buddhadharmatā svābhāvikaś ca kāyo buddhānām ucyate.*

⁴³⁶ Sār (J 177): *tathāgatam adhikṛtya śāstram— anābhogam anāsaṅgam avyāghātaṃ sadā sthitam| sarvaprāśnāpanud bauddhaṃ prañidhijñānam iṣyate||8-8|| anābhogam nirvikalpatvāt anāsaṅgam nirapekṣtvāt avyāghātaṃ sarvatrapratihatatvāt. sadā sthitam ity asamāhite cetasi sthitatvāt, sarvaprāśnān chedayatīti sarvaprāśnāpanut, sa ca sambhogakāyāḥ parīsuddhe svabuddhakṣetre jāyate yāvadākāśasthitir avatiṣṭhate. tat kuto buddhakṣetram ? prādhānyena tasyaiva tatropapatteḥ. lujyate pralujyateḥ lokāḥ, prajātaṃ bhājanaṃ ca. tasmāt dvidhā lokadhātuḥ sattvaloko bhājanalokaś ca. tatra sattvalokapariśuddhim adhikṛtyāha--sarvasattvadhātupūṇyājñānasambhārāparyantatayā prajñāpāramitā 'paryantatā 'nugantavyeti yayā bhagavataḥ prajñāyā paripācītāḥ sattvās tatra yāvadākāśam utpadyante, utpannāś ca yayā bodhaye paripācyante, seha prajñāpāramitā. tasyā aparyantatā 'nugantavyā. katham ity āha—sarvetyādi. ye kecit tatra sattvā utpadyante sarve te labdhāryabhūmayo bodhisattvāḥ. te sarve sarvaḥ sattvadhātuḥ sattvarāśiḥ. tasya pūṇyājñānasam-*

Ratnākaraśānti wishes that the treasury of exalted qualities **may arise** for you, who read this commentary on *Prajñāpāramitā*, **as the realization of a buddha**, i.e. as *Prajñāpāramitā*.⁴³⁷ According to Ratnākaraśānti’s explanation of the three bodies, we can understand arising of *Prajñāpāramitā* to begin with the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* and any other form through beings come to realize the source of qualities through hearing, contemplating, and meditating along the path. In this way, we might be able to understand the emphasis of the first verse as a praise either of the awakening of the buddhas *qua* dharmakaya/dharmadhātu or of the realization of the buddhas *qua* *Prajñāpāramitā* that is born from it. This theme is carried forward in the next verse.

7.1.2. The Second Auspicious Verse

The second auspicious verse is in the *āryā* meter.⁴³⁸ It expresses the venerability of *Prajñāpāramitā* and buddhas as follows [S2]:

That *Prajñāpāramitā*, who is blessed with sons, and those [buddhas] with the ten powers, who boast about [their] Mother, are my refuge.

Here, Ratnākaraśānti is echoing the famous opening verse of the AA, which pays homage to *Prajñāpāramitā* as **Mother** and suggests that the buddhas are her **sons**. However, unlike that verse, he specifies that he takes **refuge** in both the buddhas who have **the ten powers** and ***Prajñāpāramitā* who is blessed with sons**. The question arises: What is the difference between *Prajñāpāramitā* and the buddhas, such that he names them separately as his refuge? In the context of Ratnākaraśānti’s explanation of the buddhas’ natural body, *Prajñāpāramitā* was explained as a result, in that she is born from the source of the buddhas’ qualities. But she was also explained as a cause

bhārah, *tayor aparyantatayā*. The compound *udayasamṛddhyā* in the verse could be interpreted as a genitive, dative, instrumental, or even locative tatpuruṣa to produce different nuances. I am interpreting *saṃṛddhi* as “a maturation” since that allows for a similar ambiguity in English and the idea that Ratnākaraśānti expresses in the passage cited in this footnote.

⁴³⁷ We may also be able to interpret *buddhabodha* as an ablative *bahuvrīhi*, i.e. the treasury of exalted qualities from which the realization of a buddha [arises], or even possibly as a *hetugarbhaviśeṣa* insofar as it is a realization of a buddha.

⁴³⁸ Ratnākaraśānti seems to regard *Āryā* as an important meter. He uses it in the first and last of his eight opening verses in the PPU, but not for any others in between.

in the enjoyment and created bodies, since it is only through her that bodhisattvas come to realize the pure source of qualities for themselves and become buddhas. For this reason, we might interpret Her being **blessed** with **sons** to mean that She both has sons who are already born and is pregnant with them. That they **boast about** their **Mother** means that they teach about Her in numerous lengthy teachings in which they praise her. Although Ratnākaraśānti takes refuge in both, the implication here is that the buddhas are praiseworthy, because of their association with *Prajñāpāramitā*. In the *Śuddhimatī*'s explanation of the AA's homage, he makes this relationship more clear. First, he cites the verse:

Through the state of complete awareness (*sarvajñatā*), She leads the śrāvakas⁴³⁹ seeking peace to tranquility.

Through the state of awareness of the paths (*mārgajñatā*), She accomplishes the benefit of beings for [those] benefitting the world.

Those sages, who are acquainted with Her, teach (*vadanti*) this complete (*viśva*) [awareness (*jñāna*)] of all aspects (*sarvākāra*).⁴⁴⁰

To Her, the Mother of [any] buddha,⁴⁴¹ flanked by the śrāvakas and bodhisattvas, I pay homage.⁴⁴²

For Ratnākaraśānti, this verse shows that *Prajñāpāramitā* is even more venerable (*bla ma; guru*) than the supremely venerable (*bla ma dam pa; paramaguru*).⁴⁴³ Why?

⁴³⁹ According to Ratnākaraśānti, the term **śrāvakas** in the verse also includes pratyekabuddhas. Cf. Śud (C192:8): |nyan thos zhes smos pas ni 'dir rang sangs rgyas kyang gzung ste| theg pa de gyis la khyad par cung zad las med pa'i phyir ro|

⁴⁴⁰ Śud (C192:16) *sna tshogs 'di dag rnam pa kun mkhyen pa zhes bya ba la| rnam pa kun ni chos 'di dag rnam pa kun te| de kun nas mkhyen pa 'i'o*| It seem from Tib. that Ratnākaraśānti is explaining *sarvākāram* as a *bahuvrīhi* for *sarvākārajñānam*, a virtual synonym here of *sarvākārajñatā*. The Tibetan lemma also includes *mkhyen pa* but the Skt. verse does not. Cf. also Sār. (Ed.GS:153): *tayā bodhyā yat sarvadharmāṇāṃ sarvākārajñānaṃ nirabhiniveśaṃ sā tatra sarvākārajñatā*. The word *viśvam* here essentially means “all” “whole” (*sarva*). Since *sna tshogs* (*viśva*) is part of the lemma, it seems that *kun nas* is glossing *viśvam* adverbially. But since the Tib is uncertain here, I have left it as is. Also, DBA seems take *viśvam* as a pronoun and *sarvākāram* adverbially with a slightly different lemma is *na tshogs 'di dag rnam pa kun gsungs pa zhes bya ba ni shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la sogs pa'i chos kyi 'khor lo sna tshogs pa 'di dag rnam pa thams cad du gsung zhing ston par mdzad pa'o*. “The sages teach all this in all aspects”—which is another possible interpretation of the grammar.

⁴⁴¹ I have interpreted the singular *buddha* here to be “any” *buddha* so that Ratnākaraśānti's explanation of the singular below can be understood, and so that the verse can also be correctly understood in English.

⁴⁴² AMANO (4): *yā sarvajñatayā nayaty upaśamaṃ śāntaiṣiṇaḥ śrāvakān yā mārgajñatayā jagaddhitakṛtāṃ lokārthasampādikā|sarvākāram idaṃ vadanti munayo viśvam yayā saṃgatās| tasyai śrāvakabodhisattvagaṇīno buddhasya māt্রে namaḥ ||*

⁴⁴³ Śud (C192:1): *bcom ldan 'das ma shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa rnam par dbye bar bzhed nas bla ma dam pa'i yang bla mar gyur pa de nyid la dang por|*

The bodhisattvas and śrāvakas are venerable for the world. The buddhas are supremely venerable. [But] even for them, She is [their] mother. Therefore, she is even more venerable than they.⁴⁴⁴

How is She their Mother? Insofar as she manifests in three ways—namely as the **state of complete awareness**, the **state of awareness of the paths**, and the **State of Awareness of All Aspects**—She is their Mother, because she produces and nourishes the undefiled aggregates of these noble beings according to their goals (*don*; *artha*).⁴⁴⁵

One might object, “Since the word “buddha” in the phrase **Mother of buddha** (*buddhasya mātṛe*) is singular and since the śrāvakas and bodhisattvas themselves are considered *sons* of the buddha, how could all the noble beings be considered her children?” Ratnākaraśānti explains that she has many children, firstly, because the singular term **buddha** is a collective singular meaning “buddhas” who are **the sages** (*munaya*) in the verse.⁴⁴⁶ Secondly, Ratnākaraśānti explains that She should also be understood as the mother of the **śrāvakas and bodhisattvas**, because she gives birth to those buddhas **flanked**, i.e. accompanied, **by** them all at once.⁴⁴⁷

Therefore, we can understand the *Sāratamā*’s second verse based on Ratnākaraśānti’s explanation of the AA homage. Ratnākaraśānti’s verses do not mention the śrāvakas and bodhisattvas as a true refuge, probably because, even

⁴⁴⁴ Śud (C193:12): |*de la nyan thos dang byang chub sems dpa' ni 'jig rten gyi bla ma 'o* | *sangs rgyas ni bla ma dam pa 'o* | *de dag gi yang de ni yum mo* | *des na de ni bla ma dam pa 'i yang bla ma 'o* |

⁴⁴⁵ Śud (C192:9): |*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'i dbye ba ni rnam pa gsum yin te* | Śud (C192:18): *'di ji ltar de rnams kyi yum du 'gyur zhe na* | *ji skad bshad pa 'i don chen po gsum thob pa 'i phyir* | *gzhan yang ji srid du de dag gi zag pa med pa 'i phung po 'i bdag nyid ma bskyed cing ma gsos pa de srid du de dag gis ji skad du bshad pa 'i don chen po rnams thob par mi nus so* | *de 'i phyir don gyis na skyed pa dang gso ba yin par shes par bya 'o*. Here the three goals/benefits are personal liberation, mundane benefit, and ultimate benefit. Cf. Śud (C192): *des na thams cad mkhyen pa 'i dbye bas nyan thos zhi ba tshol rnams thar pa thob par byed pa dang* | *lam shes pa 'i dbye bas 'gro la phan par byed rnams te byang chub sems dpa' rnams kyi mdzad par 'os pa ni 'jig rten gyi don te* | *gang 'jig rten gyi don sgrub par byed pa 'o* | *lhag mar gyur pa* (P/N kyi) *dang don gyis rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa 'i dbye bas* | *gang dang yang dag ldan pas thub pa ste sangs rgyas so* |

⁴⁴⁶ As mentioned above, Ratnākaraśānti glosses AA’s buddhasya in Śud (C193:4): *rigs kyi dbang du byas na gcig gi tshig yin te* | *nyan thos la sogs pa 'i tshigs dang ldan pa 'i sangs rgyas rnams kyi zhe bya ba 'i don to* | The principle here is *jātinirdeśāt*. Cf. also Śud (C192:15): |*gang dang yang dag ldan pas thub pa ste sangs rgyas so* |

⁴⁴⁷ Cf. Śud (C193:8) *gal te de ltar na bu dang ldan pa 'i chung ma de ni bu 'i yang chung mar 'gyur ro zhe na* | *brjod par 'dod pa 'i bye brag gis de 'i skyon med de* | *'dir ni sangs rgyas tshogs dang ldan zhes bya ba 'i ldan pa 'i don ni 'dir lhan cig pa la brjod par 'dod de* | *nyan thos la sogs pa 'i tshogs dang ldan pa 'i sangs rgyas rnams kyi zhes bya ba 'i don to* | The implication here seems to be either that these are the buddhas in their enjoyment and created bodies (*nirmāṇakāya*).

though they are the retinue for a buddha's enjoyment body and created body, they are only venerable in the world. By contrast, the buddhas are a supremely venerable refuge and thus, they are the pride of *Prajñāpāramitā*. Yet, even though *Prajñāpāramitā* Herself is blessed to have these children, the fact that she is praised by her children indicates that she is an ultimate source of refuge, even more venerable than they. Thus, although Ratnākaraśānti does not explicitly say it, one can interpret this explanation here to be suggesting that with respect to the triple refuge, the saṅgha is a provisional refuge, the Buddha is a real refuge, but the dharma *qua* realization, i.e. *Prajñāpāramitā*, is the ultimate refuge.⁴⁴⁸

7.1.3. The Third Auspicious Verse

The third verse is in the *anuṣṭubh* meter. With Ratnākaraśānti's glosses of the AA's homage in mind, it becomes easy to understand the *Sāratamā*'s third auspicious verse, which obliquely comments on the AA's homage, as follows [S3]:

A few syllables from Her held even by the folds of the ear
become seeds of awakening. That Mother of conquerors is victorious !

Next, Ratnākaraśānti's third *anuṣṭubh* auspicious verse suggests that *Prajñāpāramitā* is not just the Dharma *qua* realization, but that which manifests in **syllables**, i.e. the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts themselves.⁴⁴⁹ According to Ratnākaraśānti's explanation, created bodies only take the form of verbal and physical dharmas through *Prajñāpāramitā*'s power to lead beings to three different types of awakening through their first hearing, then contemplating and meditating upon Her. Hence, when syllables **from Her** are **grasped even by the folds of the ears**, they serve as **seeds of awakening** which naturally blossom in awakening. Given *Prajñāpāramitā*'s power, even just a **few syllables** that take root will grow in one's mind and become the state of complete awareness of all aspects. In this way, Ratnākaraśānti prepares us for his

⁴⁴⁸ Cf. Sār (J 173:17)... *yaḥ paramamahāyānadharmasambodhaḥ sā prajñāpāramitā*.

⁴⁴⁹ Cf. Sār (J 173:21): *sarvaśabdāparyantatayā prajñāpāramitāparyāntatānugantavyeti*.

explanation of the *Aṣṭa*, which, when compared with other longer *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, explains the topic with relatively **few syllables**.

7.1.4. The Fourth Verse

The final verse, in the *śārdulavikrīḍita* meter, launches us on the heroic journey of studying a few syllables of *Prajñāpāramitā* until they fruit in our awakening.

In this verse, Ratnākaraśānti tells us what his *Sāratamā* will provide for that journey as follows [S4]:⁴⁵⁰

Lord Maitreya's adornment is ⁴⁵¹ a boat on the ocean of Her meaning/content (*artha*).⁴⁵²

Also, [an exegesis] is explained (*nirṇīta*)⁴⁵³ according to the branches that correspond to Her expansive form (*ākṛti*).⁴⁵⁴

Despite being slow, [I] Ratnākara will [now] explain with clear, succinct words that *Prajñāpāramitā*, [which is] Eight Thousand [*granthas* of syllables long] (*aṣṭasāhasrikā*) according to the great system (*mata*).⁴⁵⁵

The metaphor in this auspicious verse is beautiful and instructive. In the last verse, Ratnākaraśānti told us that we need only hear a few syllables from Her, but he wants us to know now that, like a profound and vast **ocean**, **Her meaning** is difficult to fathom and **Her content**, as expressed in the voluminous *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, is difficult to wade through or traverse. In order to navigate that ocean, we will need **Lord Maitreya's adornment**, i.e. the AA, which is like a **boat on the ocean of Her meaning**. That is to say, Maitreya's *Abhisamayālamkāra* is a small **adornment** (*alamkāra*, viz treatise) that can help us understand the content and meaning of all the

⁴⁵⁰ The *śārdulavikrīḍita* meter was also used in the AA's homage.

⁴⁵¹ The Sanskrit compound *alamkṛtimayaḥ* can also be interpreted to mean that the boat is made of or consists of an adornment. But, in many cases the ending *-mayaḥ*, like *lakṣaṇa* etc., just amounts to meaning "that is" or simply "is."

⁴⁵² Understand this as a metaphoric genitive to mean 'ocean-like meaning.'

⁴⁵³ The word *nirṇītam* probably means "determined" or even definitively "settled" here, but I have used "traced out" to capture the metaphor, based on Apte: *nī* = "to trace."

⁴⁵⁴ I will offer a second interpretation of this line below. MW and Apte record the meaning for *aṃśa* "degree of latitude or longitude" which is appealing in the ocean metaphor, but I have not been able to find any usages of the term in precisely this sense. Whatever word is chosen here to translate *aṃśa*, it seems that the metaphor could be connected with the idea "mapped out."

⁴⁵⁵ Here the reading *mata* is tentative and uncertain. As mentioned in my footnote 282, Ratnākaraśānti uses *mata* elsewhere to refer to Yogācāra or *Nirākāravādin* school of thought which was also held, according to Ratnākaraśānti, by Nāgārjuna. It is possible that Ratnākaraśānti is referring here to this "great" *mata* of which he is a part, but the Tibetan *gzhung lugs* suggests a "great textual tradition" (*gzhung lugs*) rather than his own "system" or a "school of thought" (*mata*).

Prajñāpāramitā literature. Aside from a boat, we will need a map so that we know where to take the boat. Fortunately, in Ratnākaraśānti's *Śuddhimatī*, much has already been **explained** (*nirñīta*), i.e. mapped out, **according to the branches** (*aṃśair*), i.e. according to the sections in the intricate AA outline, **that correspond to Her extensive form** (*ākṛti*), i.e. that correspond to the longer version of *Prajñāpāramitā*, namely the *Pañca*.⁴⁵⁶ In the *Śuddhimatī*, Ratnākaraśānti explains the AA points in detail and demonstrates briefly how the AA's 1200 points map onto the various sections in the *Pañca*. By Ratnākaraśānti's time, it appears that the *Pañca* had already been revised and the points of the AA verses had already been placed into the *Pañca* itself.⁴⁵⁷ Since the *Sāratamā* uses the AA verses to frame the topic but does little more than gloss a few of their words, Ratnākaraśānti is hinting here that there is much to understand from the *Śuddhimatī* before reading the *Sāratamā*. The point here is that, without understanding AA's outline, we will not see how Maitreya's boat navigates **that *Prajñāpāramitā***, which has **Eight Thousand** *granthas* of 32 syllables. Still, **Ratnākaraśānti despite being slow**, i.e. dull-witted, **will now explain** that text **with clear, succinct words according to that great system** (*mata*), i.e. according to the way he explained the AA in relation to the *Pañca*.⁴⁵⁸

In the third opening verse of the *Śuddhimatī*, Ratnākaraśānti makes what seems like a punning jab at Haribhadra's claim to explain that which the two

⁴⁵⁶ The word *aṃśa* could also mean Her various "subdivisions" or even "branches" in the sense of different texts that stem from Her, but it seems more likely that he is speaking of the *Śuddhimatī* here.

⁴⁵⁷ In the *bsTan 'gyur*, this revised *Pañca* is attributed to Haribhadra as though it is a commentary. In Makransky (1998), he speculates that the revisor of the revised *Pañca* might have been Haribhadra himself.

⁴⁵⁸ Once again, it is difficult to know the significance of the word "great system (*mata*)" here. Cf. my footnotes 282 and 455 on *mata*. As we saw in the transmission lists of the *rNam thar yongs grags*, there were three *Prajñāpāramitā* lineages, namely the Maitreya lineage, the Mañjuśrī lineage, and the lineage of *Prajñāpāramitā* and *tantra* as a pair—the last of which was specifically connected with Ratnākaraśānti. We can assume that *mata* is referring to the Maitreya lineage, based on this verse and the commentary's use of the AA verses as framework. However, Ratnākaraśānti appears in the *bodhicitta* section to quote extensively from the *Bṛhaṭṭikā* (*rGyas par bshad pa*—i.e. *Yum gsum gNod 'joms*), which may in fact be what "the lineage of *Prajñāpāramitā* and *tantra* as a pair" is referring to. This certainly could fit within Ratnākaraśānti's general use of the term *mata* and the *gZhan-stong* school certainly claims that the *Bṛhaṭṭikā* was called "great" (*chen po*), but further research on this point is needed.

commentators named Vimuktisena had failed to reveal in the AA.⁴⁵⁹ If we look for something similar here, we may be able to interpret the verse more cynically as follows [S4]:

Lord Maitreya's boat is an adornment on the ocean of Her meaning/content (*artha*).

Many have been led astray/carried away (*nirṇīta*) even by the subdivisions that correspond to the [AA's] detailed outline (*ākṛti*) of Her.⁴⁶⁰

[But I] Ratnākara, despite being slow, will [now] explain that *Prajñāpāramitā*, [which is] Eight Thousand [*granthas* of syllables long] (*aṣṭasāhasrika*) with clear, succinct words according to the great system (*mata*).

Here, in this second interpretation, we can understand the second line to refer to Haribhadra and his **many** followers whom he **led astray** by his incorrect interpretation, which **even** re-interprets the four **subdivisions** of the Dharmakāya chapter to be about four bodies, rather than about the three bodies and their activity which they had always been about. Since the subdivisions of the Dharmakāya chapter **correspond to the detailed outline of Her**, Haribhadra's interpretation from start to finish is mistaken. If we interpret the second sentence in this way, then we can understand a contrast being pointed out by these words, in that **Ratnākaraśānti will explain the *Aṣṭa* according to the great system**, i.e. according to the way it was laid out by the masters before Haribhadra. In fact, the way that the Dharmakāya chapter is interpreted is very significant. Certainly, Ratnākaraśānti explains the Dharmakāya chapter as speaking about only three bodies, according to the early commentarial tradition and followed by Ārya and Bhadanta Vimuktisena. Since Ratnākaraśānti's

⁴⁵⁹ Cf. Śud (C191ff): |*grol sde dag gis rgyal yum gyi*| |*don ni ma lus ma bkrol zhes*| |*rab tu byed las bdag gis ni*| |*rna bar gtam brjod bzhin du shes*| |*gang phyir don nyams de la ni*| |*bdag nyid nges par blo dman yang*| |*mgon pos byin gyis brabs pas na*| |*'di don bstan phyir brtsams pa yin*|| The pun is on the name Vimuktisena *grol sde dag gis don ni ma lus ma bkrol zhes*, i.e. "It is said (*zhes*) [by Haribhadra] that the entire meaning of *Prajñāpāramitā* was not revealed/released (*bkrol*; *mukta*) by [two] Vimuktisenas....[But I] Ratnākara, despite being slow, have composed this..." Haribhadra claimed that he was explaining what Ārya and Bhadhanta Vimuktisena had neglected. The rest of Ratnākaraśānti's verse says slyly that he will do that now, implying that Haribhadra had not done so properly. This is the pun on the "*vimukti*" part of the two Vimuktisenas' names.

⁴⁶⁰ It is possible to interpret *bahu* in three ways. The *bahu* could be in compound with *vistara*, a neuter nominative going with *nirṇītam*, or a neuter accusative adverb with a *bhāve prayoga*. The second two would have roughly the same meanings. I chose the interpretation that I have above for ease in English.

own teacher Dharmakīrtiśrī basically follows Haribhadra's structure in commenting on the AA, Ratnākaraśānti could have chosen to criticize that interpretation here only through double meanings. Whether or not we find this second reading plausible enough, much of what Ratnākaraśānti writes about the *Aṣṭa* seems to be in conversation, one way or another, with Haribhadra's *Ālokā* and AAv and their sub-commentators. After the auspicious verses, the *Sāratamā* turns to explain the purpose and the topic.

7.2. The Purpose and its Connection to the Topic of the Aṣṭa

The purpose and its connection to the topic of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* was a matter of great concern for Mahāyāna scholars in the latter half of the first millennium. In order to understand Ratnākaraśānti's explanation of these, it will be helpful to understand first the basic history and issues surrounding the different interpretations.

To the uninitiated, the eighteen different *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* within the voluminous and diffuse *Prajñāpāramitā* literature all seem to ramble and meander from topic to esoteric topic without any clarity or resolution. According to legend, it even seemed this way to the erudite scholar Asaṅga, who was so confused by the structure and content of these sūtras that he had to pray to the future Buddha Maitreya for clarification. In response to his prayers, Maitreya produced the AA, which is basically a complex versified outline or table of contents for explaining the structure and content of what we now call the revised *Pañca*, i.e. the second largest *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*. Unfortunately, although the AA sought to simplify the task of comprehending the meaning of *Prajñāpāramitā*, its detailed outline itself is still difficult to understand.

In order to make it simpler, Ārya Vimuktisena (6th C.E.) composed his *Vṛtti* on the *Pañca*. His commentary provides an overview of the AA that maps each point

in its table of contents onto the corresponding section of the *Pañca* in order to demonstrate how it illuminates the content of the sūtras. According to Ārya Vimuktisena’s commentary, the AA provides an *extensional* definition of *Prajñāpāramitā*, which is to say, it reduces the massive literature into eight main topics with seventy sub-points that readers must comprehend in order to know what *Prajñāpāramitā* is about.⁴⁶¹ Ārya Vimuktisena’s commentary seeks mainly to explain the structure of the AA, follows its extensional definition, and does not have much philosophical discussion.⁴⁶²

Around the same time, Dignāga (6th C.E.) composed his *Prajñāpāramitāpiṇḍārtha* with an entirely different approach in mind.⁴⁶³ His commentary provides a brief *intensional* definition of *Prajñāpāramitā* and then interprets the topic of the *Aṣṭa* in light of that definition through his *Sākāravādin* Yogācāra system.⁴⁶⁴ Although his commentary explains the *Aṣṭa*, it is self-contained and does not require painstaking reference to the sūtra itself, like the AA does.

In the ninth century, Haribhadra sought to combine these two divergent approaches by re-explaining Ārya Vimuktisena’s extensional definition as being subsumed within Dignāga’s intensional definition of *Prajñāpāramitā*. In order to do so, Haribhadra’s *Ālokā* argues for a new intensional definition that seeks to connect the topic with the ultimate purpose of the *Aṣṭa*. After making this argument, he uses

⁴⁶¹ An “*extensional* definition” merely lists all members of the class/set. Eg. (1,2,3, etc.) rather than defining a class through a rule.

⁴⁶² In his *Vṛtti*, Ārya Vimuktisena does not say he is defining *Prajñāpāramitā* *extensionally per se*, but begins with the question, “What is *Prajñāpāramitā* ?” and then answers it with the AA’s subsequent list of topics as a *de facto extensional* definition of *Prajñāpāramitā*. See Pensa (13:9): *katamā sā prajñāpāramitety āha*. Makransky speculates that Vimuktisena may have written the AA. Cf. Makransky (1998:chapter one).

⁴⁶³ It is not clear exactly when these two scholars lived and whose commentary was first, but Vimuktisena’s commentary appears to be debating with Dignāga followers who claim that an intensional definition is required to explain the subject coherently and meaningfully. For this reason, I believe Dignāga was earlier. For a brief summary of the three opponent positions that may stem from Dignāga or his followers, see Amano (5:2a3) *nanu...*

⁴⁶⁴ An *intensional* definition lists the rule(s) that govern membership in that class/set. Eg. anyone wearing blue. Dignāga’s *Piṇḍārtha* could be commenting on an early version of the *Aṣṭa* or the *Ratnagunasamācayagāthā*, which is the shorter versified version that corresponds relatively closely to the *Aṣṭa*.

his definition to interpret the *Aṣṭa* in light of the AA from the perspective of Śāntarakṣita's Yogācāra-Mādhyamika position.⁴⁶⁵ This definition and Haribhadra's interpretation became the standard way to interpret the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* until Ratnākaraśānti appeared in the eleventh century.

Finally, contra Haribhadra and Dharmakīrtiśrī, who followed Haribhadra closely, Ratnākaraśānti proposes in his *Śuddhimatī* a sophisticated new intensional definition based on understanding *Prajñāpāramitā* as the path, which he sees as the main purpose of the sūtra. Based on this definition, Ratnākaraśānti explains the eight topics of the AA from the perspective of his *Nirākāravādin* viewpoint and then demonstrates how the seventy points connect with the *Pañca*.

In the *Sāratamā*, he does not begin with a definition of his terms but works backwards from an extensional definition of the eight topics down to the question of whether there is a single topic. At that point, he refutes the key presuppositions of Haribhadra's definition of *Prajñāpāramitā* and his entire approach to framing and interpreting the topic. According to Ratnākaraśānti's own verses' description of the *Sāratamā*'s main project, we might say that he aims to demonstrate how the *Aṣṭa* accords with the AA and how they both can be easily read from his *Nirākāravādin* sheer luminosity perspective. However, his argument against Haribhadra at the end of the introduction makes it clear that supplanting Haribhadra's interpretation was a key concern. Thus, even though we will follow the order of exposition in the *Sāratamā* and only discuss Ratnākaraśānti's definition in the end, it will be useful to understand that he is just laying things out *extensionally* before he pivots to challenge his opponent's *intensional* definition toward the end of this introduction.

That said, since the opening section of the *Sāratamā* focuses mostly on glossing and explaining lists rather than offering an independent exegesis of the topic,

⁴⁶⁵ Dharmakīrtiśrī's interpretation is extremely close to Haribhadra's position and his DBA actually helps clarify it.

some background information will have to be filled in. However, since these lists come mostly in the form of AA verses that he explains only in the *Śuddhimatī* and assumes readers will have read, readers should be warned that there is too much information to fill in adequately here in order to explain the topic completely. For this reason, my sub-commentary below will mainly attempt to give enough information to contextualize what Ratnākaraśānti is talking about, while highlighting the particular way that Ratnākaraśānti is framing his discussion in contrast to Haribhadra and Dharmakīrtiśrī. Since the most interesting part of the introduction is Ratnākaraśānti's argument against Haribhadra about the topic and purpose of the *Aṣṭa*, Haribhadra's full, rather lengthy argument will be presented toward the end of the chapter, so that the fundamental difference between their approaches can be appreciated. After that, we will briefly look at Ratnākaraśānti's definition of *Prajñāpāramitā* from the *Śuddhimatī*.

To begin with, Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā* simply asks and answers a rhetorical question beginning his commentary, as follows [S5]:

Now, why is that [*Aṣṭa*] explained? Because She is the most precious *sūtra* (lit. "jewel among *sūtras*") among the Blessed One's teachings (*pravacana*).

This single line statement of the purpose may seem simple, but its simplicity stands in stark contrast to the complex and lengthy interpretation of Haribhadra and Dharmakīrtiśrī, who spill much ink explaining and justifying their interpretation of the purpose of the *Aṣṭa*.⁴⁶⁶ Ratnākaraśānti says the reason why the Buddha explained the *Aṣṭa* is simply because **She** is the **most precious sūtra among the Buddha's teachings**. Then, in order to clarify this reason, Ratnākaraśānti first lists and then

⁴⁶⁶ Cf. DBA (369-375), where Dharmakīrtiśrī explains Haribhadra's and his own reasons for explaining the "purpose" as he does, in order to correct Āryavimuktisena's insufficient response to three (*śrāvakayāna*?) objections that the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras are meaningless and pointless. Haribhadra's explanation of the purpose occurs in several places before the Dignāga verse.

explains, in a slightly unusual way, the different categories of **Buddha's teaching among** which the *Aṣṭa* should be classified, as follows [S6]:

There are twelve branches of the [Buddha's] teachings.⁴⁶⁷

(1) *sūtras*, (2) songs (*geya*), (3) pronouncements (*vyākaraṇa*), (4) verses (*gāthā*), (5) exultations (*udāna*), (6) contextualizations (*nidāna*), (7) noble deeds (*avadāna*), (8) past events (*itivr̥ttaka*), (9) former life stories (*jāta-ka*), (10) extensive [teachings] (*vaipulya*), (11) marvelous works (*adbhuta dharma*), and (12) instructions (*upadeśa*).⁴⁶⁸

Among these [types of teachings]:

- (1) What is a **sūtra [teaching]**? One pointing toward a meaning through prose.⁴⁶⁹
- (2) What is a **song [teaching]** (*geya*)?⁴⁷⁰ One sung (*gīta*) with verses (*gāthā*) in the middle or end of only *sūtras*. Also, any *sūtra* with a meaning to be explained (*neyārtha*)⁴⁷¹ is also something to be sung (*geya*), because it must be understood [through further explanation] (*gamyatvat*).⁴⁷²
- (3) What is a **pronouncement [teaching]** (*vyākaraṇa*)? One in which a former deceased Śrāvaka is foreordained for a [particular] rebirth (*upapatti*). Also, any (*yad*) *sūtra* with a meaning that is explained (*nīārtha*), because it communicates (*ākhyāna*) the [Buddha's] intention openly (*vīvṛtyā*).⁴⁷³

Ratnākaraśānti is mostly just following the traditional definition of these two categories here, but in these first three definitions, we should note that the definition

⁴⁶⁷ My translations of these terms attempt to make English headings that can accommodate Ratnākaraśānti's often unexpectedly broad explanations.

⁴⁶⁸ See AAĀ (29-30). Cf. Dharmasaṅgraha Vaidya (332): navāṅgapravacanāni| tadyathā sūtram, geyam, vyākaraṇam, gāthā, udānam, jātakam, vaipulyam, adbhutadharmāḥ, upadeśas ceti.

⁴⁶⁹ Ny-Ch also reads *zab mo 'i don*. I have not emended the Skt. since he could have been abbreviating his definition here for a reason. However, KAgns (C1328) Ratnākaraśānti gives virtually the same definition, but with *zab mo 'i don=gambhīrārtha*.

⁴⁷⁰ The word *geyam* can be read as “song” or more broadly as “something to be sung.”

⁴⁷¹ My translation of *neyārtha* and *nīārtha* (below) follows Ratnākaraśānti's gloss of the term in PPU (D135b6): |rton pa gsum pa 'i nges pa 'i don ni bshad pa nges par byas pa 'o| drang ba 'i don ni bshad par bya ba ste| mdo gang dag gi don dgongs pa ji lta ba bzhin du gzung bar bya 'o|| PPU (D136a6): mdo gang dag gi don sgra ji bzhin pa de ni nges pa 'i don kho na 'o|| don de la ni don gnyis pa ma yin te| 'di 'i don nges pa kho na 'o zhes bya ba nas nges pa 'i don to|| Ratnākaraśānti discusses these terms here at length, but I have given only the first line of that discussion.

⁴⁷² The gloss *gamyatvat* is likely suggesting that the term *geyam* originally comes from the verbal root *gā*, from which the forms *gam* and *gai* are both derived in ancient etymological explanations. For example, *gāyatrī gāyateḥ stutikarmaṇas, trigamanā vā viparītā*—i.e. “*gāyatrī* is derived from the root \sqrt{gai} , meaning to praise, or from \sqrt{gam} with *tri* by methathesis,” Sarup (1967:119).

⁴⁷³ With the term *vīvṛtyā*, Ratnākaraśānti is glossing *vī* (from *vyākaraṇa*) and attempting to elucidate a usage of the term.

of a **sūtra** is broad, whereas the definitions of a **song [teaching]** (*geya*) and a **pronouncement [teaching]** include two different types of sūtras, i.e. those to be explained (*neya*) and those that are explained (*nīta*).⁴⁷⁴ Since a sūtra can also be included in either definition two or three, we can see that the categories that Ratnākaraśānti is describing here are not necessarily mutually exclusive. He continues with the next nine categories as follows [S7]:

- (4) What is a **verse [teaching]**? One expressed through metrical form (*padya*) [i.e.] any [verse] with two lines, three lines, four lines, five lines or six lines.
- (5) What is an **exultation [teaching]** (*udāna*)? One declared (*udāhrta*) with a delighted heart (*āttamanaskena*).
- (6) What is a **contextualization [teaching]** (*nidāna*)? Any explanation about (*uddiśya*) a [certain] person or [any] explanation of the arrangement (*prajñapti*) of a training together with its source (*sotpattikaśikṣā*).⁴⁷⁵
- (7) What is a **[teaching of] noble deeds** (*avadāna*)? [Any] explanation through parable (*sadrṣṭāntaka*).⁴⁷⁶
- (8) What is a **[teaching of] past events** (*itivṛttaka*)? [One] connected (*pratisamyukta*) with previous occasions (*yoga; sbyor ba*).⁴⁷⁷
- (9) What is a **[teaching of] former births** (*jātaka*)? [One] related to the conduct of the Bodhisattva.
- (10) What is an **extensive [teaching]** (*vaipulya*)? One related with the bodhisattva corpus, because of being the source (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the happiness and welfare for all sentient beings.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁴ Cf. PPU (D136a6): *mdo gang dag gi don sgra ji bzhin pa de ni nges pa'i don kho na'o*|| Ratnākaraśānti presents an unusual interpretation of these types of sūtras.

⁴⁷⁵ Ratnākaraśānti's explanation of the word "motive" (*nidāna*) concerns two usages: (1) The explanation of how a person instigated a guideline or instruction. This type of teaching is common in the *vinaya* where the vows/guidelines are given together with stories of how they came to be due to a particular person's wrong behavior. (2) There is also a *nidāna* which serves as the introductory section of a *sūtra*. Here, the "motive" for a *sūtra* is communicated by describing the orientation of the assembly at a particular time and place when the teaching was given and the instigating question, which sets the teaching in motion.

⁴⁷⁶ Literally, this says explanations "with examples." These are stories that are meant to illustrate a point, not merely 'examples.' One example of this is when the Buddha tells the five disciples their Noble deeds in their previous lives (as demons) that led them to be reborn in his immediate entourage.

⁴⁷⁷ These are past life stories about the Buddha's disciples. Although Ratnākaraśānti seems to be glossing *itivṛttaka* and *jātaka* as adjectives by using *pratisamyukta*, I have translated each as substantives for readability.

⁴⁷⁸ I have translated *vaipulya* as "extensive" (following Edgerton "works of great extent") in order to accommodate both parts of Ratnākaraśānti's gloss.

- (11) What is a [**teaching of**] **marvelous works**? One where the wondrous, marvelous deeds (*dharma*) of śrāvakas, bodhisattvas, and buddhas are described.
- (12) What is a [**teaching of**] **instructions** (*upadeśa*)? One in which the unerroneous characteristic of dharma/Dharma is pointed out.⁴⁷⁹

Among these [twelve], this Blessed *Prajñāpāramitā*, the most precious (*ratna*) *sūtra*, is included in [category of] the instructions,⁴⁸⁰ because all [Her] aspects are pointing out the supremely profound dharma/Dharma that accomplishes the supreme goal of [any] person (*puruṣārtha*).⁴⁸¹

Here, although his repetition of the epithet **most precious sūtra** is nothing unusual, it is one of the clues that Ratnākaraśānti's whole explanation of classifications is to be subsumed within his explanation of the purpose. The question is: How do these classifications tell us “why” the *Aṣṭa* is “explained”? By classifying the *Aṣṭa* as a teaching of **instructions**, Ratnākaraśānti is suggesting that She is the **most precious sūtra** in a very particular way.

Firstly, although Ratnākaraśānti does not say it here, in the PPU (which he expects us to have read) he classifies the *Aṣṭa* as a *sūtra* with a meaning that is explained (*nītārtha*). This means that we should understand that the *Aṣṭa* fits into the three categories of **sūtras, pronouncements**, i.e. the part this is the *nītārtha sūtras*, and **instructions**. Furthermore, the PPU explains three types of *nītārtha sūtra*, namely a *sūtra* explained by itself, by another *sūtra*, or by both itself and another *sūtra*. Among those three types, Ratnākaraśānti classifies the *Aṣṭa* specifically as a *nītārtha sūtra* that is explained by another *sūtra*, but classifies the *Pañca* as a *nītārtha sūtra* that is explained by both. As Ratnākaraśānti explains, the *Pañca* is explained by both itself—according to its own section called *Aviparyāsaniveśanakarma* that contains

⁴⁷⁹ Given the next sentence, it seems that Ratnākaraśānti is suggesting that *dharma* here means the doctrine, but both sentences can be read as phenomena/phenomenon as well.

⁴⁸⁰ Jaini's note 12 states that the Tibetan phrase *bcom ldan 'das kyi mdo sde rin po che* (from which he derived this Sanskrit phrase) actually suggests *bhagavataḥ* here, but he offers no explanation for his rendition as *bhagavatī* (Jaini, 2). It is, in fact, legible in the MS itself.

⁴⁸¹ We could also read the goal of supreme/sublime persons. Cf. Tib, which reads slightly differently from the Sanskrit here: *skye bu dam pa'i don sgrub pa dang zab pa dam pa'i chos thams cad kyi rnam pa ston pa*, i.e. “indicating the aspects of all profound and sublime dharmas, which accomplish the goal of sublime persons.”

instructions for Maitreya who asks about the three natures—and by any other *sūtra* whose meaning is explained (*nītārtha*).⁴⁸² Thus, when Ratnākaraśānti classifies the *Aṣṭa* as a *nītārtha sūtra* or as instructions, it is because he sees the *Aṣṭa* as a shortened version of the *Pañca*, which he will use throughout the *Sāratamā* to explain it.⁴⁸³

Secondly, although his definition of **instructions** is relatively broad, we can understand from it that Ratnākaraśānti is suggesting that the *Aṣṭa* is an instruction, because the **unerroneous characteristic of dharma/Dharma**, i.e. *Prajñāpāramitā* is **pointed out** in it. *Prajñāpāramitā* is **the supremely profound dharma/Dharma** insofar as it is a means for **accomplishing the supreme goal of any person** (*puruṣārtha*), whether that person is inclined toward the śrāvaka, the pratyekabuddha, or the bodhisattva paths. **All Her aspects** means those aspects described in the *sūtra* as inhering in the State of Awareness of All Aspects (*sarvākārajñatā*) are **pointing this out**.⁴⁸⁴

Thirdly, although Ratnākaraśānti's elaboration of these classifications do not appear overtly polemical, it is setting up his argument against Haribhadra, who just mentions this list and does not classify the *Aṣṭa* other than to call it a *sūtra*.⁴⁸⁵ But,

⁴⁸² PPU (D136b1): |gang dag de las gzhan pas yin zhe na| 'phags pa brgyad stong pa la sogs pa 'o|| gang dag gnyis kas yin zhe na| 'phags pa nyi khri lnga stong pa la sogs pa ste| de 'i chos kyi sku 'i le 'u las| gang gi phyir phyin ci ma log pa la dgod pa 'i phrin las| sgra ji bzhin pa 'i don la mngon par zhen na pa 'i mtshan nyid kyi phyin ci log yongs su spangs pa 'i mtshan nyid kyi drang ba 'i don gyi bshad pa yod pa 'i phyir ro|| Cf. Pañca (152): *maitreya āha: katamad bhagavan parikalpitaṃ rūpaṃ? katamad vikalpitaṃ rūpaṃ? katamad dharmatā rūpaṃ?* Cf. also Pañca (164): *iti nirvastukaviparyāśajñāna-niveśanakarma*. In the PPU (D138a2) Ratnākaraśānti explains this Pañca passage's terms as equivalent to the more standard three natures terminology.

⁴⁸³ The AA's full title—*Abhisamayālaṃkāro nāma prajñāpāramitopadeśaśāstram*—does not specify to which *sūtra* it corresponds, but internal evidence suggests that it is a table of contents for the *Pañca*. In the *Sāratamā*, Ratnākaraśānti often says when something in the AA corresponds more directly to the *Pañca* than to the *Aṣṭa*, but he does manage to demonstrate a decent amount of correspondence between the AA and the (late Pāla version of) *Aṣṭa* as well.

⁴⁸⁴ Cf. Pañca (5:124): *bhagavān āha: yāvantaḥ subhūte ākāraṅgāni nimittāni yair ākārair yair liṅgair yair nimittais te dharmāḥ sūcyante, te ākāraṅgāni liṅgāni tāni nimittāni tathāgatenānubaddhāni tenocyate tathāgatasyārhatāḥ samyaksambuddhasya sarvākārajñatā*. For *tathāgatenānubaddhāni*, Amano (6:2a7) reads: *tathāgatenāvabuddhāni*. Note also that as we will see below, these aspects are explained from an objective perspective in the first AA chapter “The State of Awareness of all Aspects” (*sarvākārajñatā*) and from the subjective perspective in the fourth AA chapter “The Realization of All Aspects” (*sarvākārābhisaṃbodha*).

⁴⁸⁵ Haribhadra himself focuses instead on following the *Vyākhyāyukti*—i.e. he identifies the subject (*abhidheya*), its means of expression (*abhidhāna*), its coherence (*sambandha*), purpose (*prayojana*), and ultimate purpose (*prayojanaprayojana*)—but he puts his own twist on it in the context of the *Aṣṭa*.

more importantly, Ratnākaraśānti is challenging Haribhadra who, as we shall see below, explicitly says that the main referent of the term *Prajñāpāramitā* is neither “instructions that are a mere likeness of Her” nor any of the prior stages of realization connected with “the **supreme goal of a person through all Her aspects.**”⁴⁸⁶ Thus, since Ratnākaraśānti’s definition of **instructions** as *Prajñāpāramitā* is a means for **accomplishing the supreme goal of a person (*puruṣārtha*)**, we can see here that his classification of the sūtra as instruction is setting up his argument against Haribhadra’s definition of the topic of *Prajñāpāramitā* based on a different notion of the *Aṣṭa*’s purpose.⁴⁸⁷

In the *Śuddhimatī*, Ratnākaraśānti gives a useful explanation of the two types of purpose indicated by AA vv.1.1-2. Through this, we can understand the way that Ratnākaraśānti classifies the *Aṣṭa* as instructions and defines *Prajñāpāramitā* based on its purpose. Since this will help clarify his position and his debate with Haribhadra below, we will look now at the *Śuddhimatī*’s whole explanation of the two-fold purpose stated in the AA itself. Ratnākaraśānti explains:

But if we explain [the topic] according to all the [*Prajñāpāramitā*]-*sūtras*, then what purpose is there in the undertaking [of *Prajñāpāramitā*]? The purpose of the undertaking is [taught in the AA as follows]:

The path [that is] the awareness of all aspects is what the Teacher has taught in this [sūtra].⁴⁸⁸ May the wise behold that [which] is not encountered (*anālīḍha*) by others. May they retain the *sūtra*’s meaning in [their] memory and then perform the ten types of (*daśātmaka*) Dharma practice (*caryā*) with ease. This is the purpose of the undertaking. AA 1.1-1.2

Dharmakīrtiśrī follows Haribhadra’s outline and focuses much attention on discussing the ultimate purpose of the text. In the KAgsn (C1328-9), Ratnākaraśānti classifies the *tantra* in the category of sūtra without mentioning the other categories and then cites the *Vyākhyāyukti* and *PV* and uses those to structure his explanation.

⁴⁸⁶ AAĀ (23:12): *prativarnīkopadeśarahitā...sarvākāraparamapurūṣārthopayuktādhigamakramasya pratipādyamānatvāt.*

⁴⁸⁷ Since Haribhadra built his interpretation upon the citation of Dharmakīrti’s verse (mentioned above) “*sambandhānugūṇopāyam puruṣārthābhīdhāyakam...*”, Ratnākaraśānti is setting up a rebuttal of Haribhadra’s interpretation of this verse by mentioning the supreme goal of a person (*puruṣārtha*) here.

⁴⁸⁸ I have translated this line according to Ratnākaraśānti’s gloss below.

The **awareness of all aspects** means the state of buddhahood and also the supreme person (*skye bu dam pa*; *paramapuruṣa*).⁴⁸⁹ As is taught—

Buddhahood is declared [to be] the attainment of the awareness of all aspects, which is free of the stains of all the obstructions, like a chest of jewels [that is] opened.⁴⁹⁰

How is that [**awareness of all aspects**] the **path**? It is the **path** (*mārga*), due to [being something] to be sought (*mṛgya*), but not the path, due to [being something] seeking (*mārgaka*).⁴⁹¹

Ratnākaraśānti's explanation of the **awareness of all aspects** may seem unusual, in that he takes it to refer to both the state of buddhahood and the buddha himself. However, this interpretation appears in the *Pañca* and other places.⁴⁹² For Ratnākaraśānti, it means that when *Prajñāpāramitā* becomes the **awareness of all aspects**, She is no longer the path **seeking**, i.e. striving for, buddhahood. Rather she is the path of no more learning **to be sought**, i.e. buddhahood. This differs from Haribhadra and Dharmakīrtiśrī who take the **awareness of all aspects** to be the immediately preceding cause of buddhahood *qua* nondual awareness. Then, in order to connect this awareness with his sheer luminosity viewpoint, Ratnākaraśānti continues glossing the above verse, as follows:

⁴⁸⁹ I have broken this continuous Tib. passage into different footnotes due to formatting concerns. The first part is Śud (C193): |'o na mdo kun las rgya cher bshad na de yang 'di rtsom pa la dgos pa ci yod ce na| rnam pa thams cad mkhyen nyid lam| |ston pas 'di las bshad pa gang| |gzhan gyis myong ba ma yin te| |blo dang ldan pas rtogs 'gyur zhes| |chos spyod bcu yi bdag nyid ni| |mdo don dran pa las bzhag nas (see note)| |**bde blag tu ni** rtogs 'gyur ba| |zhes pa rtsom pa 'i dgos pa yin| |rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid ni sangs rgyas nyid de| de yang skyes bu dam pa ste| Cf. Amano (6-7) AA.1.1-2: *sarvākārajñātāmārgaḥ śāsīnā yo 'tra deśitaḥ /dhīmanto vīkṣiṣiraṃs tam anālīḍhaṃ parair iti // 1// smṛtau cādḥāya sūtrārthaṃ dharmacaryāṃ daśātmikāṃ /sukhena pratipatsīrann ity ārambhaprayojanam // 2 //*. P/N have a different Tib. translation of last two lines of AA 1.2.(P/N): *mdo 'i don dran pa la bzhag nas chos spyod bcu yi bdag nyid ni*. For more on these two uses of benedictive middle, i.e. *vīkṣiṣiran* and *pratipatsīran*, see Reigle (1997).

⁴⁹⁰ Śud (193ff): |ji skad du| |sgrib pa kun gyi dri med pa| |rnam pa thams cad mkhyen nyid thob| |rin chen snod ni phye ba ltar| |sangs rgyas nyid ni yang dag bstan||MSA 9.2||zhes gsungs pa lta bu ste| Cf. MSA (9.2): |*sarvākārajñātāvāptiḥ sarvāvaraṇanirmalā | vivṛtā ratnapeteva buddhatvaṃ samudāhṛtam*|| On the use of this verse, see Makransky (1998:272,431n33).

⁴⁹¹ Śud (194): |de ji ltar **lam** du 'gyur| |brtsal (P/N btsal) bar bya bas **lam** yin gyi| |tshol bar byed pas na lam ni ma yin no| It is also possible that Ratnākaraśānti used a different word beside *mārgaka* in contrast to *mṛgya*.

⁴⁹² Śār (GS 142:30): *buddha iti buddhatvaṃ sarvākārajñātety arthaḥ*. Pañca (Ch.4:116): *buddhā eva sarvākārajñātā sarvākārajñātaiva buddhāḥ. tat kasya hetoḥ? yā ca buddhānām bhagavatām tathatā*. Cf. DBA (C609:4).

[Regarding the line] **what the Teacher has taught in this**, [it says] **in this** (*gang 'di las; atra*), [meaning **in this**] *sūtra*, because the *sūtra* is the indicator (*lakṣaṇa/lakṣaka*) [of that path *qua* awareness of all aspects]. Here **the wise** are the bodhisattvas. Regarding that [attainment] **behold** means realize (*sākṣātkaraṇa*), [hence] realize the attainment. The idea is that [they] know [that path], based on this [AA] treatise, to be nothing but luminosity (*prakāśa eva; gsal ba nyid*). **Not encountered** [means] not realized. **Others** [means those who are] not bodhisattvas. By this **the predominant purpose of the undertaking** is taught.⁴⁹³

Here, we can understand Ratnākaraśānti's glosses to mean that **the main purpose of the undertaking**, i.e. why the *Aṣṭa* is taught. What is that purpose? It is to teach sheer luminosity. For Ratnākaraśānti, this is the path that is realized only by bodhisattvas. Hence, we can understand his classification of the *Aṣṭa* as “instructions,” because it is **an indicator** of that awareness of all aspects. Now Ratnākaraśānti explains the AA's statement of a secondary purpose of the *Aṣṭa*, as follows:

Having determined (*avadhṛta*) **the sūtra's meaning** based on the treatise, [one should] **retain** [it] **in memory**. **Dharma** here [means] the *sūtra* itself. **The practice** (*caryā*) [of the *sūtra* itself] is [of] **ten types**.⁴⁹⁴ As is said—

The ten practices [produce] limitless merit: (1) writing the *sūtra* down (*yi ge 'bri; lekhana*), (2) worshipping it (*mchod; pūjana*), (3) donating it (*sbyin pa; dāna*), (4) listening to it (*nyan; śravaṇa*), (5) reading it (*klog; vācana*), (6) learning it (*len pa; udgrahaṇa*), (7) explaining it (*'chad pa; uddeśana*), (8) reciting it (*kha ton; svādhyāya*), (9) contemplating it (*cintana*), and (10) cultivating it (*sgom pa; bhāvanā*).

May they perform [those practices] **with ease** [means] they should accomplish [these].⁴⁹⁵ In this way, the non-main **purpose of the undertaking**, which is the means for realizing, [should] be accomplished.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹³ Śud (194): |*ston pas 'di las bshad pa gang* | |*zhes bya ba la* | *gang 'di las zhes bya ba ni mdo sde mtshon par byed pas na mdo 'o* | |*dir blo ldan ni byang chub sems dpa 'o* | |*de la rtogs pa ni mngon sum du byed pa ste thob pa mngon sum du byed pa 'o* | |*bstan bcos 'di la (P/N las) gsal ba nyid du shes pa yin no zhes dgongs so* | |*de ji lta bu zhe na* | |*myong ba ma yin pa ni ma rtogs pa 'o* | |*gzhan zhes bya ba ni byang chub sems dpa ' ma yin pa 'o* | |*'dis ni rtsom pa 'i gts'o bo 'i dgos pa bstan te* |

⁴⁹⁴ Śud (194): *mdo 'di'i don bstan bcos 'di las nges par bzung (P/N gzung) ste* | *dran pa la bzhas pa 'o* | |*chos ni 'dir mdo nyid do* | |*spyod pa ni rnam pa bcu ste* |

⁴⁹⁵ We can expect that Ratnākaraśānti said more here than Tib. translates about the benedictive middle.

⁴⁹⁶ Śud (194): *ji skad du* | |*yi ge 'bri mchod sbyin pa dang* | |*nyan dang klog dang len pa dang* | | |*'chad pa dang ni kha ton dang* | |*de sems pa dang sgom pa ste* | |*spyod pa 'di bcu 'i bdag nyid ni* | |*bsod nams phung po dpag tu med* | |*ces bshad pa lta bu 'o (P/N pa 'o)* | |*de bde blag tu ni rtogs 'gyur ba zhes pa*

Here, Ratnākaraśānti is identifying the secondary purpose of the AA as the path leading up to the awareness of all aspects. Since this is the main content of the *Aṣṭa*, the sūtra’s immediate purpose is to communicate the instructions about these. Then, based on this notion of the purpose, Ratnākaraśānti defines *Prajñāpāramitā*, as follows:

Prajñāpāramitā is both a **discernment** (*prajñā*)—because it perceives emptiness insofar as it is aware of the ultimate reality (*dn̄gos po dam pa*)—and a **transcendent state** (*pāramitā*), since it is going (*phyin pas< ’gro ba*) to the **other shore** (*pha rol; pāra*).⁴⁹⁷

By explaining *Prajñāpāramitā* as “going to the other shore,” we are meant to understand that it is a “path” or “means” for going, as opposed to, for instance, Dharmakīrtiśrī’s interpretation of *Prajñāpāramitā* as “gone to the other shore” (*pāraṃgatā*), i.e. as a goal or result.⁴⁹⁸ Within this definition are included the three types of ultimate reality from his heuristic model, i.e., the ultimate object as **emptiness**, the ultimate ascertainment as **discernment/awareness**, and the ultimate goal as the **other shore**. It may be worth highlighting here that, although Ratnākaraśānti’s definition of *Prajñāpāramitā* is connected with the ultimate purpose, it is not governed by it—unlike that of Haribhadra and Dharmakīrtiśrī, as we shall see.

7.3. The Topic

Ratnākaraśānti moves on to explain the various topics contained in the *Aṣṭa* and outlined in the AA by posing the rhetorical question, as follows [S8]:

Now, if one asks (*praśna*), “By means of how many topics (*padārtha*) to be expressed (*abhidheya*) is [*Prajñāpāramitā*] taught? And, which [topics] are those?”

(P/N zhe bya ba) ni | rjes su sgrubs shig pa ’o | |de ltar **rtsom pa’i dgos pa** gtso bo ma yin pa de (P/N ma yin pa) ni thob pa’i thabs te rjes su sgrub pa ’o |

⁴⁹⁷ *Sūd* (C194:22): |dn̄gos po dam pa shes pas na **shes rab ste** | stong pa nyid la dmigs pa’i phyir rol | |de yang yin la pha rol yang yin pas **shes rab kyi pha rol lo** | |phyin (P/N sbyin) pas ni ’gro ba ste **pha rol tu phyin pa** ’o | It is not clear from the Tibetan translation how Ratnākaraśānti described or explained the itā in Sanskrit, but it is clear that he wants it to mean “going,” not “gone.” For a possible backtranslation of a similar definition of paramapāramiḥ, Cf. Sār (GS 32:1): *paramaṃ pāraṃ paryantam ir gatiḥ, iṅo gamanārthatvāt. paramaparyantagateḥ paramapāramiḥ.*

⁴⁹⁸ DBA (unpublished p.1): *pāraṃgatā* is the gloss. This will be discussed further below.

In these opening questions, we see immediately that Ratnākaraśānti prefers to associate “What are the topics?” with the question, “**How many topics should be expressed** in order for the subject of *Prajñāpāramitā* to be perfectly **taught?**” Although this might seem to be an attempt to define *Prajñāpāramitā* *extensionally* according to Vimuktisena’s definition, Ratnākaraśānti’s questions here actually are setting up his argument against Haribhadra’s *intensional definition* in order to lay the ground for his own *intensional definition*.⁴⁹⁹

7.3.1. Eightfold Summary of the Topics

In response to his rhetorical question, Ratnākaraśānti cites the following verse from the AA [S9]:

The [AA] treatise [reads]—

Prajñāpāramitā is perfectly described (*samudīrita*) by means of eight topics (*padārtha*). These are the eight (*aṣṭadhā*):

(1) The State of Awareness of All Aspects, (2) The State of Awareness of the Paths, (3) The State of Complete Awareness, (4) The correct understanding (*abhisambodha*) of all aspects, (5) The [Correct Understanding that has] Reached the Culmination (*mūrdha*), (6) The [Correct Understanding that is] Progressive, (7) The Correct Understanding in the Single Moment, and (8) the Dharmakāya.

AA.1.3-4⁵⁰⁰

Here, since Ratnākaraśānti’s explanation of this list is described more completely in the *Śuddhimatī*, a brief summary based on his *Śuddhimatī* may help fill in some background details. There, he explains *Prajñāpāramitā* as the path that is **perfectly**

⁴⁹⁹ Haribhadra builds his argument in order to associate the question of “What are the topics?” directly with the question “For what purpose are these topics taught?” Following Haribhadra, Dharmakīrtiśrī does this very clearly in his DBA (C377): *de don ci zhig ste dgos pa ci zhig yod snyam na rang gi stan bcos las tha mi dad pa’i rjod pa dang brjod par bya ba dang| ’brel pa dang| brjod par bya ba’i dgos pa dang| gdul bya rnam kyis bde blag tu khong gu chud pa’i dgos pa brjod par bya ba yin pa de ni don la the tshom skye ba zhes bya ba la sogs pa smos pa yin te| mdo don ni shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la sogs pa’i mdo’i don brjod par bya ba mngon par rtogs pa rnam pa brgyad do|*

⁵⁰⁰ These eight topics are capitalized here, since they are the titles of the eight chapters and since they are synonymous with *Prajñāpāramitā*. Throughout the AA’s discourse, these chapter titles are used as metonyms for their widely varied sub-topics.

described, i.e. completely, **by means of eight topics**, i.e. which correspond to the **eight** realizations to be expressed (*abhidheya*) within the AA’s eight chapters.⁵⁰¹ These eight chapters, in turn, can be mapped in order onto the thirty-two chapters of the *Aṣṭa*.⁵⁰² According to Ratnākaraśānti, the first three topics correspond to the three levels at which *Prajñāpāramitā* functions, namely, (1) a Buddha’s **State of Awareness of All Aspects**, (2) a bodhisattva’s **State of Awareness of noble Paths**, and (3) an arhat or pratyekabuddha’s **State of Complete Awareness**. In the chapters that teach these three topics, the first teaches all the “aspects” (*ākāra*) of which a buddha is aware. The second teaches all the “antidotes” (*pratipakṣa*) that are applied on the bodhisattva path in order to attain awakening. The third teaches all the “things” (*vastu*), i.e. the five aggregates, etc., that are analyzed by śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but demonstrates the sidetracks of the śrāvaka’s and how bodhisattvas avoid these. These three—namely “aspects” (*ākāra*), “antidotes” (*pratipakṣa*), “things” (*vastu*)—can be said generally to describe the content of the *Prajñāpāramitā* that is realized by means of the four practices, namely (4) the **Correct Understanding of All Aspects**, (5) the **Correct Understanding Having Reached the Culmination**, (6) the **Correct Understanding that is Progressive**, (7) the **Correct Understanding in a Single Moment**. These four topics generally correlate to the four different approaches to practice (*prayoga*) at the four stages on the bodhisattva’s path, namely the stage prior to the path of seeing (*darśanamārga*), the stage during the path of seeing, the stage during the path of cultivation

⁵⁰¹ According to Ratnākaraśānti, Śud (195:21): |*de yang dag bshad ces bya ba ni ma lus par bstan zhes bya ba’i don to*| |*ma lus pa nyid gang zhe na*| |*ngos po brgyad*. Cf. also Śud (195:21): |*mngon par rtogs pa brgyad po ’di ni go rims ji lta ba bzhin du le ’u brgyad po di’i brjod par bya ba yin*| Cf. Ādhīśa’s paraphrase of Ratnākaraśānti’s explanation here, Ādhīśa (99-674:5) |*mngon rtogs shes rgyud rim pa ste*| |*ngos po brgyad ni brjod bya la*| |*skabs ni rjod byed śānti gsungs*||

⁵⁰² That is to say, the eight AA topics follow the order of the *sūtra*’s *parivartas*. In particular, the first AA topic correlates roughly to the first *Aṣṭa parivarta*; the second AA topic correlates to *Aṣṭa parivartas* 2-8; the third AA topic correlates to *Aṣṭa parivartas* 8-9; the fourth AA topic correlates to *Aṣṭa parivartas* 9-20; the fifth AA topic correlates to *Aṣṭa parivartas* 21-29; and the last three topics correlate to *Aṣṭa parivarta* 29. The *Sāratamā* comments on *parivarta* 30-32, which constitute the Sadāprarudita story, but does not attempt to connect it to the AA verses.

(*bhāvanāmārga*), and the final realization at the end of the path of cultivation.⁵⁰³

Finally, the last topic is (8) the **Dharmakāya**, which is the result of the final realization.⁵⁰⁴ According to Ratnākaraśānti, the Dharmakāya chapter describes four sub-topics, i.e. (a) the natural body, (b) the enjoyment body, (c) the created body and (d) the activity that results from *Prajñāpāramitā*.⁵⁰⁵ In the *Sāratamā*, he does not explain all eight but gives the following glosses of the above verse [S10]:

The suffix **dhā** [does not add anything] to [the word **eight**'s] own meaning (*svārtha*). This [is to say that the Sanskrit *te 'ṣṭadhā* should simply be understood as meaning] **these are the eight**. [The term] **Correct Understanding** (*abhisambodha*) means an accurate understanding (*samyagbodha*) disposed toward (*abhimukha*) awakening (*bodhi*).⁵⁰⁶ Precisely because of this, [Correct Understanding of All Aspects is] a realization (*abhisamaya*), because the verb “to go” has the meaning of **understanding** (*bodha*).⁵⁰⁷ [One might ask], “How is this a realization (*abhisamaya*)?” [It is a correct understanding] since (*yata*) [it] is realized and achieved by [all] seven [realizations].⁵⁰⁸

Culmination (*mūrdhan*) means the highest degree (*prakarṣa*). Having reached that [culmination] is **Having Reached the Culmination** (*mūrdhaprāpta*).

In succession (*anupūrva*) means in sequence (*anukrama*). **Successive** (*anupūrvika*) means because of [having a sequence] (*tadyogād*).⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰³ On the one hand, since the *Aṣṭa* itself only uses the term “State of Complete Awareness” (*sarvajñatā*), all commentators must interpret the State of Complete Awareness (*sarvajñatā*) as a generic term that is inclusive of all three topics. Then, based on context, they interpret State of Complete Awareness as indicating the lowest one of the three. On the other hand, since the Buddha’s State of Complete Awareness Aspects includes the other two types of knowledge, the term State of Complete Awareness is also understood to be inclusive of all three. Cf. for example, DBA (382):

thams cad mkhyen pa nyid gsum po 'di nyid gcig tu byas pa 'i bdag nyid thams cad shes pa ni rnam pa kun mngon par rdzogs par rtogs pa 'o

⁵⁰⁴ Dharmakāya is capitalized here, since it refers to the AA chapter.

⁵⁰⁵ Śud (C199): *rnam pa bzhir ni yang dag brjod | ces bya ba ni ngo bo nyid kyi sku dang | longs spyod rdzogs pa 'i sku dang | sprul pa 'i sku dang | de 'i mdzad pa ste | dngos po bzhi po de dag ni chos kyi sku 'o* The above explanation of the eight topics is a paraphrase of Ratnākaraśānti’s statements in Śud (195-6), but also is based on his subsequent explanations of these topics.

⁵⁰⁶ Ratnākaraśānti is glossing the *dhā* from the *aṣṭadhā* in the verse (above) as a type of suffix, which does not change the “essential meaning” (*svārtha*) of the word it modifies. (Cf. Tubb, 82).

⁵⁰⁷ The two halves of this sentence also gloss the two halves of the previous sentence respectively. The fourth *abhisamaya* refers to the pre-noble paths and hence, it must be glossed as the content of the noble paths. This bracketed section is damaged in ms. Even though Tibetan reads *rnam pa* here, based on context, I have added the word “three” in order to clarify that what is glossed here is the four prayogas to which the term *abhisambodha* is meant to apply in the verse.

⁵⁰⁸ We will discuss below what the seven realizations are. Tib. reads *tha mi dad par* suggesting **abhinnam*, but it is not in our MS and it is difficult to imagine how it could have been included.

⁵⁰⁹ Here, *anupūrvika* is translated as an adjective, even though both glosses *anupūrvam* and *tadyogād* imply an adverbial sense.

The [term] **Correct Understanding** (*abhisambodha*) applies in both of these [above] cases.⁵¹⁰

Ratnākaraśānti focuses here on glossing only the four practices (*prayoga*) in order to group the fourth through seventh topics as Correct Understandings (*abhisambodha*) and demonstrate that they too are realizations (*abhisamaya*), i.e. *Prajñāpāramitā*.⁵¹¹ In regard to the latter, Ratnākaraśānti disagrees with other commentators about which of the eight topics should be considered “realizations.” Thus, it may be useful to paraphrase the four ways of correlating the eight topics with realizations (*abhisamaya*).⁵¹²

First, according to the view attributed to Asaṅga, out of the eight topics, there are only four actual realizations (*abhisamaya*) namely, the (1) The State of Awareness of All Aspects, (2) The State of Awareness of the Paths, (3) The State of Complete Awareness, and (8) the Dharmakāya. These four alone are realized directly (*mngon gsum tu rtogs pa*) by means of the four Correct Understandings (*abhisambodha*), which are inclined (*mngon phyogs; abhimukha*) toward them.⁵¹³

Second, according to the view of Vimuktisena, there are four actual realizations (*abhisamaya*), but these are the four Correct Understandings (*abhisambodha*) alone, because the first three Correct Understandings have as their object (1) The State of Awareness of All Aspects, (2) The State of Awareness of the

⁵¹⁰ Ratnākaraśānti is saying that the verse only mentions *abhisambodha* twice, but this term is meant to refer to the other “two cases,” i.e. summit and progressive. Although the verse does not mention that *mūrdhāprāptaḥ* and *anupūrvikaḥ* are *abhisambodha*, all commentators read the verse this way.

⁵¹¹ Since the so-called *śrāvakayāna* usage of the term “realization” (*abhisamaya*) refers almost exclusively to the arhat’s realization of the four truths, it is incumbent upon Mahāyāna scholars to explain how *Prajñāpāramitā* both includes the realization of the arhat’s four truths and transcends it. Although all commentators agree that the practice of the Profound Awakening of All Aspects *precedes* the realization (*abhisamaya*) of the four truths (and hence cannot technically be a realization), they all deal with this problem in different ways.

⁵¹² These paraphrases are drawn from Adhīśa’s PhD.

⁵¹³ Adhīśa’s PhD (C99-674:2) *shes rab kyi* | *pha rol phyin pa’i bdus don bshad* | *mngon rtogs rnam pa bzhi yin te* | *mkhyen pa gsum dang chos sku la* | *mngon sum rtogs pas mngon rtogs te* | *sbyor ba bzhi ni mngon phyogs yin* | *’phags pa thogs med de ltar bzhed* |

Paths, (3) The State of Complete Awareness. The fourth Correct Understanding results in (8) the Dharmakāya.⁵¹⁴

Third, according to Haribhadra and Buddhaśrījñāna, there are eight actual realizations (*abhisamaya*). The first seven topics describe the *causal* aspects of the single *resultant* realization of the *jñānadharmakāya*, which perceives the natural body (*svābhāvikakāya*). Furthermore, the Correct Understanding of All Aspects is the content of the other three Correct Understandings (*abhisambodha*)—all of which are said to occur on the three types of Noble Ones’ paths.⁵¹⁵

Fourth, according to both Dharmakīrtiśrī and Ratnākaraśānti, even though the first seven topics have the nature of realization, *Prajñāpāramitā* is their single nature. However, even though in general, they say that the eight realizations are what is to be expressed (*abhidheya*) by the eight chapters expressing (*abhidhāna*) them, they do not take the eighth topic “Dharmakāya” to be an *actual* realization, since it refers to the resultant bodies and their activity.⁵¹⁶

Therefore, among all the systems, Dharmakīrtiśrī and Ratnākaraśānti are very close in the way that they describe the eight topics.⁵¹⁷ They differ, however, with respect to how they explain the particular realizations themselves and their relationships.

According to Dharmakīrtiśrī, at the instant of the Correct Understanding in a Single Moment everything dissolves into the transmudane awareness, which is the State of Awareness of All Aspects. However, in the next moment, a buddha awakens as an awareness body that grasps only the unfabricated characteristic

⁵¹⁴ Adhīśa’s PhD (C99-674:3) *nam par grol sde’i gzhung gis ni* | *mngon rtogs nam pa bzhi yin te* | *sbyor ba bzhi po kho na ste* | *mkhyen pa gsum dang chos sku ni* | *yul dang ’bras bu dag tu ’dod* | Cf. Makransky (235-7).

⁵¹⁵ Adhīśa’s PhD (C99-674:4-5): *brgyad ka mngon rtogs seng bzang dang* | *bud dha shri’ dzA na ’ng bzhed* |

⁵¹⁶ Adhīśa’s PhD (C99-674:4) *gser gling shAnti nam gnyis kyis* | *mngon rtogs bdag nyid bdun yang ste* | *shes rab pha rol phyin bdag ’dod* | | *’bras bu chos sku mdzad pa yin* |

⁵¹⁷ Cf. Śud (C195): *mngon par rtogs pa brgyad po ’di ni go rims ji lta ba bzhin du le’u brgyad po ’di’i brjod par bya ba yin no* | Cf. DBA (C377): *mdo don ni shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la sogs pa’i mdo’i don brjod par bya ba mngon par rtogs pa nam pa brgyad* |

(*akṛtimalakṣaṇa*) and hence, becomes the body *qua* true nature (*dharmatātmakaḥ kāyaḥ*).⁵¹⁸ Since Dharmakīrtiśrī follows Haribhadra in asserting the ultimate truth to be the true nature inseparable from the nondual *Prajñāpāramitā* that is like an illusion, he is implicitly refuting luminosity as real.⁵¹⁹

As we saw above, according to Ratnākaraśānti, at the instant of the Correct Understanding in a Single Moment everything dissolves into the transmudane awareness. In the next moment, his sheer luminosity re-arises as an All-Pervasive One with pure mundane awareness that has error but sees the suchness. This is the State of Awareness of All Aspects that refers both to buddhahood and to a buddha himself.⁵²⁰

Ratnākaraśānti had begun the discussion of eight topics with the rhetorical question, “By means of how many topics is She explained?” In order to pursue this question further, he now jumps ahead to the AA’s ninth and final chapter and cites the final two verses of the AA, which present a sixfold and a threefold alternative to the division of the main topic into eight.

7.3.2. The Sixfold Summary of the Topics

Next, Ratnākaraśānti cites the AA to show that the topics can also be reduced further as follows [S11]—

The treatise [states] again:

Alternatively, there is the summary in six [topics]:

⁵¹⁸ DBA (C381:12): |’dis ni lam dang gzhung gi bdag nyid can gyi yum gyi lus gsungs pa yin la de gsungs pas kyang sgyu ma lta bu’i gnyis su med pa’i shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa yang bshad pa yin te byang chub sems dpa’i tshul thams cad du kun rdzob dang don dam pas brgyan te| ston par mdzad pa nyid yin la| gzhan du na gdul bya rnams mtha’ gcig tu lhung bar thal bar ’gyur ro| This sentence is the conclusion after Dharmakīrtiśrī explains the path and texts of *Prajñāpāramitā* as conventional, but the nondual *Prajñāpāramitā* as illusion-like in reference to AA 1.1-1.2.

⁵¹⁹ DBA (C382:7): |don de dag nyid skad cig ma gcig gis rtogs pas na skad cig mngon rdzogs byang chub po| |skad cig ma gnyis par bcos ma ma yin pa’i mtshan nyid ’dzin pa’i ye shes kyis skur mngon par byang chub pas chos nyid kyi bdag nyid can gyis sku ni chos kyi sku’o| Cf. also where he comments on AA v (7:2b5): ... sarvatragadharmadhātuprativedhalakṣaṇapramuditādibhūmyadhigamānukrameṇa sarvākāraṃ sākṣatkurviran DBA (C381:8): |**kun tu ’gro ba ni chos kyis dbyings khyab pa’i shes pa’o| de rtogs pa ni mngon sum du byed pa’o**

⁵²⁰ Śud (C192ff; P281:3): |rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid ni sangs rgyas nyid de| de yang skyes bu dam pa| Cf. (Sār Edj): *buddha iti buddhatvaṃ sarvākārajñatety arthaḥ*. Cf. Pañca and Vimukti’s *Vṛtti (loc. cit.): buddha eva sarvākārajñatā sarvākārajñataiva buddhaḥ*.

The characteristic, the practice (*prayoga*) of that [*Prajñāpāramitā*], the excellence in that [practice], its sequential [application], its completion, and its maturation.
AA 9.1

Alternatively, (*athavā*) in abbreviated form, that [*Prajñāpāramitā*] has six topics (*artha*).⁵²¹ [This is] because (1) the Complete Awareness that was threefold in the first [enumeration] are the **characteristic** (*lakṣana*) of *Prajñāpāramitā*, (2)-(5) The [following] four are: the **practice** of that [*Prajñāpāramitā*],⁵²² the **excellence** (*prakarṣa*) in that [practice], the **sequential** [method] of practice (*anukrama*), and the **completion** of practice (*prayogaṅiṣṭhā*). (6) Then, the Dharmakāya with its activity is the **maturation** of that [practice], i.e. their chief result.

This is a relatively straightforward explanation of the sixfold division of the topic. The three types of awareness (mentioned in the eightfold subdivision above) can be summarized as a single topic that teaches the threefold **characteristic** of *Prajñāpāramitā*.⁵²³ Whatever the case, the topic can be subdivided into six sub-topics and explained that way. There is no polemic aspect of Ratnākaraśānti's description of these six, except that he will use it and the next threefold summary as bait for the opponent position.

7.3.3. The Threefold Summary of the Topics

Next, Ratnākaraśānti cites the AA to show that the topics can also be reduced further as follows [S12]—

The treatise [states] again :

Alternatively, there is the summary in three [topics]:

- (1) The scope (*viṣaya*) is the threefold cause
- (2) The practice (*prayoga*) is fourfold and

⁵²¹ Jaini's footnote 14 (relating to this passage) states that there is no Tibetan equivalent to the portion of the text he found after the verse in Sanskrit. Unfortunately, he missed the fact that this "missing" phrase is placed *before* the verse in Tibetan. It reads "yang 'di'i bsdus pa'i don drug yin pa'i phyir yang bstan bcos las..."

⁵²² The referent of "that" (*tad*) throughout this verse is the "characteristic."

⁵²³ We will not discuss this at length, but it may be worth noting that Dharmakīrtiśrī appears to use the metonym **characteristic** without warning in some of his descriptions of ultimate reality.

(3) The fruit is Dharmakāya [and] the activity (*karma*). AA-9.2

Alternately, in brief, She has three topics. To explain, the three kinds are:⁵²⁴

- (1) The **scope** (*viṣaya*) of the practice is the threefold state of complete awareness (*sarvajñatā*).⁵²⁵ That is the **cause**.
- (2) The scope possessor (*viṣayī*) is **the fourfold practice**, namely the Correct Understanding of All Aspects and [the other three correct understandings].
- (3) The **result** of that cause is **Dharmakāya**⁵²⁶ and its “activity.”

Here, Ratnākaraśānti’s explanation of the **objective scope** (*viṣaya*) as **the threefold state of complete awareness** is not unusual, since it is mentioned within the verse itself and by all other commentators. However, his interpretation of the **fourfold practice** (*prayoga*) as the **subjective** (*viṣayī*) is unique and central to Ratnākaraśānti’s interpretation. Insofar as this threefold structure maps directly onto the *Aṣṭa*, it allows him to interpret the whole *Aṣṭa* in light of the threefold heuristic model, i.e. objective aspect of the ultimate, the subjective aspect of the ultimate, and the ultimate goal (*paramārtha*).⁵²⁷ Since the complete transcendence of dualistic object and subject in the goal that is the *Dharmakāya* requires the exposition of at least these three separate topics, the AA does not provide any further reduction in the number of topics. Thus, after citing and explaining the AA’s verses (above) he concludes [S13]: “Therefore, this *sūtra*, in its entirety (*sākalyena*), has eight, six, or three topics (*artha*).”

⁵²⁴ The following paragraph is crucial to understanding of Ratnākaraśānti’s approach to the AA’s structure. Due to misunderstanding this point, Jaini offered a complicated emendation without noting it properly. See my critical edition for notes on this.

⁵²⁵ The term *viṣaya* here refers to a list of sub-topics, which include: the meditative “objects” upon which the practice is focused; the relative “scope” of the different practitioners; and the “objectives” toward which their practice is aimed. Hence, the translation “objective scope” is an attempt to capture the broad meaning of *viṣaya* here.

⁵²⁶ This cause (*hetu*) appears to refer to the fourfold practice which brings about the result.

⁵²⁷ That said, the threefold summary of object, subject, and *Dharmakāya* is meant to map onto the *sūtra*’s *parivartas* in order. In particular, the first of these three correlates roughly to *Aṣṭa parivartas* 1-9; the second correlates to *Aṣṭa parivartas* 9-29½; the fifth AA topic correlates to *Aṣṭa parivartas* 21-29; and the last three topics correlate to *Aṣṭa parivarta* 29 ½ -30. Ratnākaraśānti does not make this structure explicit in his commentary, but it informs his treatment of these chapters. Since it would require too much information be supplied first in order to explain the structure of the whole *sūtra* that I understand Ratnākaraśānti to be implying, I can only just mention here that I understand his designation of the *viṣayī* to allow him to interpret the *Aṣṭa* according to the threefold heuristic model in this case.

Although Ratnākaraśānti's preceding presentation of the eightfold, sixfold and threefold subdivisions of the topic frames the way that his own interpretation will frame the topic according to his threefold models, his concluding word **in its entirety** (*sākalyena*) pivots toward his argument against Haribhadra's further reduction of these three topics into a single topic based on the *Aṣṭa*'s ultimate purpose.⁵²⁸

7.4. The Argument Against A Single Topic

Although Ratnākaraśānti is clearly referring in this section to the argument presented by Haribhadra and later elucidated by Dharmakīrtiśrī, neither of them ever explicitly says that the *Aṣṭa* has a single topic. It is just that Ratnākaraśānti polemically takes their extended complex arguments to imply that the *Aṣṭa* has a single topic and then refutes that implied thesis. Whether or not we ultimately decide that Ratnākaraśānti is right about their thesis, it is extremely worthwhile to understand, at least, the basic contours of the complex debate, since Ratnākaraśānti's response to the implication of their common argument illuminates the fundamental differences between Ratnākaraśānti's own approach to interpreting the *Aṣṭa* and theirs. It also highlights the differences between the projects of their respective philosophies.

Unfortunately, we cannot understand even the basic contours of the debate on the basis of the *Sāratamā* alone, because Ratnākaraśānti provides here only a short one-paragraph summary of their common argument and does not spell out his own. Ratnākaraśānti's subsequent elliptical critique of their argument is longer than his summary. But it still is more surgical than comprehensive. Hence, in order to make sense of this debate, we must ourselves first come to grips with the initial abstract argument laid out by Haribhadra.

⁵²⁸ I will present Ratnākaraśānti's following summary (of Haribhadra's school of thought) without interjecting my own comments, so that it might be grasped on its own. Afterwards, I will unpack the major terms and rephrase it more understandably in my own words.

7.4.1. The Structure of Haribhadra's Argument

Haribhadra's abstract argument actually consists of a number of different but related abstract arguments. In and of themselves, they are clear and relatively easy to follow as abstract arguments. But it is not always clear or easy to see the relationship between the different arguments or their concrete application in terms of the *Aṣṭa* itself. Since Ratnākaraśānti takes the different parts of Haribhadra argument to be building a case for his subsequent intensional definition of *Prajñāpāramitā* in the *Ālokā*, this section will present Haribhadra's argument in its entirety.

Haribhadra's argument will be presented in the order in which he makes it.⁵²⁹ First, (a) he argues that the ultimate purpose is predominant among the *Vyākhyā-yukti*'s fourfold framework for introducing a text and is the only one among them that is explained at the start of a text, then (b) he uses Dharmakīrti's principle (PVs 1.214) to argue that nothing else need be explained since everything else is implicit in the ultimate purpose, then (c) he problematizes Vimuktisena's *extensional* definition of the topic, and finally (d) he asserts *Piṇḍārtha*'s *intensional definition* as a necessity.⁵³⁰

In the following sections corresponding to (a - d), when describing these individual arguments, my approach will be to let Haribhadra's words explain and then to comment mainly on those points that Ratnākaraśānti highlights. Furthermore, Haribhadra's argument is made in the abstract. However, since his commentary is on

⁵²⁹ Haribhadra's arguments are lengthy. Although the large amount of material from Haribhadra that I will present below may seem disproportionate to the relatively terse response by Ratnākaraśānti, it is a necessity because understanding his terse response will not be possible without a complete picture of his opponent's position. Since he introduces numerous terms and connects them to each other via citations and argument, much subtlety would be lost in a summary. It is beyond the purview here to discuss these arguments in detail, but it seems remiss not to at least present them and to comment on a few of the main points so that future readers may see the connections. Dharmakīrtiśrī reformulates Haribhadra's argument in reverse order following the AA and is much clearer in many ways than Haribhadra. Unfortunately, Dharmakīrtiśrī's argument is difficult to extricate from its commentary on Haribhadra and the AA verses and would require much more exegesis to present here. Furthermore, Haribhadra's *Ālokā* is available in clear Sanskrit and the DBA is not yet. For this reason, I have chosen to focus on Haribhadra here, but I will demonstrate toward the end that Ratnākaraśānti's critique applies very well to Dharmakīrtiśrī too.

⁵³⁰ Throughout these arguments, he is implicitly problematizing Ārya Vimuktisena's *extensional* definition of the topic, but the section I am referring to here concerns the passage where Ārya Vimuktisena sets up his own explanation of the topic.

the *Aṣṭa*, since his arguments are placed immediately following the lemma for the word **evam** at the beginning of the *Aṣṭa*, and since his conclusions are sublated within his discussion of the *Aṣṭa*'s first sentence stating the topic, I will interpret his arguments here as though they are made directly about the *Prajñāpāramitā* and the *Aṣṭa*, so that their relevance to Ratnākaraśānti's critique is more readily understandable. After Ratnākaraśānti's response to Haribhadra, we will compare their different approaches to defining *Prajñāpāramitā*.

7.4.2. Vyākhyāyukti Framework

First, Haribhadra begins his discussion of the topic by laying out the *Vyākhyāyukti* fourfold framework—i.e. the subject matter (*abhidheya*) of a text, its coherence (*sambandha*), its purpose (*prayojana*), and its ultimate purpose (*prayojana-prayojana*)—that he will use to explain the *Aṣṭa*.⁵³¹ Most commentators use this fourfold framework as a way of introducing and explaining the text in a concise manner. But Haribhadra does not simply use the framework. Instead, he launches into a long abstract theoretical discussion about the framework itself. His broader argument is that properly stating the ultimate purpose when introducing a text is sufficient for explaining all four limbs mentioned in the *Vyākhyāyukti*. His entire theoretical discussion was understood in Tibet as a posthumous lecture to Ārya Vimuktisena and his student Bhadanta Vimuktisena, who wrote commentaries on the *Pañca* without telling the ultimate purpose of the *Pañca*. Without the detailed knowledge of the text to supply, Haribhadra's theoretical discussion seems like a mere lecture on how to write a thesis. Although his lecture certainly does operate at this general, abstract and instructional level, Ratnākaraśānti takes Haribhadra to be arguing that the *Aṣṭa*'s ultimate purpose, i.e. complete, perfect awakening, is what is

⁵³¹ Cf. Amano (7:2b2): *ko' rtha iti mandadhījanāśaṅkāṃ apākurvan svaśāstrasyāntarṇnihitasambandhābhidheyaprayojanaprayojanāny arthasamśayotpādatayā pravṛtṭyaṅgāny āha sarvākārajñātāmārgaḥ śāsinā yo 'tra deśitaḥ...*

predominantly communicated by the word *Prajñāpāramitā* in the *Aṣṭa*'s own thesis sentence. Haribhadra's extended argument begins, as follows [AAĀ 1]:

Thus [have I heard] and so on. Indeed, since everyone has uncertainty about the subject matter in all cases (*sarvatra*), applying oneself (*pravṛtti*) [toward a text] is preceded (*pūrvikā*) by the ascertainment of [its] coherence (*sambandha*), topic (*abhidheya*), purpose (*prayojana*), and ultimate purpose (*prayojanaprayojana*).⁵³² Hence, in relation to the *Prajñāpāramitā*, which has a coherence and so on, [these are] to be explained. That is to say, if Her coherence and topic were not explained, then [somebody] might imagine (*sambhāvayet*) [the utterances of *Prajñāpāramitā*] to be incoherent and to have no subject matter, like the statements of a madman and so on. No one would even apply [themselves] to listen/study. Therefore, the coherence and subject matter in Her must necessarily be explained.

Up until here, Haribhadra is just introducing the different 'limbs' of the text that he will discuss. Although he says here that the **coherence** and **subject matter** of the text **must be explained** so that people will know what is in the text and **apply themselves to study** it, instead of proceeding to **explain** the **coherence** and **subject matter**, he now explains why the purpose and ultimate purpose are more important to express first, as follows [AAĀ 2]:

This being the case (*tathāpi*), even when there is a coherence and subject matter, [there is] the rule that "Even a so-called 'means' that does not provide [anything] distinctive with regard to a task (*karman*) whose activity (*kriyā*) has [already been] performed (*niṣpādita*) violates (*atipad*) the principle of [its being] a means (*sādhananyāyā*)." According to [this rule], even faithful [types of] devotees do not care (*ādriyante*) even to listen to the excellent *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtra without [its] purpose as a limb for applying [oneself] (*pravṛttāṅga*) [being] distinguished (*viśiṣṭa*) from [what is] included in other sūtras. Hence, first, the uncommon fruit of activity (*kriyā*) [of applying oneself] must be expressed as the purpose only contained in that [sūtra] (*tadgata*) and not contained in others, so that those wishing to apply [themselves] to the sūtra [can] apply [themselves to it]. For, otherwise, [that purpose] would not be a proper (*asaṃgata*) expression. For the purpose is expressed at the start of the sūtra in order to cause someone else (*para*) to apply [himself] (*pravartayitu*) to the sūtra. [It is] not out of [some] obsession [that it is explained at the start].

⁵³² Coherence means a coherent connection between different aspects of the discourse, but mainly between the means and the goal.

Here, if we understand Haribhadra in light of the opening sentence of the *Aṣṭa*, his point is that the opening sentence is not about the **coherence and subject matter**, since these do not provide any distinctive information that would make **those wishing to apply themselves to the sūtra** actually **apply themselves** to it. Rather, since the **purpose contained in that sūtra** is **the uncommon fruit of activity** of applying oneself **to that sūtra**, that **purpose must be expressed first**, i.e. at the start of the *Aṣṭa*, as something distinctive in order to be a **proper expression**. In fact, Haribhadra understands the **purpose** that is **expressed at the start of the sūtra** to be properly expressed for the sake of causing others to **apply** themselves. Although he is speaking in the abstract here, we should understand this to mean that his subsequent arguments regarding the purpose are relevant to his explanation of the first sentence at the start of the *Aṣṭa*. Now, Haribhadra makes a pivot to connect the purpose with a single *artha*, as follows [AAĀ 3]:

How is another [person] (*para*) made to apply [him/herself] to the sūtra based on pointing out (*upadeśa*) the statement of purpose? If the purpose is expressed as contained only in that [sūtra] not in others, [then], due to that [particular] expression of purpose of one thing (*anyadīya*), someone would not proceed toward another thing (*anyatra*). Furthermore, sūtras are described as words that aim at (*param*) communicating a particular meaning (*artha*). The [sutra] is neither merely the subject matter (*abhidheya*), nor [is it] mere words devoid of the capacity to communicate a meaning. Thus, [the purpose] should not be expressed (*abhidhānīya*) as [something] contained in the subject matter and so on. Nor does the purpose have the nature of the activity (*kriyā*) [itself]. That is to say, the function characterized by stating the subject matter of its own meaning is common (*sādhāraṇā*) to all statements. Furthermore, since that [function] is something extremely well known (*atipratīta*), [it] does not deserve mentioning (*upādāna*) as the purpose, because there is no deviation of [any] treatise in that regard.

Here, if we interpret Haribhadra's statements in light of his subsequent commentary on the *Aṣṭa*'s opening sentence, he is explaining **how** someone might be **made to apply [him/herself]** to the *Aṣṭa* **based on his pointing out (*upadeśa*) the statement of its purpose** as something contained **in the sūtra** itself. Haribhadra will explain

how *Aṣṭa*'s **aim at communicating a particular meaning** that is connected to his interpretation of its **purpose** which is **contained in the subject matter** and **does not have the nature of the activity** (*kriyā*) itself. For Haribhadra, the idea that **the purpose** of the *Aṣṭa* **should not be expressed** (*abhidhānīya*) as something **contained in the subject matter and so on** is extremely important, because he will interpret the opening sentence to be communicating more than the subject matter. It is also worth noting that Haribhadra considers **something extremely well known** (*atipratītatā*), i.e. something already stated by itself or somewhere else, to **not deserve mentioning** (*upādāna*) **as the purpose**, because this is a point about which Ratnākaraśānti will have much to say.⁵³³ Haribhadra pivots now to defend this assertion from those who might think, like Ārya Vimuktisena apparently did, that the purpose can be communicated implicitly by stating the subject matter, as follows [AAĀ 4]:

If you say [that function of stating the purpose as the subject matter of its own meaning is] for the sake of eliminating (*vyudāsa*) the doubt regarding there not being [any] subject matter, then we say, no. [That is achieved] just due to stating the subject matter, because the uncertainty is eliminated then. The mention of the [purpose] is also not out of a wish to communicate something particular about the subject matter, because that [specific function (*kriyā* ?)] is communicated just through communicating something particular about the subject matter.

Haribhadra's main point here is to say the statement of the *Aṣṭa*'s purpose is something entirely independent of the subject matter. The purpose is not mere information. It performs the function of impelling others to apply themselves to it devotedly. They will not apply themselves on account of the subject matter, but on account of the goal to which the *Aṣṭa* leads if it is pertinent to their own goal.

⁵³³ As an aside, it might be worth pointing out here that much of the theoretical discussion can be related to a discussion of definitions. For instance, consider the sentence: [**the purpose**] i.e. the definition, **should not be expressed** (*abhidhānīya*) as [**something**] **contained in the subject matter**, the definiendum.

Haribhadra now makes an important shift by distinguishing *any* purpose from *the main* purpose, as follows [AAĀ 5]:

The purpose [that is] the fruit of that fruit of the activity is [what] should be demonstrated (*upadarśanīyaṃ*), because without that it is not possible to enter (*pravṛtti*) into the sūtra based on the mere fruit of the activity. That is to say, a thoughtful person (*prekṣāvān*) being desirous of the predominant fruit desired (*abhimata*) would enter (*pravarteta*) into the means [for] that [fruit], because without (*antareṇa*) that cause the effect [would] not be possible.

Up until now, Haribhadra has been speaking generally about the purpose. But here he makes clear that **the purpose** described at the start of the *Aṣṭa* is not just any fruit of *Prajñāpāramitā*, but **the fruit of that fruit of the activity**, which is also the **predominant (*pradhāna*) fruit**. What is the predominant fruit? Haribhadra does not tell us here, but his own and Dharmakīrti's use of the word **predominant (*pradhāna*)** both adjectively and adverbially in various contexts suggest that he means the ultimate fruit, i.e. complete perfect awakening. Thus, when Haribhadra says it is **not possible to enter (*pravṛtti*) into the sūtra**, i.e. the *Aṣṭa*, **based on the mere fruit of the activity**, he means that people will not do what the *Aṣṭa* says to do just to have done it. They will do it in order to attain the complete awakening, because any **thoughtful person** would want to know that the **cause** of doing something will lead to an **effect** beyond that, as his following example shows [AAĀ 6]:

"A method that is being practiced (*'bhyasyamāna*) is known as bestowing (*dāyaka*) the fruit [that is] its own thing to be attained, just like getting healthy through using (*anuṣṭhāna*) a means (*sādhana*) for regular (*avikala*) health (*ārogya*)." So applying oneself (*pravṛtti*) toward the sūtra is based on understanding the method. Therefore, due to [its] predominance (*prādhānyena*), it is only the ultimate purpose that, as an aid for applying oneself (*pravṛtṭyaṅga*), must necessarily be demonstrated.

This final sentence makes it clear that the **predominant fruit** and **the fruit of the fruit** are connected to **the ultimate purpose that must be demonstrated as a aid for applying oneself** toward the *Aṣṭa*. It is highly significant that Haribhadra uses the same two restrictive qualifiers, i.e. **due to its predominance (*prādhānyena*)** and **only**

(*eva*), because he also uses these two when discussing his interpretation of the opening sentence. Since it is **only the ultimate purpose that must necessarily be demonstrated**, we can understand its **predominance as an aid for applying oneself** to outshine the other three aids for applying oneself, namely the subject matter, the coherence, and the purpose. It is this “predominance” of the “ultimate purpose” that Haribhadra uses to create an intensional *definition* of the term *Prajñāpāramitā* that Ratnākaraśānti criticizes.

7.4.3. Dharmakīrti’s Principle

From Haribhadra’s perspective, the next passage is simply a continuation of his discussion about the “purpose,” the first of the *Vyākhyāyukti*’s four aids for entering the text. However, I have placed this continuation of his argument about the purpose into a separate section, because instead of explaining the coherence, he now uses Dharmakīrti’s principle (PVs 1.214) to argue that the coherence does not need to be explained separately at the start of the text, as follows [AAĀ 7]:

Furthermore, that [ultimate purpose] cannot be shown by a text devoid of coherence and so on that is (*bhūta*) [its] means (*upāya*). Hence (*iti*), the telling (*kathana*) of the coherence and so on is in order to demonstrate that the sūtra is the means [to] the ultimate purpose. And, the ultimate purpose should be demonstrated as coherent, [having] an appropriate means, according to the principle [of Dharmakīrti’s verse]:

A statement that teaches [some] goal of a person, that is coherent (*sambaddha*), and that [has] an appropriate means is worthy of (*adhikṛta*) investigation. [Any statement] other than that is not worthy [of investigation].

It is possible to read Dharmakīrti’s verse, as I have, with three qualities that a well formed **statement** must have, namely it must have **coherence**, an **appropriate means**, and **teach some goal of a person**. However, in Haribhadra’s sentence introducing this verse, he only mentions two of the three qualities—namely **coherence** and an **appropriate means**—and says that they belong to an **ultimate purpose**, not to a statement. Although we may not know what Dharmakīrti’s intention

was, we can see that Haribhadra is equating the **ultimate purpose** with a **statement that teaches the goal of the person** that possesses two qualities, namely **coherence** and an **appropriate means**. He goes on to explain these two, beginning with an appropriate means, as follows [AAĀ 8]:

But, carrying out [that goal's] means should not be [something] unfeasible (*aśakya*), or else no one would apply himself (*pravarteta*) [toward it], like the thing (*artha*) in the Treatise of Takṣaka's Crown Jewel (*cūḍāratna*)⁵³⁴ for getting rid (*hara*) of a fever (*jvara*). [Thus, stating the ultimate purpose with an appropriate means would] not be an endless series of statements (*anavasthā*), because a person's desire (*ākāṅkṣā*) [for something further] would [actually] be eliminated (*viccheda*) by completion of the thing (*artha*) wished for (*abhimata*). For this reason, beyond this [ultimate purpose], no further purpose would be sought.

Here, Haribhadra is suggesting the word **appropriate means** indicates something that is feasible or possible. If the ultimate purpose, i.e. a statement that teaches the goal of a person, includes a feasible means, then it is **worthy of investigation**. If it is not feasible, then there will just be **an endless series of statements**, which would **not be worthy of investigation**. Haribhadra does not tell us how an ultimate purpose can “have” an appropriate means, but we can gather clues from his next remarks about its **coherence**, as follows [AAĀ 9]:

What is its coherence (*sambandha*) and so on? Regarding that, it is explained. First, the coherence should not be demonstrated separately from the purpose, because it would be fruitless. Any X deserves a separate mention (*upādāna*), [only] if it is not understood when Y (*yasmin*) is expressed—since (*yathā*), in the expression of the one part such as the subject matter and [purpose], there [would be] no understanding (*avagati*) of the other (*itara*) [part]. And (*ca*), when the purpose is expressed, there is no possibility [that] the coherence is not [also] expressed.

Here, Haribhadra is interpreting Dharmakīrti's verse to suggest that **coherence** should not be explained **separately** at the start as an aid for others to apply themselves to a text, because he takes coherence (like the appropriate means above) to be implicit in a proper statement. Since he takes the opening sentence of the *Aṣṭa* as a proper

⁵³⁴ *Takṣaka* is a mythological snake with a crown jewel that has curative powers.

expression of the purpose, he explains that the coherence is not to be expressed at the start of a sūtra, but elsewhere, as follows [AAĀ 10]:

To explain (*tathā hi*), when [the coherence] is being demonstrated as the relationship (*bhāva*) between the goal (*sādhya*) and the means in relation to the [AA] treatise and [the stated] purpose, [the coherence] should be shown. [At that time, one should] not [explain] something else (*anya*), such as the activities of the lineage (*parva; rgyud*) of gurus and so on, because that [lineage] is disconnected (*anaṅga*) from seekers (*arthin*) applying themselves toward that [sūtra] (*tasya*).

Here, Haribhadra shows that demonstrating the **coherence** of the *Aṣṭa* with its purpose is only useful when the purpose of the *Aṣṭa* has already been explained. It is also at that time that one should show the **relationship between the goal and the means**. He continues [AAĀ 11]:

Furthermore (*ca*), the relationship of the goal (*sādhya*) and the means [itself] is shown just due to expressing the purpose. Showing “This is its purpose” is the demonstration that “This is its means.” The [coherence] does not need to be expressed separately from the statement of the purpose, due to the implicit (*sāmarthyā*) understanding that [it is] not possible that any X (*ya*), whose purpose is Y (*tad*), does not accomplish (*sādhayati*) Y (*yad*), since [this would cause an] excessively absurd consequence.”

Here, Haribhadra finally makes clear his interpretation of Dharmakīrti’s verse. That is to say, the ultimate purpose of the *Aṣṭa* automatically contains both the appropriate means and the coherence, since these are both understood implicitly from a proper statement of the ultimate purpose. The idea that the ultimate purpose possesses a natural coherence with all the various appropriate means leading up to the goal is something that Haribhadra uses in formulating his definition of *Prajñāpāramitā*. Ratnākaraśānti critiques this conclusion as well, as we shall see.

7.4.4. Ārya Vimuktisena’s Extensional Definition

After arguing that the proper statement of the goal of a person, i.e. the ultimate purpose, implicitly contains the appropriate means and the coherence, Haribhadra turns to the question of the subject matter where he engages three opponent positions. Each of the three positions attempts to identify a single collection of sub-topics that

can contain all the various disparate topics of the *Aṣṭa* under a single heading. Since these three positions were refuted by Vimuktisena as a preface to offering his *extensional definition* of *Prajñāpāramitā*, Haribhadra's refuting of the same three positions which proposes an alternative solution can be understood as an oblique problematization of Vimuktisena's *extensional definition* of the topic. Before offering his alternative solution, Haribhadra presents and refutes three opponent positions, as follows [AAĀ 12]:

Some say, the collection of all things (*vastu*) is [the subject matter] expressed for the sake of the correct classification (*pravicaya*) of phenomena.

According to this first opponent, all the disparate topics of the sūtra can be subsumed within a single **collection of things**, i.e. aggregates and so on. The idea of this opponent is that the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras mainly teach bodhisattvas about the aggregates **for** the purpose of their **correct discernment of phenomena** as suchness. Hence, all its various teachings can be summarized as concerning this single topic of Complete Awareness, i.e. of the aggregates and so on—which correlates to the third of eight topics in the AA list above. Haribhadra continues as follows [AAĀ 13]:

Others say, the combination of antidotes (*pratipakṣa*) are [the subject matter] explained for the sake of relinquishing the counterproductive factors (*vipakṣa*).

According to this second opponent, all the disparate topics of the sūtra can be subsumed within a single **combination of antidotes**, i.e. the various bodhisattva paths or discernments that counteract ignorance (*avidyā*). The idea of this opponent is that, even when the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras teach bodhisattvas about the aggregates, they are focused on the various paths **for** the purpose of **relinquishing the counterproductive factors** with respect to those aggregates. Hence, all the *Aṣṭa*'s various teachings can be summarized as concerning this single topic of the **Awareness** of all

Paths—which correlates to the second of eight topics in the AA list above.

Haribhadra continues as follows [AAĀ 14]:

Still others say, all (*aśeṣa*) the aspects are [the subject matter] taught for the sake of fully knowing all (*niravaśeṣa*) objects of awareness (*jñeya*).

According to this third opponent, all the disparate topics of the sūtra can be subsumed within a single collection of **all the aspects**, i.e. everything to be known. The idea of this opponent is that, even when the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras teach bodhisattvas about the aggregates and the paths, it is **for the purpose of their fully knowing all (*niravaśeṣa*) objects of awareness**. Hence, all the *Aṣṭa*'s various teachings can be summarized as concerning this single topic of the **Awareness of all Aspects**—which correlates to the first of eight topics in the AA list above. Now Haribhadra refutes these three positions, as follows [AAĀ 15]:

These three are wrong. To explain, with respect to the first position [that holds the subject matter to be] the collection of all things (*vastu*), [there is] the fault of [useless] redundancy (*pūrvoktatā*), since (*iti*) there certainly not does not exist an unprecedented class (*jāta*) of things here in the *Prajñāpāramitā*, which is not included [already] in the Abhidharma Corpus teaching the aggregates, dhātus, and āyatanas.

Haribhadra explained to us above that the subject matter had to be expressed in connection with a distinctive purpose, since “sūtras are described as words that aim at (*param*) communicating a particular meaning (*artha*).” He also explained that “something extremely well known (*atipratīta*)” does not “deserve mentioning (*upādāna*) as the purpose, because there is no deviation of any treatise in that regard.”⁵³⁵ Hence, the single unifying topic cannot be based on the purpose of **teaching the aggregates, dhātus, and āyatanas** because these are not an **unprecedented class**, i.e. distinctive set of categories, **of things**. Thus, if this were the single topic, the *Aṣṭa* would be a **redundancy** of something already taught **in the Abhidharma Corpus** and would not be a statement with any particular means appropriate for producing a

⁵³⁵ Cf. [AAĀ 2].

distinctive result. Hence, the single topic is not the **collection of all things**.

Haribhadra continues as follows [AAĀ 16]:

With respect to the second position [that holds the subject matter to be] the collection of all antidotes, [there would] not be any thing [or] counterproductive factor (*vipakṣa*) that would be included [in that collection]. Hence, even when expressing “the śrāvaka path and so on is to be cultivated as an antidote,” [one would] not know “[to be cultivated] as an antidote of what,” because there would be no understanding (*pratipatti*) of an antidote restricted to each (*pratiniyata*) counterproductive factor. Hence, [this position has] the fault of [having] no understanding (*apratipatti*).

Here, the general problem with the first opponent’s summary of the topic is that it did not include anything distinct about the aggregates and so on. In the second position, the problem is the opposite. It includes neither the **things** which the **antidotes** concern nor the **counterproductive factors**, eg. conceptualizations (*vikalpa*) and so on, which the **antidotes** eliminate. For example, at the level of the **śrāvaka path and so on**, *Prajñāpāramitā* is said to be **cultivated as the antidote** to the imputation of a self, i.e. the **counterproductive factor**, onto the **things**, i.e. aggregates and so on. Thus, if the subject matter was only the **antidotes**, then it would be an incoherent statement of the purpose, since no one would **know “as antidote of what”** *Prajñāpāramitā* should be cultivated. Thus, if this **collection of all antidotes** were the subject matter, it would incur the **fault** of incoherent words that produce **no clear understanding**. Haribhadra continues as follows [AAĀ 17]:

With respect to the third [position that holds the subject matter to be] collection of all the aspects, there are two options (*vikalpa*). Is an aspect (i) not different from a thing or (ii) [is it] different? If [it is] the former option (i), then the very thing is included under the guise (*vyājena*) of the aspect; hence, [it] incurs (*samāpatati*) the fault possessed (*bhāvin*) [by the previous position regarding] the collection of things. [On the other hand,] if (*atha*) it is the latter [option] (ii), then, since [it would be] the collection of mere aspect[s] created by conceptualization without [any real] thing [being there], this aspect being cultivated also would not be of use in the goal of a person, due to not applying to any thing even indirectly (*pāramparyeṇa*). Hence, since it would be expressing a thing (*artha*) of no use (*upayujyamāna*) in the goal of a person, there would be the fault of not explaining [anything].

Here, the **third** opponent’s position that the subject matter can be summarized as a **collection of all the aspects** suffers from same problems of the prior two opponent positions, because the **aspect** of some real **thing** cannot be explained as either the **same** as that thing or **different** from it. Hence, it **incurs the fault possessed** (*bhāvin*) in both positions, in that it would either (i) be a mere **thing in the guise of an aspect** and hence, lacking in any distinctive subject or appropriate means or (ii) something **magically created by the conceptualization** that does not correlate to anything real and hence, incoherent and **not explaining** anything. Haribhadra would acknowledge that the Awareness of **All the Aspects** contained in *Prajñāpāramitā* is one of the subjects of the *Aṣṭa*, but it cannot be a summary into a single topic that represents the whole.

Here it is important to note that Ārya Vimuktisena entertains and dismisses all three opponent positions in a similar manner to Haribhadra. However, for Ārya Vimuktisena, each opponent is trying to reduce the multiple topics to a single topic or an intensional definition that applies in all cases, but this is impossible. For this reason, after refuting these positions, he simply asks the rhetorical question, “So, what is *Prajñāpāramitā*?” and then answers it by reciting the table of contents of the AA as an extensional definition of *Prajñāpāramitā*. By contrast, Haribhadra draws the following conclusion [AAĀ 18]:

Therefore, through the collection (*saṃgraha*) of these three meanings (*artha*), there is no possibility [due to] the faults arising (*bhāvi*) in the individual positions. Hence, as the teacher of all people suffused with great compassion, the Blessed One taught through various (*vividha*) miracles (*prātihārya*)⁵³⁶ the whole path—(a) including the realizations of śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and tathāgatas (b) with the

⁵³⁶ For more on *prātihāryaiḥ*, see DBA (379:21) where Dharmakīrtiśrī explains the corresponding section of the AA_v (7:2b3) as referring here to the three types of miracles (*prātihārya*) through which the Buddha taught. Cf. also BHSD *prātihārya*.

unerroneous stages of the eight realizations, i.e. the Awareness of All Aspects and so on, and (c) leading toward (*āvāhaka*) the Dharma *qua* supreme prosperity (*abhyudayaniḥśreyasa*)—in relation to *Prajñāpāramitā*. [This is] the subject matter (*abhideya*).

Here, although Haribhadra’s use of the locative for *Prajñāpāramitā* can be interpreted in several ways, it should become clearer in the next section why I have translated it as “in relation to *Prajñāpāramitā*.” However the locative is interpreted, the basic idea seems to be that *Prajñāpāramitā* is the single topic that subsumes all the subtopics in the *Aṣṭa*. From what Haribhadra told us above, he must consider the word *Prajñāpāramitā* to represent a single ultimate purpose for the sake of which the Buddha taught the *Aṣṭa*. But we also know that, for Haribhadra, this statement about *Prajñāpāramitā* as the ultimate purpose implicitly communicates the subject matter, the coherence, the means, and the non-ultimate purposes which are subsumed within it. In the next section, we will see how he develops an intensional definition from *Prajñāpāramitā* as a single ultimate purpose.

7.4.5. Dignāga’s Intensional definition

Haribhadra’s interpretation of Dignāga’s intensional definition of the term *Prajñāpāramitā* comes some pages later in his commentary. Although the language in this context is different, it is based on a similar principle of predominance, as follows:

Prajñāpāramitā is predominantly (*mukhyā*) a blessed buddha [who] is the nondual awareness that is like an illusion.⁵³⁷ But as a subordinate (*gaunī*) [usage], She is both a text, which is the collections of words and sentences, and a path characterized by seeing and so on. Just as Ācārya Dignāga says:

Prajñāpāramitā is the nondual awareness. She is the Tathāgata. [She is] the goal/target (*sādhya*) of the text, [which] is the words about Her, and [the goal] of the path, due to the *yoga* that has Her as its goal (*arthya*).⁵³⁸

⁵³⁷ I have translated *mukhyā* similarly to *prādhānyena* because they are synonyms and function in a similar way here.

⁵³⁸ AAĀ (23:7): *mukhyā buddho bhagavān māyopamaṃ jñānam advayaṃ. tatprāpty anukūlatvena tu padavākyasamūho grantho darśanādilakṣaṇo mārgaś ca gaunī prajñāpāramitā. tathā cāhācāryadignāgaḥ. prajñāpāramitā jñānam advayaṃ, sā tathāgataḥ. sādhya tādarthyayogena*

In his definition, Dignāga does not elaborate further on the term, but we can understand his definition of *Prajñāpāramitā* as a simple, intensional definition, because as a Yogācāra, the only real referent of the term *Prajñāpāramitā* is the nondual awareness of the buddha. All other usages are figurative in that they do not refer to real things separate from awareness. Haribhadra's introduction and definition of Dignāga's definition veers from Dignāga's meaning. Haribhadra asserts that *Prajñāpāramitā*'s **predominant** referent is a buddha's illusion-like nondual awareness, whereas its **subordinate** referent is **the path with that awareness as its goal, and the text**, which bears Her name. By identifying the predominant referent of the term *Prajñāpāramitā* as something illusion-like (not "real"), Haribhadra produces a complex *intensional definition* that becomes clearer in his comments on the opening sentence of the *Aṣṭa* immediately following the passage above:⁵³⁹

Based on this [definition by Dignāga], [we should understand] a restriction (*avadhāraṇa*) [that the term here is] is concerning *only*, i.e. predominantly, the ***Prajñāpāramitā***, which is of three types, is the possessor of a connection (*sambandhini*) with those, and is devoid of the instructions (*upadeśa*) that are a mere likeness (*prativarṇika*) [of Her]. [We should] not [understand the term here as referring to that ***Prajñāpāramitā*** which] belongs only **to those** [bodhisattvas], because [*Prajñāpāramitā*] governs (*adhikāra*) the three [types of] awakening, insofar as [She] is inseparable [from them].

Here, we can see that Haribhadra's interpretation of the topic sentence in the *Aṣṭa* expands on Dignāga's intensional definition. By Haribhadra's **restriction** of the term ***Prajñāpāramitā***, he produces an intensional definition that limits the class containing *real* referents of the term to a single member, namely a buddha's illusion-like nondual awareness of the emptiness of itself and all phenomena. Through this restriction also,

tācchabdyam granthamārgayoḥ|| iti|| I have left Dignāga's *yogena* untranslated since it might be interpreted different ways, either as connection, method, application, or even as meaning nothing at all here.

⁵³⁹ This Sanskrit text and what follows is not included in the appendix since it derives from a different section of the commentary and is not continuous. AAĀ (23:12): *atas trividhām api tatsambandhinīm prativarṇīkopadeśarahitām prajñāpāramitām eva prādhānyād adhikṛtyety avadhāraṇam, na tu teṣām eveti.*

he implies an exclusion of other referents of the term, implying that they are figurative and relative. But this restriction is complex in that the buddha’s awareness *qua* “real referent” is also “illusion-like” and hence, only qualifies as primary due to its “predominance” not its “reality.”⁵⁴⁰ Thus, his notion of a **possessor of the connection** (*sambandhin*) boils down to the singular ultimately real thing/goal (*artha*) to which the three relative usages of the word are connected. That is to say, that *Prajñāpāramitā*, which is the nondual awareness of a buddha, is the **possessor of the connection**, because all other referents are connected to it. Rather, as the possessor of the connection, *Prajñāpāramitā* **governs** (*adhikāra*) **the three** [types of] **awakening, insofar as [She] is inseparable** means that She is the complete perfect awakening which subsumes the others, which Haribhadra clarifies as follows:

To explain, it will taught in this very [sūtra shortly that] **this *Prajñāpāramitā* should be studied even by those wishing to train for the ground⁵⁴¹ of the śrāvakas** and so on, because [any] stage of realization is connected with the supreme goal of a person [through] all [Her] aspects and because of the explanation in the *Āryagaṇḍavyūha* and so on:

O Noble Son, that bodhicitta alone is the essence/core (*sāra*),⁵⁴² as the seed and as the fruit, of all the buddha qualities.⁵⁴³

Here, Haribhadra’s reference to the passage about the **ground of the śrāvakas** is just a reminder of the fact that, as was seen above with regard to the AA’s homage, the term *Prajñāpāramitā* is used variously in the sūtra to refer to the awareness that gives rise to the realization of a śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, bodhisattva, or buddha. Haribhadra’s point is that each of these types of realizations is just a **stage** that is

⁵⁴⁰ Cf. the following page of this thesis within the explanation of the next.

⁵⁴¹ I have interpreted *bhūmau* as a *nimittasaptamī* based on comments by Ratnākaraśānti in *Sāratamā*.

⁵⁴² One could get a similar meaning by taking *sāram* as an adjective meaning “essential,” but I have taken it to be a neuter noun in order to emphasize its relationship to the buddha qualities.

⁵⁴³ AAĀ (23:13): *bodhitraye ’syā nāntarīyakatvenādhikārāt. tathā hy atraiva vakṣyati : śrāvakabhūmāv api śikṣitukāmeneyam eva prajñāpāramitā śrotavyetyādi. sarvākāraparamapurūṣārthopayuktādhigamakramasya pratipādyamānatvāt. tatra ca bodhicittaṃ kulaputra bījabhūtaṃ tad eva ca phalabhūtaṃ sāram sarvabuddhadharmāṇām ity āryagaṇḍavyūhādinirdeśād yathā yena parārthālambanasamyaksambodhikāmatālakṣaṇadvāvimśatiprabhedabhinnabodhicittādhigamaprakāreṇa bodhisattvā mahāsattvās trividhām api prajñāpāramitāṃ niryāyur niścītya prāpnuyur iti.* I have not translated the last phrase of this sentence beginning with *yathā* but provide it here for context.

connected with the **supreme goal of a person**. For Haribhadra, the **predominance** of a buddha's nondual awareness, which is illusion-like, includes all illusion-like realizations along the single path (*ekayāna*), since they are simply **connected with the supreme goal of a person through all Her aspects**. Since all these stages are equally illusion-like, the defining principle in Haribhadra's complex intensional definition is based not on Her being a real referent of the term, but on her predominance. In this way, Śāntarakṣita's notion of the two realities is brought to bear on the interpretation of the *Aṣṭa*.

The nature of the complex definition is seen in Haribhadra's reference to the verse on *bodhicitta*. As is well known, the term bodhicitta can be explained as a case of applying the name of the **fruit**, eg. apple, to the **seed**, eg. apple seed. The implication there is that *bodhicitta* is a word applied to an aspiration, only because it leads eventually to a buddha's *bodhicitta*, i.e. the real *bodhicitta* that constitutes the goal.⁵⁴⁴ What is interesting to note here, however, is that the verse is cleverly connecting the many moments on the path to the final moment of the goal through the word *sāra* which might mean **essence**, when it is a seed, but **core**, when it is a fruit. That is to say, since both the **seed** bodhicitta and the **fruit** bodhicitta share in that same illusion-like **essence**, the term *Prajñāpāramitā* refers only to the **mind** of someone who has realized complete, perfect **awakening** (*bodhi*) only because of its predominance as the ultimate purpose or fruit toward which all realizations are ultimately aimed. In this way, Haribhadra has implied an intensional definition in his comments on the *Aṣṭa*'s opening sentence that echoes his arguments regarding the ultimate purpose.

In whatever way that Haribhadra himself interpreted the verse, since Ratnākaraśānti is refuting precisely this section of Haribhadra's commentary in which this

⁵⁴⁴ Haribhadra also is discussing *bodhicitta* here because it is the first of ten points in the first chapter of the AA.

verse mentioning *sāra* is cited as example and authority, we can probably take this as a clue that the title to Ratnākaraśānti’s commentary “*Sāratamā*” is a response to Haribhadra that purports to explain something *more essential* about *Prajñāpāramitā* than Her being the ultimate goal of the path.

7.4.6. Dharmakīrtiśrī’s Explication of Haribhadra’s Definition

Before moving on to Ratnākaraśānti’s refutation of Haribhadra, it may be worth showing briefly how Dharmakīrtiśrī picks up Haribhadra’s intensional definition of *Prajñāpāramitā* and runs with it. In fact, immediately following his opening verses, Dharmakīrtiśrī begins commenting on the AAv’s homage by defining *Prajñāpāramitā*, as follows:

[Here,] *prajñā* is the awareness born from hearing and so on. That [Prajñā’s] *pāramitā*, i.e. having reached the maximum degree (*prakarṣa*), is *Prajñāpāramitā*, [of which there are] three types, based on the division between the predominant and the subordinate—i.e. (*iti*) [respectively] the nondual awareness, the path with that [awareness] as its goal, and the text.⁵⁴⁵

By beginning his DBA in this way, Dharmakīrtiśrī indicates, as his commentary itself shows, that his appropriately titled *Durbodhālokā* will both follow Haribhadra’s interpretation and clarify the questions raised by the *Ālokā*. It also demonstrates his understanding that Haribhadra’s entire interpretation of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts derives from this hierarchy of primary and secondary referents among the three applications of the term *Prajñāpāramitā*.⁵⁴⁶ Dharmakīrtiśrī’s breakdown of the word as “gone to the other shore” (*pāraṃgatā*) implies a feminine past participle, but could be interpreted as a gloss of Haribhadra’s well known etymological explanation that the

⁵⁴⁵ DBA (unpublished skt. ed.) (1): *prajñā śrutādimaya jñānam, tasyāḥ pāramitā prakarṣagatā jñānam advayam tādarthyo mārgo granthāś ceti mukhagaunabhedād tridhā prajñāpāramitā*. Cf. DBA (C363:3).

⁵⁴⁶ Haribhadra does not mention Dignāga until relatively late in the introduction, i.e. AAĀ (23).

term should be understood as “the state of a goer to the other shore” (*pāramiḥ+tā*).⁵⁴⁷

We cannot go into the details of how Dharmakīrtiśrī’s interpretation centers itself around this definition, since it revolves around references to both the AA verses and the AAṽ commentary and requires much exegesis. However, it should be kept in mind that, although Ratnākaraśānti’s main argument is directed against the definition of Haribhadra, it was Dharmakīrtiśrī who demonstrated the way that Haribhadra’s definition informs both Śāntarakṣita’s philosophy and Haribhadra’s notion of the path. Hence, Dharmakīrtiśrī may well have influenced Ratnākaraśānti’s attack on this definition as the central issue.

Now we turn back to the *Sāratamā* for Ratnākaraśānti’s response.

7.4.7. Ratnākaraśānti’s Arguments

Before we turned to Haribhadra’s arguments, Ratnākaraśānti had just suggested that the *Aṣṭa* cannot be perfectly explained in anything less than “eight, six, or three topics (*artha*).” He continues as follows [S14]:

Nonetheless, some [commentators] say [the *Aṣṭa* has] predominantly (*pradhānyena*) only a single topic, [because] otherwise, there would not be even a singular [coherent] expression (*ekavakyatā*), like the [incoherent] collection of words (*padasamūhavat*) “the ten pomegranate trees” and so on, because [there would be] no summary (*upasaṃhāra*) within a single topic (*ekārtha*) based on the sub-topics (*avayavārtha*) [being] coherent with respect to each other (*paraspara*). For this reason, [these commentators suggest that] complete, perfect awakening, [which] possesses a connection (*sambandhavatī*) and [has] an appropriate means (*anugūṇopayā*), is predominantly described in the [Aṣṭa].

Here, Ratnākaraśānti is just paraphrasing the position of Haribhadra and his school.

But since Haribhadra argued along the same lines as described, but not in these exact words, it may be worth pointing out the similarities of Ratnākaraśānti’s

⁵⁴⁷ AAṽ (23:2): *evamādiśrutacintābhāvanāmayajñānodayakrameṇa sarvākārajñānādhiḡamāt pāram prakarṣaparyantam eṭīti viḡrhya, kvipi sarvāpahārilope ’nityam āgamaśāsanam ity atuki, tatpuruṣe kṛti bahulam ity aluki ca karmavibhakteḡ kṛte* (MS, T; *kṛtaḡ* W) **pāramis**, *tadbhāvaḡ pāramitā. prajñāyā dharmapṛavicayalakṣaṇāyāḡ* (MS, T; *lakṣaṇāyāḡ* W) **pāramitā prajñāpāramitā**.

characterization and Haribhadra’s statements. First, in his argument against the three opponent positions, Haribhadra does suggest that *Prajñāpāramitā* is the **single topic**. He also discusses one of Dharmakīrti’s principle verses concerning a **singular coherent expression** and suggests that *Prajñāpāramitā* **possesses a connection (*sambandhavatī*) and has an appropriate means (*anugūṇopayā*)**. He does not use the expression “**ten pomegranate trees,**” which is a common example for an incoherent **sentence**. But as we saw above Haribhadra does state:

If Her coherence and topic were not explained, then [somebody] might imagine (*sambhāvayet*) [the utterances of *Prajñāpāramitā*] to be incoherent and to have no subject matter, like the statements of a madman and so on.⁵⁴⁸

Since Haribhadra also defines *Prajñāpāramitā* as referring predominantly only to the buddha’s illusion-like nondual awareness, he does suggest that She is the ultimate goal of **complete, perfect awakening** that subsumes the other awakenings. For this reason also, he explains that She **is predominantly described in the Aṣṭa’s opening sentence**, which he sees as a **summary of the Aṣṭa based on the sub-topics** being implicitly understood as **coherent with respect to each other**. Thus, Ratnākaraśānti’s paraphrase applies well enough to Haribhadra—the only known previous commentator on the *Aṣṭa* based on the AA—that we can say Ratnākaraśānti had Haribhadra’s school in mind here. Now the *Sāratamā* begins its refutation as follows [S15]:

That is not true. For complete, perfect awakening is not [something that anyone will] want to know (*ajijñāsītā*), because [it is already] extremely well known (*atipratītatvād*) even in the *śrāvaka* corpus.

Here, Ratnākaraśānti is using the logic from Haribhadra’s own dismissal of a subject matter or purpose that is “something extremely well known” because it is not distinctive enough to warrant someone to **want to know** more about it and apply

⁵⁴⁸ See [AAĀ 1].

oneself to it.⁵⁴⁹ Ratnākaraśānti is pointing out here the irony that Haribhadra chose to interpret the *Aṣṭa* having a topic and purpose that was common to all buddhist sūtras, since **complete, perfect enlightenment** is found **even in the *śrāvaka* corpus**. This remark is Ratnākaraśānti's only refutation of Haribhadra's logic. It is surgically directed at what he sees as the assumption underpinning Haribhadra's whole argument about the distinctiveness of the subject matter being expressed implicitly by the ultimate purpose. Haribhadra's abstract argument is built upon the idea that the statement of that purpose *should* make someone wish to investigate this sūtra and apply themselves to it. It is a bit like a salesman speaking about how to interest others in a product, rather than talking about the product itself, as Haribhadra wrote:

...even faithful [types of] devotees do not care even to listen to the excellent *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtra without [its] purpose as a limb for applying [oneself being] distinguished from [what is] included in other sūtras...For the purpose is expressed at the start of the sūtra in order to cause someone else to apply [himself] (*pravartayitu*) to the sūtra.⁵⁵⁰

Whatever Haribhadra's intention, Ratnākaraśānti is suggesting that the topic of the Buddha's illusion-like nondual awareness is a product of applying oneself to the sūtra, but it has nothing specifically to do with what is *actually in this* sūtra and hence, does not describe its subject matter correctly. Ratnākaraśānti's refutation of Haribhadra's extendent argument is only one line long, because he believes that in order to refute it, he only has to show that Haribhadra's abstract reasoning produced an abstract interpretation of the topic that could apply to any sūtra. After doing so, Ratnākaraśānti turns to argue that *Prajñāpāramitā* Herself—i.e. *not* the *Prajñāpāramitā* defined as complete, perfect awakening—is already distinctive enough as the *Aṣṭa*'s single topic, as follows [S16]:

⁵⁴⁹See [AAĀ 3].

⁵⁵⁰See [AAĀ 2].

But, since *Prajñāpāramitā* is not known (*aviditatvād*), She is [something that people] want to know (*jijñāsītā*). Hence, [it is] nothing but She [who] is predominantly discussed.⁵⁵¹

Here, Ratnākaraśānti is perhaps playing on two meanings of *avidita*. It can mean “**not known**” in the sense of Her being the opposite of complete, perfect awakening which is “well known.” But it also can mean “not found” such that people **will want to know** how and where to find Her.⁵⁵² In his own statement, Ratnākaraśānti uses the *eva* and *prādhānyena* as another echo of Haribhadra’s explanation of the implied restriction in the *Aṣṭa*’s opening sentence. But for Ratnākaraśānti, these words have a different emphasis. As he will explain below, he sees the *Aṣṭa* as **predominantly** describing the path to awakening, not the goal. Thus, **nothing but** might be taken to suggest that *Prajñāpāramitā* is “only” what is actually found in the *Aṣṭa*, not something established through argument about what should be there. But Ratnākaraśānti now takes up Haribhadra’s assumption that the subject matter of the sūtra should make people wish to investigate and apply themselves to the *Aṣṭa* and he adds more reasons why She is worth investigating, as follows [S17]:

[Secondly] *Prajñāpāramitā* is [something] difficult to trust, because She is extremely profound (*atigambhīratvāt*).⁵⁵³ Nevertheless, based on the Blessed One’s teaching [of Her], She can be trusted (*adhimucyeta*). For this reason also, She is [something] to be expressed predominantly by the Blessed One.

[Thirdly,] to the degree that She is trusted, to that same degree awakening becomes close.⁵⁵⁴ For this reason also, She is predominantly to be expressed [by the Blessed One].

For Ratnākaraśānti, *Prajñāpāramitā* is a proper topic to be **investigated**, since *Prajñāpāramitā* can be recognized by reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*), but

⁵⁵¹ I have split this from the above sentence in order to explain them, but the two belong together as the first reason Ratnākaraśānti gives for refuting the opponent.

⁵⁵² In the *Aṣṭa*, there are several plays on the verbal root $\sqrt{\text{vid}}$. Eg. Sār (GS 79:12): *yathā sārīputra na saṃvidyante, tathā saṃvidyante evamaṃvidyamānāḥ tenocyante avidyete*.

⁵⁵³ The term *adhimokṣa* (and *adhi*+ $\sqrt{\text{muc}}$) generally means “(having) firm conviction.” In this syntax, that translation is difficult to phrase in English. Cf. Böthlingk & Roth *adhimokṣa*=*adhimukti*=Vertrauen. Cf. BHS *adhimokṣa*=“zealous adherence to”; *adhimucyate* “earnestly devoted to.”

⁵⁵⁴ The term awakening (*bodhi*) here includes the various stages of arhats, bodhisattvas, etc. up to buddhas.

cannot be found (*avidita*) by ordinary consciousness (*citta*) with a grasper and grasped. This makes Her a suitable topic for explanation, because She is both something that is **difficult to trust** (*duradhimokṣa*) and something that **can primarily be trusted on the basis of the Blessed One's speech**. For this reason, *Prajñāpāramitā* is something that must **be expressed by the Blessed One**, because the more confidence that a person has in the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the more one can apply oneself to Her as the path. Furthermore, **to the degree that She is trusted**, i.e. the more one applies oneself to Her as the path, **to that same degree awakening becomes close**, i.e. the closer one gets to awakening. **For this reason**, She is something towards which it is worth applying oneself. This is why **She**, i.e. as the path, **is to be expressed** as the topic of the *Aṣṭa*. Ratnākaraśānti now points to the text itself to demonstrate that She is the primary topic and, as the primary topic, the quintessential part of the path necessary for awakening [S18]:

[Fourthly,] for that reason too, She is being described extensively at every occasion (*yathāvasara*)⁵⁵⁵ in the eight realizations, how could She not be predominantly discussed?

[Finally,] “*Prajñāpāramitā* alone *is* the path of awakening, because She alone transforms everything else into a path also.”⁵⁵⁶ [Since] she is being described (*ucyamānā*) like this, [She] is even more (*sutarā*) predominantly explained. Enough with these excessive details!

Here, it is universally acknowledged by commentators on the AA that the **eight realizations** are teaching the various aspects of the path to awakening. This would be difficult to deny, because on every page, some aspect of Her is **being described** as a path. Haribhadra wants these various aspects of Her to be ontologically relativized and hence designates Her as the goal toward which the texts are aimed. But, even

⁵⁵⁵ Given that the testimony of Tib. *snying po*, the illegibility and lateness of MS B, and the parallel passages against which RĀŚ is arguing, it is possible that the Tibetan reading **yathāsāraṃ* is the older reading instead of *yathāvasaraṃ* intended as a pun on this commentary's title especially if taken with the *sutarām* in the next line. Although **yathāsāraṃ* would be the *lectio difficilior*, I have not emended it, since I am not sure how I would interpret the pun. If we keep *yathāvasaraṃ*, it certainly should not mean “occasionally” here. Is *yathāsāraṃ* possible here in the way that the *Aṣṭa* uses it?

⁵⁵⁶ This seems like it would be a citation from the one of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*. However, I have not yet been able to locate it in any of them or anywhere else thus far.

when Haribhadra argues that the subject matter of the *Aṣṭa* is the goal, he describes the Buddha as teaching the “whole path” through the eight realizations. For Ratnākaraśānti, the content that appears on every page is about Her. This means that She is **predominantly** a path, not a goal. If She is **being described extensively at every occasion** (*yathāvasara*) as something essential to the path comprised of the **eight realizations**, then **how could She not be predominantly discussed**. Furthermore, Ratnākaraśānti explains that ***Prajñāpāramitā* alone is the path of awakening, because She alone** is what **transforms** the other five *pāramitās* and **everything else into the path**. Since She is implicit in all the passages about the other *pāramitās* as well, She is **even more predominantly being explained**. In Ratnākaraśānti’s statement ***Prajñāpāramitā* alone is the path of awakening** one finds the very essence of his debate with Haribhadra. The goal of this sūtra is not to teach about awakening, but to teach about how to get there. Since *Prajñāpāramitā* is the path to awakening on which bodhisattvas are supposed to depend, it has been given a name and identified as such by the sūtras. According to Ratnākaraśānti, if this important point is misunderstood, one will not be able to comprehend the *Aṣṭa* or the path. Ratnākaraśānti brings his argument to a close by pointing to what the sūtra itself tells us is its main topic, as follows [S19]:

For this very reason, according to its title (*vyapadeśād*)⁵⁵⁷ this sūtra is predominantly “*Prajñāpāramitā*”—not “perfect awakening.”⁵⁵⁸

Earlier Ratnākaraśānti reminded his opponents that the AA’s title stated that it was an instruction (*upadeśa*). Now, Ratnākaraśānti says that the *Aṣṭa*’s title indicates what those practical instructions concern. Also, since a book’s title is supposed to indicate its topic, Ratnākaraśānti puts it to Haribhadra’s followers to say that the *Aṣṭa* was erroneously titled. Furthermore, by stating that the sūtra is *Prajñāpāramitā*,

⁵⁵⁷ P has *mdo sde* suggesting that the neuter *sūtram* might be taken as the group of PP sūtras.

⁵⁵⁸ I have translated this phrase following P which reads *de nyid kyi phyir shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ni mdo sde 'dir gtsor bstan pa yin te| yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub ni ma yin no ||*

Ratnākaraśānti implies that the *Aṣṭa* explains itself as a *sādhana* to be written, worshipped, donated, heard, read, learned, explained, recited, contemplated, and cultivated as the centerpiece of one’s religious performance. Finally, Ratnākaraśānti concludes his argument by pointing out the incorrect presupposition of Haribhadra’s interpretation of Dharmakīrti’s verse, as follows [S20]:

Therefore, it has been settled (*niṣṭhita*) that the virtually predominant (*pradhānabhūta*) topic (*artha*) of this most precious *sūtra* is nothing but *Prajñāpāramitā* with a practice and with a fruit. As is said in the *Vārttika*, “[A statement should] teach a goal of a person,” even there [the word] “teach” is said, but [the words] “predominantly teach” are not said.⁵⁵⁹

For Ratnākaraśānti, Haribhadra’s complex intensional definition is being forced onto the *Aṣṭa* and onto all the passages he interprets. Ratnākaraśānti’s own *intensional definition* of *Prajñāpāramitā* explains the topic of the *Aṣṭa* differently. According to Ratnākaraśānti’s threefold heuristic interpretation, **the virtually predominant (*pradhānabhūta*) topic (*artha*) is nothing but *Prajñāpāramitā***, i.e. the transmudane awareness and the pure mundane awareness that constitutes the path for bodhisattvas. We will see in the final chapter why Ratnākaraśānti distinguishes *Prajñāpāramitā* as having both a **practice** and a **fruit**, but suffice it to say here that Ratnākaraśānti is challenging Dignāga’s notion that a result should be considered the primary usage, while a cause should be considered secondary. For Ratnākaraśānti, both the cause, i.e. the **practice**, and the result, i.e. the **fruit**, of *Prajñāpāramitā* are secondary usages.⁵⁶⁰

In this way, Ratnākaraśānti does not reduce the topic of the *Aṣṭa* to match a singular usage of the term based on the predominance of the goal. Rather, he points out that Haribhadra’s citation of Dharmakīrti (PV 214) does not actually interpret the verse in a way that Dharmakīrti seems to have intended it, i.e. “A statement—which

⁵⁵⁹ Ny-Ch reads *de ltar na shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ’i de nyid (P phyin pa ’di nyid) ni ’bras bu dang bcas pas, sbyor ba dang bcas pa gtso bor gyur pa ’di mdo sde rin po che ’i don to (te in P) ’di ni de ltar nges par gnas pa yin no |*

⁵⁶⁰ In this regard, it would be interesting to see how Ratnākaraśānti would interpret the verse cited by Haribhadra about *bodhicitta* and especially the *sāra* in relation to the seed and fruit.

teaches a goal of a person, is coherent and [has] an appropriate means—is worthy of (*adhikṛta*) investigation.” Although Haribhadra is not the only one to have interpreted Dharmakīrti’s verse to be describing the two qualities of a statement of purpose—i.e. “A statement that teaches a goal of a person, which is coherent and [has] an appropriate means, is worthy of (*adhikṛta*) investigation”—his interpretation goes even further than the grammar allows. Ratnākaraśānti may not agree that Dharmakīrti’s verse supports Haribhadra’s idea that coherence and an appropriate means are implicit in a statement that teaches a goal of a person. Whatever the case, Ratnākaraśānti clearly points out the slippage in Haribhadra’s argument based on Dharmakīrti’s authority, saying the word **‘teach’ is said, but [the words] “predominantly teach” are not said**. In this way, Ratnākaraśānti implies that Haribhadra has completely violated the meaning of Dharmakīrti’s verse and adduced the word **predominantly** in order to reinterpret it. Ratnākaraśānti does not say it, but we can understand that he prefers to interpret the Dharmakīrti’s verse as referring to three different parts that all must be present in a meaningful sentence, rather than Haribhadra’s way of understanding it as basically a sentence teaching a goal of a person that contains two parts. Certainly, Ratnākaraśānti’s way of reading the verse is closer to the minimum “three topics” that he suggests are the minimum number of topics, as explained in the AA. Haribhadra’s twofold model belies his wish to reinterpret the AA by explaining it under the rubric of Śāntarakṣita’s explication of the two realities, i.e. an illusion-like ultimate reality that supersedes the illusion-like conventional reality but is inseparable from it.

Whether we agree with Ratnākaraśānti or Haribhadra, Ratnākaraśānti’s initial description of Haribhadra’s argument is that Haribhadra explains Prajñāpāramitā in a single topic, because otherwise there would be “no summary (*upasaṃhāra*) within a single topic (*ekārtha*) based on the sub-topics (*avayavārtha*) [being] coherent with

respect to each other (*paraspara*).” For Ratnākaraśānti, it seems that Haribhadra’s summary of the topic as illusion-like nondual awareness as a single “connection possessor” (*sambandhavatī*) verges on creating an ontological whole that contains all parts (*avayavin*) and fails the test of *pramāṇa*. Since this is anathema to Ratnākaraśānti’s own Buddhist sensibilities, he demonstrates why we need to define *Prajñāpāramitā* as the path instead. Thus, we can see that Ratnākaraśānti’s refutation of Haribhadra and his followers on this point is not just about names or about correcting him on his reading of *Dharmakīrti*. It is about delineating a profound difference in their philosophies and their approaches to the *Aṣṭa* that is only expressed by their different ways of defining *Prajñāpāramitā*.

Since the introductory section to the *Sāratamā* ends here by referring to Ratnākaraśānti’s definition without explaining its implications or significance, we will turn again to the *Śuddhimatī* to fill in the details and conclude.

8. Ratnākaraśānti's Definition

It is no surprise that Ratnākaraśānti interprets the *Aṣṭa* as expressing a *Nirākāravādin* path to awakening. But his way of interpreting the text relies on his particular definition of what *Prajñāpāramitā* predominantly is. We have seen already that he takes the term *Prajñāpāramitā* to refer to the path. But we have not clarified yet how his definition of *Prajñāpāramitā* as the path avoids being merely an extensional definition and helps clarify the topic. To explain this, we must begin where we left off in the *Śuddhimatī* above and show the precise way that he defines the path to which *Prajñāpāramitā* refers, as follows:

Prajñāpāramitā is both a **discernment** (*prajñā*)—because it perceives emptiness insofar as it is aware of the ultimate reality (*dn̄gos po dam pa*)—and a **transcendent state** (*pāramitā*), since it is going (*phyin pas* < 'gro ba) to the **other shore** (*pha rol; pāra*).

In Ratnākaraśānti's definition of *Prajñāpāramitā*, all three elements of Dharmakīrti's notion of a meaningful sentence are present, namely the **going** is the “appropriate means,” **the other shore** is the “goal of a person,” and the “coherent connection” between the two is that it **perceives emptiness insofar as it is aware of the ultimate reality** *qua* object. It also resonates with the main purpose of the undertaking in AA 1.1-2 as Ratnākaraśānti explained it, namely that bodhisattvas behold nothing but their own empty luminosity. For Haribhadra, the stated purpose of AA 1.1-2, i.e. encountering something “not encountered by others,” needs to be connected to the ultimate purpose/ultimate goal which is a buddha's nondual awareness. But now Ratnākaraśānti specifies that the main referent of the term is a bodhisattva's awareness, as follows:

Of what [is it] the other shore ? [It is the other shore] of the conceptualization (*rnam par rtog pa 'i*) of a bodhisattva. [It is the other shore] of the purity (*dag pa; śuddhi*) of the buddhas.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁶¹ Śud (C195:1): |gang gi pha rol zhe na| 'phags pa byang byub sems dpa'(P/N sems dpa'i) ni rnam par rtog (P/N rtogs) pa'i 'o| de bzhin gsheg pa rnam kyī ni dag pa'i 'o|

Here, Ratnākaraśānti is indicating that the other shore is actually the boundary line between the **conceptualization of a bodhisattva** and the **purity of the buddhas**. *Prajñāpāramitā* is the path that brings a bodhisattva's conceptualization to an end. Once he crosses that boundary, it is no longer really *Prajñāpāramitā*. For Ratnākaraśānti, the bodhisattva's path and the goal are the beginning and end of the process of purification that eliminates the **conceptualization of a bodhisattva** and arrives at the **purity of the buddhas**. In the AA 1.1-2, the idea of an experience “not encountered by others” suggests an experience that is distinctive. Haribhadra interpreted this as the distinctiveness of a buddha, but Ratnākaraśānti now explains how it is referring to the distinctiveness of bodhisattvas, as follows:

If you ask, “Why is the [name] *Prajñāpāramitā* [used] with respect to the path of preliminary practice (*prayogamārga*)?” [That usage] is because [the path of preliminary practice] is its cause. If you ask, “Why is the [name] *Prajñāpāramitā* [used] with respect to the [three] bodies (*dharmakāya*) and its activity?”⁵⁶² [That usage] is only because [the *Dharmakāya* with its activity] is its fruit (*'bres bu; phala*).⁵⁶³

Here, without saying it, Ratnākaraśānti is using a similar hermeneutic device that distinguishes two different secondary usages of the term *Prajñāpāramitā* from the main referent based on causal relationships. The difference is that Ratnākaraśānti applies *Prajñāpāramitā* to the middle position of the three usages and designates secondary usages based on something being either a **cause** or a **result**. That is to say, Ratnākaraśānti wants us to understand that when we see the term *Prajñāpāramitā* used **with respect to** either the **path of preliminary practice** or the **Dharmakāya with its activity**, we should know that these are merely secondary or figurative uses of the term based on their causal connection to *Prajñāpāramitā*. We call a budding bodhisattva's conceptual awareness on the path of preliminary practice “*Prajñāpāramitā*” only because it is a **cause** for it, not the real *Prajñāpāramitā*. We call the awareness of the three bodies (*dharmakāya*) “*Prajñāpāramitā*” only because it is

⁵⁶² Here, Dharmakāya is referring to the eighth realization and hence means all three bodies.

⁵⁶³ See Śud (C195:4).

result of *Prajñāpāramitā*, not the real *Prajñāpāramitā*. Ratnākaraśānti’s definition of *Prajñāpāramitā* as “seeing emptiness” is the key distinctiveness of a bodhisattva. That is to say, if someone is **on the path of preliminary practice**, they still have conceptualization, i.e. cognitive images, mixed in with their experience of emptiness. Even though figuratively that person can be said to be practicing *Prajñāpāramitā*, without experiencing sheer luminosity free of cognitive images, it is, by definition, not the irreversible path of *Prajñāpāramitā* of the bodhisattvas who see emptiness. It may lead to that path, but it is not that path. Hence, when *Prajñāpāra-mitā* refers to a pre-bodhisattva, that is a figurative usage of the term. Likewise, after practicing *Prajñāpāramitā*, the **dharmakāya** is the indirect result of purification, but that **dharmakāya**, in Ratnākaraśānti’s system, is not perceiving emptiness anymore, since it arises as the All-Pervading One, which is pure mundane awareness. Thus, when *Prajñāpāramitā* refers to a buddha, that too is a figurative usage of the term. In this way, by distinguishing *Prajñāpāramitā* from the **path of preliminary practice** and the **dharmakāya**, Ratnākaraśānti is telling us that the main referent of the term is only those transmundane and pure mundane awarenesses on the bodhisattvas’ paths of seeing (*darśanamārga*) and cultivation (*bhāvanāmārga*). As he explains later in the *Sāratamā* by citing the *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*—

Prajñāpāramitā is of two types, transmundane and pure mundane. The bodhisattva, who is established (*pratiṣṭhita*) in the nonconceptual source, sees all entities as uniform [like] space, through awareness [which is] not distinguished with regard to [objects] to be known. Through [the post-meditative cognition] attained after that (*tatprṣṭhalabdha*), he sees all entities as magical illusions (*māyā*), mirages (*marīci*), dreams (*svapna*), light reflections (*pratibhāsa*), echoes, image reflections (*pratibimba*), moons in water, magical creations (*nirmita*).⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶⁴ Sār (82:16): *dvividhā prajñāpāramitā lokottarā śuddhā laukikī ca, yathoktaṃ drumavikalpapraveśāyām* (em.— *avikalpapraveśāyām*) *dhāraṇyām*— “*avikalpadhātupratiṣṭhito bodhisattvo jñeyanirviśiṣṭena jñānena ākāśasamatalān sarvadharmān paśyati. tatprṣṭhalabdhenā māyāmarīcisvapnapratibhāsapratīśrutkāpratibimbodakacandranirmitasamān sarvadharmān paśyati.*” *ato lokottaram adhikṛtyāha-- ākāśasyetyādi. śuddhalaukikīm adhikṛtyāha-- tatkim ityādi.* According to Sār (J 214fn16) the citation traces to *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* (Taisho No. 654, Vol. 15, pp.805b-6c) Although I have translated *ākāśasamatalān* “uniform like space,” it literally means “having the same surface as space.” Ratnākaraśānti also cites this same passage from *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* and gives

For Ratnākaraśānti, the path of the bodhisattva is distinguished from all other non-bodhisattva paths, in that it relies on the **two types** of awareness, namely **transmundane and pure mundane**. When a bodhisattva meditates, he is in **the nonconceptual source** which has no cognitive images whatsoever. When he is in the post-meditative state **attained after that**, he naturally experiences the **pure mundane awareness**, which is the natural after-effect of the transmundane awareness. That is to say, a bodhisattva does not need to deliberately practice anything in the post-meditation; his pure mundane awareness cannot help but see **all entities**, i.e. cognitive images of entities, **as magical illusions (*māyā*), mirages (*marīci*)**, and so on, i.e. as false. Above, he told us that, by relying on *Prajñāpāramitā*, all experience is transformed into a path. That is precisely what is distinctive about *Prajñāpāramitā*. For Ratnākaraśānti, the main purpose of the undertaking described in the *Aṣṭa* and expressed in the AA v.1.1-1.2 is for the purpose of teaching the path of noble bodhisattvas, because it is the distinctive method for reaching awakening. This distinctive method is the single topic of the *Aṣṭa* and the meaning of *Prajñāpāramitā*, because their ultimate purpose is to explain the state of awareness that leads to buddhahood.

In this way, we can see that Ratnākaraśānti's notion of the path and the goal of *Prajñāpāramitā* are very different from Haribhadra's. For Haribhadra, illusion-like nondual awareness is the goal that we must have in mind while reading the sūtra, contemplating it and meditating upon it. But upon realizing the goal of awakening, one sees that both the goal and the path leading up to it are just illusions. This implies that the path is a necessary, but convenient lie that results in awakening only when one gives up on it. Whatever method one applies, the most important thing is seeing it

three possible interpretations of the compound *jñeyanirviśiṣṭam* in PPU (D160b1). For more on *śuddhyadhyāśayaḥ*, see BBh (1512): *tatra paripācakāḥ pudgalāḥ katame...* For the exact stages connected with the in-meditation phase, see MAu (D226a6; C610ff).

as an illusion. Ostensibly, this description is aimed at undermining goal orientation along the path. Yet, Ratnākaraśānti sees Haribhadra's notion of the path and goal as sending the wrong message and undermining people's interest in entering into the text and proceeding along the path.

In Ratnākaraśānti's system, the goal is not buddhahood, but the purification or removal of all obstructions. The goal is the path, insofar as one focuses merely on the path of purification. In this way, goal orientation along the path is avoided, but that path still results in a genuine awakening based on particular real causes aimed at removing particular obstructions one by one through the various methods explicated in the AA. For Ratnākaraśānti, the instructions of the AA are not a convenient lie, but a particular method for arriving at awakening through the *pāramitā* method (*pāramitānaya*). The important part about the *Aṣṭa* is precisely the particular method that it employs to arrive at buddhahood. But more importantly, it is only by emphasizing the importance of the *Aṣṭa*'s distinctive method that all the various methods of the *tantras* can be distinguished.⁵⁶⁵ Without these various methods being considered real, i.e. not illusory, there is no way to justify the superiority of any method in the Mahāyāna, much less the Śrāvakayāna. According to Ratnākaraśānti, *Prajñāpāramitā* is the activating element that makes either the sūtras or the tantras lead to awakening, but those methods must be defined and explained as functioning in a particular way. The Mahāyāna paths can all lead to the same goal, but they must be differentiated as indirect and slow or as direct and quick. If their essential quality is that they are illusions, then no one will be interested in these paths, because people's interest in any path is only due to its being causally efficacious. Hence, the way to define *Prajñāpāramitā* is not as the illusory goal toward which any illusory path

⁵⁶⁵ It is likely for this reason that Ratnākaraśānti also often emphasizes the centrality of the *upāyatantra*.

leads, but as the quintessential part of any real path to awakening. This was Ratnākaraśānti's defining wisdom.

In conclusion, Ratnākaraśānti's re-definition of the term was a brilliant innovation. It allowed a causal understanding of the path and the goal to move forward without the burden of Vimuktisena's *extensional definition*. We know that it was considered a “new” interpretation of *Prajñāpāramitā*, because it seems to have been received by his opponents—like by Jñānaśrīmitra in his scathing review—as a complete violation of any traditional interpretation ever known in India.⁵⁶⁶ Although Ratnākaraśānti's definition did not take root and is virtually unknown in Tibet, certain Tibetan authors, such as Rig-pa'i-ral-gri and Śākya-mchog-ldan, clearly drew inspiration from it in developing their own systems for explicating the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.⁵⁶⁷ Whatever the verdict from others, his new definition dovetailed perfectly with his threefold hermeneutic and heuristic models and enabled him to interpret the many works of sūtra and tantra within a single viewpoint that did not deny causality at the ultimate level.

⁵⁶⁶ Much of what Jñānaśrīmitra is criticizing here should seem familiar. SSś (505:8): *ataś caivam, prajñāpāramitāyāṃ hi trīṇ samāśrītya deśanā kalpitam paratantram ca pariniṣpannam eva ca. nāstītyādīpadaiḥ sarvaiḥ kalpitam vinivāryate. māyopamādidṛṣṭāntaiḥ paratantrasya deśanā. caturdhā vyavadānena pariniṣpannakīrtanam, prajñāpāramitāyāṃ hi nānyā buddhasya deśanā. ity akṣuṇṇapāramitānayarhānugamāt na cātra paratantrasyāpy ākāro 'san prakāśamātram tu sad ity uktam, yena pāramitānayaḍ iyatā bheda iti syāt. na ca svābhīmatam sphuṭīkṛtya tadartho 'py evam draṣṭavya ity atideśaḥ kṛtaḥ. nāpi sādhye viśeṣapradarśanam asti yena tathā unnīyeta. **prajñāpāramitā jñānam advayaṃ sā tathāgataḥ sādhyā** iti grāhyagrāhaka mātraśūnyatāyāḥ pratipādanā. anyathā nīrabhāsatvam eva vācyam syāt, na ca sa evākāro grāhyaṃ grāhakaṃ bhavitum arhati tallakṣaṇāyogād iti kalpitam eva tattvam bhinnam vā grāhyādi. sambhogakāyaś ca laukika aupacāriko veti viśeṣeṇa nirdeśyeta, bhagavatyāḥ piṇḍārthasyārabdhavāt, anyatra caivam anukteḥ. vārtikam cādarśa eṣāṃ kim atah param? tat kim ātmano 'śucinā lepanam parasya? svayam eva vā, kvacid guṇā eva na rūpam uttamam kvacid ca rūpam na guṇā viśeṣataḥ. amī tv asādhāraṇayogasampado guṇāś ca rūpam ca bhavantam āśritā iti viśeṣābhivyakter ity alam bahunā. na cāsmākaṃ yāvatsambhavam granthakārāśayasamarthanayatnaḥ, ekavaṃśasammatāstv eta iti. tathā hi, āryāsaṅgam anaṅga-jinnayavaho yad bhūpatiśo 'nvaśād ācāryo vasubandhuruddhuramatis tasyājñāyādīdyutat. dignāgo 'tha kumāranāthavīhitāsāmānyasāhāyakaś tasmīn vārtikabhāṣyakārakṛtanoradyānavadyā shtitiḥ. āryanāgārjunapādānām tu bhinnavaṃśatve 'pi sādharāṇaiva sādhyatattvasthitir iti darśitam, abādhyasvasamvedanasvikārāt.*

⁵⁶⁷ Yaroslav Komarovski (personal communication) notes that Śākya-mchog-ldan cites Ratnākaraśānti throughout his works, but further research is needed to determine how closely he or other Tibetan systems follow Ratnākaraśānti. Although Śākya-mchog-ldan mentions *sNying po mchog* roughly ten times in his *Prajñāpāramitā* commentaries, the fact that Ratnākaraśānti follows the *Madhyāntavibhāga* model of the three natures differentiates him from Śākya-mchog-ldan (who holds the *chos dbying* to ultimate) and even moreso from others *gZhan-stong* writers like Dol-po-pa (who hold *'od gsal* to be ultimate while emphasizing the *ekayāna* system and the Kālacakra framework).

9. Appendix A – Haribhadra’s AAĀ

The brackets, eg. “[AAĀ #]”, below mark the Sanskrit text that corresponds to the numbered AAĀ Sections in the thesis translation itself. The apparatus compares Wogihara’s (W) and Tucci’s (T) editions with the MS.⁵⁶⁸

[AAĀ 1]: **evam** ityādi. sarvatraiva hy arthasaṃśayena sarveṣāṃ sambandhābhidheyaprayojanaprayojanaprayojanāvasāyapūrvikā⁵⁶⁹ pravṛttir iti sambandhādīni prajñāpāramitāyāṃ vācyāni. tathā hi yadi sambandhābhidheyam asyā na kathyeta tadonmat-tādivākyavad asambandham anarthakaṇi ca⁵⁷⁰ saṃbhāvayet. na kaścit⁵⁷¹ pravartetāpi⁵⁷² śrotum. iti sambandhābhidheyam asyāṃ avaśyaṃ⁵⁷³ vacanīyaṃ.

[AAĀ 2]: tathā saty api sambandhābhidheye niṣpāditakriye karmaṇy aviśeṣādhāyī⁵⁷⁴ sādhanam ityāpi⁵⁷⁵ sādhananyāyam⁵⁷⁶ atipatatīti nyāyāt, sūtrāntarāsaṃgrhītaviśiṣṭapra-vṛtṭyaṅgaprayojanarahitam⁵⁷⁷ prajñāpāramitāsūtraratnam śraddhānusāriṇo ’pi śrotum api nādrīyanta ity ādāv asādhāraṇam kriyāphalaṃ sūtre pravṛttikāmānāṃ pravṛttaye tadgatam eva prayojanaṃ vācyam nānyagataṃ. anyathā hy asaṃgatābhidhānaṃ syāt. sūtre hi param⁵⁷⁸ pravartayitum sūtrādaḥ prayojanaṃ abhidhīyate na vyasanitayā.

[AAĀ 3]: kathaṃ ca paraḥ⁵⁷⁹ prayojanavākyopadeśāt⁵⁸⁰ sūtre pravartito bhavati. yadi tadgatam eva prayojanaṃ abhidhīyate nānyagataṃ, na hy anyadīyaprayojanābhidhānād anyatra, kasyacit pravṛttir bhavet. sūtraṃ ca viśiṣṭārthapratipādanaparam vacanam ucyate, nābhidheyamātraṃ nāpi śabdamaṭram arthapratipādanasāmarthyaśūnyam. ato nābhidheyādigatam abhidhānīyam. na ca kriyārūpaṃ prayojanaṃ. tathā hi sarvavākyānāṃ svārthābhidheyapratipādanalakṣaṇakriyā⁵⁸¹ sādharmaṇī.⁵⁸² sā cātipratītatayā⁵⁸³ prayojanatvena nopādānam⁵⁸⁴ arha(P.1b)ti, tasyāṃ śāstrasya vyabhicārābhāvāt.

[AAĀ 4]: anabhidheyatvāśaṅkāvyudāsārtham upadarśanīyeti cet. na. abhidheyakathanād eva tadāśaṅkāyā vyudastatvāt. nāpi abhidheyaviśeṣapratipipādayiṣayā⁵⁸⁵ tadupādānam. abhidheyaviśeṣapratipādanād eva tasyāḥ⁵⁸⁶ pratipāditatvāt.

⁵⁶⁸ Note this comparison of the two editions only mentions the MS readings that I found to differ from what was reported. My understanding of the Sanskrit and my selection of readings from the extant editions was greatly aided by attending Harunaga Isaacson’s class readings of this text and for the most part follows his suggested emendations, which are marked by H.I.

⁵⁶⁹ °prajñāpāramitāyāṃ vācyāni W; °prajñāpāramitāyāṃ vācyāni T.

⁵⁷⁰ ca] W; cetī] T.

⁵⁷¹ kaścit] W, T; su yang Tib. (Note: Tib.’s reading is implying “no one,” rather than “nothing”).

⁵⁷² pravartetāpi] T; pravartate ’pi.

⁵⁷³ avaśyaṃ] T; avaśyaṃ W.

⁵⁷⁴ aviśeṣādhāyī] em. H.I.; aviśeṣābhidhāyī T; aviśeṣāvāpi W.

⁵⁷⁵ ityāpi] W; ityādi T.

⁵⁷⁶ nyāyam] T; nyyāyam W.

⁵⁷⁷ °pravṛtṭyaṅga] T.

⁵⁷⁸ param] T; prām W.

⁵⁷⁹ paraḥ] W; punaḥ T; gshan pa dag Tib.

⁵⁸⁰ prayojanavākyopadeśāt] W; dgos pa’i dag bsten pas (*lac.*) Tib.

⁵⁸¹ °lakṣaṇa] T; °lakṣaṇā W.

⁵⁸² sādharmaṇī] W; sādharmaṇā] T.

⁵⁸³ cātipratītatayā] T; ca nātipratītatayā W.

⁵⁸⁴ prayojanatvena nopādānam] T; prayojanatvenopādānam W

⁵⁸⁵ abhidheyaviśeṣapratipipādayiṣayā] MS, T; abhidheyaviśeṣapratipipādayiṣayā W; abhidheyaviśeṣapratipipādayiṣayā T.

[AAĀ 5]: tasya ca kriyāphalasya phalam prayojanam upadarśanīyaṃ. tena vinā⁵⁸⁷ kriyā[Wogi 3]phalamātreṇa sūtre pravṛtṭyasambhavāt. tathā hy abhimatapradhānaphalārthī prekṣāvāms tadupāye pravarteta. kāraṇam antareṇa kāryasyāyogāt. [ṭib.3a]

[AAĀ 6]: avikalārogyasādhanānuṣṭhānenārogyaprāptivad upāyo jñāto 'bhyasyamānaḥ svopeyaphaladāyaka ity upāyāvagamāya⁵⁸⁸ sūtre pravṛtṭiḥ. tasmāt pravṛtṭyaṅgam prādhānyena⁵⁸⁹ prayojanaprayojanam evāvaśyadarśanīyaṃ.⁵⁹⁰

[AAĀ 7]: tac copāyabhūtasambandhādīśūnyena granthenāśakyam darśayitum iti sūtrasya prayojanaprayojanopāyatāsaṃdarśanārthaṃ sambandhādīkathanam.⁵⁹¹ tac ca prayojanaprayojanaṃ-- sambaddhānugūṇopāyam puruṣārthābhīdhāyakam parīkṣādhi-
kṛtaṃ vākyaṃ, ato 'nadhikṛtaṃ param || PV 3.215|| iti nyāyāt sambaddhānugūṇopā-
yam upadarśanīyaṃ.

[AAĀ 8]: na punar aśakyam tad sādhanānuṣṭhānam.⁵⁹² anyathā jvaraharatakṣakacūḍā-
ratnālamkārarthaṃ iva na pravarteta kaścit. anavasthāpi naiva.⁵⁹³ tathā hy abhimatā-
rthaparisaṃpṛtyā puruṣasyākāṅkṣāvicedhāt. ato nāparam ūrdhvaḥprayojanaṃ mṛgyam
iti.

[AAĀ 9]: ko 'sya sambandhādīḥ. tatrocya sambandhas tāvan na prayojanāt pṛthag
upadarśanīyo niṣphalatvāt. sa hi nāma pṛthagupādānam arhati yo yasminn abhihite 'pi
na gamyate, yathābhīdheyādyanyatarābhīdhāne netarāvagatir bhavati. na ca sambhavo
'sti prayojane 'bhihite sambandho nābhīhita iti.

[AAĀ 10]: tathā hi sampradarśyamānaḥ⁵⁹⁴ śāstraprayojanayoḥ sādhyasādhanabhā-
valakṣaṇo upadarśanīyaḥ.⁵⁹⁵ nānyo guruparvakriyādīlakṣaṇaḥ. tasyārthipravṛtter anaṅ-
gatvāt.

[AAĀ 11]: sa ca sādhyasādhanabhāvaḥ prayojanābhīdhānād eva darśita(P.2a)ḥ. tathā
hīdam asya prayojanam iti darśayatā darśitaṃ bhavatīdam asya sādhanam iti. na hi
yo⁵⁹⁶ yan na sādhyati tat tasya prayojanaṃ sambhavaty atiprasaṅgād iti sāmartya-
labhyatvena nāsau prayojanābhīdhānāt pṛthag abhīdhānīyaḥ.

[AAĀ 12]: dharmapṛavicayārthaṃ sarvavastusaṃgraho 'bhīdheya iti ekaḥ.

[AAĀ 13]: vipakṣa prahāṇāya samastapratipakṣo nirdeśya ity aparāḥ.

[AAĀ 14]: niravaśeṣajñeya-parijñānāyāśeṣākāraḥ kathanīya ity anyāḥ.

⁵⁸⁶ tasya] em; tasyāḥ W, T.

⁵⁸⁷ vinā] MS, T; om. W.

⁵⁸⁸ upāyāvagamāya] T; upāyāvagamāt] W.

⁵⁸⁹ pravṛtṭyaṅgam prādhānyena] MS; pravṛtṭāṅgaprādhānyena T, W.

⁵⁹⁰ evāvaśya] MS, T; evāvāśya° W.

⁵⁹¹ kathanam] MS, T; kathitaṃ W.

⁵⁹² tatsādhanānuṣṭhānam] MS, T; tad upāyānuṣṭhānam W.

⁵⁹³ naiva] W; naivam T.

⁵⁹⁴ sampradarśyamānaḥ] T, MS; prajñāpāramitāpradarśyamānaḥ W.

⁵⁹⁵ upadarśanīyaḥ] T; darśanīyaḥ] (em.)W.

⁵⁹⁶ yo] MS, T; yad W.

[AAĀ 15]: tad etat trayam asat. tathā hi prathame pakṣe samastavastusaṃgrāhe na hi tad astīha prajñāpāramitāyāṃ apūrvam vastu jātaṃ yan na skandhadhātvyātanānirdeśenābhidharmapīṭakādau [Wogi 4] saṃgrhītam iti punaruktatādoṣaḥ.

[AAĀ 16]: dvitīye sarvapatipakṣasaṃgrāhe⁵⁹⁷ kasyacid vipakṣavastuno 'saṃgrahāt pratipakṣatayā śrāvakaṃmārgādayo⁵⁹⁸ bhāvayitavyā ity abhidhāne 'pi na jñāyate kasya pratipakṣeṇeti pratiniyatavipakṣapatipakṣapatipatter abhāvād apratipattidoṣaḥ.

[AAĀ 17]: tṛtīye 'py aśeṣākārasaṃgrāhe vikalpadvayam. kiṃ vastuno 'vyatirikta ākāra uta vyatirikta iti. yady ādyo vikalpas tadā vastv evākāravvyājena saṃgrhītam iti vastusaṃgrahabhāvīdoṣaḥ samāpatati. atha dvitīyas tadā vikalpanirmitanirvastukākāramātrasya saṃgrahāt pāraparyeṇāpi kvacid vastuny apravṛtter bhāvyaṃmāno 'py asāv ākāro na puruṣārthe yujyata iti puruṣārthopayujyamānārthānābhidhānād akathanadoṣaḥ.

[AAĀ 18]: tasmād yathoktārthatritayasāṃgrāheṇa pratyekapakṣabhāvīdoṣānupapattiyā śrāvakaṃpratyekabuddhabodhisattvatathāgatādhiḡamasāṃgrhīto 'viparītaḥ sarvākārajñātādyasṭābhisaṃmayakramo 'bhyudayaniḥśreyasadharmāvāhakaḥ samasto mārgo vividhaiḥ prātihāryaiḥ sakalajānānuśāsakena bhagavatā mahākaruṇāmayena prajñāpāramitāyāṃ deśita ity abhidheyah.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁷ sarvapatipakṣasaṃgrāhe] MS; sarvapatipakṣasaṃgrāha eva W.

⁵⁹⁸ pratipakṣatayā śrāvakaṃ] T, MS; pratipakṣatayā'srāvaka W.

⁵⁹⁹ abhidheyah] MS; abhidheyam WT.

10. Abbreviations and Bibliography

Ratnākaraśānti's works are grouped together by topic in the end of the Tibetan Primary sources section.⁶⁰⁰

10.1. Abbreviations

AA	<i>Abhisamayālaṃkāra</i> by Maitreya (verse citations AAv ed. Amano)
AAĀ	<i>Abhisamayālaṃkāṛālokā</i> by Haribhadra ed. Wogihāra (ed. Tucci=T)
AAv	<i>Abhisamayālaṃkāravivṛti</i> by Haribhadra
AD	<i>Abhidharmadīpa</i>
AKbh	<i>Abhidharmakośabhāṣya</i> by Vasubandhu
AMn	<i>Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra</i>
AN	<i>Āṅguttara Nikāya</i>
APD	<i>Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī</i>
AS	<i>Abhidharmasamuccaya</i> of Asaṅga
ASbh	<i>Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya</i> by Asaṅga
Aṣṭa	<i>Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra</i>
AŚ	<i>Avadānaśataka</i>
AVS	<i>Antarvyāptisamarthana</i> by Ratnākaraśānti
BBh	<i>Bodhisattvabhūmi</i>
BCAp	<i>Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā</i> by Prajñākaramati
BhK1	<i>Prathama Bhāvanākrama</i> by Kamalaśīla
BHSD	<i>Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary</i> (see Edgerton)
BITS	Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica Series
Bṭ	* <i>Bṛhaṭṭīkā</i>
Bṭv	* <i>Bṛhaṭṭīkāvr̥tti</i>
C	dPe bsdur ma edition of bsTan 'gyur
CAP	<i>Citrādvaitaparakāśa</i> by Ratnakīrti
CIHTS	Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies
Śud	* <i>Śuddhimatī (dag ldan)</i> by Ratnākaraśānti
DBA	<i>rTogs par dka' ba'i snang ba (=Durbodhāloka)</i> by Dharmakīrtiśrī
DBhs	<i>Daśabhūmikasūtra</i>
DS	<i>Dharmasaṃgraha</i>
GhASt	<i>Śrīghanācārasaṃgrahaṭīkā</i>
Gmṃṭ	<i>Guṇavatī-nāma-Mahāmāyātantraṭīkā</i>
GS	My edition (see <i>Sār</i> below)
IsMEO	Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente
J	Jaini (see <i>Sār</i> below)
JNĀ	<i>Jñānaśrīmitranibandhāvalī</i> by Jñānaśrīmitra.
JSSn	<i>Jñānasārasamuccayanibandha</i> by Bodhibhadra
HBṭĀ	<i>Hetubindutīkāloka</i> by Durvekamiśra.
KAgSn	<i>Kusumāñjalī-nāma-Guhyasamājanibandha</i>
KBhĀ	<i>Kṣaṇabhaṅgādhyāya</i> by Jñānaśrīmitra
KBhS	<i>Kṣaṇabhaṅgasiddhi</i> by Ratnakīrti
KTṭ	<i>Khasamātantraṭīkā</i> by Ratnākaraśānti
Kās	<i>Kāśikā</i>
Kv	<i>Kāśikāvr̥tti</i> by Jayāditya & Vāmana

⁶⁰⁰ This grouping is done to demonstrate how I count Ratnākaraśānti's works and also identify the probable works wrongly attributed to Ratnākaraśānti. Many works in that section contain brief descriptions.

LSK	<i>Laghusidhāntakaumudī</i>
MAk	<i>Madhyamakālaṃkārikā</i> by Śāntirakṣita
MA-C	<i>Madhyamakāvātāra</i> by Candrakīrti
MAhp	<i>Muktāvalī-nāma-Hevajrapañjikā</i> by Ratnākaraśānti
MAu	* <i>Madhyamālaṃkāropadeśa</i> by Ratnākaraśānti
MAś	<i>Madhyamakālokaśāstra</i> by Kamalaśīla
MBh	<i>Mahābhāṣya</i> by Patañjali
MN	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>
MNS	<i>Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti</i>
MPS/MAv	* <i>Madhyamapratipadāsiddhi-nāma-Madhyamālaṃkāravṛtti</i> by Ratnākaraśānti
MAVi	<i>Madhyāntavibhāga</i> by Maitreya
MAVibh	<i>Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya</i> by Vasubandhu
MAViṭ	<i>Madhyāntavibhāgaṭikā</i> by Sthiramati
MK	<i>Marmikakaumudī</i> (=gnad kyī zla ba'i 'od)
MSA	<i>Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra</i> by Asaṅga
MVA	<i>Mahāvastu Avadāna</i>
MW	Monier Williams Dictionary
Ny-Ch	<i>sNying po mChog</i> (=Sāratamā) by Ratnākaraśānti
Pañca	<i>Pañcavimśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra</i>
PPA	* <i>Prajñāpāramitāpiṇḍārtha</i> by Dignaga
PPAP	* <i>Prajñāpāramitāpiṇḍārthapradīpa</i> by Adhīśa
PPu	<i>Shes rab kyī Pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag</i> (<i>Prajñāpāramitopadeśa</i>) by Ratnākaraśānti
PsP	<i>Prasannapadā</i> by Candrakīrti
PVs	<i>Pramāṇavārttikasvavṛtti</i> by Dharmakīrti
PVv	<i>Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti</i> by Manorathanandin
PTS	Pali Text Society edition
RĀŚ	Ratnākaraśānti
RNĀ	<i>Ratnakīrtinibandhāvalī</i> by Ratnakīrti.
Sār	<i>Sāratamā</i> by Ratnākaraśānti (J=ed. Jaini, GS=my edition)
SAv	<i>Sphuṭārthavyākhyā</i> by Yaśomitra
SBhV	<i>Sanghabhedavastu</i>
SN	<i>Samyutta Nikāya</i>
SSś	<i>Sākārasiddhiśāstra</i> by Jñānaśrīmitra
Śud	<i>Śuddhimatī</i> by Ratnākaraśānti
ŚBh	<i>Śrāvakabhūmi</i> by Asaṅga
ŚS	<i>Śikṣāsamuccaya</i> by Śāntideva
TSP	<i>Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā</i> by Kamalaśīla
TRĀ	<i>Tattvaratnāvalī</i> by Advayavajra
Triṃś	<i>Triṃśikā</i> by Vasubandhu
TŚS	<i>Trisaraṇasaptati</i> by Candrakīrti
VCṭ	<i>Vajracchedikāṭikā</i> by Kamalaśīla
VKNs	<i>Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra</i>
VMS	<i>Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi</i> by Ratnākaraśānti
VM	<i>Visuddhimagga</i> by Buddhaghosa
YRps	<i>Yaśodhara Rasaparakāśasuddhakāra</i>
YṢ	<i>Yuktiśāstika</i> by Nāgārjuna
YBh	<i>Yogācārabhūmi</i> by Asaṅga

10.2. Primary Sources in Sanskrit

**Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra*

AMn See '*Phags pa blo gros mi zad pas bstan pa*.

Āṅguttara Nikāya

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Antarvyāptisamarthana by Ratnākaraśānti

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Abhisamayālaṃkāra by Maitreyaṅgāthā

AA *Abhisamayālaṃkāra-prajñāpāramitā-upadeśa-śāstra: the work of Bodhisattva Maitreya*. Edited, explained and translated by Th. Stcherbatsky and E. Obermiller, Introduction Sanscrit Text and Tibetan Translation, Bibliotheca Buddhica 23, Fasciculus 1, Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, Leningrad 1929. (Reprint ed.. Motilal Bandarsidass, Delhi 1992)
See *Abhisamayālaṃkāra-kārikāśāstravivṛti* for verses and verse numbers.

Abhisamayālaṃkāra-āloka by Haribhadra

AAĀ *Abhisamayālaṃkāra-Āloka-Prajñāpāramitāvyākhyā: Commentary on Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā by Haribhadra*, ed. by Unrai Wogihara, Tōyō Bunko Publications, Series D, vol.2, The Tōyō Bunko, Tōkyō 1932-35. *Abhisamayālaṃkāra-Āloka* ed. by Giuseppe Tucci. In *The Commentaries on the Prajñāpāramitās. Volumen Ist. The Abhisamayālaṃkāra-āloka (sic) of Haribhadra, being a commentary on the Abhisamayālaṃkāra of Maitreyaṅgāthā and the Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, ed by Giuseppe Tucci, Gaekwad's Oriental Series 62, Oriental Institute, Baroda 1932.
MSS – (a) NAK 3/738 = NGMPP A 37/7. 162 folios, Newari script. 2r1-2v7 (b) NAK 5/214 = NGMPP A106/4. 196 folios, Devanagari.

Abhidharmakośabhāṣya by Vasubandhu

AKbh *Abhidharmakośa and Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* of Vasubandhu. Ed. by Prahlad Pradhan. K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna 1967.

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AAv *Abhisamayālaṃkāra-kārikā-śāstra-vivṛti: Haribhadra's commentary on the Abhisamayālaṃkāra-kārikā-śāstra: edited for the first time from a Sanskrit manuscript*, ed. by Koei H. Amano, printed by Heirakuji-shoten, Kyoto 2000.

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Abhidharmakośavyākhyā (a.k.a. *Sphuṭārthā*) by Yaśomitra

SAv *Abhidharmakośa & Bhāṣya of Ācārya (sic) Vasubandhu with
Sphuṭārthā Commentary of Ācārya Yaśomitra*, ed. by Swāmī
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See *Sāratamā* below.

Avadānaśatakam

AŚ *Avadānaśatakam*, ed. P. L. Vaidya. Buddhist Sanskrit Texts no. 19.
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APD *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī: Sanskrit Text and Japanese Translation*,
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(Note: My abbreviations for the above MSS in the critical apparatus of the Sanskrit Edition are listed in the Abbreviations section in the Appendix)

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Kāś

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Kāśikāvṛttiḥ

Kv

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⁶⁰¹ I have been unable to obtain "Buddhism: Art and Faith" edited by W. Zwalf. Apparently, this MS, in which six of eight great events of the Buddha's life are depicted, is listed there as one of "155 manuscripts of Perfection of Wisdom."

- Kusumāñjalī-nāma-Guhyasamājanibandha* by Ratnākaraśānti
 KAgsn See *gSang ba 'dus pa'i bshad sbyar snyim pa'i me tog ces bya ba*
- Kṣaṇabhaṅgasiddhi* by Ratnakīrti
 KBhS See *Ratnakīrtinibandhāvalī*.
- Kṣaṇabhaṅgādhyāya* by Jñānaśrīmitra
 KBhĀ See *Jñānaśrīmitranibandhāvalī*
- Khasamātantraṭīkā* by Ratnākaraśānti
 KTṭ "Khasamatantasya ācāryaratnākaraśāntiviracitā khasamā-nāmaṭīkā,"
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 Gmmṭ *Mahāmāyātāntra with Guṇavatī*, ed. by Samdhong Rinpoche and
 Vrajavallabh Dwivedi, Rare Buddhist Text Series 10. Project edition,
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- Guhyasamājatantra*
 GSt *The Guhyasamājatantra. A New Critical Edition*, ed. by Matsunaga
 Yūkei, Tōhō Shuppan, inc., Osaka 1978.
- Citrādvaitaparakāśa* by Ratnakīrti
 CAP In *Ratnakīrtinibandhāvalī*, ed. by Anantalal Thakur.
- Jñānaśrīmitranibandhāvalī* by Jñānaśrīmitra
 JNĀ *Jñānaśrīmitranibandhāvalī*, ed. by Anantalal Thakur, Tibetan Sanskrit
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 (1st ed. 1959)
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 Triṃś *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi, Deux traités de Vasubandhu: Vimśatikā (La*
Vigntaine) et Triṃśikā (La Trentaine), ed. par Silvain Lévi,
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TŚS "Sanskrit Verses from Candrakīrti's *Triśaraṇasaptati* Cited in the *Munimatālamkāra*" China Tibetology, No.1, March 2014.. pp.4-11. *Triśaraṇasaptati: the Septuagint on the Three Refuges*, ed. Per K. Sørensen. Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, Wien 1986.

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Divyavadānam.

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Dīgha Nikāya

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Dharmasaṃgraha

DS *The Dharma-Saṃgraha : an ancient collection of Buddhist technical terms*, ed. by Kenjiu Kasawara, F. Max Müller, and H. Wenzel. Clarendon Press, Oxford 1885.

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PPA See '*Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin ma bsodus pa'i tshig le'ur byas pa*

**Prajñāpāramitāpiṇḍārthapradīpa* by Adhīśa

PPAP See *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i don bsodus sgron ma*.

Prajñāpāramitāvajracchedikāṭīkā

VCṭ *Prajñāpāramitāvajracchedikāsūtram with Prajñāpāramitāvajracchedikāṭīkā of Acārya Kamalāsīla*, ed. by Pema Tendzin. BITS, 29. CIHTS, Sarnath 1994.

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Bṭ See *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i 'bum pa dang nyi khri lnga stong ba dang khri brgyad stong pa'i rgya cher bshad pa*

**Brhaṭṭikāvṛtti*

Bṭv See *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'bum pa rgya cher 'grel pa*

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MNS *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti. In Bauddhastotrasaṃgraha, ed. by Janardan Shastri Pandey, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 1994.*

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MAK See *dBu ma rgyan*.

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MPS/MAv See *dBu ma'i rgyan gyi 'grel pa dbu ma'i lam grub pa*.

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MAVi *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya*. A Buddhist Philosophical Treatise Edited for the first time from a Sanskrit Manuscript, ed. by Gadjin M. Nagao. Suzuki Research Foundation, Tōkyō 1964.

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**Marmakaumudī*
MK See *gNad kyi zla ba'i 'od*.

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MAhp

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See also *dPal dgyes pa'i rdo rje'i dka' 'grel mu tig phreng ba.*

Yaśodhara Rasaparakāśaśuddhakāra

Yaśodhara Rasaparakāśaśuddhakāra, ed. by Jivram Kālidās Śāstrī. Rasasala Ausadhasram, Gondal 1940.

Yogaratanmālā

The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study. Part 2, Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts, ed. D.L. Snellgrove, Oxford University Press, London 1959 (reprint 1980).

Yogācārabhūmi

YBh

The Yogācārabhūmi of Ācārya Asanga: the Sanskrit text compared with the Tibetan version, ed. by Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya, University of Calcutta, Calcutta 1957.

Yuktiśāstika by Nāgārjuna

YṢ

See Li Xuezhong and Ye Shao Yong.

Ratnakīrtinibandhāvalī by Ratnakīrti

RNĀ

Ratnakīrtinibandhāvalī ed. by Anantalal Thakur. Buddhist Nyāya works of Ratnakīrti, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, vol. III., Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna 1957.

Ratnamālāvadāna

Ratnamālāvadāna. ed. by Kanga Takahata. *A Garland of Precious Gems or a Collection of Edifying Tales, Told in a Metrical Form, Belonging to the Mahāyāna.* Oriental Library Series D, 3, Tōkyō 1954

Laghusiddhāntakaumudī

LSK

Online version <https://archive.org/details/laghusiddhantaka014967mbp>

Lalitavistara

Lalitavistara, ed. P. L. Vaidya. Buddhist Sanskrit Texts no. 1. The Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, Sarnath 1958.

Vādanyāya by Dharmakīrti
Dharmakīrti's Vādanyāya With the Commentary of Śāntarakṣita, ed. Rāhula Sāṅkrītyāyana. Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath 2007.

Vimalaprabhāṭikā
Vimalaprabhāṭikā of Kalki Śrī Puṇḍarīka on Śrī Laghukālacakra-tantrarāja by Śrī Mañjuśrīyaśa. vol 1, ed. by Jagannatha Upadhyaya. CIHTS, Sarnath 1986.

Śabarabhāṣya
Śabarabhāṣya. In: *Mīmāṃsādarśanam*, ed. by Mahāprabhuḷā Gosvāmī, Tārā Priṅṅa varksa, Vārāṇasī 1984.

Śikṣāsamuccaya by Śāntideva
ŚS *Śikṣāsamuccaya of Śāntideva*, ed. P. L. Vaidya. Buddhist Sanskrit Texts no. 11. The Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, Darbhanga 1961.

Śuddhimatī by Ratnākaraśānti
Śud See *Dag ldan* under Ratnākaraśānti's works.

Śrāvakabhūmi by Asaṅga
ŚBh *Śrāvakabhūmi of Ācārya Asaṅga*, ed. Karunesha Shukla. Tibetan Sanskrit works series, nos. 14 and 28. K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna 1973.

Śrīghaṇācārasaṃgrahaṭīkā
GhASṭ *Śrīghaṇācārasaṃgrahaṭīkā Jayarakṣita*, ed. by Sanghasena Singh. K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna 1983.

'Siddha Biography.'
Known as 'Siddha Biography' or Sham Shere MS 142. Catalogued as MS 142 in the Kaiser Library, Kathmandu in the collection of General Kesar Sham Sher Jung Bahadur Rana. Photographed and held in the Nepalese-German Manuscript Project. Printed most recently in Isaacson and Sferra (2014:429-430) Appendix 7 "The Life of Maitreyaṅgātha/Advayavajra in Kaiser Library MS 42."

Samyutta Nikāya
SN *Samyutta Nikāya*, 6 vols., ed. by L. Feer, The Pāli Text Society, London 1884-1904.

Saṅghabhedavastu
SBhV *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu. Part I*, ed. by Raniero Gnoli. IsMEO, Roma 1977.
The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu. Part II, ed. by Raniero Gnoli. IsMEO, Roma 1978.

Sarvarahasyanibandha
Ed. by Harunaga Isaacson (unpublished).

Sākārasiddhiśāstra by Jñānaśrīmitra

SSŚ See *Jñānaśrīmitranibandhāvalī*, ed. by Anantalal Thakur.

Sphuṭārthā by Yaśomitra

See *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*.

Sphuṭārthā Śrīghanācārasaṃgrahaṭīkā

Sphuṭārthā Śrīghanācārasaṃgrahaṭīkā, ed. by Sanghasena Singh. K. P. Jayaswal Research, Patna 1983.

Nettipakaraṇa

Nettipakaraṇa with Extracts from Dhammapāla's Commentary, ed. by E Hardy. Published by Henry Frowde for the Pāli Text Society, Oxford University Press Warehouse, Amen Corner E.C. London 1902.

Vajracchedikā

"Vajracchedikā in the Original Sanskrit," ed. by F.E. Pargiter. In *Eastern Turkestan Facsimiles with Transcripts Translations and Notes*. vol. 1, ed. A.F. Rudolf Hoernle. Clarendon Press, Oxford 1916.

**Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* by Ratnākaraśānti

VMS See *rNam par rig pa tsam nyid du grub pa*.

Vimalakīrtinirdeśa

VKNs *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa and Jñānālokālamkāra: Transliterated Sanskrit text collated with Tibetan and Chinese translations*, ed. by Study Group on Buddhist Sanskrit Literature. Taishō Daigaku Shuppankai, Tōkyō 2004.

Visuddhimagga

VM *Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosācariya*, ed. H. C. Warren. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts 1950.
Visuddhimagga, Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids, Pali Text Society, London 1920 & 1921.

Sāratamā by Ratnākaraśānti

Sār *Sāratamā: A Pañjikā on the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* by Ācārya Ratnākaraśānti. ed. by Padmanabh S. Jaini. Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, Calcutta 1979 = *editio princeps*.

Āryāṣṭasāhasrikāyāḥ prajñāpāramitāyāḥ Sāratamākhyā pañjikā: A Hybrid Sanskrit and Tibetan Edition. ed. by Gregory Max Seton, in Appendix I to this thesis.

Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brGyad stong pa 'i dKa' 'grel Snying po Mchog: Tibetan Critical edition. ed. by Gregory Max Seton, in Appendix I to this thesis. attached in the appendix this thesis.

MS A (in my attached critical edition) = Palm leaf MS, 64 folios, *kuṭilā* script, dated 1092/3 C.E. presently held in Namgyel Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sikkim. =MS 200 in Sānkrṭyāyana. 1937. *Second Search of Sanskrit Palm-leaf Mss. In Tibet*. Journal of the

Bihar and Orissa Research Society. (a) Sāṅkrtyāyana's 1938 photographs obtained from Goettingen University, Bandurski cat. no. 50 Xc 14/53 (b). Tucci's 1939 photographs from IsAIO obtained from Francesco Sferra. (c) Photographs for personal use obtained in 2009 from Anna Balikci, Namgyal Institute in Sikkim.

MS B (in my attached critical edition) = Palm leaf MS, *kuṭilā* script paleo. ca. 12th /13th century, 103 folios, 7 of these 103 folios are presently held in Namgyel Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sikkim. =MS 201 in Sāṅkrtyāyana's *Second Search*. (a) Scans of Sāṅkrtyāyana's 1938 photographs obtained from Goettingen University, Bandurski cat. no. 50 Xc 14/53 (b) Photographs for personal use obtained in 2009 from Anna Balikci, Namgyal Institute in Sikkim.

Hetubinduṭīkāloka

HBtĀ *Hetubinduṭīkāloka* by Durvekamiśra. ed. by Sukhlalji Sanghavi and Muni Śrī Jambuvijayaji. *Hetubinduṭīkā of Bhaṭṭa Arcaṭa with the Sub-Commentary Entitled Āloka of Durveka Miśra*. Oriental Institute, Baroda 1949.

10.3. Primary Sources in Tibetan

bKa' babs bdun ldan by Tāranātha

bKa' babs bdun ldan gyi brgyud pa'i rnam thar ngo mtshar rmad du byung ba rin po che'i khungs lta bu'i gnam. In: Five Historical Works of Taranatha (*Rgya gar chos 'byung, Kahna pa'i rnam thar, Bka' babs bdun gyi rnam thar, O rgyan rnam thar Rgya gar ma, and Sgrol ma'i rnam thar*), *Reproduced from impressions of 19th century sde-dge blocks from the library of Ri-bo-che Rje-drun of Padma-bkod by Tseten Dorji*, Tibetan Nyingmapa Monastery, Tezu, Arunachal Pradesh 1974, pp. 361-499.

brGyad stong pa

'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa
Tōh. 12, Ōta. 734.

Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa

Tabo collection, RN 185. MS incomplete. 80 folios. *dbu chen* script with *da drag, ya btags* (=copied before 14th century?). Translation diff. from Derge. Scans obtained courtesy of Helmut Tauscher, ISTB, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Universität Wien.

Shes rab kyi pha rold tu phyind pa brgyad stong pa ('Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa)

-Tabo collection, RN 289. MS incomplete. 63 folios. *dbu chen* script with *da drag, ya btags* (=copied before 14th century?) Translation diff. from Derge. Scans obtained courtesy of Helmut Tauscher, ISTB, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Universität Wien.

-Tabo collection, RN 302. MS incomplete. 88 folios. *dbu chen* script with *da drag, ya btags* (=copied before 14th century?). Scans obtained from ISTB, University of Vienna, courtesy of Helmut Tauscher.

'Grel pa don gsal ba'i rnam bshad snying po'i rgyan by rGyal-tshab dar-ma rin-chen
Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par
rtogs pa'i rgyan gyi 'grel pa don gsal ba'i rnam bshad snying po'i
rgyan. rGyal-tshab dar-ma rin-chen. In: gSung 'bum, vol. ka, Lhasa
Edition, O.D.: 2) Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Press, Sarnath 1980.

Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi

Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi rtogs pa'i snying po by *Vīrapra-
bhāsvara (*sLob-dpon dPa'-bo 'od-gsal*). Tōh. 2292.

Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i rnam thar. Abhayadattaśrī. TBRC
(Hand copy) W1KG14799 p.36-42

Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i lo rgyus. Abhayadattaśrī. Trans. by
sMon-grub Shes-rab. Computer input; Bod kyi dpe mdzod khang,
Dharamsala h.p. 2010.

Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i rtogs brjod do ha 'grel pa dang bcas
pa. Abhayadattaśrī. Ōta. 5092, lu.

Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i gsol 'debs by rDo rje gdan pa
(Vajrāsana). Ōta. 4578; G 2583.

rTogs par dka' ba'i snang ba by gSer gling pa (Dharmakīrtiśrī)

DBA *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par*
rtogs pa'i rgyan ces bya ba'i 'grel pa rtogs par dka' ba'i snang ba zhes
bya ba'i 'grel bshad. Ōta.5192, G 3196. C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 52,
(bsTan 'gyur, Par theñs 1. Pecin: Kruñ go'i Bod kyi šes rig dpe skrun
khañ; Žin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis bkram, 1994-
2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.362-651).

mNgon rtogs rgyan gyi 'grel pa rnam 'byed by Ar byang chub ye shes

In: *Ar byang chub ye shes kyi gsung chos skor*, ed. by Dpal brtsegs bod
yig dpe mying zhib 'jug khang nas bsgrigs. Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe
skron khang, Beijing 2006.

gNad kyi zla ba'i 'od by Abhayākaragupta

'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa'i 'grel pa
gnad kyi zla ba'i 'od (Āryāṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-vṛtti-Marma-
kaumudī) Trans. Shes-rab-dpal. Tōh. 3805.

rNam thar yongs grags

rNam thar rgyas pa yongs grags in Lokesh Chandra (ed.), *Biography*
of Atīśa and his disciple ħBrom-ston, Zhö edition, vol. 1, pp. 49-237
(roman page numbers), New Delhi 1982.

rNam thar Lam Yig

rNam thar rgyas pa yongs grags in Lokesh Chandra (ed.), *Biography*
of Atīśa and his disciple ħBrom-ston, Zhö edition, vol. 1, pp.237-96
(roman page numbers), New Delhi 1982.

'Phags pa blo gros mi zad pas bstan pa (*Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra)

AMn *'Phags pa blo gros mi zad pas bstan pa.* Tōh. 175, Ōta. 842.

**Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra: Edition of Extant Manuscripts with an*
index. vol. I. ed. Jens Braarvig. Oslo 1993.

'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin ma bsod pa'i tshig le'ur byas pa
(*Prajñāpāramitāpiṇḍārtha*) by Dignāga.

PPA Trans. Kha che'i paṇḍita Tilakakalaśa; Lo tzā ba dge slong blo ldan shes rab. Tōh. 3809, G 3211.

Phar phyin mdo lugs ma by Kun mkhyen rton pa bzhi ldan (Shes rab rgyal mtshan)
Ed. by Ngag dbang kun dga' 'jam dbyangs blo gros. Jo nang dpe tshogs (Jonang Publication Series), vol.3. mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Pe ciñ 2007.

Phar phyin Nya tī ka yid kyi mun sel by Chos rje Nya dbon kun dga' dpal.
Ed. by Ngag dbang kun dga' 'jam dbyangs blo gros. Jo nang dpe tshogs (Jonang Publication Series 4), vol.1, mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Pe ciñ 2007.

sBas don zab mo'i gter gyi kha 'byed by Go ram pa bsod nams seng ge
In: *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum*. vol. 13, No. 50, fols. 245-1-1 bis 358-1-3. Tōyō Bunko, Tōkyō 1969.

dBu ma rgyan

MAK *dBu ma rgyan gyi tshig le'ur byas pa*. Tōh. 3884, Ōta. 5284.
Śāntirakṣita's *Madhyamakālāṅkāra* and *Madhamakālāṅkāravṛtti*, ed. by M. Ichigo *Madhyamakālāṅkāra of Śāntarakṣita: With his own commentary or Vṛtti and with the subcommentary or Pañjikā of Kamalaśīla*. Buneido, Kyoto 1985.

dBu ma la 'jug pa by Zla ba grags pa (Candrakīrti)
Tōh. 3861. G 3264.C, dPe bsodur ma vol. 60, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theis 1. Pecin: Kruñ go'i Bod kyi śes rig dpe skrun khang; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshon 'grem spel khang gis bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.555-599).

dBu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad dpal ldan dus gsum-mkhyen-pa's brgyud grub pa'i shing rta by Dus gsum khyen pa.
dPal spungs thub bstan chos 'khor gling, dPal spungs dgon pa'i par khang, sDe dge. TBRC W1KG11909.

Phar phyin Nya tī ka yid kyi mun sel by Chos rje Nya dbon kun dga' dpal.
Ed. by Ngag dbang kun dga' 'jam dbyangs blo gros. Jo nang dpe tshogs (Jonang Publication Series 5), vol.2. mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Pe ciñ 2007.

Yum don rab gsal by Go ram pa bsod nams seng ge.
In: *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum*. vol. 13, No. 49, fols. 85-1- 1 bis 244-3-6. Tōyō Bunko, Tōkyō 1969

bLa ma dam pa bod kyi lo rgyus bzhugs pa lags so dbag. ('Brog-mi lo-rgyus)
In: *The Tibetan Chronicle of Padma-dkar po*. Ed. L. Chandra. IAIC, New Delhi 1968.

Legs bshad gser gyi phreng ba by rJe Tsong-kha-pa

Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan dang bcas pa'i rgya cher bshad pa legs bshad gser gyi phreng ba by rJe Tsong-kha-pa. In *gSung 'bum*, vol 18. tsha (smad cha). Bkra shis lun po'i par rnying. (TBRC W29193). Also, vol. 17. tsa (stod cha). Bkra shis lun po'i par rnying (TBRC W29193).

Sher phyin mngon rtogs rgyan gyi rtsa 'grel and *Sher phyin mngon rtogs rgyan gyi 'bru 'grel* by Rdza dpal sprul. 2nd reprint. Siddhartha's Intent, New Delhi 2000.

Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i don bsdus sgron ma

(**Prajñāpāramitāpīṇḍārthapradīpa*) by Dpal mar me mdzad ye shes (Atiśa).

PPAP Trans. Tshul-khrims-rgyal-ba. Tōh. 3804, G 3205.

rGya cher 'grel pa

Bṭv

Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'bum pa rgya cher 'grel pa

Tōh. 3807, G 3207. C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 54, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theñs 1. Peciñ: Kruñ go'i Bod kyi šes rig dpe skrun khañ; Žin-hwa dpe tshoñ, Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.22-661).

rGya cher bshad pa by Damṣtrasena

Bṭ

dang khri

Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i 'bum pa dang nyi khri lnga stong ba

brgyad stong pa'i rgya cher bshad pa Tōh. 3808, G 3210. C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 55, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theñs 1. Peciñ: Kruñ go'i Bod kyi šes rig dpe skrun khañ; Žin-hwa dpe tshoñ, Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.666-1397.

10.4. Ratnākaraśānti's Works

This list is organized according to subject headings and numbered so that the total number of Ratnākaraśānti's works that I tentatively suggest are correctly attributed to him is clear. When a text is the same as or excerpted from another text in the list, that text is not numbered. The listings are organized within each subsection in order of the Tibetan syllabary.

10.4.1. Pāramitānaya

1. *dag ldan* (**Śuddhimatī*)⁶⁰²

Śud

mNgon par rtogs pa'i rgyan gyi tshig le'ur byas pa'i 'grel pa dag ldan zhes bya ba (Abhisamayālamkārikākārikāvṛtti Śuddhamatī-nāma) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.

Trans. by Subhūtiśānti & Śākya-blo-gros. Rev. Śāntibhadra & dGe-ba'i-blo-gros. Rev. by 'Gos [Khug pa]-lhas-btsas.

Ōta. 5199, P, sher phyin, ta 87b8-227b8 (vol.91, p.225-?)

⁶⁰² The Tibetan transliteration of this as **Śuddhamatī* does not match the title *dag ldan*, but rather implies **dag pa'i blo*. See my comments on the opening verse of *Sāratamā* for more on the term *Śuddhimatī*.

Tōh. 3801, D, mdo 'grel, ta 76a6-204a3.
N. ta 80a5-227a6. Kinsha/G 3198, ta 108b1 (p.55-3-1).
C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 53, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi
śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis
bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.191-527).

2. *Nang gi khyab pa (Antarvyāptisamarthana)* by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.
AVS Trans. by Kumārakalaśa & Śākya-'od.
Ōta. 5757, P, tshad ma, ze 329b6-335a4 (vol.138, p.104-106);
Tōh. 4260, D, tshad ma, zhe 309b4-314a5;
N, ze 338b6-344b5. Kinsha/G 3757/3759, ze 443b4 (p.223-2-4);
C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 106, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod
kyi śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ
gis bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.852-866).

3. *rNam par rig pa tsam nyid du grub pa zhes bya ba (Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi-nāma)*
by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.
VMS Trans. by Śāntibhadra & Śākya-'od. Rev. by Klog-skya-shes-rab-
brtsegs.
Ōta. 5756, P, tshad ma, ze 326b1-329b6 (vol.138, p.103-104);
Tōh. 4259, D, tshad ma, zhe 306b4-309b3;
N, ze 335a5-338b6. Kinsha/G 3756/3758, ze 439a1 (p.220-2-1);
C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 106, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod
kyi śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ
gis bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.842-851).

4. *sNying po mchog (Sāratamā)*
Ny-Ch 'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa brgyad stong pa'i dka' 'grel
snying po mchog ces bya ba (Sāratamā-nāma-
aryāśtasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāpañjikā) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.
Trans. by Subhūtiśānti & Śākya-blo-gros.
Ōta. 5200, P, sher phyin, tha 1a1-253b (vol.92, p.1-103);
Tōh. 3803, D, mdo 'grel, tha 1a1-230a7;
N, tha 1a1-261b2. Kinsha/G 3199/3204, tha 1b1 (p.1-2-1);
C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 53, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi
śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis
bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.711-1317).

5. *dBu ma'i rgyan gyi 'grel pa dbu ma'i lam grub pa zhes bya ba*
(**Madhyamakālamkāravṛtti/Madhyamapratipadāsiddhi-nāma*) by Rin-chen-
'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.
MPS/MAv Trans. by Śākya-'od.
Ōta. 5573, P, sems tsam, ku 117b1-138a7 (vol.114, p.223-231);
Tōh. 4072, D, sems tsam, hi 102a5-120b1;
N, ku 119b7-140b7. Kinsha/G 3572, ku 148b1 (p.75-3-1);
C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 78, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi
śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis
bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.263-312).

This work **Madhyamakālamkāravṛtti* actually includes a series of root verses written
by Ratnākaraśānti to establish the middle way according to his own interpretation of
the two realities in line with the *Madhyāntavibhāga*. Ratnākaraśānti not only

composed the verses, but also provides glosses and commentary on his own verses, in the manner of an auto-commentary. Thus, we should understand the verses in **Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti* to be Ratnākaraśānti's own **Madhyamakālaṃkārikā* and his commentary on them to be an autocommentary (*svavṛtti*). That the verses and commentary were presented as one package together, of course, was not an unusual practice in India and many texts today are extant only in that form. Furthermore, as Moriyama has shown, the commentary itself argues against Śāntirakṣita's "neither one nor many" argument and reformulates it to apply to everything but reflexive awareness.⁶⁰³ Since Ratnākaraśānti also argues throughout the text that the Yogācāra and Mādhyamika founders shared the same conclusions but that nobody else since them has understood this, Ratnākaraśānti's title **Madhyamakālaṃkāra* may well have aimed (polemically) to rival and supplant Śāntirakṣita's text of the same name that sought to formulate a synthesis between Yogācāra and Mādhyamika. Certainly, he aims here to re-define the identity and philosophical position of the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika school.⁶⁰⁴ In this way also, Ratnākaraśānti makes it clear that he is not writing a subcommentary to Śāntirakṣita's or any other Mādhyamika commentary, but is criticizing Śāntirakṣita and putting forth his own independent treatise that comments directly on Nāgārjuna's intention.

6. *dBu ma rgyan gyi man ngag* (**Madhyamālaṃkāropadeśa*) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba (Ratnākaraśānti).

MAu Trans. by Śāntibhadra & Śākya-'od. Rev. by Amogha & 'O ru. Ōta. 5586, P, sems tsam, ku 257b2-267a4 (vol.114, p.279-282); Tōh. 4085, D, sems tsam, hi 223b2-231a7; N, ku 260b1-269a6. Kinsha/G 3585/3589, ku 347b1 (p.175-2-1); C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 78, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theis 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Āin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.604-625).

Whereas the MPS/MAv is focused on arguing for a philosophical viewpoint, the MAu cites the two opening verses from the MPS/MAv, explains the viewpoint in the MSV/MPS in a more clear and simple way, and connects this theory to practice directly, through explicating four stages of practice (*yogabhūmis*). Despite the fact that Ratnākaraśānti tends to repeat his philosophical position, there are key clarifications of Ratnākaraśānti's philosophic position in the MAu that are not made anywhere else in Ratnākaraśānti's other commentaries. Hence, the MAu is indispensable for reading any of Ratnākaraśānti's other works.

7. *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag* (Prajñāpāramitopadeśa) by Ratnākaraśānti.

PPu Trans. by Zhi-ba-bzang po (Śāntibhadra) & 'Gos [Khug pa]-lhas-btsas. Ōta. 5579, P, sems tsam, ku 151a4-184b6 (vol.114, p.236-250); Tōh. 4079, D, sems tsam, hi 133b7-162b1; N, ku 153b5-187b7. Kinsha/G 3578/3582, ku 196b1 (p.99-3-1); C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 78, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theis 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Āin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.357-434).

a) *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa bsgom pa'i man ngag* (**Prajñāpāramitābhāvanopadeśa*) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.

⁶⁰³ Moriyama (2013:5).

⁶⁰⁴ Ratnākaraśānti was not alone in titling his work *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*. Others did this as well.

Trans. by Śāntibhadra & 'Gos [Khug pa]-lhas-btsas.
 Ōta. 5459, P, dbu ma, gi 205a4-207b2 (vol.103, p.266-267);
 Tōh. 4545, D, jo bo'i chos chung, gi 173b2-175a6;
 N, gi 196a2-198a6. Kinsha/G 3458/3580, gi 248b6 (p.125-3-6);
 C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 78, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theñs 1. Kruñ go'i Bod kyi
 śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Žin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis
 bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.338-344).

- b) *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i bsgom pa'i man ngag*
 (Prajñāpāramitābhāvanopadeśa) by Ratnākaraśānti.

Trans. by Rab-'byor-zhi-ba (Subhūtiśānti) & Ting-nge-'dzin-bzang-po.
 Ōta. 5580, P, sems tsam, ku 184b6-187b3 (vol.114, p.250-251);
 Tōh. 4078, D, sems tsam, hi 131b3-133b7;
 N, ku 188a1-190b4. Kinsha/G 3579/3583, ku 243b1 (p.123-2-1);
 C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 78, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theñs 1. Kruñ go'i Bod kyi
 śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Žin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis
 bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.349-356).

- c) *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i bsgom pa'i man ngag*
 (*Prajñāpāramitābhāvanopadeśa) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.

Trans. by Śāntibhadra & 'Gos [Khug pa]-lhas-btsas.
 Ōta. 5577, P, sems tsam, ku 147b2-149b8 (vol.114, p.235-236);
 Tōh. 4076, D, sems tsam, hi 128b1-130b1;
 N, ku 150a3-152b1. Kinsha/G 3576, ku 190b5 (p.97-1-5);
 C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 78, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theñs 1. Kruñ go'i Bod kyi
 śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Žin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis
 bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.344-349).⁶⁰⁵

The *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* is one of Ratnākaraśānti's most important texts, since it presents the framework for his interpretation of the *Prajñāpāramitā* based on the three natures (*trisvabhāva*) and the four stages of practice (*yogabhūmi*). The three shorter texts (a-c) attributed to Ratnākaraśānti are different excerpts and paraphrases of parts of the *bhāvanā* section of the *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*. Since they all have the same name and none have separate opening verses, they were likely excerpted by the translators not by Ratnākaraśānti and hence, they have been listed here together.

10.4.2. Mantranaya

bDag med ma'i sgrub thabs rgyas par bstan pa (Nairātmyāsādhana) by dKon-mchog-'byung-gnas.

Trans. by Gayadhara & Śākya-ye-shes. Ōta. 2439, Tōh. 1309.

This work has not been numbered separately, because Harunaga Isaacson has also identified this *Nairātmyāsādhana* as having been extracted from Ratnākaraśānti's *Muktāvalī I.viii*. Since Ratnākaraśānti's works always have an opening and closing verse, but this extraction does not, Isaacson reasons that it was not likely extracted by Ratnākaraśānti and should not be considered an independent work of his.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁵ TBRC does not record this text separately. More research is needed to figure out what the discrepancy is here, but it seems that 4545 comes from *Jo bo'i chos chung* section, whereas the others are in *sems tsam*.

⁶⁰⁶ Isaacson (2001b:482).

8. *bDe sdug gnyis bral gyi lta ba* (**Sukhaduḥkḥapariṭyāgadṛṣṭi*) by Śānti-pa (Ratnākaraśānti).

Trans. unlisted.⁶⁰⁷

Ōta. 3205, P, sgra rig pa, she 158b1-168b7 (vol.140, p.195-199)

Tōh. 2427, D, sgra mdo, se 351b1-360b7

N, she 104a3-114a5. Kinsha/G 1206/1210, she 136b1 (p.69-3-1)

C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 27, (bsTan ‘gyur, Par theiṣ 1. Kruṅ go’i Bod kyi ṣes rig dpe skrun khan; Zin-hwa dpe tshoṅ Pe-ciṅ ’grem spel khan gis bkram, Pe-ciṅ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.230-232).

It is difficult to be certain whether this short versified work, about *Mahāmudrāsiddhi* was written by Ratnākaraśānti or not. On the one hand, it resonates with Ratnākaraśānti's emphasis on *prajñāpāramitā* and the fact that he is said in *rNam thar yongs grags* to have passed on a Mahāsiddha (*grub thob*) lineage to Adhīśa, to which this text may well be connected.⁶⁰⁸ On the other hand, there is also reason to suspect it not to be his work, because it resonates in many ways more with Maitreyaṅātha's nonabiding (*mi gnas pa; apratiṣṭhāna*) Mādhyamika viewpoint, focusing on causelessness (*rgyu med*) and concluding with a point about selflessness (*bdag med*), which is uncharacteristic of Ratnākaraśānti's works.⁶⁰⁹ Although a difference in terminology might be due to the unique type of text that this is, there are a number of terms used here in a different way from Ratnākaraśānti's usual usage and the text presents a different meditation framework than that which is explained in the context of the *anālambanayogabhūmi* in MAu/PPu and elsewhere. Also, the use of the term “free of the two” (*gnyis bral*) in the sense of free from pleasure and pain is suspicious because Ratnākaraśānti more commonly uses it in the sense of “lacking the two”, (*gnyis med; advayam*), i.e. “lacking a grasping subject and object grasped.” Moreover, to speak of a luminosity to be indicated (*mtshon pa'i 'od gsal; lakṣyaprabhāsvaratā*) rather than a natural luminosity (*prakṛtiprabhāsvaratā*) is plausible, but seems slightly unusual.⁶¹⁰ Finally, its corrupt transliterated Sanskrit title and the conspicuous absence of any translator names are suspicious. A more careful comparison to Ratnākaraśānti's comments on *Mahāmudrā* elsewhere would be necessary before disinclining it among his works, but at first glance it appears closer to the *Mahāmudrā* described in Maitreyaṅātha's school.

9. *'Khrul pa spong ba zhes bya ba'i sgrub pa'i thabs* (*Bhramahara-nāma-Hevajrasādhana*) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba (Ratnākaraśānti).

Trans. unknown Atiśa?

⁶⁰⁷ The Tibetan transliteration of the Sanskrit title **sukhaduḥkḥādhyapariryaghadṛṣṭi* (?) is corrupt. Since several words are recognizable Sanskrit, it does not appear to be a transliteration of Prakrit. If we make the smallest change to find a plausible Sanskrit form, it would be **Sukhaduḥkḥādhyapariṭyāgadṛṣṭi* or slightly more change **Sukhaduḥkḥādiparityāgadṛṣṭi*. These changes to the central part of the compound, namely °*ādhyapariṭyāga*° or °*ādiparityāga*°, are not equivalent to the Tibetan *bral*. Thus, I have tentatively conjectured **Sukhaduḥkḥapariṭyāgadṛṣṭi* based on the Tibetan itself.

⁶⁰⁸ As is mentioned in the opening verse, *bDe sdug gnyis bral gyi lta ba* (C27:231): *sgom las 'das pa sgrub rgyus med | mgon po rnam kyī bdag nyid can | grub thob rnam kyī bla ma la | phyag 'tshal gnyis bral lta ba bshad* | This Mahāsiddha lineage transmission was discussed above in the section on *rNam thar yongs grags* transmission lists.

⁶⁰⁹ Consider, for instance, *bDe sdug gnyis bral gyi lta ba* (C27:231): *|na tshogs pa yi rig pa rnam | rang rig gzhan gyis rig mi 'gyur | de rtogs nyin mtshan bde chen mnyam | gnyis dang gnyis med spangs gyur pa'i gang la mi gnas rnal 'byor de | shes rab pha rol phyin pa rtogs | de rtogs bdag med lta ba yin | rnal 'byor bde sdug gnyis dang bral | gnyis bral rnal 'byor śānti-pa | rtogs pas phyag rgya chen po thob | bde sdug gnyis bral gyi lta ba zhes bya ba slob dpon śānti pas mdzad pa rdzogs so |*

⁶¹⁰ Cf. Tripathi, Negi (2001:148), where *Muktāvalī* is commenting on Ch.2, v.44: *iyatā prakṛtiprabhāsvarataiva cittasya buddhatve bījam anādisiddham ity uktam bhavati.*

Ōta. 2374, P, rgyud 'grel, zha 222a2-228b8 (vol.56, p.171)
Tōh. 1245, D, nya 189a4-194b6;
N, zha 205a3-211a3. Kinsha/G 379, zha 271b1 (p.139-1-1);
C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 5, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi
śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Āin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis
bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.513-528). See also
Isaacson, H. (ed.) (2002).

10. *sGyu ma chen mo'i sgrub thabs* (Mahāmāyāsādhana) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.

Trans. by Zhi-ba-bzang-po (Śāntibhadra) & 'Gos [Khug pa]-lhas-btsas.
Ōta. 2515, P, rgyud 'grel, 'a 339b4-344b8 (vol.57, p.304)
Tōh. 1643, D, ya 269b5-273b4;
N, 'a 306b1-310b6. Kinsha/G 519/523, 'a 400b1 (p.201-2-1)
C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 13, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi
śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Āin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis
bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.755-765).

11. *mDor bsdus pa'i sgrub thabs kyi 'grel pa rin chen phreng ba* (Ratnāvalī-nāma-
piṅḍīkṛtasāadhanopāyikāvṛtti) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba (Ratnākaraśānti).

Trans. by Karmavajra.
Ōta. 2690, P, rgyud 'grel, gi 273a7-370b8 (vol.62, p.61);
Tōh. 1826, D, ci 1-95a6;
N, gi 271a6-375b2. Kinsha/G 693/698, gi 348b5 (p.175-3-5);
C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 18, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi
śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Āin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis
bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.793-1027).

12. *rDo rje sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs* (Vajratārāsādhana) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba
(Ratnākaraśānti).

Trans. by dGra bcom Buddhaśrījñāna & Śākyaśrībhadra.
Ōta. 2456, P, rgyud 'grel, za 148b4-154b5 (vol.57, p.61);
Tōh. 1324, D, ta 265b4-271a2. N, za 142b2-148b3. Kinsha/G
460/2320, za 195a1 (p.98-2-1);
C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 40, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi
śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Āin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis
bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.1706-1720).

rDo rje sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs (Vajratārāsādhana) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba
(Ratnākaraśānti).

Ōta. 4312, rgyud 'grel, du 179b6-186b4 (vol.80, p.290-292);
Tōh. 3490, D, mu 139b5-144b6;
N, du 166b6-173a5. Kinsha/G 2314/2320, du 196b2 (p.99-4-2);
C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 40, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi
śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Āin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis
bkram, Pe-ciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.661-676).

The second text here has the same title as the above, but is shorter and listed as a
distinct text. Further research is necessary to determine the relationship between these
two texts.

13. *Nam mkha' dang mnyam pa zhes bya ba'i rgya cher 'grel pa (Khasamā-nāma-tīkā)* by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba (Ratnākaraśānti).

Trans. by Śūnyatāsamādhi (=Divākaracandra) & Shes-rab-ye-shes.

Ōta. 2141, P, rgyud 'grel, na 176a5-197b5 (vol.51, p.142);

Tōh. 1424, D, wa 153a3-171a7;

N, na 165a1-184b4. Kinsha/G 143/143, na 209b1 (p.105-4-1);

C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 11, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theŋs 1. Kruŋ go'i Bod kyi ūses rig dpe skrun khaŋ; Źin-hwa dpe tshoŋ Pe-ciŋ 'grem spel khaŋ gis bkram, Pecii 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.375-420).

14. *dPal dgyes pa'i rdo rje'i dka' 'grel mu tig phreng ba (Muktāvalī-nāma-śrīhevajrapaŋjikā)* by Ratnākaraśānti.

Trans. by Śāntibhadra & 'Gos [Khug pa]-lhas-btsas.

Ōta. 2319, P, rgyud 'grel, tsa 262a1-349a6 (vol.54, p.78);

Tōh. 1189, D, ga 221a1-297a7;

N, tsa 250a2-336a5. Kinsha/G 324/?, tsa 325b1 (p.163-4-1);

C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 2, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theŋs 1. Kruŋ go'i Bod kyi ūses rig dpe skrun khaŋ; Źin-hwa dpe tshoŋ Pe-ciŋ 'grem spel khaŋ gis bkram, Pecii 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.1308-1505).

15. *dPal sgyu 'phrul chen mo'i 'grel pa yon tan ldan pa (Guṇavatī-nāma-śrīmahāmāyāṭīkā)* by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba .

Trans. by Zhi-ba-bzang-po (Śāntibhadra) & 'Gos [Khug pa]-lhas-btsas.

Ōta. 2495, P, rgyud 'grel, 'a 223b1-249a2 (vol.57, p.257)

Tōh. 1623, D, ya 180b1-201a3;

N, 'a 201b7-225b5. Kinsha/G 499/503, 'a 272b1 (p.137-2-1);

C, dPe bsdur ma vol.13 , (bsTan 'gyur, Par theŋs 1. Kruŋ go'i Bod kyi ūses rig dpe skrun khaŋ; Źin-hwa dpe tshoŋ Pe-ciŋ 'grem spel khaŋ gis bkram, Pecii 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.495-548).

16. *dPal thams cad gsang ba'i bshad sbyar gsang ba'i sgron ma [zhes bya ba] (Rahaḥpradīpa-nāma-Sarvarahasyanibandha)* by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.

Trans. by Prajñākaravarman & Rin-chen-bzang-po.

Ōta. 3450, P, rgyud 'grel, ku 144b1-180b1 (vol.76, p.1);

Tōh. 2623, D, rgyud, cu 122a5-152b1;

N, ku 128b2-162a4. Kinsha/G 1454/1462, ku 182b1 (p.93-1-1);

C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 33, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theŋs 1. Kruŋ go'i Bod kyi ūses rig dpe skrun khaŋ; Źin-hwa dpe tshoŋ Pe-ciŋ 'grem spel khaŋ gis bkram, Pecii 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.1176-1255).

17. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga'i 'grel pa (*Śrīguhyasamā-jamaṇḍalavidhi-tīkā)* by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba (Ratnākaraśānti).

Trans. by Vīryabhadra & Rin-chen-bzang-po.

Ōta. 2734, P, rgyud 'grel, ti 347b6-440b7 (vol.65, p.141);

Tōh. 1871, D, ni 59a7-130a7;

N, ti 330a1-411a4. Kinsha/G 737/742, ti 416b1 (p.211-1-1);

C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 22, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theŋs 1. Kruŋ go'i Bod kyi ūses rig dpe skrun khaŋ; Źin-hwa dpe tshoŋ Pe-ciŋ 'grem spel khaŋ gis bkram, Pecii 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.151-334).

18. *dPal gshin rje'i dgra nag po'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po'i dka' 'grel rin po che'i sgron ma zhes bya ba* (Ratnapradīpa-nāma-śrīkṛṣṇayamārimahātantrarājapañjikā) by Ratnākaraśānti.

Trans. by Vinayacandra & Chos-kyi-shes-rab.

Ōta. 2782, P, rgyud 'grel, ni 148a8-207a7 (vol.66, p.239);

Tōh. 1919, D, bi 124a1-172b7;

N, ni 146a2-202a4. Kinsha/G 784/789, ni 176b1 (p.89-2-1);

C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 23, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis bkram, Peciiñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.1035-1167).

19. *Lhan cig skyes pa'i rnal 'byor gyi rim pa zhes bya ba* (*Hevajrasahajasadyoga*) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.

Trans. by Kumārakalaśa.

Ōta. 2375, P, rgyud 'grel, zha 228b8-230b1 (vol.56, p.173);

Tōh. 1246, D, nya 194b6-196a3;

N, zha 211a3-212b1. Kinsha/G 380, zha 280a1 (p.142-2-1);

C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 5, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis bkram, Peciiñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.529-533).

20. *gShin rje'i dgra nag po'i sgrub pa'i thabs ku mu da kha bye ba zhes bya ba* (*Kṛṣṇayamārisādhanaprotphullakumuda-nāma) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.

Trans. by Vinayacandra & Chos-kyi-shes-rab.

Ōta. 2798, P, rgyud 'grel, pi 71b6-76a2 (vol.67, p.66);

Tōh. 1935, D, mi 58b5-62a6;

N, pi 61b4-65b3. Kinsha/G 800/805, pi 89a1 (p.44-4-1);

C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 24, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis bkram, Peciiñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.173-183).

Harunaga Isaacson has pointed out that the Sanskrit *Kṛṣṇayamārisādhana* in Kumāracandra's *Ratnāvalī* on the *Kṛṣṇayamāritantra* that is likely Ratnākaraśānti's work, whereas this Tibetan work is not identical with that Sanskrit work. A further comparison of the two works is necessary in order to decide which of the two to include this among Ratnākaraśānti's works.

21. *gSang ba 'dus pa'i bshad sbyar snyim pa'i me tog ces bya ba* (Kusumāñjaliguhyasamājanibandha-nāma) by Ratnākaraśānti.

Trans. by 'Gos [Khug pa]-lhas-btsas & Śāntibhadra.

Ōta. 2714, P, rgyud 'grel, ji 233b8-nyi 147a6 (vol.64, p.95);

Tōh. 1851, D, ti 202b1-thi 120a4;

N, ji 219b4-nyi 140a6. Kinsha/G 717/722, ji 303b1 (p.153-2-1);

C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 20-21, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruṅ go'i Bod kyi śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis bkram, Peciiñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.1327-1655, 3-326).

22. *bSrung ba lnga'i cho ga* (*Pañcarakṣāvidhi) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.

Trans. by Muditāśrīñāna & Ban de bKra-shis-rgyal-mtshan. Rev. by Chag lo tsā. Ōta. 3947, Tōh. 3126.

23. *So sor 'brang ma'i bsrung ba'i 'khor lo bri ba'i thabs* (*Pratisarāraṅcācakralekhopāyikā) by Ratnākaraśānti.
 Trans. unlisted.
 Ōta. 3939, P, rgyud 'grel, tu 245b6-247a6 (vol.80, p.22);
 Tōh. 3118, D, rgyud, pu 217b6-219a2;
 N, tu 228b6-230a5. Kinsha/G 1941/1947, tu 312a4 (p.156-3-4);
 C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 38, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruñ go'i Bod kyi śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis bkram, Peciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.689-694).

10.4.3. Ratnākaraśānti's Miscellaneous Works

24. *sDeb sbyor rin chen 'byung gnas zhes bya ba* (Chandoratnākara) by 'byung gnas zhi ba (Ratnākaraśānti).

Trans. by Chos-ldan-ras-pa & Yar-lungs-pa-grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan.
 Rev. by Byang-chub-rtse-mo & Nam-mkha'-bzang-po.
 Ōta. 5790, P, sgra rig pa, she 158b1-168b7 (vol.140, p.195-199)
 Tōh. 4303, D, sgra mdo, se 351b1-360b7
 N, she 104a3-114a5. Kinsha/G 3790/3792, she 136b1 (p.69-3-1)
 C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 110, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruñ go'i Bod kyi śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis bkram, Peciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.1134-1151).

- sDeb sbyor rin chen 'byung gnas zhes bya ba* (Chandoratnākara-nāma) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba'i zhabs.

Trans. by Chos-ldan-ras-pa & Yar-lungs-pa-grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan.
 Rev. by Byang-chub-rtse-mo & Nam-mkha'-bzang-po.
 Ōta. 5791, P, sgra rig pa, she 169a1-193b6 (vol.140, p.199-209);
 Tōh. 4304, D, sgra mdo, se 361a1-379a7;
 N, she 114a6-137b7. Kinsha/G 3791/3793, she 147b1 (p.75-2-1);
 C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 110, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruñ go'i Bod kyi śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis bkram, Peciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.1152-1172, 1173-1238).

- sDeb sbyor rin chen 'byung gnas zhes bya ba* (Chandoratnākara-nāma) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.

Trans. by sTag-tshang-pa-shes-rab-rin-chen.
 Ōta. 5903, P, ngo mtshar bstan bcos, po 294a5-300a8 (vol.149, p.137-140);
 Tōh. 4459, D, sna tshogs, po 270a2-275a7;
 N, po 281a3-286b5. Kinsha/G 3912/3917, po 365b1 (p.183-4-1);
 C, dPe bsdur ma vol. 120, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theṅs 1. Kruñ go'i Bod kyi śes rig dpe skrun khañ; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khañ gis bkram, Peciñ 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.1663-1678).

25. *Vidagdhavismāpana*. by Ratnākaraśānti. Michael Hahn, ed. In BEI, 20.2:3-81. See also Hahn (2002).

This is a book of riddles is not in the bsTan 'gyur and has no Tibetan title, but I have included it in this list for the sake of counting Ratnākaraśānti's known works. However, the fact that Ratnākaraśānti demonstrates his prowess in this regard tells us

much about the way he embeds double meanings in his verses as well as leaves clues for us to find them. Stylistically, this is important to keep in mind when interpreting his opening verses of the *Sāratamā*, which attempt to function at several levels at once.

10.4.4. Works Wrongly Attributed to Ratnākaraśānti

1. *dBang bskur ba'i rim par bstan pa* (Abhiṣekanirukti) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba. Trans. by Śāntibhadra & Tshul-khrims-rgyal-ba. Ōta. 3301, Tōh. 2476.

Harunaga Isaacson pointed out that only one of two Tibetan colophons (Tōh. 2476) attribute this work to Ratnākaraśānti, whereas the other (Tōh. 2477) and the Sanskrit MS attributes it to Jinasujayaśrīgupta. Also, according to Isaacson, "On grounds of style and terminology I do not believe that the ascription to Ratnākaraśānti is correct."⁶¹¹

2. *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi tshogs kyi 'khor lo zhes bya ba* (Vajrabhairavagaṇacakranāma) by Ratnākaraśānti.

Trans. Dīpaṃkararakṣita & rDo-rje-grags. Ōta. 2848, Tōh. 1995.

This text survives in a single Sanskrit manuscript (complete, paper) with an anonymous fragmentary gloss, NAK 5-7871 = NGMPP B 104/10.⁶¹² This Sanskrit MS contains many grammatical errors, uncharacteristic of Ratnākaraśānti, and does not have an attribution that matches the Tibetan colophon.⁶¹³ Since the Tibetan translation itself shows that this text, contrary to its title, has nothing to do with Vajrabhairava, there is a strong likelihood that this is an apocryphal text.⁶¹⁴ The Tibetan translation was also made by the infamous Rwa lo, from whom one might expect a false attribution of a text to Ratnākaraśānti.

3. *Maṅḍal gyi cho ga zhes bya ba* (Maṅḍalavidhi-nāma) by Ratnākaraśānti. Ōta. 5087.⁶¹⁵

This text also has no opening verse and does not follow Ratnākaraśānti's style of presentation. Further study is needed, but this text does not appear to have been written by Ratnākaraśānti himself. It may represent the notes of a student of his. The Tibetan translation does not appear in D, but the G version (if it is the same as Ōta. 5087) contains interlinear notes. The author of the interlineage notes also seems to find the text's lack of opening verse strange and hence takes the translator's homage to be Ratnākaraśānti's own.

4. *Maṅḍal gyi cho ga* (Maṅḍalavidhi) by Ratnākaraśānti. Ōta. 5088.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹¹ Isaacson (2001b:483).

⁶¹² I thank Peter-Daniel Szanto for bringing this information to my attention (personal communication Aug. 2015). Most of my comments here are based on personal communication from Peter-Daniel Szanto. Cf. Shizuka (2011), who has studied the Tibetan translation.

⁶¹³ See Kano (unpublished PhD dissertation) Chapter 2, and specifically p.17.

⁶¹⁴ In a workshop focused on Ratnākaraśānti in Procida, Italy (2013), scholars, among them Alexis Sanderson, Harunaga Isaacson, Francesco Sferra, and Peter-Daniel Szanto, analyzed the Sanskrit text and unanimously agreed that it could not belong to Ratnākaraśānti's corpus. I have not been able to study the text myself yet, but have been apprised of the issues with it.

⁶¹⁵ I do not presently have access to the Peking edition, Ōta. 5087 and Ōta. 5088, so I cannot positively verify which of the two, if either, matches Kinsha/G 3087/3092 or the Kinsha/G 3086/3091.

This text differs from the one of the same name above. It too has no opening verse and does not follow Ratnākaraśānti's style of presentation. Further study is needed, but this text does not appear to have been written by Ratnākaraśānti himself. Once again, it may represent the notes of a student of his. The Tibetan translation does not appear in D.

5. *mDo kun las btus pa'i bshad pa rin po che snang ba'i rgyan ces bya ba*
 (*Ratnālokālamkāra-nāma-sūtrasamuccayabhāṣya) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.
 Trans. by Nag po (Kṛṣṇa) & Tshul-khrims-rgyal-ba. Ōta. 5331, Tōh. 3935.

Kazuo Kano has also argued persuasively that the *mDo kun las btus pa'i bshad pa rin po che snang ba'i rgyan ces bya ba* is not a work by Ratnākaraśānti, because it vigorously attacks the *yānatraya* system that Ratnākaraśānti strongly asserts and attempts to establish the *ekayāna* position in its place. In this way, it appears to have been a work written by someone from Maitreyanātha's school.⁶¹⁷

6. *Theg pa gsum rnam par bzhag pa zhes bya ba* (*Triyānavyavasthāna-nāma) by Rin-chen-'byung-gnas-zhi-ba.
 Trans. by Kṛṣṇa & Chos-kyi-shes-rab. Ōta. 4535, Tōh. 3712.

Kazuo Kano has also argued persuasively that the *Theg pa gsum rnam par bzhag pa zhes bya ba* is not a work by Ratnākaraśānti, because it contradicts Ratnākaraśānti's central theses elsewhere. In particular, it holds Mādhyamika to be the highest position, whereas Ratnākaraśānti reserves this for Nirākāra; it holds the *ekayāna* position, whereas Ratnākaraśānti strongly asserts the *yānatraya* system; and it differs in its presentation of *pāramārtha* from that of Ratnākaraśānti. In this way, it appears to have been a work written by someone from Maitreyanātha's school.^{618a}

10.4.5. Two Extant Sub-Commentaries on Ratnākaraśānti's works

Lhan cig skyes pa'i rnal 'byor dam pa'i 'grel pa snying po rab tu gsal bar byed pa
 (Sahajasadyogavṛtti-garbhaprakāśikā-nāma) by Thagana.

Trans. by Mantrakālaśa. Toh.1247. dPe bsdur ma vol. 5, (bsTan 'gyur, Par theñs 1. Kruñ go'i Bod kyi śes rig dpe skrun khan; Ĵin-hwa dpe tshoñ Pe-ciñ 'grem spel khan gis bkram, Pecin 1994-2008, TBRC W1PD95844, p.534-547).⁶¹⁹

dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam par bshad pa tshig don gsal ba'i me tog ces bya ba
 by bCom-ldan-[Rig-pa'i]-ral-gri.

-In bKa' gdams gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs thengs gsum pa. Vol 1: 473 - 527. TBRC W1PD153536;

-In gsung thor bu. bCom-ldan-Rig-pa'i-ral-gri. TBRC W1CZ1041. vol. 1: 567 - 622.

⁶¹⁶ Once again, I do not presently have access to the Peking edition, Ōta. 5087 and Ōta. 5088, so I cannot positively verify which of the two, if either, matches Kinsha/G 3087/3092 or the Kinsha/G 3086/3091.

⁶¹⁷ See Kano (unpublished PhD dissertation) Chapter 2, and specifically p.14.

⁶¹⁸ For a full explication of the evidence, see Kano (unpublished PhD dissertation) Chapter 2, and specifically p.16, whose paraphrase of the arguments of Hiyashi (1999) is what I myself am paraphrasing here.

⁶¹⁹ For more information, see Isaacson (2002a:459)

-In rnam grol 'dod 'jo ris med dpe rnying khang gi tshad ldan nges don dpe tshogs/. TBRC W1KG5705. 6: 419 - 458. [zi ling]: rnam grol 'dod 'jo dpe rnying khang, 2007-2009.

This work, to my knowledge, has remained unknown to modern scholars up to this point but appears to be the only known indigenous Tibetan sub-commentary to a Ratnākaraśānti text. As a perpetual word commentary, it supplies useful identifications of parallels and citations within Ratnākaraśānti's work, along side brief but insightful comments. bCom-ldan-Rig-pa'i-ral-gri (1227-1305 C.E.), the commentary's author, was a famous and prolific bka' gdams pa master from the sNar thang monastery founded by Adhīśa. Aside from knowing Sanskrit, he was one of the most important scholars of the 13th century.⁶²⁰ This text is an early *gZhan-stong* work and demonstrates the attempt to transform Ratnākaraśānti into a justification for the new position. Its discovery provides a missing link in the development of *gZhan-stong* and its attempt to revive Ratnākaraśānti in Tibet.

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