14 M II 33.
15 S II 178.
16 D III 84.
17 *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1889, p. 8.
18 *ibid.*, pp. 10–11.
19 *ibid.*, p. 9.
20 D III 134.
21 S II 58.
22 S II 26; 48.
23 M I 190–91.
24 S II 25.
25 S II 58.
26 M I 320; 324 etc.
27 S II 1 foll.
28 M I 167.
29 M I 264–65.
30 D II 157, translation by T. W. Rhys Davids.
31 Th 1002–3, translation by C. A. F. Rhys Davids.

THE GĀRAVASUTTA OF THE SAṂYUTTANIKĀYA AND ITS MAHĀYĀNIST DEVELOPMENTS

This small Sutta deals with the veneration (*gārava*) in which the Buddha held the Dharma, the doctrine which he had discovered on the night of his enlightenment and which he had chosen as his teacher. This text throws some light on the nature of the Buddha and the Dharma as they were conceived by the first Buddhists.

Shortly after his enlightenment, the Buddha Śākyamuni was in Uruvelā, on the bank of the River Nerañjarā, under the Goatherd's Banyan. Absorbed in meditation, he began to reflect: 'It is not good to live without respect or veneration for a teacher; if there exists a religious or a brahman in the world who is superior to me, I would like to take him as my teacher, to honour and serve him'. With his divine eye he surveyed the triple world, but he saw no-one who surpassed him. Consequently he resolved to attach himself to the Dharma he had discovered a few days previously. In the world of subtle form, the god Brahmā Sahampati had read the Buddha's thought; he immediately descended from his heaven and went to congratulate the Blessed One: 'Noble lord', he said to him, 'in the past, the present and the future, all the perfectly enlightened holy ones attach themselves to the Dharma in order to honour and serve it'. Then, having uttered some stanzas, Brahmā returned to his paradise.

The Indian exegetists do not understand in the same way the doctrinal significance of this Dharma chosen as a teacher, and the *Gāravasutta* which refers to it has been the subject of two interpretations, which are divergent if not opposed: a Sthaviravādin interpretation professed by the Buddha's first disciples, and a Mahāyānist interpretation proposed by the adherents of the Great Vehicle.

Sthaviravādin interpretation of the Gāravasutta

The *Gāravasutta* is represented by four sources designated here by the abbreviations A B C D:

A. *Gāravasutta* of the Saṃyuttanikāya I 138–40.
B. *Uruvelasutta* of the Aṅguttaranikāya II 20–1.
C. *Tsun-chung* of the Saṃyuktāgama T 99, ch. 44, pp.321*c*18–322*a*27.
D. *Tsun-chung* of the Saṃyuktāgama T 100, ch. 5, p.410*a*3–410*b*9.

To my knowledge no Sanskrit fragment of this Sūtra has come down to us. The two Pali versions (A and B) are practically identical except for the final paragraph of B which seems to be a later addition.[1] The two Chinese versions (C and D) are extremely similar and locate the Sūtra under the Bodhi tree and not under the Goatherd's Banyan as do the Pali recensions.

The Pali *Gāravasutta* (A) begins in the following way:

1. 'Thus have I heard. One day the Blessed One was to be found in Uruvelā, on the bank of the River Nerañjarā, at the foot of the Goatherd's Banyan; he had just acquired enlightenment.

2. Then, while the Blessed One was meditating in solitude, this mental reflection arose in him: "It is wrong to live without venerating or honouring anyone. To which samaṇa or brāhmaṇa could I therefore now attach myself in order to serve and venerate him?"

3. Then the Blessed One had this thought: "In order to perfect the still unperfected aggregate of morality, I would like to attach myself to another samaṇa or brāhmaṇa by respecting and venerating him. However, neither in the world with its Devas, Māras and Brahmās, nor in the populace with its samaṇas and brāhmaṇas, with its gods and men, do I see any other samaṇa or brāhmaṇa who is more perfect than myself in morality and to whom I could attach myself by respecting and venerating him.

4–7. In order to perfect the still unperfected aggregate of concentration. . . , in order to perfect the still unperfected aggregate of wisdom. . . , in order to perfect the still unperfected aggregate of deliverance. . . , in order to perfect the still unperfected aggregate of the knowledge and vision of deliverance, I would like to attach myself to another samaṇa or brāhmaṇa by respecting and venerating him. However, neither in the world with its Devas, Māras and Brahmās, nor in the populace with its samaṇas and brāhmaṇas, with its gods and men, do I see any other samaṇa or brāhmaṇa who is more perfect than myself in [concentration, wisdom, deliverance], knowledge and vision of deliverance, and to whom I could attach myself by respecting and venerating him.

8. If therefore I were now to attach myself, by respecting and venerating it, to the Dhamma acknowledged by me at the moment of my enlightenment?" '

On reading this Sutta there naturally come to mind certain questions an answer to which should be attempted by, if possible, assuming the viewpoint of early Buddhism which is separated from us by twenty centuries.

When and where does the episode alluded to here take place? The sources disagree over the period which intervened between the enlightenment and the discourse at Vārāṇasī.[2] Śākyamuni remained under the Bodhi tree or near it, dividing his time between meditation and walking and welcoming some visitors. According to the Pali sources,[3] he spent the first week under the Bodhi tree, the second under the Goatherd's Banyan (*Ajapālanigrodha*), the third under the Mucalinda, the fourth under the Rājāyatana; after which he returned to the Goatherd's Banyan where he remained for some further time. It is there, during the fifth week, that he chose the Dharma as his teacher and that during the eighth he received the request from the Brahmā gods who begged him to expound the Law.[4] As has been seen, the Chinese versions of the *Saṃyuktāgama* locate the Sutta under the Bodhi tree. Moreover, these particulars are of little importance: the hagiographers' intention is not to inform us about the circumstances of time and place, but to describe the mental state of the recently enlightened Buddha (*prathamābhisaṃbuddha*), who was experiencing the happiness of deliverance (*vimuktisukhapratisaṃvedin*).

There is nothing astonishing in his having sought a teacher. In India there is no religious life without a guru; a monk who has no-one to respect and venerate condemns himself to failure and excludes himself from the Good Law.[5]

The Buddha examines the world of form, the world of subtle form and the formless world in order to find a śramaṇa or

brāhmaṇa who is superior to him in five eminent qualities. In all truth, these qualities do not appear clearly in the ten epithets which are commonly applied to him and with which adherents are accustomed to recollect him: Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha, endowed with knowledge and practice, Sugata, knower of the world, supreme leader of those beings to be won over who are men, instructor of gods and men, Buddha, Bhagavat.[6]

Before his enlightenment, Śākyamuni, like every human being, formed an assemblage of five aggregates (*skandha*): form (*rūpa*) or bodily form (*rūpakāya*), the seat of the four formless phenomena: feelings (*vedanā*), perceptions (*saṃjñā*), karmic formations (*saṃskāra*) and consciousness (*vijñāna*). These Skandhas form a series (*saṃtāna*) which is endlessly renewed and which, by reason of passions and actions, passes from existence to existence. They are conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) inasmuch as they arise from causes and conditions and, as such, they have the characteristics of arising (*utpāda*), disappearing (*vyaya*) and enduring-changing (*sthityanyathātva*).[7] They are also impure (*sāsrava*), in relation to the impurities which affect the triple world from top to bottom: 1-2. the *kāma-* and *bhavāsrava* respectively bind beings to the world of desire and to the two superior worlds; 3. the *avidyāsrava* or impurity of ignorance leads them into mental confusion which bars the truth from them.[8] The worldling (*loka*) imagines that the five impure Skandhas constitute a Self or belong to a Self, but these transitory (*anitya*) and painful (*duḥkha*) phenomena only represent a pseudo-personality. Nevertheless, for incalculable periods, for innumerable rebirths, Śākyamuni had multiplied virtuous actions and accumulated knowledges which made him a Bodhisattva, close to enlightenment. The first half of his last existence was marked by wonders and his body was already adorned with the marks of the Mahāpuruṣa.[9]

The psycho-physical elements are not those evoked here by the Buddha when he wants to compare himself to other śramaṇas and brāhmaṇas. He is taking into account another series of Skandhas, entirely pure[10] and without any relation to the passions and ignorances. These are in fact abstractions: 1. morality (*śīla*), 2. concentration (*samādhi*), 3. wisdom (*prajñā*), 4. deliverance (*vimukti*), 5. the knowledge and vision of deliverance (*vimukti-jñānadarśana*) which the Buddha brought to perfection (*sampad*)

during his Abhisaṃbodhi at Bodh-Gayā.[11] Morality, concentration and wisdom which divert from the world are the constituent elements of the Path of Nirvāṇa;[12] the wisdom which is a part of this Path is a holy right view (*samyagdṛṣṭi*), free from *āsravas* and transcendental; it culminates directly in Vimukti, mental deliverance resulting from wisdom (*cetovimukti* and *prajñāvimukti*).[13] The holy one's mind is freed from impurities (*āsravebhyaś cittaṃ vimuktam*) and, instantly, he has the knowledge and vision of that deliverance. He then declares: 'I have understood the noble truths, destroyed rebirth, lived the pure life, accomplished the duty; henceforth there will be no more rebirths for me'.[14]

It is specified that the five pure Skandhas are identical for all the holy ones, be they Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas or Buddhas, for 'between deliverance and deliverance there is no difference'.[15] It should not be concluded from this that Prajñā is the same for all since the equipment of merit and knowledge varies according to the three types of holy ones: by simplifying the problem to a minimum, it can be said that the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas especially know the general characteristics of dharmas, namely impermanence, suffering and impersonality, while the Buddhas know them in all their particular aspects; the omniscience (*sarvajñatā*) of the Buddhas is a universal knowledge relating to all the aspects of things (*sarvākārajñatā*).[16]

The five Skandhas which have just been referred to are called pure skandhas (*anāsravaskandha*), transcendental or supernatural skandhas (*lokottaraskandha*), skandhas of those who have no more training to do (*aśaikṣaskandha*), skandhas of the Law (*dharmaskandha*):[17] it is they that form Buddhas (*buddhakāraka*), i.e. they by reason of which, in the main, a certain person is called 'Buddha'.[18] Joining the five impure Skandhas which constitute the pseudo-personality, they provoke a renewal of the psycho-physical organism or, according to the traditional expression, a revolution of the support (*āśrayaparāvṛtti*).[19] The impure Skandhas will not be destroyed as such: they will continue to recur from moment to moment until the holy one's death. Between his enlightenment and his death, the holy one experiences Nirvāṇa 'with a remainder of conditioning (*sopadhiśeṣa*) in this world, since the elements of existence still persist in it and life continues.[20]

However, what counts henceforth for the holy one or for the Buddha (since the two notions do not differ here) are the five pure Skandhas, morality, etc., which form Tathāgatas. Whatever his external appearances, fleshly body or glorious body, the Buddha after his enlightenment is not a god, or a gandharva, or a yakṣa, or a man, since the impurities (*āsrava*) which could have made him any of these have forever disappeared: 'Know', he said to Droṇa, 'that I am a Buddha'.[21]

When the hour of death struck, the Buddha, just like the Arhats, casts off the five impure Skandhas which 'conditioned' his existence on earth and enters Parinirvāṇa 'without a remainder of conditioning' (*nirupadhiśeṣa*). Does this mean that the series of the five pure Skandhas are protected? Not at all, as it is explained in connection with the death of Śāriputra, the holy one enters Parinirvāṇa without taking with him the elements of morality, concentration, wisdom, deliverance, the knowledge and vision of deliverance.[22] Be they pure or impure, the Skandhas are conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) dharmas, arisen from causes and conditions, and as such are doomed to disappear.[23]

What then remains of the Buddha in Parinirvāṇa? Does he or does he not exist after death? This is a question which the Buddha himself refused to answer[24] and this refusal excuses us from tackling the problem. Whatever the circumstances, just as a flame extinguished by a breath of wind goes towards stillness, passes from sight, so the Wise Man casting off his names and form (*nāmarūpa*), that is, the five impure Skandhas, enters stillness; no measure can measure him, to speak of him there are no words, what the mind might conceive vanishes. Thus every path is closed to speech.[25]

In its Pali versions (A and B) the *Gāravasutta* has it that Śākyamuni searched for a teacher 'to perfect in himself the as yet unperfected (pure) Skandhas' (*aparipuṇṇassa sīla. . . kkhandhassa paripūriyā*), but this motive is passed over in silence by the Chinese translations (C and D), and it is difficult to see how the Buddha could have evoked it since the Abhisaṃbodhi he won a few days previously had ensured him of the *āsravakṣayajñāna* and *anutpādajñāna*: he knew for a fact that he had destroyed the impurities and that these would not recur again.[26]

Not finding any śramaṇa or brāhmaṇa who was superior to

him in the triple world, the Buddha attached himself to the Dharma, that is, the Law, the Truth, acknowledged by him at the moment of his enlightenment (*dhammo mayā abhisambuddho*) and which he had penetrated to the point of identifying with it: hence the epithet *dhammabhūta* sometimes applied to the Buddha.[27] However, the Dharma is an abstract notion and not a person; it is only metaphorically the Buddha's teacher. It is therefore with exactness of wording that, on the road to Vārāṇasī, the Buddha declares to the ājīvika Upaka: 'I have no teacher (*ācarya*), none is like me; in the world with its Devas and men none is equal to me'.[28]

What was the purport of that Dharma? The *Gāravasutta* is not very explicit: It is, it says, the Law acknowledged by the Buddha at the time of his enlightenment. The classical formula with which adherents recollect the Dharma is not much more instructive: The Law was well spoken by the Blessed One; it yields its fruit in the present existence; it is independent of time, it leads to the right place; it says 'come and see'; it is knowable internally by the wise.[29]

A more precise definition is provided by the *Āyācanasutta* (S I 136-8) which, in the *Saṃyuttanikāya*, precedes the *Gāravasutta* and is closely linked to it. The *Āyācanasutta* relates how, at the request of the god Brahmā Sahampati, the Blessed One consented to expound the Law: a well-known episode in the life of the Buddha and told by an infinite number of sources. These are the terms in which the Buddha describes his Dharma:[30]

> 'This dhamma, won to by me is deep, difficult to see, difficult to understand, tranquil, excellent, beyond dialectic, subtle, intelligible to the learned. . . For a creation delighting in sensual pleasure, delighted by sensual pleasure, rejoicing in sensual pleasure, this were a matter difficult to see, that is to say causal uprising by way of condition (*idappaccayatā paṭiccasamuppāda*). This too were a matter difficult to see, that is to say the tranquillising of all activities, the renunciation of all attachment, the destruction of craving, dispassion, stopping, nibbāna' (tr. Miss I. B. Horner).

This short paragraph condenses the whole of the philosophy of early Buddhism.

The things (*dharma*) which are the object of mental consciousness (*manovijñāna*) are divided into two main classes: the conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) and the unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*).[31]

The Saṃskṛtas, also called Saṃskāras, arise from causes and conditions (*hetupratyayasamutpanna*). Each has its own nature or characteristic (*svabhāva, svalakṣaṇa*), the reality of which is not contested. As general characteristics (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*), they all have arising (*utpāda*), disappearance (*vyaya*) and enduring-changing (*sthityanyathātva*).[32] Arising and perishing from instant to instant they are impermanent (*anitya*), painful (*duḥkha*) and, by this fact, devoid of a self (*anātman*) and anything belonging to the self (*anātmiya*).[33] Their successive appearances and disappearances are regulated by the Pratītyasamutpāda, a dependent arising consisting of twelve limbs going from ignorance (*avidyā*) to old-age-and-death (*jarāmaraṇa*) and in which intervene passion (*kleśa*), action (*karman*) and the fruits of action (*karmaphala*). The Pratītyasamutpāda is not an entity in itself,[34] but a norm defining the 'dharma-nature of dharmas' (*dharmatā*) or, according to a tradition current in China, the True Nature of dharmas. It was not created by the Buddha or by anyone else, and whether the Tathāgatas appear or not, this Dharmatā remains stable.[35]

In contrast to the Saṃskṛtas, the Asaṃskṛta is free from arising, free from disappearance and free from enduring-changing. It is exempt from the passions and in particular from those basic passions which are craving (*rāga*), hatred (*dveṣa*) and delusion (*moha*) which, by vitiating action, lead to the round of rebirth (*saṃsāra*). The Asaṃskṛta is the stopping of rebirth, the stilling of the mind, calm, Nirvāṇa.[36] But neither in the Asaṃskṛta nor in the Saṃskṛtas nor elsewhere is there found a permanent, stable, eternal and immovable principle: there is no self and nothing belongs to a self.

The ideas suggested here by the *Āyācanasutta* can be summarized in a concise formula: All Saṃskāras (or conditioned dharmas) are transitory; all Saṃskāras are painful; all dharmas (whether conditioned or unconditioned) are not-self; but calm is Nirvāṇa.[37]

The Dharma as it is conceived by early Buddhism pivots round an axis the two ends of which are arising (*utpāda*) and destruction (*nirodha*). To Saṃsāra, the world of contingence

regulated by the dependent arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*), it contrasts Nirvāṇa, the uncaused absolute. Saṃsāra is painful; Nirvāṇa is calm.

Mahāyānist interpretation of the Gāravasutta

Early Buddhism recognizes the reality of dharmas arisen from causes, but declares them to be impermanent, painful, empty of Me and Mine: it thus professes the emptiness of beings (*sattvaśūnyatā*) or the impersonality of individuals (*pudgalanairātmya*). It makes of the Pratītyasamutpāda, or dependent arising, the Dharmatā, that is the dharma-nature of conditioned dharmas. Faced with these, it posits an unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*), a stopping of the Pratītyasamutpāda, in other words, Nirvāṇa. The knowledge which relates to these truths and from which deliverance (*vimukti*) is derived is qualified as Prajñā anāsravā, or pure wisdom.

Examining the notion of impermanence more deeply, the Mahāyāna notes that dharmas which are empty of Me and Mine, arising from other dharmas which are empty of Me and Mine, do not exist in themselves, do not exist through themselves and are devoid of a self-nature or own characteristic (*svabhāvaśūnya svalakṣaṇaśūnya*): it thus professes the twofold emptiness of beings and things (*sattva-dharmaśūnyatā*). Furthermore, dharmas without a self-nature do not, in reality, arise. It therefore follows that their supposed Pratītyasamutpāda is merely a non-arising and that the Dharmatā which defines it has the sole characteristic of the absence of any characteristic (*ekalakṣaṇā yadutālakṣaṇā*).[38] But if there were no conditioned dharmas, of what use would the unconditioned which is contrasted to them be? Things which do not exist cannot be eliminated; a non-arising presupposes an arising. Conditioned or unconditioned, dharmas do not exist, are not perceived.[39] Consequently, valid knowledge is not a Prajñā attributing an arising (*utpāda*) and a destruction to dharmas arising from causes (*pratītyasamutpanna*), but a Prajñāpāramitā or Perfection of Wisdom not recognizing in things either arising or destruction. It relates to the twofold emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of beings and things; it penetrates the True

Nature of things (*dharmāṇāṃ dharmatā*) which is nothing but the absence of any characteristic (*alakṣaṇa*); it neither grasps nor rejects any dharma, whether conditioned or unconditioned, for the good reason that there is nothing to grasp or leave: the Prajñāpāramitā is merely the elimination of all the false views (*dṛṣṭi*),[40] beginning with those of existence and non-existence.

The highest aspiration of the Mahāyānist is to accede, as a Bodhisattva, to the knowledge of non-arising (*anutpādajñāna*) or, in the words of the traditional expression, to the certainty that dharmas do not arise (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*).[41] This conviction is definitively acquired in the eighth stage of the Bodhisattva's career: without being deflected (*ābhoga*) by anything whatever, the mind is finally appeased.

The *Gāravasutta* maintains that the Buddha chose the Dharma as his teacher and, in the words of the *Āyācanasutta*, this Dharma has as its basic doctrine the Pratītyasamutpāda. These two Suttas which appear in the Tipiṭaka are the words of the Buddha and to challenge them would be a serious offence (*saddharmapratikṣepa*). Those Mahāyānists who do not believe in the Pratītyasamutpāda find themselves in an embarrassing position and to get out of it do not hesitate to retouch the original text by substituting the Prajñāpāramitā for the 'Dharma acknowledged by the Buddha' during his enlightenment. This modification is of cardinal importance since it culminates in the rejection of the principle of causality. It can nevertheless be justified if the *Gārava-* and *Āyācanasuttas* are considered as Suttas whose 'meaning is to be interpreted' (*neyārthasūtra*), which is in accordance with the rules of Buddhist exegesis.[42]

However it may be, the author of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* elaborated a revised and corrected version of the *Gāravasutta*, this time in perfect agreement with the views of the Mahāyāna. This is how it is presented in the Chinese translation carried out by Kumārajīva in Ch'ang-an between A.D. 404 and 406 (T 1509, ch. 10, pp. 131*c*16–132*a*2):

> 'When the Buddha had just been enlightened (*prathamābhisaṃbuddha*) he said to himself: "Not to honour or serve anyone is not good. So who now, in the world of the ten directions, can be honoured and served? I want a master to serve".
>
> At that moment, the Devas, Brahmādevarāja, etc., said to the Buddha: "The Buddha is peerless (*anuttara*); no-one surpasses him". The Buddha also, with his divine eye (*divyacakṣus*), saw that, in the worlds of the three time-periods (*tryadhvan*) and the ten directions (*daśadiś*), no-one was superior to the Buddha. He reflected and said to himself: "I, by practising the Prajñāpāramitā, have now reached Abhisaṃbodhi: it is that which I honour; it is my master (*śāstṛ*); I should respect, venerate and serve this Dharma".
>
> There was a tree called Hao-chien (Very strong). That tree was to be found at the centre of the earth; it was a hundred years old; its branches and leaves were perfect. One day, it grew a hundred cubits. When that tree had grown, it looked for (another) tree under which to shelter. Then, in the forest, a deity said to the Hao-chien tree: "In the world there is no tree greater than you; all trees will shelter in your shade".
>
> For the Buddha, it is the same: for innumerable incalculable periods (*asaṃkhyeyakalpa*), he dwelled in the Bodhisattva's stages (*bhūmi*); one day when he was sitting under the Bodhi tree, on the diamond seat (*vajrāsana*), he in truth knew the Nature of dharmas (*dharmāṇāṃ dharmatā*) and realized Abhisaṃbodhi. Then he said to himself: "Whom can I honour and serve as a master? I should hold him in esteem, respect and venerate him". At that moment, the Devas, Brahmādevarāja, etc., said to the Buddha: "The Buddha is peerless; no-one surpasses him"'.

This new version differs in several points from the Pali *Gāravasutta*.

Like the Chinese translations of this Sutta, it no longer locates the event under the Goatherd's Banyan, but under a tree called here Hao-chien, which everything indicates as being the Bodhi tree, in these circumstances the aśvattha (ficus religiosa) in the shade of which Śākyamuni won enlightenment.[43] The myth of the holy tree is common to all ancient civilizations. In India, already attested to in the prehistorical period, it occupied a major place in vedic and brahmanic literature.[44] According to Buddhists, it is inhabited by one of the forest deities and is to

be found at the centre of the earth of which it is the navel (*pṛthivīnābhi*). The Bodhimaṇḍa, that is the area which surrounds it, is the spot where, from age to age, all the Buddhas without exception attain Abhisaṃbodhi. However, the ground would be too weak to support the weight of a Bodhisattva entered into the Diamond-like Concentration (*vajropamasamādhi*) which shatters the last attachments to the world. Thus when the Bodhisattva has taken his place in that venerable spot, a layer of diamond (*vajra*), emerging suddenly from the Circle of Waters, comes to substitute itself for the ground, and it is on a Diamond seat (*vajrāsana*) that the Bodhisattva becomes a Buddha.[45] The *Upadeśa* refers here to this collection of traditions by drawing attention to the Bodhi tree, the forest deities and the Diamond seat at Bodh-Gayā.

The *Upadeśa* maintains that the Hao-chien tree was already a hundred years old when it reached full florescence and when suddenly, in one day, it grew by a hundred cubits. In the same way, it is only after long practice carried out over incalculable periods (*asaṃkhyeyakalpa*) that a Bodhisattva reaches maturity and when suddenly, in one night, he wins Abhisaṃbodhi and becomes a Buddha. This establishing of a parallel of the growth of a tree with the life of a Buddha is not a new procedure. It had already been exploited in a section, doubtless apocryphal, of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*: an Udumbara (ficus glomerata) which grew on the bank of Lake Mandākinī reproduced in its own way the events marking the life of Śākyamuni: conception, birth, childhood, great departure, life of austerity, enlightenment and parinirvāṇa.[46] In Kuśinagara, the two Śāla trees (shorea robusta), under which the Buddha entered parinirvāṇa, bloomed out of season and spread their flowers over the Blessed One's body.[47]

In the *Upadeśa*, the cosmic perspectives are endlessly developed. When the Buddha seeks a master, this is no longer within the narrow limits of a universe of four continents, but in the innumerable universes of the three time-periods and ten directions.[48]

The part attributed to the Brahmadevas is modified. Previously, Brahmā Sahampati appeared in order to point out to the Buddha that, for all times, the holy ones have the custom of venerating and serving the Dharma. Here the Brahmadevas attest that, in the entire universe, no-one is superior to the Buddha.

Finally, according to the Pali *Gāravasutta*, the doctrine that the Buddha chose as his teacher is, essentially, that of the Pratītyasamutpāda or dependent arising constituting the Dharmatā, that is the 'Dharma-nature of dharmas'.[49] Conversely, for the *Upadeśa* the Dharmatā is the True Nature of dharmas, the sole characteristic of which is the absence of characteristic and which excludes all arising (*utpāda*) and all destruction (*nirodha*). The Prajñāpāramitā is the only wisdom which can conceive of it, but knows it by not knowing it.

The *Upadeśa* returns on practically every page to True Nature, and even while proclaiming it to be undefinable, formulates it in the following way:

> The True Nature of dharmas (*dharmāṇāṃ dharmatā*) is unarisen and undestroyed, neither defiled nor purified, neither existent nor non-existent, neither grasped nor rejected, always stilled, perfectly pure, like space, indefinable and inexpressible; it destroys all the paths of speech; it surpasses the sphere of thoughts and mentals; it is the same as Nirvāṇa: it is the Dharma of the Buddhas.[50]
>
> The Dharma of the Buddhas is the True Nature of dharmas (*dharmāṇāṃ dharmatā*). This True Nature is without arising, without destruction, without interruption, without permanence, without unity, without plurality, without arrival or departure, without grasping, without disturbance, without attachment, without support, non-existent, the same as Nirvāṇa.[51]

Thus formulated, the Mahāyānist Dharmatā is the exact opposite of the Pratītyasamutpāda as it is conceived by the Elders. It marks an important turning-point in the evolution of Buddhist thought, but this was not unexpected. After having denied impermanent dharmas all personality, it is good logic to refuse them any real arising. What is impermanent (*anitya*) is not-self (*anātman*) and what is not-self does not truly arise (*anutpanna*). From the start, dharmas are unarisen (*anutpanna*), undestroyed (*aniruddha*), the same as Nirvāṇa (*nirvāṇasama*): such is the last word of a Wisdom which eludes all views, destroys all speech and stops the functioning of the mind.[52]

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Notes

* I am greatly indebted to Sara Boin, who has been kind enough to provide the English version of this article.

Editions and works mentioned frequently in this article are quoted in abbreviated form as follows:

Kośa = L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu traduit et annoté par L. de La Vallée Poussin, 6 vols, Paris, Geuthner, 1923-31.

Kośabhāṣya = Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu ed. by P. Pradhan, 2nd edn, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, VIII, Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, 1975.

Kośavyākhyā = Sphūtārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā ed. by U. Wogihara, Publishing Association of Abhidharmakośavyākhyā, Tokyo, 1932-6.

Traité = Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna, tr. par É. Lamotte, tomes I et II (Bibliothèque du Muséon, No. 18), Louvain, 1944-9; tomes III et IV (Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain, Nos 2 et 12), Louvain, 1970-6.

Upadeśa = Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa, T 1509.

1 F. L. Woodward, *Gradual Sayings II*, London, PTS, 1933, p.22, n.3. In this passage the Buddha demonstrates his great respect for the Saṃgha which, at that time, had not yet been founded.

2 *Traité* I 419, n.1.

3 Vin I 1-4; cf. *Nidānakathā* in Ja I 77-8.

4 According to Spk I 203,18 and 195,7.

5 A III 7: condemnation of the *agārava* and *appatissa* monk.

6 A III 285; V 329, etc.

7 S III 37; A I 152: *Tīṇ' imāni bhikkhave saṅkhatassa saṅkhatalakkhaṇāni. Katamāni tīṇi. Uppādo paññāyati, vayo paññāyati, ṭhitassa* (var. *ṭhitānaṃ*) *aññathattaṃ paññāyati.* – Cf. the Sanskrit formula in C. Tripāṭhī, *Fünfundzwanzig Sūtras des Nidānasaṃyukta*, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1962, p.139; *Kośavyākhyā*, p.171; *Prasannapadā* Mūlamadhyamakakārikā ed. L. de la Vallée Poussin, St. Petersburg, Bibliotheca Buddhica IV, 1903-13, p.145.

8 The three or four āsravas vitiate all the conditioned dharmas with the exception of the dharmas of the Path (*Kośa* I 6); they are defined in M I 7; S IV 256, etc.

9 According to the *Traité* III 1340-62, the Buddhānusmṛti should relate not only to the ten appellations (*adhivacana*) of the Buddha, but also to the wonders of his birth, his physical marks and especially to his pure Skandhas and his omniscience.

10 On these five pure Skandhas, see D III 279; M I 145; 214; 217; S I 99-100; 139; V 162; A I 162; III 134; 271; V 16; It 107-8; *Kośa* VI 297, n.; *Kośavyākhyā*, p.607.

11 These pure Skandhas had already been cultivated by Śākyamuni in the course of his long career as a Bodhisattva, but only became truly pure at the time of his enlightenment; they are then qualified as sampad, perfections. Cf. M I 145; A III 12-14.

12 These are the three asekhakkhandhas. D II 81; A I 291; It 51.

13 M III 72, describes Pure Wisdom in the following way: There are, O monks, two kinds of right views (*sammādiṭṭhi*). There is a right but impure (*sāsavā*) view, having value only from the point of view of merit (*puññabhāgiyā*) and only yielding fruit in this world (*upadhivepakkā*). There is a right view, noble (*ariyā*), pure (*anāsavā*), transcendental (*lokuttarā*), a limb of the Path (*maggaṅga*). The latter pertains to the noble mind (*ariyacitta*), to the purified mind (*anāsavacitta*), closely linked to the noble Path (*ariyamaggassa samaṅgi*) and cultivating that Path: this is wisdom (*paññā*), the faculty of wisdom (*paññindriya*), the power of wisdom (*paññābala*), the limb of enlightenment discerning things (*dhammavicayasambhojjhaṅga*) the right view which is a limb of the Path (*sammādiṭṭhi maggaṅga*).

The Prajñā anāsrava is the only wisdom which culminates directly in complete and final liberation. This liberation is the deliverance of the mind due to Prajñā: cf. *Kośa* VI 297.

14 On enlightenment as deliverance, see my article 'Die bedingte Entsehung und die höchste Erleuchtung', in *Beiträge zur Indienforschung: Ernst Waldschmidt zum 80. Geburtstag gewidmet*, Berlin, Veröffentlichungen des Museums für indische Kunst Berlin, IV, 1977, pp.292-7.

15 Provided one is freed of the impurities (*āsrava*) and has attained holiness (*arhattva*), there is not the slightest difference between deliverance and deliverance. Cf. A III 34; M II 129; S V 410: *Ettha kho pan' esāhaṃ na kiñci nānākaraṇaṃ vadāmi yad idaṃ vimuttiyā vimuttiṃ.*

16 There are quite a few other differences between the Prajñā of the Buddhas and that of the Śrāvakas who have become Arhats. The knowledge of the Buddhas is not derived from a teaching because they enlighten themselves (*anupadiṣṭajñānaṃ svayam abhisaṃbodhanārthena*); it brings about not only the destruction of the passions, but also eliminates all the impregnations (*vāsanā*): cf. *Kośa* VII 82-3.

17 See the references in *Kośa* VI 297, n.2.

18 *Kośa* IV 77; *Kośabhāṣya*, p.216: *yo buddhaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchati aśaikṣān asau buddhakarakān dharmāñ charaṇaṃ gacchati yeṣāṃ prādhānyena sa ātmabhāvo buddha ity ucyate yeṣāṃ vā lābhena sarvāvabodhisāmarthyād buddho bhavati.*

Whoever takes refuge in the Buddha does not take refuge in his fleshly body (*māṃsakāya*), but in the Arhat qualities – the five pure Skandhas – which form Buddhas. On this question see L. de La Vallée Poussin, 'Documents d'Abhidharma; la doctrine des Refuges' in *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* I, 1931-2, pp.65-109.

19 *Kośa* VII 81, n.1.

20 Cf. L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Nirvāṇa*, Paris, Beauchesne, 1925, pp. 175-7.

21 A II 37-9; *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, ch. 4, p.28*a*20-28*b*18; *Ekottarāgama*, T 125, ch.31, pp.717*c*18-718*a*12. – Śākyamuni showed little respect for his fleshly body which he called body of filth (S III 120), and for his relics (D II 141). Although many epithets were justifiably applied to him (A III 285; V 329, etc), he only laid claim to one: that of Buddha (Vin I 9).

22 S V 162 (= *Saṃyukta*, T 99, ch.24, p.176*c*11-13): *Na āyasmā Sāriputto sīlakkhandhaṃ vā ādāya. . . vimuttiñāṇadassanakkhandhaṃ vā ādāya parinibbuto.*

23 According to the immutable principle: *Yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhamman ti.* References in F. L. Woodward, etc., *Pāli Tipiṭakaṃ Concordance II*, London, PTS, 1973, p.513*b*.

24 This is included among the fourteen difficult questions not settled by the Buddha (*avyākṛtavastu*): cf. D I 187-9; M I 157; S III 213-16; *Traité* I 154-5.

25 Sn 1074 and 1076; cf. D I 46.

26 *Kośa* VI 240, 251.

27 D III 84,25; M I 111,13; III 195,6; 224,27; S IV 94,31; A V 226,25; 256,29.

28 Vin I 8; CPS p.128; *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu* I, ed. R. Gnoli, Roma, Ismeo, 1977, p.132. This stanza is quoted in the commentary to the *Saṃyutta* on the *Gāravasutta*, Spk I 204.

29 A III 285; V 329, etc.

30 M I 167; Vin I 4-5: *Adhigato kho myāyaṃ dhammo gambhīro duddaso duranubodho santo paṇīto atakkāvacaro nipuṇo paṇḍitavedanīyo. . . Ālayarāmāya kho pana pajāya ālayaratāya ālayasammuditāya duddasaṃ idaṃ ṭhānaṃ yad idaṃ idappaccayatā paṭiccasamuppādo; idam pi kho ṭhānaṃ sududdasaṃ yad idaṃ sabbasaṃkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhakkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānaṃ.*

This long definition is also found, with some divergences, in the Mvu III 313,18-314,17, and in several Vinayas, except for that of the Mūlasarvāstivādins: see *Vin. of the Mahīśāsakas*, T 1421, ch.15, p.103*c*8-12; *Vin. of the Dharmaguptakas*, T 1428, ch.32, p.787*a*1-5.

According to the Majjhima Commentary (Ps II 174) the Dhamma discovered by the Buddha is that of the four noble truths (*catusaccadhamma*). It will be noted that the doctrine of the Pratītyasamutpāda is not differentiated from the second of these truths.

31 The Theravādins using the Pali language and the Vātsīputrīyas accept only one unconditioned: Nirvāṇa. The Sarvāstivādins and the Vaibhāṣikas from Kaśmīr posit three of them. Yet other schools count up to nine: cf. L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Nirvāṇa*, Paris, Beauchesne, 1925, pp.180-7.

32 These are the three 'conditioned characteristics' of the conditioned things (*saṃskṛtasya saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*). Cf. A I 152; S III 37; *Kośa* II 223; *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 171. Other references in *Traité* I 36-7; III 1163.

33 According to the formula: *Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ. . .* References in *Traité* IV 1997.

34 Although certain schools consider it as an Asaṃskṛta, the twelve-limbed Pratītyasamutpāda is not a subsisting entity since all its limbs are impermanent and doomed to destruction (S II 26). The problem is discussed in *Kośa* III 77.

35 *Nidānasaṃyukta*, ed. Ch. Tripāṭhī, p. 164 (= *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, ch.12, p.85*b*23-6): *Kin nu bhagavatā pratītyasamutpādaḥ kṛta aho svid anyaiḥ. – Na bhikṣo mayā pratītyasamutpādaḥ kṛto nāpy anyaiḥ. api tūtpādād vā tathāgatānām anutpādād vā sthitā eveyaṃ dharmatā dharmasthitaye dhātuḥ.*

36 A I 152; S IV 251; 261.

37 These are the three or four seals (*mudrā*) or summaries (*uddāna*) of the Law, often evoked in the two Vehicles. See the references in *Traité* III 1369.

38 All these Mahāyānist theories are developed in the *Traité* IV 2015-21. The formula 'dharmas have only one characteristic, namely that of the absence of characteristic' (*ekalakṣaṇaṃ yad utālakṣaṇam*) is common in the Prajñāpāramitāsūtras: cf. *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, ed. N. Dutt, London, Luzac, 1934, pp.164, 225, 244, 258, 261, 262, etc.

39 *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, p.135,20: *dharmā na vidyante nopalabhyante.*

40 The Prajñāpāramitā is the non-grasping and the non-rejecting of all dharmas: cf. *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, p.135,2: *yaḥ sarvadharmāṇām aparigraho 'nutsargaḥ sā prajñāpāramitā.* It is the same as Emptiness which is the relinquishing of all views: cf. *Kāśyapaparivarta*, ed. A. von Staël-Holstein, Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1926, p.97: *sarvadṛṣṭigatānāṃ śūnyatā niḥsaraṇam.*

41 On this anutpattikadharmakṣānti, see É. Lamotte, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti* rendered into English by S. Boin, SBB XXXII, London, PTS, 1976, pp.289-91.

42 These rules are formulated in the *Catuḥpratisaraṇasūtra* or Sūtra of the Four Refuges: cf. É. Lamotte, 'La critique d'interprétation dans le bouddhisme', *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire orientales et slaves*, IX, 1949, pp.341-54. Some schools, notably those of the Sarvāstivādins and Vaibhāṣikas, do not believe that all the Blessed One's words were in accordance with the meaning (*yathārtha*); among the Sūtras, some are of precise meaning (*nītārtha*), but others are of undetermined meaning and need to be interpreted by exegetists.

43 On the Bodhivṛkṣa, see G. P. Malalasekera, *DPPN* II 319-22; *Hōbōgirin, Dictionnaire encyclopédique du Bouddhisme d'après les sources chinoises et japonaises* I, Tokyo, Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1939, pp. 90-1, s.v. *Bodaiju; Encyclopaedia of Buddhism III*, 2, Ceylon, Government Press, 1972, pp.249-52, s.v. *Bodhi-Tree.*

44 See O. Viennot, *Le Culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne*, Paris,

Annales du Musée Guimet, tome LIX[e], 1954.

45 *Upadeśa*, T 1509, ch. 34, pp. 310*c*22-311*a*2: According to some, when the Bodhisattva reaches the foot of the Bodhi tree, he sits at that spot and obtains supreme and perfect enlightenment. At that moment, the Bodhisattva penetrates the True Nature of dharmas, and from then on there is no more earth (*pṛthivī*) which might support him. Why? The earth is illusion for beings and exists as a fruition (*vipāka*) resulting from former actions: that is why it is not able to support the Bodhisattva. When the Bodhisattva is on the point of realizing Saṃbodhi, he has as his body (*kāya*) the knowledge of the True Nature (*dharmatājñāna*), and from then on the place where he sits changes into Vajra.

According to others, the Earth (*pṛthivī*) rests in the Circle of Gold (*kāñcanamaya maṇḍala*); this Circle of Gold rests on the Vajra; from the upper end of the Vajra emerges a terrace (*prāsāda*) like a lotus flower (*padmapuṣpa*); just above, it supports the spot where the Bodhisattva is sitting and prevents him from sinking in. That is why the area of enlightenment (*bodhimaṇḍa*) where the Bodhisattva sits is called Vajra.

Finally, according to others, as soon as the Bodhisattva has realized Saṃbodhi, every place where the Bodhisattva takes up the four bodily attitudes (*īryapatha*) changes into diamond.

The second explanation is based on cosmological conceptions which have varied in the course of time: compare D II 107, and *Kośavyākhyā*, p. 15 with *Kośa* III 138-41 and *Kośabhāṣya*, pp. 157-8. Also see Hsüan-chuang, *Hsi yü chi*, T 2087, ch. 8, p. 915*b*15-18.

Carved representations of the outer Vajrāsana in A.K. Coomaraswamy, *La Sculpture de Bodhgayā*, Ars Asiatica XVIII, Paris, Editions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1935, pl. XLIV and XLV.

46 E. Waldschmidt, *MPS*, pp. 469-70; Idem, *Die Überlieferung vom Lebensende des Buddha*, Göttingen, 1944-8, p. 224, n. 37.

47 *MPS*, p. 398.

48 The grandiose cosmic system which multiplies to infinity the great chiliocosms is not unknown to the early Scriptures (cf. A I 227), but is only fully exploited in the Mahāyānasūtras.

49 Many are the Sūtras identifying the *paṭiccasamuppāda* with the *dhamma*, *dhammatā* and *tathatā*: cf. W. Rāhula, 'Wrong Notions of Dhammatā (Dharmatā)', in L. Cousins (et al.), *Buddhist studies in honour of I. B. Horner*, Dordrecht, Reidel, 1974, pp. 187-8.

50 *Upadeśa*, T 1509, ch. 23, p. 235*a*4-7. Cf. the definitions of the 'True Nature of all dharmas' in the *Pañcaviṃśati*, T 223, ch. 2, p. 231*b*13-14; ch. 3, p. 234*c*12; ch. 4, p. 244*a*1-2; ch. 6, p. 257*b*13-14; ch. 23, p. 392*a*19-24; ch. 27, p. 416*c*8-11.

51 *Upadeśa*, T 1509, ch. 34, p. 313*a*11-13. This definition starts with a reproduction of the famous kārikā by Nāgārjuna:

anirodham anutpādam anucchedam aśāśvatam/
anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam//

52 These ideas are developed in *Traité* II 1060.

DEVAS AND ADHIDEVAS IN BUDDHISM

In a paper published in the Waldschmidt Festschrift[1] I have examined the text of what is said to be one of the only two suttas in the Pali canon in which the Buddha is specifically asked about the existence of the devas.[2] In that examination of the *Saṅgārava-sutta* (= M II 209-13)[3] I have shown (I hope convincingly) that the existing editions and translations of the sutta are not satisfactory, with the result that the answer which the Buddha gave to his questioner has been misunderstood.

In the present paper I wish to examine the second of the two suttas, the *Kaṇṇakatthala-sutta* (= M II 125-33), since I believe that this too has been misunderstood. In this sutta Pasenadi, the king of Kosala, comes to the Buddha and asks him a series of questions. He asks first about omniscience, and then about the four castes. The Buddha answers his questions. Pasenadi then asks: *kim pana, bhante, atthi devā*. 'But, sir, do devas exist?' Instead of replying immediately, the Buddha repeats the question: *kim pana tvaṃ, mahārāja, evaṃ vadesi 'kim pana, bhante, atthi devā'*. 'But why, great king, do you ask this question?'

It seems that Pasenadi takes this counter-question as meaning, 'Why do you ask? The question is unnecessary,' for he then continues with his questioning. Buddhaghosa, when commenting upon this passage, places this interpretation upon the Buddha's reply and states: *kiṃ, mahārāja, kin tvaṃ 'santi devā Cātummahārājikā, santi devā Tāvatiṃsā . . . pe . . . santi devā Paranimmitavasavattino, santi devā tatuttariṃ' evaṃ devānaṃ atthibhāvaṃ na jānāsi yena evaṃ vadesi* (Ps III 359,22 foll.). 'Are you unaware of the existence of such devas as the Cātummahārājika devas and the Tāvatiṃsa devas, that you ask this question?'

Pasenadi then continues: *yadi vā te, bhante, devā āgantāro itthattaṃ, yadi vā anāgantāro itthattaṃ*. 'Will those devas return to this earthly state, or will they not?' That is to say: 'Will those devas come back to existence as men, or are they non-returners?' It seems to me that Pasenadi's question reveals some knowledge of the Buddha's teaching, or at least something very similar to it. We find, for example, the Buddha saying: *ime vā pana bhonto*