Namo Buddhāya Gurave (K. 888): Circulation of a Liturgical Formula across Asia[1]

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Abstract—The article takes an inscription from Cambodia as its starting point, showing that it is a Sanskrit verse of homage to the three jewels that is associated with the celebrated Indian poet, Mātṛceṭa (ca. 4th century). It places the verse within a wide liturgical context, showing that it was known in Tang China, and that it has been known and recited in Nepal and Bali up to the 20th century or even the present. The article gives new readings of two of the versions, those of the Khmer inscription and of the Chinese transcription. It is a contribution to the somewhat neglected field of Sanskrit Buddhist (and/or Buddhist Sanskrit) liturgy.

The Inscription of Preah Khan of Kompong Svay (K. 888)

A large sandstone image in the National Museum, Phnom Penh, immediately attracts the visitor's attention (Figures 1a, b, c). A male figure clad in monastic robes sits cross-legged with his right leg folded over the left. Draped over his left shoulder is a neatly folded robe, a *saṃghāṭi*.[2] From the front he appears to have close-cropped hair, and his ears have long and extended lobes, resembling those of a Buddha.[3] With half-shut eyes and gently smiling lips, his serene face is expressive of subdued joy.

There is nothing unusual about any of these features. What is unusual – and in fact would seem to be unique – is that the seated figure has raised his arms to balance a massive rectangular object on the top of his head with his open palms. And this object is inscribed in large letters.

What is the object? Is it a slab, or could it be a book? If it is a book, it must be meant

[1] I am grateful to Saerji, Santi Pakdeekham, Sāmaṇerī Dhammadinnā (then Giuliana Martini), Bertrand Porte, Christophe Pottier, Péter-Dániel Szántó, Alexander von Rospatt, and Trent Walker for suggestions and materials. Without their kindness this article would be a much poorer thing. I especially thank Jens-Uwe Hartmann, Péter-Dániel Szántó, Alexander von Rospatt, and Trent Walker for their helpful corrections and suggestions.

[2] The neatly folded *saṃghāṭi* is characteristic of Southeast Asian Buddhism, or, more specifically, Thai, Lao and Khmer Buddhism. Can we trace the earliest representations of this in art? As far as I know, it is not characteristic of early Indian Buddhist art, or of non-Theravāda fraternities.

[3] According to Bertrand Porte (email, 15 May 2012), the carving is partly unfinished. At the back of the head, the hair and hairline are clearly unfinished, and one can observe the point marks of the chisel (Figure 1c). The base of the statue extends as a tenon, which would have been set in a pedestal.

Figure 1a, 1b, 1c (opposite and left). Stone figure from Kompong Svay, National Museum of Cambodia (NMC). Photos 2010 courtesy, EFEO/NMC.

Figure 2 (above). Lokeśvara, National Museum of Cambodia East tower, Angkor Thom, sandstone, late 12th–early 13th century. c. 190 cm in height. Inv. Ka 1695. Photo courtesy EFEO/NMC.

to be a folding paper manuscript – a leporello, concertina, or accordion book – and, if so, it might possibly be the earliest depiction of a paper manuscript in Khmer or Thai art. A few images, such as Prajñāpāramitā or Lokeśvara, hold palm-leaf manuscripts, but these are narrow, short, and proportionally much smaller (Figure 2).

The statue is from "Preah Khan of Kompong Svay", located in Ta Seng village, Ronak Seng commune, Sangkom Thmei district, Preah Vihear province. Preah Khan is a vast complex of monuments about 100 kilometres east of Angkor; it is also known as "le grand Preah Khan" to distinguish it from the Preah Khan at Angkor.

Henri Mauger referred to the statue in his report on Preah Khan published in the *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* (BEFEO) in 1939.[4] Within the fourth enclosure, at the south-west corner of the *barai*, are the remains of a tower-like structure, known locally as Preah Chatomukh, "the four-faced image" (Figure 3). It is made of

[4] Henri Mauger (1903–?), an architect, worked with the EFEO in Cambodia in the 1930s. He published articles on several sites in the pages of BEFEO. See www.efeo.fr/biographies/notices/mauger.htm.

Map: Trans-Asian liturgical connectivity: travels of a Buddhist verse (map by Pierrre Pichard, EFEO)

large stone blocks around a central laterite core; each side was carved to represent a standing Buddha, estimated by Mauger to have been fifteen metres in height. The torsos and upper portions no longer survive, except as blocks and fragments scattered in the vicinity. Fragments of the head of a Buddha with its hair curls (Figure 4) suggest that the statues were indeed finished. By the time of Mauger's visit, only some of the lower portions remained in place: the lower hem of the robe and the left hand with the palm extended, thumb and forefinger held together, along the line of the left leg (Figure 5). That there is nothing comparable along the right side suggests that the arm would have been raised above waist height. Most probably, the monument was designed as a

Figure 3 (above). View of Preah Catomukh from east. Photo PKKS 06 courtesy Christophe Pottier, EFEO, 2000
Figure 4 (below left). Fragment of head of Buddha, Preah Catomukh. Photo PKKS 06 courtesy Christophe Pottier, EFEO, 2000.
Figure 5 (below right). Left hand of Buddha, Preah Catomukh. Photo PKKS 06 courtesy Christophe Pottier, EFEO, 2000.

solid structure representing four standing Buddhas, one on each face, each with the right hand raised and the left arm extended along the side.

At the foot of the monument were some loose sculptures. “Aux pieds de cette gigantesque statue, on découvrit une quantité de sculptures, sans doute offertes par les adorateurs. Deux d’entre elles sont entrées au Musée Albert Sarraut: un

Figure 6a, 6b, 6c. Buddhist triad recovered from Preah Catomukh, front, side and rear views. Photos courtesy EFEO.

personnage accroupi portant sur sa tête un cartouche inscrit d'une formule bouddhique; et une trinité bouddhique, supportée par un orant, groupe dont la composition est unique dans l'art khmer et qui est d'une belle exécution."[5] The two statues singled out for mention by Mauger entered the collection of the Musée Albert Sarraut – now the National Museum – in Phnom Penh in January 1940, where they remain today.[6] Their current inventory numbers are 1697 and 1848 respectively. Inv. No. 1697 is displayed in the West Gallery; Inv. No. 1848 is displayed in the gallery around the central garden.[7]

The two images are unusual in Khmer art and indeed in Buddhist art in general. The figure supporting a triad (Figures 6a, b, c) has no known parallel in stone sculpture, but may be compared to a number of bronze images. One, in the National Museum, Bangkok, is a two-sided seated figure who holds up with both arms a panel or screen

[5] Henri Mauger, "Práḥ Khăn de Kompoṅ Svày," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* XXXIX (1939), p. 212.

[6] Artefacts discovered later at Preah Khan, now in the Museum, include the statue "presumed to be Jayavarman VII": Dalsheimer, Pièce no 73.

[7] For Inv. No. 1848, see Dalsheimer, § 119, H. 0.83 m, L. 0.48 m. The catalogue assigns different dates to the two statues: 13th–14th century to 1697 (§ 85), and end of the 12th century to 1848 (§ 119). Given the fact that they are of the same material ("grès gris") and are stylistically similar – compare especially the style of the robe, the wide folded *saṃghāṭi* over the shoulder, and the seated posture of the Buddha in § 119 and the orant in § 85 – the dates need to be reexamined. Inv. No. 1848 is illustrated in Pierre Garnier, Guy Nafilyan, Christian Cres, and Jacqueline Nafilyan, *L'art khmer en situation de reserve/Khmer Art in reserve*, Marseille: Éditions Européennes Marseille – Provence & Arts et Expressions Marseille – Provence, 1997, p. 115. They describe it as a "borne bouddhique"/ "Buddhist boundary stone", but this is inaccurate in both languages.

Figure 7a, 7b. Bronze figure holding panel or screen, front and rear views. National Museum, Bangkok

depicting in relief a central Buddha within a tower with two tiers of devotees below (Figures 7a, b).[8]

The catalogue of the National Museum, Phnom Penh, describes the image as a "personnage assis, jambes croisées, tenant sur sa tête une inscription pāli."[9] There has been a general consensus that the inscription, which was assigned the number K. 888, is in Pāli.[10] The lettering on the rectangular slab is unfinished: the top two lines have been almost entirely engraved in convex lettering, but the rest is only sketched out (Figures 8a, b). There is a break in the stone where it joins the head or hair-knot of the devotee,

[8] MC Subhadra Subhadradis, *Pratimakam khom*, Bangkok, 2515, fig. 153; Piriya Krairiksh, *Rak ngao haeng sinlapa Thai*, Bangkok: River Books, 2553 [2010], figures 2.367, 2.368 and pp. 354–355; Marlene L. Zeffreys, Nicholas S. Zeffreys, and Jeffrey Stone, *Heaven and Empire: Khmer Bronzes from the 9th to the 15th Centuries*, Bangkok: White Lotus, 2001, pl. 62.

[9] Nadine Dalsheimer, *Les collections du musée national de Phnom Penh*, Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2001, p. 178.

[10] So, for example, George Cœdès, *Inscriptions du Cambodge* VIII, Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1966, pp. 210–211; Saveros Pou, *Nouvelles inscriptions du Cambodge I*, Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1989, pp. 14–15

Figure 8a. Inscription K. 888. Photo 2010 courtesy EFEO.
Figure 8b. Estampage of K. 888. Estampage courtesy Khom Sreymom, NMC/EFEO; photo Santi Pakdeekham, 4 December 2014.

resulting in the loss of several letters. The epigraph does not bear a date; it has been dated palaeographically to the 13th to 14th centuries, that is, the post-Jayavarman VII period. Pou finds the writing comparable to that of K. 754, "the oldest Pāli inscription of Cambodia,"[11] and would date our record "aux premières années du XIV^{e} siècle." If the inscription were in Pāli, it would join K. 754 as one of the oldest Pāli records of Cambodia.

But the inscription is not in Pāli: it is in Sanskrit and Khmer.[12] It contains a four-line verse followed by a phrase in Khmer, which is not fully legible. Although much of the vocabulary of the verse is shared by Sanskrit and Pāli, the inflections are Sanskrit, as are the words *dharmāya* and *tribhyo*.[13]

(1) *oṃ namo vuddhāya gurave*
(2) *namo dharmmāya tāy(i)ṇe*

[11] George Cœdès, "La plus ancienne inscription en pâli du Cambodge," repr. in George Cœdès, *Articles sur le pays khmer*, Paris, École française d'Extrême-Orient,1989, pp. 282–289 (originally published BEFEO XXXVI, pp. 1–21).
[12] For an illustration of the inscription, see *Nouvelles inscriptions*, Pl. I; for the image, see Dalsheimer, *Les collection du musée national de Phnom Penh*, pièce no. 85.
[13] *Tribhyo* (*pace* Pou's *traibhyo*) is clear in the rubbings. I interpret the hook in the stroke of the long *ā* that rises above the line before descending as a vertical stroke as a superscript *ra*.

(3) *namas saṅghāya mahate*[14]
(4) *tribhyo .... (śa)tata(ṃ) namaḥ* (|) *namassa … (vraḥ) mantra vraḥ kamrateṅ (añ)*.

When we take into account the Sanskrit texts and Tibetan translations to be presented below, we can reconstruct the verse with some degree of confidence:

namo buddhāya gurave, namo dharmāya tāyine
namo saṃghāya mahate, tribhyo'pi satataṃ namaḥ.

Mātṛceṭa's "Praise of the Three Jewels"

This four-line verse of homage bears a close resemblance to the opening verse of the "Praise of the Three Jewels," *Triratnastotra*, a short verse composition ascribed to the great Indian poet, Mātṛceṭa.[15] Lost in Sanskrit but preserved in Tibetan translation as the *Dkon mchog gsum la bstod pa*,[16] the *Triratnastotra* has four verses. The opening verse pays homage to the three jewels collectively; it is followed by one verse of homage each for the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha.

Triratnastotra: Tibetan version[17]

sangs rgyas gtso la phyag 'tshal lo //
skyob pa'i chos la phyag 'tshal lo //
dge 'dun che la phyag tshal lo //
gsum la rtag tu phyag 'tshal lo[18] //

Homage to the Buddha, the foremost;[19]

[14] The writing is unclear but it appears to read *namas saṅghāya* rather than the correct sandhi form *namaḥ saṅghāya*.
[15] For Mātṛceṭa, see the preface and introduction to Michael Hahn (tr.), *Invitation to Enlightenment: Letter to the Great King Kaniṣka by Mātṛceṭa [and] Letter to a Disciple by Candragomin*, Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1999. For a list of works ascribed to Mātṛceṭa, see Jens-Uwe Hartmann (ed., tr.), *Das Varṇārhavarṇastotra des Mātṛceṭa*, Göttingen (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen No. 160), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987, pp. 22–30 (*Triratnastotra*, p. 26). For further fragments, see Jens-Uwe Hartmann, "Neues zum Varṇārhavarṇa," in Martin Straube et al. (eds.), *Pāsādikadānam: Festschrift für Bhikkhu Pāsādika*, Marburg: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 2009 (Indica et Tibetica, 52), pp. 229–241.
[16] See the exemplary edition and study of the Tibetan version in Jens-Uwe Hartmann, "The *Triratnastotra* ascribed to Mātṛceṭa" in Helga Uebach and Jampa L. Panglung, (eds.), *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 4th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Schloss Hohenkammer-Munich 1985* (Studia Tibetica: Quellen und Studien zur tibetischen Lexikographie, Band II), Munich: Kommission für Zentralasiatische Studien, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988, pp. 177–184.
[17] Hartmann "Triratnastotra," p. 180. The Tibetan in Ye shes sde is the same.
[18] Variant *bdag phyag 'tshal*, for which see Hartmann, "The *Triratnastotra*," p. 181.
[19] The Tibetan translation of *guru* as *gtso* is unusual, since *guru* is regularly rendered by *bla ma*, and *gtso* usually translates Sanskrit *agra, jyeṣṭha, śreṣṭha, pramukha, mukhya*. The lexicons available do not give any examples of it having been used for *guru*. The usage is, however, vouchsafed by the commentary.

Homage to the Dharma, the Saviour;
Homage to the Saṅgha, the grand;
Perpetual homage to the three.

Two commentaries on the *Triratnastotra* are preserved in Tibetan Tanjurs:

Vṛtti by Rgyal ba'i sras (Jinaputra), translated by Jñānaśānti and Dpal gyi lhun po;[20]
Sangs rgyas gtso ba'i rgya cher 'grel pa by the Tibetan scholar, Zhang Ye shes sde.[21]

The Tibetan is found in three manuscripts from the Dunhuang caves in Gansu, China (see for example Figure 9). The Tibetan *stotra* version is not provided with a translator's colophon, but given that the translation is identical to that which opens Ye shes sde's commentary, it is likely that the translation was done in central Tibet in the early 9th century by Ye shes sde, one of the most influential figures in the history of Tibetan lexicography and translation, and one of the earliest authors of scholastic texts.[22]

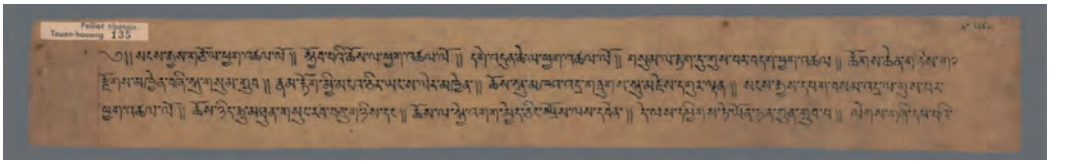

Figure 9. Dunhuang manuscript of Triratnastotra, v. 1. Pelliot tibétain Touen-houang 135. Musée Nationale, Paris.

Mātṛceṭa's "Praise of the Thirty-five Sugatas"

The same verse opens another work attributed to Mātṛceṭa, the "Praise of the Thirty-five Sugatas" (*Sugatapañcatriṃśatstotra*). This too is lost in Sanskrit but preserved in Tibetan translation. The translation of the first three lines is identical to that of the *Triratnastotra*. The last line is, however, different:

[20] Jinaputra (rGyal ba'i sras), *Triratnastotravṛtti*, Peking edition Cat. No. 2036, Otani reprint Vol. 46, *ka*, 123r1–128v8. The colophon reads, *dkon mchog gsum la bstod pa'i 'grel pa slob dpon rgyal ba'i sras kyis mdzad pa rdzogs so // rgya gar gyi mkhan po dznyā na śā nti dang / bod kyi lo tsā ba bande dpal gyi lhun po'i sdes sgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o //*. Little is known of this Rgyal ba'i sras, who may be the same as Yaśomitra who composed the *Vyākhyā* on the *Abhidharmakośa*.
[21] Ye shes sde (Jñānasena), *Sangs rgyas gtso bo'i rgya cher 'grel pa*, Peking edition Cat. No. 5848, Otani reprint Vol. 145, *tsho*, 269v7–274r1; critical Tanjur vol. 116, p. 610. The colophon reads, *sangs rgyas gtso'i ṭīka rgya cher 'grel pa bod kyi lo tsā ba zhang ye shes sde mdzad pa rdzogs so*.
[22] For Ye shes sde, see Peter Skilling, *Mahāsūtras: Great Discourses of the Buddha. Vol. II, Parts I & II*. Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1997 (Sacred Books of the Buddhists XLVI), pp. 129–130. For his proto-Grub mtha' composition *Lta ba'i khyad par*, see David Seyfort Ruegg, "Autour du *Lta ba'i khyad par* de Ye shes sde," in David Seyfort Ruegg, *The Buddhist Philosophy of the Middle: Essays on Indian and Tibetan Madhyamaka*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2010, pp. 267–287 (originally published *in Journal asiatique*, Année 1981, pp. 207–229).

sangs rgyas gtso la phyag 'tshal lo //
skyob pa'i chos la phyag 'tshal lo //
dge 'dun che la phyag tshal lo //
gsum la rtag tu skyabs su mchi //.[23]

Homage to the Buddha, the foremost;
Homage to the Dharma, the saviour;
Homage to the Saṅgha, the grand;
I perpetually go for refuge to the three.

The colophon of the *Sugatapañcatriṃśatstotra* ascribes the translation to the Indian, Upādhyāya Sumakaravarma, and the Tibetan translator, Rin chen bzang po. With the exception of the last line, the translation is identical to that by Ye shes sde.

Ritual recitation of the names of the thirty-five Buddhas is widely practised in Tibetan Buddhism, and the thirty-five are depicted in art, for example in thangka paintings. There is no evidence for the practice in Cambodia or Southeast Asia, however, so it is not very likely that the *namo buddhāya* verse in K. 888 comes from the "Praise of the Thirty-five Sugatas."[24]

At present, the *Triratnastotra* does not survive as an independent Sanskrit work. The opening verse of homage – the verse with which we are herein concerned – is, however, preserved in Sanskrit in a phonetic transcription into Chinese in a document from Dunhuang and in the living liturgical and manuscript traditions of the Kathmandu valley, Nepal, and of the island of Bali, Indonesia.

A Chinese interlude

The Dunhuang document is associated with Xuanzang (玄奘, c. 602–664) and Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 705–774)[25] (Figure 10). It has three parts:

1. A preface, written by Xuanzang's disciple, Kuiji (窺基 632–682, here named "Upādhyāya Ci'en," Ci en heshang 慈恩和尚);[26]

[23] Pierre Python, *Vinaya-viniścaya-upāli-praipṛcchā. Enquête d'Upāli pour une exégèse de la discipline. Traduit du sanscrit, du tibétain et du chinois, avec introduction, édition critique des fragments sanscrits et de la version tibétaine, notes et glossaires. En appendice: texte et traduction de T 1582, I, et du Sugatapañcatriṃśatastotra de Mātṛceṭa*, Paris: Adrien-Maissoneuve, 1973 (Collection Jean Przyluski, Tome V), p. 156.

[24] There is a frieze of thirty-seven Buddhas at Preah Pithu: see David Snellgrove, *Angkor – Before and After: A Cultural History of the Khmers*, Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2004, p. 138, Fig. 159.

[25] Taishō 256, which is based on Dunhuang manuscript S 2464. There are in addition four other manuscripts: S 5648, S 5627, S 3178, P 2322. I initially learned about the document from Leon Hurvitz, "Hsüan-tsang (602–664) and the Heart Scripture," in Lewis Lancaster (ed.), *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems*: *Studies in Honour of Edward Conze*, Berkeley, 1977 (Berkeley Buddhist Series 1), pp. 103–121. For what follows I am indebted to Saerji 萨尔吉 (University of Peking) – for the translations, transcriptions, and commentary presented in this section.

[26] Hurvitz wrongly argues that Ci en heshang was Xuanzang.

Figure 10. Dunhuang manuscript of Taishō 256: S 5648. Courtesy IDP, British Library, London

2. "Broad Praise of the Three Jewels, recited in the Lotus family" (*Lianhua bu pu zantan sanbao* 蓮花部普讚歎三寶),[27] (see below), transcribed by Amoghavajra;

3. The main section, "Chinese Phonetic Transcription of the Sanskrit Scripture of the Heart of Prajñāpāramitā" (*Tang fan fan dui ziyin bore boluomiduo xin jing* 唐梵飜對字音般若波羅蜜多心經),[28] the Sanskrit *Hṛdaya-sūtra* transcribed phonetically in Chinese characters, which, according to the document, was transmitted (or recited) by Bodhisatva AvalokiteŚvara and "Sanzang fashi" (Dharmabhāṇaka of the Tripiṭaka) Xuanzang, and polished by Amoghavajra (觀自在菩薩與三藏法師玄奘親教授梵本，不空潤色).

The "Broad Praise of the Three Jewels" opens with a parallel to our verse:

Namo buddhāya gurave namo dharmāya tāyine{ma}[29] *namaḥ saṃghāya mahate traibhyo*

[27] Hurvitz: "Broad Praise of the Three Jewels, Recited in the Lotus School and Others." The Taishō version gives *Lianhua bu deng pu zantan sanbao* 蓮花部等普讚歎三寶, 蓮花部. The superfluous character *deng* 等, "and others," should be cancelled. *Lianhua bu* probably indicates the "lotus family" (*padmakula*) of esoteric Buddhism. The mantra itself repeats the word *kamala*, "lotus," seven times.

[28] Hurvitz: "Brahmanical Text of the Scripture of the Heart of Prajñāpāramitā." *Fan ben* 梵本 indicates "Sanskrit text".

[29] The manuscript adds the extra syllable *ma* 麼.

This is followed by a long formula or mantra that is difficult to restore to Sanskrit. It is not related to the *Triratnastotra* or the other texts studied here.[30]

The living tradition of the Newars

Sharkey, in his study of the daily ritual of the Kathmandu shrines, wrote about *Buddhaṃ trailokyanāthaṃ*, "a short hymn in praise of Śākyamuni Buddha which lists some of his chief epithets," which is recited after *Dānabalena*, "undoubtedly the best known of Newar Buddhist Sanskrit hymns, due to its simplicity and the frequency with which it is recited."[31] *Dānabalena* is an extract from one of the most widely disseminated sūtra/mantras of antiquity, the *Aparimitāyuḥsūtra* or Unlimited Life Sūtra. The liturgical *dānabalena* consists of six verses that evoke the authority of each of the six perfections and close the sūtra. The verse in praise of the three jewels often comes between the two recitations:[32]

> *oṃ namo buddhāya gurave, namo dharmāya tāyiṇe*
> *namo saṃghāya mahate.*[33] *Oṃ.*

Sharkey notes that "it is a convention to recite this or a very similar verse before a number of *stotras*." This suggests that it may be recited in a number of contexts. The verse also occurs at the end of a manuscript of the *Ṣaḍgatikārikā*:[34]

> *namo buddhāya gurave, namo dharmāya tāyine*
> *namo saṃghāya mahate, tribhyo'pi satataṃ namaḥ.*

Here it seems to introduce some ancillary verses on refuge and *bodhicitta*. It also occurs in the Nepalese ritual text *Gurumaṇḍalārcana* and the *Kudṛṣṭinirghāta* ascribed to Advayavajra

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[30] Hurvitz transcribes as follows (his question marks): *piśāca (?) kamalamukhakamalalocanaṃ kamalalasanaṃ kamalaghāsata (?) kamalavamuni (?) kamalakamalasaṃbhavakamalahṛṣalā namaḥ stuti (?)*. In note 72 he remarks, "The *mantra* is not pure Sanskrit to begin with, and the Chinese transcription is very uncertain, to say nothing of possible copyists' errors. The whole thing is made only worse by my romanization."

[31] Gregory Sharkey, *Buddhist Daily Ritual: The Nitya Puja in Kathmandu Valley Shrines*, Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2001. The two texts are given in Sanskrit with English translation at pp. 304–305. *Dānabalena* comes from the six verses at the end of the *Aparimitāyuḥsūtra*: see Duan Qing, *Das Khotanische Aparimitāyuḥsūtra, Ausgabe, Kommentar, Übersetzung und Glossa*r, Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik, Dissertationen Band 3 (Reinbek: Dr. Inge Wezler, Verlag für Orientalische Fachpublikationen, n.d); English tr. from Sanskrit as "A Sūtra for Long Life" by Jonathan Silk, in Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (ed.), *Buddhist Scriptures*, London: Penguin Books, 2004, Chapter 47; Richard Payne, *Pacific World*, Third Series, No. 9 (Fall 2007). The *Aparimitā-dhāraṇī* is also recited: cp. Sharkey, *Buddhist Daily Ritual*, p. 301 with Duan Qing, *Das Khotanische Aparimitāyuḥsūtra*, p. 133.

[32] Sharkey, *Buddhist Daily Ritual*, p. 100.

[33] Sharkey, *Buddhist Daily Ritual*, n. 58, notes the variant *mahattame*.

[34] Banārsī Lāl, "Durlabh Granth Paricaya," in *Dhīḥ – Durlabh bauddha granth śodh patrikā*, 46 (2008), p. 13 (full article pp. 7–14).

(ca. 11th century).[35] The verse is also quoted in the *Ādikarmāvatāra* of Mañjukīrti. The date of the author is not clear, but is probably not earlier than the 10th century.[36]

namo buddhāya gurave namo dharmāya tāyine |
namaḥ saṃghāya mahate tribhyo 'pi satataṃ namaḥ || 1
ratnatrayaṃ me śaraṇaṃ sarvaṃ pratidiśāmy agham |
anumode jagatpuṇyaṃ buddhabodhau dadhe manaḥ || 2
ā bodheḥ śaraṇaṃ yāmi buddhaṃ dharmaṃ gaṇottamam |
bodhau cittaṃ karomy eṣa svaparārthaprasiddhaye || 3

The three jewels are my refuge. I confess every fault.
I rejoice in the merit of everyone in the world; I focus my mind on awakening as a Buddha.
Up until [I achieve] awakening I take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Supreme Community.
I set my mind on awakening – for the accomplishment of benefit for my own self and for [all] other [sentient beings].

The *namo buddhāya* verse is also incorporated into the *Nityakarmapūjāvidhi*, a manual for daily rites and liturgies from Nepal.[37]

The Balinese tradition

A Balinese version of the stanza was published in 1933 by Sylvain Lévi:[38]

namo buddhāya gurave, namo dharmāya tāyine
namaḥ saṅghāya mahate, tribhyo 'pi satataṃ namaḥ

The stanza is embedded in a long liturgy called *Buddhavedaḥ*, which includes declarations of homage to the five Jinas, *mantra-dhāraṇī*, and so on. No specific context is given, but Lévi remarks that "the stotras (or stavas) preserved in Bali are not detached pieces of secular poetry; they are regular parts of the ritual."[39]

[35] Ācāryaḥ Paṃ. Advayabajra kṛta Gurumaṇḍalārcana Pustakam, nepāla bhāṣā sahita cvayā pikāhn, Paṃ, Vai. Ākāśākājī Bajrācārya*, U.B. Priṇṭing Pres, Lalitpur*, NS 1109 [1989], pp. 35–36; Ṭh.R. Śāśanī, "Advayavajraviracitagranthadvayam, Kudṛṣṭinirghātanaṃ Kudṛṣṭinirghātavākyaṭippaṇikā ca (grantha-paricay)," *Dhīḥ, Journal of Rare Buddhist Texts Research*, 54 (2014), pp. 165–207 (citation on p. 191, v. 14). See also David Gellner, "Ritualized Devotion, Altruism, and Meditation: The offering of the *guru maṇḍala* in Newar Buddhism," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 34 (1991), p. 182.
[36] I cite here the reading of a draft critical edition from NSUB Göttingen Xc 14/50, line 10r4 of the manuscript as it reads, with no corrections other than standardisations, by Péter-Dániel Szántó and Alexander von Rospatt. I thank them for their generosity in giving me permission to publish this from their forthcoming study and edition.
[37] 'Nityakarmapūjāvidhiḥ', *Dhīḥ*, p. 159.5.
[38] Sylvain Lévi, *Sanskrit Texts from Bali*, Baroda, 1933, p. 79.3.
[39] Lévi, *Sanskrit Texts from Bali*, p. xxi.

Reflections on liturgical intertextuality

There is no doubt that the different sources quoted here contain the same verse, with only minor differences.[40] When we compare these versions, we can conclude that the Khmer inscription K. 888 is bilingual, in Sanskrit and Khmer. Unfortunately the short Khmer sentence at the end is damaged, resulting in a lacuna.

Who is the figure that holds up the inscription? Is he a monk, a king, or a royal devotee? From the front, he appears to be a monk, sitting cross-legged with a *saṃghāṭi* folded ritually over his left shoulder. From the side (Figure 1b), however, he rather resembles the famous "portrait sculptures" of Jayavarman VII.

Is the verse homage to the three jewels an integral part of Mātṛceṭa's *Triratnastotra*? Or is it, as Hartmann suggests, "obviously common Buddhist property,"[41] and hence extraneous to the main work? The verse is short, but it has been enduring and it has travelled far. Jinaputra describes it as "an abbreviated encomium" (*bstod pa mdor gsungs pa*) and explains that the text that follows (the *Triratnastotra* properly speaking) has been written by Ācārya Mātṛceṭa "as an enlargement."

The verse is equivalent to the formula:

> *oṃ namo buddhāya namo dharmāya namo saṃghāya*
> *Oṃ*, homage to the Buddha, homage to the Dharma, homage to the Saṅgha.

or to the condensed version,

> *oṃ namo ratnatrāyaya*
> *Oṃ,* homage to the three jewels.

Namo buddhāya is widely used in the formulas of "Theravādin" Southeast Asia, particularly in Siam and Cambodia, where, in liturgy, each of the five syllables is assigned to one of the five Buddhas of the Auspicious Aeon, or, in the meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) tradition, is correlated with one of the five stages of bliss (*pīti*), the five precepts, the five elements, and so on.[42] The other two formulas, *namo dharmāya* and *namo saṅghāya*, are apparently not used independently.

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[40] The variation *tāyin*/*trāyin*/ is old and not uncommon. See e.g. Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, Vol. II: *Dictionary*, [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953] Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972, pp. 251–252. One of the earliest mentions might be that in E. Burnouf, *Introduction à l'histoire du bouddhisme indien*, Deuxième Édition, Paris: Maisonneuve et C^{ie}, 1876, p. 202, n. 1, with reference to the *Karaṇḍavyūha*; for a thorough examination, see Gustav Roth, "'A Saint like That' and 'A Saviour' in Prakrit, Pali, Sanskrit and Tibetan Literature," in Heinz Bechert and Petra Kieffer-Pülz (eds.), *Indian Studies: Selected Papers of Gustav Roth*, Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1986 (Bibliotheca Buddhica No. 32), pp. 91–107 (originally published in *Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya Golden Jubilee Volume*, Part 1, Bombay, 1968, pp. 46–62).

[41] Hartmann, "The *Triratnastotra*," p. 181.

[42] See for example Fragile Palm Leaves: for the preservation of Buddhist literature, No. 5, May 2542/1999, pp. 3, 12.

The *namo buddhāya* verse is associated with the two verses cited above in numerous ritual manuals and anthologies. The verses summarise the foundational practices of Mahāyāna: refuge (*śaraṇa*), confession of misdeeds (*pāpadeśanā*), rejoicing in other's merit (*puṇyānumodanā*), liturgical aspiration to awakening (*bodhicitta*). As preliminary practices, they are the foundation of Tantric practice and are incorporated into works of the masters Anupamavajra, Kokadatta, Jagaddarpaṇa, Tatakaragupta, and others.[43] The verses seem to have circulated widely in the Pāla realms, including at the great monastic centre of Vikramaśila, and in the Kathmandu Valley. In some cases the verses are associated with Hevajra *sādhana*s. On the evidence largely of iconography, Hevajra practices were widespread in Cambodia in the 11th to 12th centuries, the period during which they became prominent in Tibet.

Liturgies travel with ordination lineages – with teaching, meditation, practice, ritual, and initiation lineages. They are carried in the human memory and do not (necessarily) require written supports. The transmission of liturgies and associated ceremonies is not linear or fixed; selections and collections of verses were transmitted in interlinking and intertextual cycles. We have examples of the *Namo buddhāya* verse from the North India of the Pāla domains, from Nepal, Cambodia, Bali, and China. Further research into the tangle of verses is a desideratum. I will not be at all surprised if more examples of the *Namo buddhāya* and associated verses are found in other Sanskrit ritual and liturgical texts.

This study gives a glimpse of a short, and simple, liturgical verse that was used across Asia for centuries, and that in the Newar tradition is recited to this day. The possible connection of the brief formula with Mātṛceṭa is tantalising, since it recalls Yijing's assertion of the importance of Mātṛceṭa's hymns "in all the five parts of India."[44] It is regrettable that the academic study of Buddhist liturgy is nearly non-existent, to the degree that it would be an exaggeration even to say that it is weak. For Khmer culture in the pre-Theravāda period, there is one single Avalokiteśvara that has *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ* inscribed on the back.[45] The hospitals erected by Jayavarman VII presuppose liturgies dedicated to Bhaiṣajyaguru and to the two attendant Bodhisatvas, Sūryaprabha and Candraprabha, statues of whom, according to the inscriptions, were placed in each of the hospitals. The *ārogyaśālā* inscriptions open with *namo buddhāya* in a verse formula of homage to the *trikāya*, *namo vuddhāya nirmmāṇe, dharmasāṃbhogamūrttaye*. The complex iconographies of bodhisatvas and tantric deities must have had their own liturgies and ritual settings; for example, Hevajra inscriptions open with their own statements of homage.

Little work seems to have been done on Newar liturgy, which also has diverse connections. If *dānabalena* is from *Aparimitāyuḥ-sūtra*, if the formula *ādau kalyāṇaṃ*

[43] I am grateful to Péter-Dániel Szántó for these and other references, often from unpublished manuscript sources.

[44] See Li Rongxi (tr.), *Buddhist Monastic Traditions of Southern Asia: A Record of the Inner Law Sent Home from the South Seas by* Śramaṇa *Yijing*, Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2000, pp. 140–142.

[45] Peter Skilling, "An *Oṃ maṇipadme Hūṃ* Inscription from South-East Asia," *Aséanie* 11 (June 2003), pp. 13–20.

madhye kalyāṇaṃ paryavasāne kalyāṇaṃ[46] is an ancient module, if the verse *adya me saphalaṃ janma* (Sharkey p. 303) has numerous resonances in the Epics and in Tantras, these are just easy examples. Newar liturgy is an intricate intertextual weave, as indeed are the liturgies of other Buddhist cultures. The fragment studied here shows that the liturgists of Cambodia once joined in a chorus that was sung across Asia.

Let us hope that the *orant* of Kompong Svay has not been holding his message of homage up entirely in vain. A replica – a *nirmāṇakāya*? – has recently been set up in the lounge of the Siem Reap airport (Figure 11).

Figure 11a, 11b. Replica of stone figure from Kompong Svay: Siem Reap International Airport. Photo courtesy of Christophe Pottier, EFEO, May 2012.

Appendix: Commentary on *Triratnastotra* by Jinaputra

// rgya gar skad du / tri ratna sto stra bhi ti (!) /
bod skad du / dkon mchog gsum pa la bstod pa'i 'grel pa /
bcom ldan 'das 'jam dpal gzhon nur gyur pa la phyag tshal lo //

s(r)id pa gsum pa'i bla ma dkon mchog gsum la phyag 'tshal ba la sogs pa ni 'gro ba rnams kyi mngon par 'dod pa'i 'bras bu mtha' dag bskyed pa'i rgyu yin pas na de'i phyir de dag la phyag 'tshal ba / **sangs rgyas gtso la phyag 'tshal lo** zhes bya ba la sogs pa gsungs te / ma 'dres pa dang mtshungs par ldan pa'i ma rig pa dag ma lus par spangs pa ni sangs pa ste / gnyid rab tu sangs pa bzhin no // yang na nyon mongs pa can ma yin pa'i mi shes pa spangs pas shes bya mtha' dag la blo rgyas pas rgyas pa ste / padma rab tu rgyas pa lta bu'o // de ltar de dag ni spangs pa dang / ye shes phun sum tshogs pas bstod pa ste / nyid kyi don phun sum tshogs pa'o // gzhan gyi don phun sum tshogs pa'i dbang du byas te / **gtso** zhes smos pa las sa gsum dbang phyug chen por gyur pas na gtso bo ste / de dag ma lus pa gnon pas lci bar gyur pa ni / gzugs la la lci bar gyur pa na srang gi mgo mnon pa lta bu'o // des ni thams cad zil gyis mnan nas 'dul zhes bstan par 'gyur ro // yang na phyin ci ma log pa'i yon tan rin po che sbyin pas na bla ma ste / de la phyag 'tsal lo zhes bya ba ni sgo gsum gyis rab tu 'dud pa'o //

[46] Sharkey, *Buddhist Daily Ritual*, p. 92

skyob pa chos la phyag 'tshal lo zhes bya ba ni / 'dis ngan 'gro dang srid par sdug bsngal ba las skyob cing sdug bsngal sel la bde la sbyin [123b] pas na skyob pa zhes bya'o // de nyid kyis na chos te rnam par ltung ba las 'dzin pas so // de yang gis don dam pa'i chos de rtogs nas / slar ngan song dang 'khor bar mi ltung ba'i phyir ro // de rtogs pa'i rgyud pa'i rgyu ni bstan pa'i chos yin la / dngos kyi rgyu ni lam kyi chos yin pas de dag la 'ang btags te 'dzin pa zhes brjod do // yang na **skyob pa** zhes bya bas ni gzhan la phan 'dogs pa phun sum tshogs pa bstan la / chos zhes bya ba bas ni rang gi mtshan nyid rnam par dag pa 'dzin pa phun sum tshogs pa bstan to // de la phyag 'tshal lo zhes bya ba ni snga ma bzhin no //

dge 'dun che la phyag 'tshal lo zhe bya ba la /

Dedication

I dedicate this article to Hubert Durt, who loves the mysteries of iconography and letters, whose enthusiasm has inspired him to visit the countries mentioned here more than once, and whose curiosity embraces the wide range of the sources studied here – and much more.

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