Gāndhāri and the Early Chinese Buddhist Translations Reconsidered: The Case of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra

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GÂNDHÂRÎ AND THE EARLY CHINESE BUDDHIST TRANSLATIONS RECONSIDERED: THE CASE OF THE SADDHARMAPUÑḌARIKÂSÂTRA

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Scholars have for several decades now assumed that most if not virtually all of the Indic texts transmitted to China in the first few centuries of the Common Era were written in a Northwest Middle Indic language widely known as Gândhârî. Much of the data for this hypothesis has derived from the reconstructed pronunciation of Chinese transcriptions of Indian proper names and Buddhist technical terms contained in the early Chinese Buddhist translations. This paper, inspired by the recent brilliant work of Seishi Karashima, attempts to reexamine this assumption from another angle. A closer look at problems in the translation process itself reveals that the collaboration of the Chinese members of the early translation teams may have been instrumental in formulating the final shape these renderings assumed. Such a realization will require us to reassess our use of these documents for the history of Indian Buddhist languages and texts.

I. THE GÂNDHÂRÎ HYPOTHESIS

It has for some time now been assumed that many if not most of the early Chinese Buddhist translations derive from originals written in Northwest Middle Indic. A number of scholars have attempted to show that the reconstructed pronunciation of many of the Chinese transcriptions of Indian proper names and Buddhist technical terms in these translations reflect a Prakrit source text that has much in common with, and perhaps is even identical to, a language now widely known as Gândhârî.

While there can be little doubt that the Chinese translators often heard recitations of Indic texts that were heavily Prakritized, containing a number of features that coincide with what we know of the Gândhârî language, it is not as certain that they saw such texts. This is to say, what has not been sufficiently taken into consideration is the fundamentally oral/aural nature of the translation process in China. This paper is an attempt to take such a process into account and to raise some caveats with regard to our understanding of the underlying Indian language of these translations.

Until quite recently, there were few thorough examinations of the early Chinese Buddhist translations. With the exception of a few brave Japanese souls, scholars of both Indian and Chinese Buddhism have generally been put off by the difficult if not at times impenetrable language of these texts. Moreover, there has been little to attract scholars to these abstruse texts. While the translations of the first few centuries of the Common Era had considerable impact on the gentry Buddhism that emerged after the collapse of the Han dynasty, they were subsequently eclipsed by the translations of Kumârâjiva and his successors. It was these later translations that had a greater impact on the development of the indigenous schools of Chinese Buddhism.

From the other side of the Himalayas, Indologists have generally questioned—with good reason—the reliability of these first attempted translations as documents for the study of Indian Buddhism. The majority of our historical data—prefaces, colophons, early bibliographies, etc.—paint a rather dismal picture of the earliest translation teams in China. The Indian or Central Asian missionary is frequently described as having little or no skill in Chinese; it is virtually certain that practically no Chinese of this early period commanded any Indian literary language; and it is not at all clear how these texts were copied, transmitted, or preserved. As a result, it has been universally accepted that the translations of later Indian-trained specialists such as Xuanzang, as well as the very
Be that as it may, the early translations are currently enjoying an upsurge of scholarly attention. This new-found interest has come from two camps. Sinologists, led in the West by Erik Zürcher, have sought to mine these texts as repositories of early Chinese vernacular language. The fundamentally oral/aural nature of the translation process in China—a process that will be discussed in detail below—has left remnants of what appears to be the spoken idiom of Luoyang during the first few centuries C.E.\(^1\) Indologists, on the other hand, have been drawn to these texts as early representatives of Mahāyāna Buddhist sūtras drafted at a time thought to be rather close, by Indian standards, to that of their composition. In fact, these early translations predate our oldest Sanskrit manuscripts by as many as four or five centuries and may well reveal an earlier redaction of the Indian textual tradition. In addition, it is also believed that these early translations may contain clues concerning the Indic language of transmission. Given the fact that almost all of our extant Indic language materials date from a period when Sanskritization had already profoundly reshaped their idiom, these early Chinese sources may be one of our few windows into their earlier Middle Indic stage.

Already in 1914 Paul Pelliot had surveyed the transcriptions of proper names in the Chinese translations of the *Milindapañha* in order to reconstruct their underlying Indic forms.\(^2\) While Pelliot had noted similarities between some of the names in the Chinese texts and forms originating in Northwest India, as well as the possibility of Iranian influence, this was, in his own words, "une étude provisoire."

In the early 1930s Friedrich Weller and Ernst Waldschmidt turned their attention to the early fifth-century Chinese translation of the *Dirghāgama*.\(^3\) Weller examined thirty-six transcriptions from the fifteenth *sūtra* of the *Dirghāgama*, noting that their reconstructed pronunciation showed many features closer to Prakrit than to Sanskrit, though he hesitated to label the specific idiom. Waldschmidt investigated an even larger body of transcriptions from the nineteenth *sūtra* (the *Mahāsamādā-sūtra*).\(^4\) He was perhaps the first to notice similarities between the reconstructed language of these Chinese transcriptions and the language of the Dutreuil de Rhins manuscript of the *Dharmapada* that had been discovered in the late nineteenth century.\(^5\) Nevertheless, there were unresolved problems that kept Waldschmidt from drawing firm conclusions concerning the nature of the underlying Prakrit.

The first attempt to identify and describe the features of the Middle Indic idiom that appears in some of these early Chinese translations as well as in a number of Central Asian languages is the groundbreaking article by H. W. Bailey entitled "Gândhārī," by which name scholars have continued to identify this Northwest Prakrit.\(^6\) For Bailey, this Middle Indic language encompassed the Aśokan *kharoṣṭhi* edicts from Shāhbazgarh and Māneśhā,\(^7\) the various donative inscriptions from northwest India,\(^8\) the *Dharmapada* found near Khotan (the Dutreuil de Rhins manuscript),\(^9\) the documents from the ancient Shanshan kingdom found at Niya and Loulan,\(^10\) and the miscellaneous traces preserved in Central Asian and Chinese sources.

Since the publication of Bailey's article, attention paid to this language has steadily increased. In 1962 John Brough published a masterful study of the Gândhārī *Dharmapada* which thoroughly discussed all aspects of the discovery, publication, and language of the manuscript as well as its relationship to other versions of the text. In discussing the broader role of Gândhāri Prakrit in the transmission of Buddhist texts, Brough also advanced the growing consensus that some early Chinese translations may have been translated from originals writ-

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\(^1\) See Zürcher 1977 and 1991.
\(^2\) Pelliot 1914.
\(^3\) Weller 1930 and Waldschmidt 1932, esp. pp. 226–49.
\(^4\) A revised edition of this text and a discussion of its language in light of fifty more years of research can be found in Waldschmidt 1980.
\(^5\) Waldschmidt 1932, esp. pp. 231ff.
\(^6\) Bailey 1946.
\(^7\) Prior to Bailey's article, the language of the Aśokan edicts had received extensive analysis by such scholars as Johansson, Senart, Bühler, and Woolner. For a systematic description of the language of the *kharoṣṭhi* edicts, see Hultzsch 1925, lxxiv–xcix. The corpus of Aśokan studies that has since accumulated is now quite large, constituting something of a sub-field in its own right.
\(^8\) On the language of these inscriptions, see Konow 1929, xcv–cxcv. Many important contributions have since been made toward clarifying some of the problems posed by these epigraphs, particularly by H. W. Bailey, Gérard Fussman, and Richard Salomon; see the bibliography in Fussman 1989, 488–98.
\(^9\) For a list of the early studies on the linguistic problems of this text, see Brough 1962, viii–x.
\(^10\) Boyer et al. 1920–29 and Burrow 1937. See also the rather comprehensive list of *kharoṣṭhi* text/Gândhārī Prakrit related publications focusing on finds from Chinese Turkestan (Xinjiang) in Lin 1996.
ten in Gândhâri. Brough was prudently cautious in his remarks, recognizing that very few texts had been systematically studied with this problem in mind. However, within three years—and with no further studies undertaken to my knowledge—he was able to state: “Sufficient evidence, however, has now accumulated to establish that the originals of these early Chinese translations were mostly, even if not exclusively, texts written in the Northwestern (Gândhâri) Prakrit.” While Brough’s newfound certainty is indeed curious, it is noteworthy that his conclusions concerning the role of Gândhâri Prakrit have been regularly repeated by subsequent scholars, generating what I call the “Gândhâri hypothesis.”

Franz Bernhard, in an oft-cited article published in 1970, reiterated the now firmly established Gândhâri hypothesis:

> Phonetic transcriptions in early Chinese translations of Buddhist texts make it clear that Gândhâri was the medium in which Buddhism was first propagated in Central Asia, the medium through which Indian culture was transmitted from the northwest across Central Asia to China.13

Bernhard describes Gândhâri as “the Buddhist missionary dialect par excellence,” a kind of lingua franca comparable to ecclesiastical Latin of the European Middle Ages.

It is difficult to know what would constitute evidence for a lingua franca in Central Asia on the basis of the rather scanty extant records. There can be no doubt that Gândhâri had a noticeable impact on other languages it encountered in Central Asia, and most scholars have assumed that it had been most widely influential during the height of the Kushan empire in the first few centuries of the Common Era. Whether this impact can be described as the impact of a lingua franca, a common language shared by speakers of diverse language groups for the purposes of commerce, administration, or religious intercourse, is far more uncertain.17

Bernhard would like to see the Dharmaguptaka school as primarily responsible for this spread of Gândhâri in Central Asia. Some of Bernhard’s evidence indicating such a role for the Dharmaguptakas, however, has recently been shown to be problematic. Furthermore, it is well known that the Sarvâstivâdins had the most substantial presence in Central Asia, at least as discernible from the preserved remains of Buddhist literature in this region and from the reports of Chinese pilgrims passing through. And, not insignificantly, the Sarvâstivâdins are specifically connected with the Sanskritization of

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11 Brough 1962, 50–54.
12 Brough 1965, 587.
13 Bernhard 1970, 57.
14 On the problem of categories of language in Central Asia, see Nattier 1990.
15 Bailey 1946 discussed this influence on Khotanese and Tokharian among other Central Asian languages; for a survey of the impact of Gândhâri on Parthian and Sogdian, see Sims-Williams 1983.
16 Douglas Hitch has attempted to pinpoint this influence more precisely (Hitch 1988). He argues that Kushan control of the southern silk route and the northwest Tarim Basin coincided with the rise of Kaniška—taking his ascension as the traditional 78 C.E. On the basis of Chinese historical accounts and numismatic evidence, Hitch hypothesized that this domination probably lasted only until midway through the reign of Huviška, or approximately thirty-five years, when Chinese campaigns reasserted themselves in the western regions (Hitch 1988, 185–86). Hitch’s thesis, however, depends upon the often repeated but never substantiated supposition that Kushan expansion beyond the Pamirs could only have occurred under Kaniška. Moreover, the evidence of Kushan control of the Tarim Basin has consisted of little hard data: “The paucity of Kushan coins in the area and the absense of other substantial evidence, literary or archeological, make it likely that Kushan interests were strategic or commercial and that they did not rule directly over much of the region for any considerable time” (Rosenfield 1967, 43).
17 The only clear case to draw from on this issue is the corpus of texts from the ancient kingdom of Shanshan. While these administrative documents are written in a kind of Gândhâri Prâkrit, it is also clear from internal linguistic evidence that the local spoken language of this region was a Tokharian dialect, albeit one that differs from that of either Agni or Kucha; see Burrow 1935. In addition, we know that Chinese became used at least for business purposes from the time of Emperor Wu’s conquest of Kroraina (Chin. Loulan) in 263. Like much of Central Asia, Shanshan was clearly a multilingual society. For a recent description of what these documents reveal about social, political, and religious life in this region, see Atwood 1991.
19 For example, Bernhard claimed that an early Chinese translation of the Karmavâcana belongs to the Dharmaguptaka school. However, as Hisashi Matsumura has recently pointed out, the text in question is a mere extract from the Dharmaguptaka-vinaya: “Once it has become clear that the extant two Chinese Karmavâcana texts of the Dharmaguptakas were compiled in China, it is entirely meaningless to discuss what the original language of the Karmavâcana of this school was” (Matsumura 1990, 69).
canonical literature. Nevertheless, some connection with the Dharmaguptakas is not entirely without basis. The Chinese translation of the Dharmaguptaka-vinaya refers to the recitation of the arapacana formulary and this formulary has now been convincingly shown to be the syllabic order of Gândhārī Prakrit in kharoṣṭhī script. Moreover, as mentioned above, the Chinese translation of the Dirghāgama, widely believed to belong to the Dharmaguptaka school, has been repeatedly cited as derived from a Gândhārī original.

Since Bernhard's article, the Gândhārī hypothesis has been repeated, more or less intact, by Indologists and Sinologists alike, usually without any substantial in-

20  On the problem of school affiliation in relation to the preserved Sanskrit remains from Central Asia, see von Simson 1985, esp. pp. 84–85 on the evidence of the Dharmaguptakas. As von Simson points out, the only extant vinaya fragment of the Dharmaguptakas is in hybrid Sanskrit and a sūtra fragment attributed to this sect is in pure Sanskrit. Dr. Klaus Wille has informed me (personal communication, June 1995) that there may be some additional fragments of the Dharmaguptakaviniya in the Pelliot Sanskrit collection, they too are written in Sanskrit.

21 Lévi 1915, 440.

22 Salomon 1990.

23 Weller and Waldschmidt examined only a relatively small portion of the entire text in their early studies. The underlying language of the Chinese Dirghāgama will now have to be re-considered in light of the thorough study by Karashima (1994). Karashima makes it clear that the situation is more complicated than generally stated: "As we have seen above, the original language of the Chang ahan jing is not something that can be simply decided upon as Gandhari. When one looks at the particulars, complex aspects emerge in which elements of Sanskritization, Prakrit, and local dialects were harmonized in addition to specific features of the Northwest dialect. We may still be able to call this dialect Gandhari in a broad sense, with the necessary proviso that it differs considerably from the Gândhārī language as reflected in the Northwest inscriptions" (Karashima 1994, 51–52).

24 See, among others, von Hinüber 1982, esp. p. 250: "If there has been a Gandhari text of the Upālīgāthās, it does not seem to be too far fetched an assumption that the whole text of the Madhyamāgama passed through a stage of development when it was written in this language once widely used in Central Asia" (von Hinüber follows this remark by citing Brough 1965). See also von Hinüber 1983 and Nishimura 1987.

25 See Pulleyblank 1983. Pulleyblank’s adherence to the Gândhārī hypothesis is clear: "The hypothesis that the texts brought by the first Buddhist missionaries to China were writ-

crease of data. Sinologists have generally sought to use the transcriptional data to aid in the reconstruction of Ancient Chinese. Indologists have, conversely, used the reconstructed pronunciation of Chinese to determine the underlying Indian language of the translation. The circularity of this process becomes immediately evident and has not gone unnoticed by some of the principal investigators:

Since a good deal is known about the sound systems of various Middle Indic dialects and the ways they differed from that of Sanskrit, the Chinese forms sometimes allow us to guess whether the original language of a particular text had a certain feature in common with Sanskrit or was more similar to one or more of the Prakrits. When care is taken to avoid circularity, information obtained in this way can, I believe, be safely used in the reconstruction of BTD [Buddhist Transcriptional Dialect(s)].

This brief overview of the development of the "Gândhārī hypothesis" should make clear that the evidence marshalled to date concerning the role of this Northwest Middle Indic language in the transmission of Buddhism to China is rather meager. It has in general been founded upon a small body of transcriptions, principally from a few sūtras in the Dirghāgama only. And the conjectures concerning the underlying Indic language of these transcriptions have been repeated sufficiently to qualify now as "facts."

But there are other problems. From the Indian side, this hypothesis has gained so much credibility as to inhibit the consideration of other Prakrits or mixtures of Prakrits as possible source languages. It is, of course, possible, perhaps even probable, that texts composed in Central Indian Prakrits were funneled through the Northwest language on route to China. Such a transmission could have imprinted upon these texts a number of orthographic and dialectical features of the Gândhārī language. But at the very least this would have resulted in Gândhārī . . . seems to make good sense in terms of the historical situation and has been supported by linguistic arguments by Bailey and Brough" (Pulleyblank 1983, 84).

26 Coblin 1983, 34–35. Coblin’s study does in fact add a considerable amount of data to the transcriptional corpus from some of the earliest translations of Buddhist texts into Chinese, though much more work remains to be done. Moreover, Coblin has suggested a more cautious approach to the underlying Indic languages vis-à-vis the Chinese transcriptions in his more recent study, Coblin 1993, 871–72.
in texts that were linguistically mixed in some very complicated and difficult-to-discern ways. I will return to this issue again at the end of this paper.

On the Chinese side, scholars have typically assumed that the transcriptional evidence accurately reflects the Indian source language. This takes for granted that the Chinese scribes—and it was almost always Chinese scribes who took down the final text—were able accurately and consistently to distinguish the Indian phonemes and find suitable equivalents for them with sinographs—all with no real knowledge of Sanskrit or Prakrit. Some of the evidence gathered below will call this into question, at least with regard to one of the early translation teams. More importantly, however, even if the Chinese did for the most part accurately record the sound of an Indic word, that does not demonstrate that the word was written in the Indian manuscript as they heard it. This problem has been summarized by Heinz Bechert:

[W]e can only view with the greatest scepticism any attempts to come to conclusions about pronunciation on the basis of orthography, since we must never lose sight of the broad spectrum of possible divergences between orthography and pronunciation that we are familiar with from our knowledge of the development of other languages and from examination of later stages in the evolution of the Indic languages themselves.27

Thus on the Chinese side we have to consider the problem in reverse: evidence for a particular pronunciation of an Indic location does not ipso facto indicate the language in which that text was written. It is this problem that I will attempt to explore in more detail in this paper.

II. AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

In light of the problems discussed above, I shall attempt a somewhat different approach to examining the influence of Middle Indic—particularly Gāndhārī—on the early Chinese Buddhist translations. I will, first of all, restrict this investigation to one text. We know all too well that Indian Buddhist texts were not transmitted to China in a single installment. They were brought over a period of several centuries by an ethnically diverse group of missionaries28 who themselves hailed from a variety of Indian and Central Asian locales. In this way I hope to avoid generic statements about “the” linguistic medium of transmission.

Furthermore, rather than focusing upon the Chinese transcriptions of Indian names and terms, which, as I have suggested, raise a number of problems not all of which can be controlled, we shall look instead at mistakes in translation that were due in all probability to phonological confusions caused by a Prakrit or Central Asian pronunciation of the text. It is my contention—to be fleshed out below—that the fundamentally oral/aural nature of the translation process in India led to a number of problems of interpretation for Chinese assistants on these teams who had limited skills in Indian languages.

For this purpose we are very fortunate to have the recent and brilliant study by Seishi Karashima,29 whose work has broken entirely new ground in the study of these early translations. He has meticulously combed through the earliest Chinese translation of the Sad-dharmapuṇḍarikasūtra—that of Dharmarakṣa,30 whose translation is dated to 286 C.E.—and has provided a point-by-point analysis of the agreements and disagreements of Dharmarakṣa's translation with all of the extant Sanskrit manuscripts remain as well as with the fifth-century version of Kumārajiva. In so doing he has also offered ingenious explanations of some of the discrepancies between Dharmarakṣa's text and those of the various Sanskrit manuscripts which may stem from confusions caused by a more Prakrit—and, as I will argue, oral/aural—transmission of the text.

The advantages of concentrating our attention on the Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra (hereafter SP) then manifold. We possess extensive manuscript finds with considerable divergences among them that often allow us to

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28 We call these early translators “missionaries” by convention; while it is likely that their endeavors included activities that we would typically label as missionizing, there is increasing evidence that suggests some of them may have been more

what we should call refugees than proselytizers. See Forte 1995, 65–70 for some tentative suggestions regarding the motives of An Shigao, the first translator in China. This issue is tangential to this paper, though a more careful consideration of the possible motives of these first Buddhist teachers in China may reveal some interesting facts about the homelands they left.

30 Dharmarakṣa, Chin. Zhu Fahu 竹法護 (ca. 233–311), was born at Dunhuang and studied under an Indian teacher there. He was the most prolific of the early translators; his career spans over forty years and the earliest bibliography of Chinese Buddhist translations credits him with 154 translations, approximately half of which are extant. The best overview of his life and translation career can be found in Tsukamoto and Hurvitz 1985, 193–230.
differentiate translation mistakes from redactional variations, something that can seldom be done with most Indian Buddhist texts. Nevertheless, despite this quantity of manuscript material, it cannot be assumed that we can always proceed with full knowledge of the Indic "original" underlying Dharmarākṣa's translation. We will return to this problem throughout the paper.

The fact that the earliest translation of the SP is by Dharmarākṣa is also helpful for this examination. Besides the fact that he was one of the most prolific of the early translators during the formative period of Buddhism in China, we have a fair amount of information concerning his life and translation procedures that will bear upon our consideration of the range of forces operating in this translation. He is, for example, one of the first of the foreign translators who is reported by Chinese biographers to have been fluent in both Sanskrit and Chinese as well as the full range of Central Asian languages. Our evidence for mistakes in the translation, then, will provoke us to reexamine these reports from the native hagiographies as well as provide clues concerning the actual dynamic among the participants on the translation teams.

In the evidence amassed below, I have in general followed Karashima's lead in the analysis of the philological problems presented by Dharmarākṣa's translation. Nevertheless, there are a number of places where I cannot accept Karashima's readings—places where I believe he may have pushed the Prakritic explanation further than is warranted. I have, therefore, despite Karashima's huge body of evidence, cited only what I view to be valid examples of confusions based upon a more heavily Prakritic transmission of the text. Then, having looked at such phonological problems, I will turn to an examination of two colophons to the translation that reveal much about the process by which it was rendered into Chinese as well as some of its early life in China. I will follow this with a look at other kinds of evidence from the translation that expose in different ways the complexity of the data for evaluating the underlying Indic language. It is hoped that such a problematizing of an early Chinese translation will provide some important caveats for the use of these texts by both Sinologists and Indologists.

Evidence for Gāndhārī Prakrit Underlying Dharmarākṣa's Translation of the SP

In this section I will draw upon Karashima's study in order to highlight specific mistakes in Dharmarākṣa's translation that may have been due to the misinterpretation of words or phrases whose forms, though distinct in Sanskrit, would have coalesced in Prakrit, making them more difficult to distinguish for the translation team. I will begin by giving examples that could be construed as providing evidence for a transmission of this text specifically in Gāndhārī Prakrit.

Confusions Related to Vowels

Dharmarākṣa's translation exhibits frequent confusions between long and short vowels. This would be especially understandable if his Indic text were written in kharoṣṭhī script, which does not ordinarily mark vowel length.

\[
\begin{align*}
a/\bar{a} & : \text{bālā (childish, foolish) for bāla (strong)}; \\
& \text{other examples include KN 48.7: bālāḥ; } \\
& \text{Dh 70c.18: 力 (Krsh, 53); KN 99.4: bālāṇa etāḍrśa bhonti (they are fit for fools); Dh 79c.26: 志在根力 (intent upon the faculties and powers) (Krsh, 81).} \\
& \text{This confusion occurs in the opposite direction as well: }
\end{align*}
\]

31 A survey of the extant manuscripts can be found in Karashima 1992, 16–19.

32 The following abbreviations are used throughout the rest of the paper:

Dh: Dharmarākṣa's translation of SP (references to the translation are to Taishō 263, vol. 9, by page, register, and line number).

KN: Kern/Nanjio 1908–12 (references are to page and line numbers).

Kash: Chandra 1976; unless otherwise stated, this manuscript has been cited from the transcription of Toda 1981 by folio, side, and line number.

BHS G and D: Edgerton 1953.


Translations throughout are mine unless otherwise indicated.

33 For a recent explanation of this convention in kharoṣṭhī script and its implications for understanding the phonology of Gāndhārī, see Fussman 1989, §§33–34.

34 Note also that Dharmarākṣa has confused etāḍrśa and indriya (faculties), a confusion that is not easily explained in phonological terms.
KN 54.12: *kāruṇya mahyāṃ balavantu teṣu*
I have great compassion for them

Dh 72a.29-b.1: *吾發大哀 慾此愚癡*
I manifest great compassion and take pity on these fools (Krsh, 59)\(^{35}\)

\(i/i\)

KN 120.5: *pratipatti darśenti bahuprakāraṃ sattvāna*
[the Buddha] teaches good conduct to beings in multifarious ways

Dh 83a.24: *然大燈明 示無央眾*
thus the brilliance of a great lamp illuminates the innumerable masses (Krsh, 91)\(^{36}\)

Karashima has proposed a confusion between *pratipt(t)ti* (good conduct) and *pradipa* (lamp). Note also the confusion between voiced and unvoiced intervocalic stops, a widespread Prakritic phenomenon.

\(u/ū\)

KN 54.6: *saṃhṛṣrayāmi vividhair upāyaśaṅkha*
I gladden through various means

Dh 72a.20-21: *心所好樂 若干色像*
what [sentient beings] love in their hearts has many forms.

Karashima has proposed that Dharmarākṣa incorrectly divided these two words, causing a confusion between -dhair *upā* and rūpa (Krsh, 58). This proposal is not certain since Dharmarākṣa's rendering could be an attempt to translate *vividhair upāyaśaṅkha* with *sexiāṅg* 色像, though this would be an extremely unusual rendering for *upāya* in his corpus of translations.\(^{37}\)

KN 3.5: *Anikṣiptadhuśena*
(name of a bodhisattva: “whose burden is not abandoned”)

Dh 63a.28: *不置遠菩薩*
“not put down far away” (Krsh, 27).

There appears to be a confusion here between -dhura (burden) and -dūra (long distance); note also the confusion between aspirate and non-aspirate consonants which will be discussed below. We should also mention that this rendering of this bodhisattva's name occurs in the works of previous translators, for example, Zhi Qian's early third-century translation of the *Vimalakirtinirdeśasūtra* (*Taishō* 474, vol. 14, 519b.15). Thus we must always allow for the possibility that such a name could have been drawn from an established lexicon of translation equivalents and would not therefore represent evidence for the underlying language of this Indic original.\(^{38}\)

Besides these there are also a number of other vocalic confusions, but many are confusions of quality rather than length and are either common in many Prakrits or represent problems of a different nature. Thus they cannot be used to indicate a Gāndhārī source.

Confusions Related to Consonants

There are quite a number of mistakes in Dharmarākṣa's translation that appear to be due to confusions between aspirated and unaspirated voiced consonants in both initial and intervocalic position. Weakness of aspiration—discerned from occasional interchange of aspirated and unaspirated stops in Gāndhārī texts and inscriptions—is frequently cited as a defining feature of Gāndhārī among the Prakrits and is especially common among the consonants *g/gh* and *d/dh* (Burrow 1937, §§ 24-27; Brough 1962, § 49; Fussman 1989, § 35).

\(^{35}\) We should note that this example is a bit ambiguous. While it is likely that Dharmarākṣa mistook *balavantu* as from *bālavat* as Karashima has suggested, he also translated *balavantu* in his rendering *do* 大. We will see other instances of this kind of “double translation” below.

\(^{36}\) Karashima has suggested an alternative rendering: “(The Buddha) burns [run 燃 = ran 燃] a great candle.”

\(^{37}\) Furthermore, *sexiāṅg* occurs elsewhere in Dharmarākṣa's *SP* for *rūpa*: KN 76.3/Dh 75c.2, KN 290.12/Dh 109c.10, KN 295.10/Dh 110b.11, etc. I would like to thank Prof. Karashima for calling these additional examples to my attention.

\(^{38}\) Thus Chinese renderings (translations or transcriptions) established in the early period under possible Gāndhārī influence cannot be cited from later texts as evincing the continued influence of the Northwest Prakrit. Once these terms became part of the indigenous Chinese Buddhist vocabulary, translators often defaulted to them even if their Indic text may not have reflected the same phonology or exact meaning. A common example that could be cited is *shamen* (Early Middle Chinese: *sa-mon*) 沙門, which transcribes *śramaṇa* but appears to reflect the particular Gāndhārī development of *śr* > *ś* (*śramaṇa*). On this issue, see de Jong 1981, 111-12 and Nishimura 1987, 51-52.
g/gh

KN 15.1: ghontāsamūhai

with multitudes of bells39

Dh 65b. 12: 所在翠香

there being a large quantity of incense
(Krsh, 34)

Here a confusion appears to occur between ghanta (bell) and gandha (incense); there is also the interchange of voiced and unvoiced stops as well as dental and retroflex consonants.

d/dh

KN 56.8: ahaṃ pi samkṣobhi imasmi dārune utpanna sattvāna kaśāyamadhye

I too have arisen in this dreadful motion [i.e. the world], in the midst of the impurities of beings40

Dh 72c.3: 我時比丘 亦持斯法 出於人 黎庶之間

At that time I was a bhikṣu,41 and I too came forth among the masses of men in order to uphold this dharma. (Krsh, 60)

The relationship between the Sanskrit and the Chinese is not entirely clear. It may be that Dharmarakaśa confused dārune (dreadful) with dharaṇa (preserve, uphold) or perhaps even with dharma. The word dārune seems to have given Dharmarakaśa particular problems as he often made mistakes in its interpretation:

KN 253.11: sudārune

extremely cruel

Dh 104c.15: 能堪受

able to receive (< dhārana ?) (Krsh, 152)

KN 84.7: kumbhāṇḍakā dārūnaraudracittāḥ

kumbhāṇḍas whose minds are cruel and hostile

Dh 76c.17: 鳥恒香音 志存暴弊

the intentions of the kumbhāṇḍas and gandharvas remain hostile and harmful (Krsh, 70)

Karashima has proposed that Dharmarakaśa divided this phrase incorrectly, taking it as kumbhāṇḍa-ka dārūna- and interpreting it as gandharva. Despite the ingenuity of this proposal, there are still unresolved problems with this interpretation.

KN 4.13: drūnena ca kimnararājena (proper name)

Dh 63b.12: 唐法真陀羅王

"pay heed to the dharma" kimnararāja (Krsh, 28)

The confusion between dṛuma and dharma has two possible explanations: we could hypothesize with Karashima that Dharmarakaśa’s Indic text—or his pronunciation of it—was subject to the usual metathesis of liquids characteristic of Gāndhāri and the later Dardic languages, hence dharma > dhrama or drama (with concomitant confusion of u and a); or that dṛuma was pronounced with an epenthetic -a- [daruma] in which the unaccented -u- was heard only weakly, thereby making its pronunciation nearly indistinguishable from that of dharma. We should also note that the following kimnara king in the list presented here is Mahādharma, accurately rendered by Dharmarakaśa as 大法真陀羅王. It is telling that two completely different Indic words in such close proximity could be translated with the same sinographs. Unable to hear a difference between dṛuma and dharma, Dharmarakaśa’s translation assistants may have logically assumed that Dharma- would precede Mahādharma-.

b/bh and -t/-d) dh-

The following groups of examples illustrate several different problems that occurred simultaneously. Therefore I will discuss them together while also attempting to distinguish the various phonological developments at work. To begin with, there are many examples of a confusion between a form of the verb √bhū (to be, become) and bodhi (enlightenment).

39 Note that Kash 21a.6–7 reads: ghantāsamudgebhī.

40 Cf. Kash 62a.1: . . . dārūni utpanna satvāsu kaśātṛhamadye. With regard to our examination of the confusions related to aspiration in Dharmarakaśa’s translation, we should also note that in this one line the Kashgar ms itself has made two errors of this kind: kaṣṭṭha presumably stands for kaṣṭṭha (cf. BHSD 174; note also Kash 53a.2: kaṣṭtrā) and madye here is a mistake for madhye. The manuscript is quite clear in both cases.

41 Karashima proposes that biqiu 比丘 here represents an instance of metathesis in Dharmarakaśa’s translation: (saṃ)-kṣobhi/ bhikṣu (Krsh, 60).

42 variant: shun 順.
Dharmarakṣa has confused dh- and b- as well as -t- and -dh- in these examples. We might expect that the latter confusion was heard as no more of a difference than that between -t- and -d-, which are interchanged in other contexts as well. While weakness of aspiration in Gāndhārī could be cited in both cases, it is nevertheless astounding that the translator(s) would have produced a text that so completely departs from the Indic version.

Karshma records an important Sanskrit variant here: bodhi caritvā (instead of bhoti caritāh). This variant comes from a Central Asian fragment in the Ōtani Collection that was transcribed by N. D. Mironov and whose readings are preserved in the notes to N. Dutt’s 1953 edition of the SP. Since Dharmarakṣa, as we have seen, has a propensity to confuse bho(n)ti with bodhi, it is difficult to draw conclusions about his conformity to one or another manuscript tradition in this example. In fact, this is a very good illustration of a problem one is regularly faced with in these early Chinese testimonies to Indian redactional histories.
bhūta/buddha

There are instances in which bhūta appears to have been confused for buddha:

KN 45.14: vadāmi yeneha ca bhūtaniścayam
by which I will speak here about true resolve

Dh 70b.1: 以故得說 佛所決了
for which reason [I] can speak on what the Buddha has decided (Krsh, 50)

KN 200.3: bahubhīś ca bhūtair guṇair abhiṣṭuto
lauded for his many genuine qualities

Dh 95c.1: 光揚詒嗟 諸佛之德
brilliantly glorified and praised the virtues of the buddhas (Krsh, 124)

There also seem to be instances in which Dharmarākṣa’s translation team misinterpreted -(d)dh- as having been derived from -t-:

Kash 47a.4–5: ... evāḥam sāradvatiputra buddhajñāna-
(darsana)saṁdarśaka
it is I, Śāradvatiputra, who display the exhibition of buddha-knowledge

Dh 69c.8: 現真諦慧
[I] manifest the knowledge of truth (Krsh, 47)

KN 330.13: mahārśiṇā prakāśayanteṇ'ima buddha-
bhūmim
by the great seer who reveals this buddha-
hood

Dh 116a.4: 大仙...分別演說 立真諦地
the great saint... makes a detailed revelation and establishes this true stage (Krsh, 190)

In these two examples, Dharmarākṣa took buddha- in the beginning of compounds as bhūta-. Since the normal Prakritic development is clearly from unvoiced to voiced stops, we might speculate that Dharmarākṣa’s translation assistants, hearing an intervocalic voiced dental stop, perhaps pronounced with considerable friction, deduced it to be derived from an unvoiced stop, despite the fact that such a reading could not have been represented in writing in the underlying Indic text. However, we are ahead of ourselves here and should continue with an examination of the linguistic data before setting forth hypotheses about how this translation acquired its current form.

-th/-d-

Sanskrit -th- and -dh- are both generally represented by -dh- in Gāndhāri, as well as occasionally by -d- (e.g., yada < yathā) through weak articulation of aspiration. Of course, the voicing of -th- to -dh- is a common Prakritic course (cf. Pischel 1955, §203) and it is not unlikely that the difference between the aspired and unaspirated voiced dental stops would have been lost as discussed above.

KN 166.6: nātho ’si śāstāsi gurū ’si jāto
you are a protector, a teacher, a guru

Dh 90a.12: 世尊所演 如瞻子吼
what is taught by the Blessed One is like the roar of a lion (Krsh, 109)

KN 176.8: sāduḥ dārśana buddhānāṃ lokanāthāna
tāyīnām
excellent is the sight of the buddhas, the lords of the world, the holy ones

Dh 91a.27: 善哉願諸佛世吼獲聖明
Excellent! May the buddhas, roars [sic!] of the world, ones who have obtained brilliance... (Krsh, 112)

Dharmarākṣa has confused -nāṭha (lord, protector) with -nāda (lord’s] roar). While this phonological development is not impossible to explain, it is considerably more

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46 KN 40.11 reads: tathāgatajñānadārśanasamādārśaka evā-
hāṃ sāriputra.
troubling that Dharmaraka’s translation team would not have been guided more by context—not to mention a broader knowledge of Buddhist idiom—than such a translation suggests. Moreover, this is especially perplexing when we note that Dharmaraka has made such a mistake in close proximity with a more accurate rendering of the same expression. For example, at KN 301.7/Dh 111a.7, Dharmaraka once again confused lokaṇātha with *lokaṇāda. Yet in the preceding verse (KN 301.4/Dh 111a.4) lokaṇātha is found again and is translated by Dharmaraka as shixiong 世雄 (world hero). Though not an entirely acceptable rendering of lokaṇātha, it does indicate a serious attempt to render that Indic locution. The close proximity of a plausible translation and an entirely mistaken one for the same word will be another piece of data that will lead us to speculate on the actual division of labor within the translation team.

-bh-/ -v-

As Brough has observed (1962, §§12 and 44), -bh- in all probability had the phonetic value of a voiced bilabial fricative [β] in the northwest and could be represented in kharoṣṭhī script as -bh-, -v-, or even -h- (e.g., lavhu < labha, uvha’i < ubheya, śilaprava < śila-prabhā). Such a phonetic value for -bh- would have made it difficult to distinguish from -v-, especially in an oral/aural context among non-native speakers.

Perhaps the most noticeable occurrence of this phonetic confusion is found in the name of the famous bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. There have been a number of scholarly discussions already on the variations and interpretations of the name of this bodhisattva among our extant Sanskrit manuscripts and Chinese translations.48 Without retracing all of the scholarship here, it is reasonably assumed that the original form of this appellation is that found in some of the Sanskrit remains of the SP safe from Central Asia (i.e., Avalokitavasara) and approximated in Kumārajiva’s fifth-century translation (guan-shi-yin 觀世音 = avalokita[loka]svaRa ?).49

48 For a survey of scholarly opinions up to 1948, see Mallmann 1948, 59–82; the few studies that have appeared since this work have contributed little to the discussion.

49 See Mironov 1927, 243. The rendering guan-shi-yin 觀世音 has been said to originate with the translator Kang Sengkai (Saṅghavarman ?) (mid-third cent.) in a translation of the Sukhāvattvyāha (see von Staël-Holstein 1936, 352, n. 3), but the attribution of this translation to him is highly questionable. Before Kang Sengkai, the Parthian translator An Xuan (ca. 180) rendered the name as ku-yin 阔音 (“the one who) watches

KN 3.4: avalokiteśvara

Dh 63a.27: 光世音 (“the sound of illuminating the world”?)

Dharmaraka appears to have interpreted the name as abhā-loka-svara, with the confusion of -v- and -bh- (perhaps through pronunciation as [β]). For other occurrences in Dharmaraka’s SP, see 128c.22–23, 26, 27, 29; 129a.1, 7, 8–9, 10, etc.

Evidence Consistent with Gāndhāri Prakrit but not Restricted to this Language

There are a number of confusions in Dharmaraka’s translations that appear to be caused by a Prakritic transmission whose phonological features are represented in Gāndhāri, but are also known to other Prakrits as well. Thus, to avoid prejudicing the analysis of the underlying language of Dharmaraka’s translation, I will present this evidence separately, noting where appropriate alternative explanations for such occurrences.

Confusions Between Labials

p/v

Though frequently cited as a feature of Gāndhāri phonology, the development of p > v is a widespread Prakritic phenomenon (cf. Pischel 1955, §199; von Hinüber 1986, §181).

Kash 121a.3: bahuprakāram pravadanti dharmam
they declare the dharma in many ways

Dh 83a.28: 以若干法而致墮落
they bring about decline to the manifold dharma (Krsh, 91)

Karashima has suggested that pravadanti was misconstrued as prapatanti (lit., they fall down), though we

over [i.e., hears] the sounds”?) in his translation of the Ugra-paripṛcchā (Taishō 322, vol. 12, 15b.7) as did Zhi Qian (ca. 220–52) in his translation of the Vimalakirtinirdeśasūtra (Taishō 474, vol. 14, 519b.16). The translation of the Sukhāvattvyāha attributed to Lokakṣema (ca. 168–88) transcribed the name: heloueng 廣樓頂 (Taishō 361, vol. 12, 290a.27); see von Staël-Holstein 1936, 351–52, n. 3 and Brough 1970, 83 and nn. 13–16. Once again, however, this attribution is quite improbable. Brough’s attempt to link this transcription with a name that appears in a second-century Gandhāran inscription is also not without problems (cf. Brough 1982).

50 KN 120.8 reads: bahuprakāram hi braviti dharman.
might expect the verb here to have been understood as a causative (prapāteti). Thus both -v- and -d- were taken as derived from unvoiced originals (-p- and -t-).

KN 398.4: adāvati (a word within a dhāranimatra-pada)

Dh 130b.3: 希章 ("a sentence for wealth") (Krsh, 237)

Adā is confused with ādhya (wealthy, rich, opulent); we would assume a derivation from adātha through assimilation of the consonant conjunct along with weakened aspiration. -vati appears to have been confused with -pada: an original -p- would have been assumed for the -v- and the -t- may have been voiced. In both of the cases cited here, as well as others cited elsewhere, an existing -v- was interpreted incorrectly as deriving from -p-, despite the fact that it is unlikely to have been so represented in writing.

-m/-v-

The alternation of -m- and -v- is quite common in the Prakrits (Pischel 1955, §§ 248, 250) "but is rare in Gāndhāra sources other than the Dharmapada" (Brough 1962, §36). The most probable explanation is that -m- serves as a notation for /v/ in nasalized contexts (see Pischel 1955, §§251, 261; Brough 1962, §36; von Hinüber 1986 §§209–11). Thus we find words in the Gāndhāri Dharmapada such as bhamana/i (< bhava-nā), śramaṇa (< śravaṇaṁ), and nama (< nāvaṁ).

KN 343.13: gamisyate eṣa drumasya mūlam
he will go to the foot of the tree

Dh 117c.19: 而當求索 树王之下
and he will seek out the foot of the king of trees (Krsh, 193)

We presumably have here a confusion between gamisyate (he will go) and gavezynate (he will seek). Despite Brough’s comment above, the interchange between these two roots is common in the Gāndhāra documents from Niya (cf. Burrow 1937, §50).

Confusion Between ks and c/ch

One of the distinguishing features of Gāndhāri Prakrit in kharoṣṭhī script is the preservation of a distinct sign for the conjunct ks, a conjunct that is assimilated in all other Prakrits (see Burrow 1937, §48; Bailey 1946, §4; Brough 1962, §52). Although this sign has been hypothesized to have the phonetic value [ts],31 we would not expect it to have been confused with Sanskrit c or ch by a person who read a kharoṣṭhī manuscript. Such a mistake would suggest either that this aksara was misconstrued in its aural reception or that it was assimilated in a more typically Prakritic fashion.

KN 35.13: rājāna ye mahipati cakravartino ye āgataḥ
kṣetrasahasra-kṣobhiḥ
those kings, great lords, universal monarchs who have come from thousands of Kotis of lands

Dh 69a.13–14: 國主帝王 轉輪聖王 悉共同心 傳百千眾52
lords of the world, supreme kings, wheel-turning sage-kings, united in thought, they number hundreds of thousands of Kotis (Krsh, 46)

Karashima has made the ingenious suggestion that xin 心 (heart, mind) here is probably derived from a development in which kṣetra was pronounced chētta, which was then confused with citta. Dharmarakṣa’s translation assistant presumably would have understood this clause as ye āgataḥ citta, “who have fallen to, obtained (a particular state of mind).” This confusion is perhaps one of the clearest examples of a mistake that could only have occurred in an oral/aural translation context or from a non-Gāndhāra Prakrit source text.

Confusions Related to Nasals and anusvāra

There are several instances of an apparent confusion by Dharmarakṣa of dental and retroflex nasals, which show a clear pattern in the Gāndhāri Dharmapada: initial -n- remains n and both intervocalic -n- and -n- are written -n-. (cf. Brough 1962, §45; von Hinüber 1986, §93). These nasals appear, however, to have been regularly interchanged in the Niya documents (Burrow 1937, §34) and kharoṣṭhī inscriptions from the northwest, not to mention the fact that their differentiation often became weak in the Prakrits broadly (cf. Pischel 1955, §224).35

51 See Konow 1936, 610; Bailey 1946, §4; Brough 1962, §16; for a fuller discussion of the problems related to this conjunct in Middle and New Indo-Aryan, see Turner 1936.

52 I have read here with the variant.

53 Konow remarks with regard to these two nasals: “Here there is an apparent difference between the system of Dhp. and that of Doc. [Niya Documents] and, so far as we can see, Indian Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions. It is, however, remarkable that the Kurram casket inscription, which contains a quotation of a canon-
Although Karashima’s explanations are ingenious and surely possible, we might also expect that once a significant confusion was made in the understanding of a passage, as in the case of kāṇaka/kanaka here, considerable reworking of the whole verse would have been necessary to make some sense of one’s reading. In this regard we should note that Dharmarakṣa’s translation is made sensible in light of the story to come. That is to say, Dharmarakṣa’s rendering of v. 21 here anticipates the narrative development that is revealed some ten verses later, where the father states that all his wealth and property will be given over to his son, who was being prepared gradually for his inheritance. If this is the case, then Dharmarakṣa, knowing the whole text before the actual translation, interpolated backwards from knowledge of what was to come. On the other hand, it is also possible that a revision was made—by Dharmarakṣa or by another proofreader—after the first draft of the translation was completed. A more systematic gathering of such occurrences may make clearer the range of activities at work in the production of the final text.

There are also a number of instances in Dharmarakṣa’s translation in which his interpretation of a word suggests that existing nasalization was omitted or that non-existing nasalization was assumed:

\[ \text{KN 272.3: (aranyavṛttakāś ca) } \text{kanthā prāvari-} \]
\[ \text{yāna ca} \]
\[ \text{[those who dwell in the wilderness], being dressed in rags} \]

Dh 107a.4: 當何以報答
\[ \text{how shall we?} \]
\[ \text{reply? (Krsh, 160)} \]

The confusion here seems to be from taking kanthā (rags) as katham (how? in what manner?). Karashima also proposes a mistake between prāvariyaṇa (< prāvṛ) and praśva (to answer) to account for the verb here, but I am more inclined to see this as a free rendering by Dharmarakṣa of praśva (to choose), molded here to fit the incorrect perception of kanthā as an adverb.

\[ \text{KN 350.6: na durgandhi} \]
\[ \text{will not have an offensive smell} \]

Dh 118b.20–21: 不應悪趣
\[ \text{will not fall into unfortunate destinies} \]
\[ \text{(Krsh, 195–196)} \]

Durgandhi (foul smelling) is here confused with durgati (unfortunate destinies). While I agree in principle with Karashima’s reading of this passage, I should also note

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54 Variant reads fu 父.
that Karashima fails to mention the previous clause in Dharmarākaśa's text: 體常香潔 (his body will always be pure in odor). This could either be an attempt to render the previous clause of the Sanskrit: na tasya . . . pūtimukham bhavati (he will not have a putrid mouth), or, as I think more likely, it is meant to render both clauses in a telescoped fashion. If this latter proposal is correct, then the inclusion of 不墮惡趣 in Dharmarākaśa's translation would constitute another instance—to be examined in more detail below—of what I have called a "double translation." Faced with an orally delivered phrase that had at least two possible interpretations as pronounced, the Chinese assistants, unable to decide between the two, presented both options.

KN 304.1–4: ato bahutarāś cānaye parivāraś anantakaś paṇcāśatiya gānḍagāya catvārīṃśac ca triṃśaś (v. 11)
samo vimsatigāṇḍagāya parivāraḥ samantaḥ ato bahutarāś cānaye yeśāṃ daśā ca paṭica ca (v. 12)

Others, even more numerous than that, with unlimited retinues, [equal to the sands] of fifty Ganges rivers, and to forty, and to thirty, Others, even more numerous than that, who will everywhere have retinues equal to [the sands] of twenty Ganges rivers, and to ten, and to five.

Dh 111b. 11–14: 其數過於彼 親屬無思想
五百江河沙 或四或三百
或二百江河 諸營從如是
其數復此 或五或復十

Their numbers will surpass that; their retinues will be inconceivably [large, equal to] the sands of five hundred [Ganges] rivers, or to four [hundred] or to three [hundred], Or to two hundred [Ganges] rivers; their attendants will be like this. Their measure will also surpass this, be it five or ten [rivers]. (Krsh, 177–178)

There are multiple problems with these two verses from chapter fourteen. First of all, Dharmarākaśa has clearly mistaken several of the numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit (KN) text</th>
<th>Dharmarākaśa’s text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>paṇcāśatiya (50)</td>
<td>五百 (500 &lt; *paṇcaśaṭ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>catvārīṃśac (40)</td>
<td>四 (400 &lt; *catuḥśaṭ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>triṃśaś (30)</td>
<td>三百 (300 &lt; *triśaṭ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vimsaṭi (20)</td>
<td>二百 (200 &lt; *diviṣaṭ)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers fifty and five hundred differ only in a long "a" and are confused even in Buddhist Sanskrit literature.56 In the case of the numbers 20 and 200 and 30 and 300, the loss of anusvāra either in the manuscript or in pronunciation could account for the confusion.57 Only 40 and 400 are difficult to explain, though it would be easy to imagine this number being brought into line with the other numbers of the same magnitude. Karashima would also like to see an instance of the unnecessary addition of anusvāra in qi xian 其限 (its limit), where ato would have been confused with amto (antaḥ). While this does help account for the rather out-of-place xian 限 at the head of this line, it also ignores the fact that in both verses ato ("than this/that") is well translated: 過於彼 "surpassing that" (v. 11) and 復殊此 “also surpasses this" (v. 12). It seems somewhat more plausible to me to read 其限 here as "their scope, compass," indicating the magnitude of the retinues rather than their delimitation.

It is difficult to draw entirely clear conclusions concerning the evidence of Dharmarākaśa’s inconsistent recognition of nasalization in his underlying Indic text. The best discussion of this problem vis-à-vis Gāṇḍhāra is by Gérard Fussman.58 Fussman convincingly demonstrated that in early Gāṇḍhāra inscriptions, heavy open syllables (i.e., a syllable with an etymologically long vowel followed by only a single consonant) in initial or medial position would have been pronounced with nasalization by the law of morae whether such nasalization was marked or not. Thus inconsistencies in marking anusvāra—either its absence or its inclusion where it never existed—suggest that its notation in writing had already become superfluous to at least some scribes in the northwest:

Si le scribe n’a pas jugé bon d’indiquer la nasalisation, c’est qu’elle allait de soi à partir du moment où la syllabe était lourde et ouverte: en d’autres termes, toute syllabe ouverte lourde comportait les vibrations nasales, que sa voyelle soit une voyelle étymologiquement brève et nasalisée ou que sa voyelle soit une voyelle étymologiquement longue, étymologiquement non nasalisée, et nasalisée par la suite conformément à une tendance spontanée caractéristique des langues indo-aryennes.59

| 57 In the case of 200, we could hypothesize that it was read as dviśaṭi and that the aksara du- was perhaps mistaken as a particle (= tu). |
| 58 Fussman 1989, §33 ff. |
| 59 Fussman 1989, 478; for remarks on nasalization in the Niya documents, see Burrow 1937, §47. |

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55 On these BHS forms, see BHSG, §§19.29–30.
We might hypothesize, then, that Dharmarakṣa, faced with a kharosṭhī manuscript in which nasalization was at best irregularly marked, made mistakes both of omission and addition in his recitation of the text. However, while this is certainly possible, we must also consider the fact that this problem is, in Fussman's words, "caractéristique des langues indo-aryennes." That is to say, we often find in Prakrit broadly a tendency to lengthen an open syllable through nasalization (cf. Pischel 1955, §74), or, conversely, to lengthen a vowel with omission of anusvāra (e.g., visāti < viṃsāti; von Hütter 1986, §112). This phenomenon occurs regularly in Pāli⁶⁰ and even occasionally in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.⁶¹ And it is important that we heed Brough's caveats concerning Nepalese scribal tendencies—including a general carelessness in the marking of anusvāra—in assessing the likely "original" form underlying our witnesses to BHS lexical items.⁶² We have, in short, no exact means to assess the quality of the manuscript tradition from which Dharmarakṣa made his translation.

Taken by themselves, then, confusions related to nasalization are inconclusive with regard to the underlying language or script of Dharmarakṣa's source text. But taken with the growing body of other problems in this translation, we might be just as inclined to see here mistakes in the interpretation of Dharmarakṣa's recitation of the Indic text by assistants with just enough knowledge of Sanskrit to confuse themselves in situations for which context did not clearly decide among the alternatives for them. This would be all the more likely if Dharmarakṣa's recitation of the source text was influenced by pronunciation habits in which heavy syllables—especially in verse—were represented haphazardly.

III. THE CHINESE TRANSLATION PROCESS

In the above survey of the linguistic data for a possible Gāndhārī influence on the transmission of the Indic text of the SP, I have on a number of occasions referred to Dharmarakṣa's recitation of the Indic text and to his assistants' possible misunderstandings of specific locations. Before proceeding with an evaluation of the presented data or offering additional evidence, I should pause to consider in more detail the process by which Dharmarakṣa's translation attained its final form. In fact, it is my contention that this process had a significant and hitherto underestimated effect on the shape of these early Chinese translations—an effect that clearly must be taken into account in the search for the underlying language of the source text. Given the rather sizeable body of documentation of this process in China—colophons, prefacces, and bibliographers' notices—we can often reconstruct in broad terms the roles of the Indian or Central Asian missionary, his assistants, and his Chinese scribes in traversing the huge linguistic and cultural divide separating the Indian and Chinese worlds. The general steps of this process have been conveniently summarized by Erik Zürcher:

The master either had a manuscript of the original text at his disposal or he recited it from memory. If he had enough knowledge of Chinese (which was seldom the case) he gave an oral translation (k'ou-shou 口授), otherwise the preliminary translation was made, "transmitted", by a bilingual intermediary (ch'uan-i 傳譯). Chinese assistants—monks as well as laymen—noted down the translation (pi-shou 笔受), after which the text was submitted to a final revision (cheng-i 正義, chiao-ting 校定). During the work of translation, and perhaps also on other occasions, the master gave oral explanations (k'ouchieh 口解) concerning the contents of the scriptures translated.⁶³

More specifically for our investigation, we have two extant colophons to Dharmarakṣa's translation of the SP (Zhengfahua jing 正法華經) preserved within Sengyou's early sixth-century bibliography, the Chu sanzang ji ji 出三藏記集 [Compilation of Notices on the Translation of the Tripitaka, hereafter CSZJ], which preserve explicit details of the translation process and the roles of the participants. The first colophon is translated as follows:⁶⁴

On the tenth day of the eighth month of the seventh year of the Taikang reign period [= September 15, 286 C.E.], the Yuezhi bodhisattva śramaṇa from Dunhuang, Dharmarakṣa, holding the foreign (hu 胡) scripture in his hand, orally delivered and issued⁶⁵ the twenty-seven chapters of the Zhengfahua jing, conferring (shou 授) it upon the upāsaka Nie Chengyuan, Zhang Shiming, and Zhang Zhongzheng, who together took it down in writing.⁶⁶ Zhu Decheng, Zhu Wensheng, Yan Weibo, Xu

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⁶⁰ Geiger 1994, 86.
⁶¹ BHSG, §§1.1–4.
⁶² Brough 1954, 355.
⁶⁴ Taishō 2145, vol. 55, 56c.16–24.
⁶⁵ kouxuan (var. adds chuanchu) 口宣傳 出.
⁶⁶ bishou 笔受, literally "received with the brush."
Wencheng, Zhao Shuchu, Zhang Wenlong, Chen Chang-xuan, and others all took pleasure in encouraging and assisting. It was finished on the second day of the ninth month [= October 6]. The Indian śramaṇa Zhu Li and the Kuchean householder Bo Yuanxin both collated (can-jiao 参校) the translation. On the sixth day of the second month of the first year it was reexamined. Furthermore, on the fifteenth day of the fourth month of the first year of the Yaun kang reign period [= May 29, 291 C.E.], Sun Bohu of Chang’an copied it with simple glosses.66

A number of points from this colophon stand out immediately. First, this translation, like many in Dharmarakṣa’s corpus, was very much an international affair. No fewer than thirteen participants in the translation process are mentioned by name, and these include Chinese,67 an Indian, a Tokharian, as well as, of course, the Yuezhi Dharmarakṣa.68 We can only imagine what a hodge-podge of linguistic backgrounds such a variety of assistants would have brought to the translation process.

66 The question, of course, is first year of which reign period. Tsukamoto and Hurvitz 1985, 551, note 3 assume the reign period to be Yongkang [= 291], but is unlikely given the fact that that reign period only begins in the third month. The first new year after the Taikang period is Taixi, which would make this date equivalent to March 3, 290. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that there are four rapidly succeeding changes of reign titles in the years 290–291; whether the anonymous colophon writer was in touch with such changes at court is impossible to determine. Tang 1938, 112 and Okabe 1983, 21 read yuan nian 元年 here as a mistake for [Taikang] jiu nian 九年 [= March 25, 288]. This reading has the advantage of explaining why a new reign title was not specifically mentioned in the notice.

67 Exactly what the Chang’an devotee Sun Bohu did is not entirely clear. The colophon states that he xie sujie 寫素解, “copied [the translation, making] a simple lexicon.” Okabe 1983, 21 proposes to read xie sujuan 寫素綴, “copied it onto pure silk.” Though perhaps a clearer reading, there is no obvious reason to adopt such an emendation. Interestingly, Sun Bohu is mentioned in Dharmarakṣa’s biography in the Gaoseng zhuan (Taishō 2059, vol. 50, 327a. 6–7) as one of the several people who regularly “held the brush and collated [the translation] in detail at the request of Dharmarakṣa.” It is not unreasonable to hypothesize that if Sun Bohu did in fact play a significant role on Dharmarakṣa’s translation committees as the Gaoseng zhuan suggests, then he very well may have produced a series of exegetical notes to the Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra for the faithful in Chang’an as he copied down the text, perhaps even at the request of Dharmarakṣa himself.

68 Among the Chinese on this translation committee are three members of the Zhang 張 clan: two scribes and one of the patrons. Wolfram Eberhard (1956, 213–14) has listed this clan name among the prominent families at Dunhuang from early times, and members of this clan have been known to have been particularly active in the production of Buddhist texts at Dunhuang in later periods (see Teiser 1994, 146, n. 26). With regard to Zhu Decheng and Zhu Wensheng, who “took pleasure in encouraging and assisting” the work on the Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra, Hurvitz states: “These two Chinese lay brethren with the surname Chu [Zhu] must have been very devout indeed, since, although still laymen, they had left the secular community, an act symbolized by abandoning their clan name and taking instead the name Chu, which, as indicated above, is short for ‘T’ien-chu’, i.e., ‘India’” (Tsukamoto and Hurvitz 1985, 486, note “ad”). Hurvitz’s speculation—and that is all this is—is dubious for two reasons. For one, despite the Chinese-looking personal names, it is not impossible that they were both naturalized Indians living in China. Secondly, if they were Chinese, it is likely that they were monks, given that they had adopted the ethnikon of a foreign master, perhaps even Dharmarakṣa himself (cf. Zürcher 1959, 68). Among the assistants on Dharmarakṣa’s various translation committees with the ethnikon zhu, only two, Zhu Li and Zhu Fashou, are clearly of Indian descent and both are described as śramaṇas.

69 The ethnic identity and linguistic affiliation of the Yuezhi is one of the most vexed subjects in Central Asian history. Despite decades of studies drawing upon Greco-Roman, Chinese, Tibetan, and Central Asian sources, there has yet to be a consensus on many of the most fundamental issues. Much of the problem lies in the great difficulty—and probable impossibility—of pinpointing the identity of the Yuezhi before their expulsion by the Xiongnu out of Gansu in the second century B.C.E. Maenchen-Helfen 1945 is almost certainly correct in suggesting that the ethnikon Yuezhi in Chinese sources ceased as a sociological-ethnic term after the migration of the Great Yuezhi to the west. From that point, this designation represented a composite people: one group (the Dayuezhi 大月支) settled in the western Tarim Basin and eventually conquered Bactria, where they adopted an Iranian language and culture; others (the Xiaoyuezhi 小月支) remained in the Nanshan region (in modern Gansu) among the Qiang tribes and probably spoke a Tokharian language. The problem of Dharmarakṣa’s ethnic identity is not without significance for this investigation. As noted several times already, Dharmarakṣa’s own pronunciation habits could have been responsible for some of the translation confusions we have considered and will consider below. It would be of some interest then to know if his native pronunciation was affected by Iranian habits, perhaps to a greater degree than Gândhári speakers in northwest India, or by a Tokharian dialect, as the inhabitants of the Shanshan kingdom appear to have been.
They almost certainly would have had a diverse range of skills in Indian languages, and, perhaps more importantly, they would have had an equally diverse range of pronunciation habits.

Secondly, we might also notice that the translation was completed in about three weeks, quite rapid for such a large text, even by ancient standards. It is difficult to judge what effect this pace would have had on the finished product, but it is worth noting at the very least that this translation was carried out under circumstances not altogether typical of Dharmarakṣa’s forty-year career.

What is most important about this colophon, however, are the actual steps of the translation process that it reveals. First, it mentions that Dharmarakṣa held a manuscript in his hands. Dharmarakṣa is the first translator in China who is reported to have held an actual manuscript during the translation, though we should be cautious in attaching too much significance to what may be a simple omission of detail. What follows then is of crucial significance. Dharmarakṣa is said to have “orally delivered and issued” the whole of the SP, conferring the text upon the upāsaka Nie Chengyuan and two other scribes assistants. Though the colophon is ambiguous at this point, I take it to mean that Dharmarakṣa conveyed a recitation of the Indic text to Nie Chengyuan along with a preliminary series of glosses and exegeses, and that he, not Dharmarakṣa, then converted the oral draft translation into literary Chinese, influenced as well by his apprehension of the Indic recitation.

Exactly what transpired between the recitation of the Indic text and the creation of the literary Chinese translation obviously cannot be known with certainty. But it is clear that we cannot take for granted the polyglot skills attributed to Dharmarakṣa by the Chinese hagiographers. Other preserved colophons suggest something of an evolution in his Chinese ability. In the colophon to his earliest recorded translation, the Suvarṇāntacinti-devaputraparipṛcchā (Taishō 588), Dharmarakṣa is once again described as “orally conferring and issuing” the text, after which the Parthian An Wen-hui and the Ku-ch’ien Bo Yuanxin “transferred the words” (chuanyan 傳言). Their transmission was then taken down with the brush by Nie Chengyuan, Zhang Xuanbo, and Sun Xiudà. It is clear here that Dharmarakṣa was not able independently to translate the Indian text into Chinese. Later in his career, however, the colophons state explicitly that he “held the foreign text in his hand and orally delivered it into Chinese” (kousuan jinyan 口宣著言).75

71 The year Taikang 7 was an especially active period for Dharmarakṣa. Besides the SP, he also translated the Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāpūrajñāpāramitā, the Vīśeṣacinti-brahmaparipṛcchā, and the Ajātāsaṭraku kṣayavādinā, all of which are sizable texts.

72 Nie Chengyuan was without a doubt Dharmarakṣa’s closest disciple. He is mentioned in a number of colophons to Dharmarakṣa’s translations, including the earliest, the Suvarṇāntacinti-devaputraparipṛcchā, translated in 267 C.E. Thus he had over twenty years of experience working on Dharmarakṣa’s translation teams by the time of the rendering of the SP. Furthermore, he is eulogized in Dharmarakṣa’s biography as follows: “[Nie] Chengyuan was wise and experienced, talented and principled—devout in the work of the dharma. When Master Hu [Dharmarakṣa] issued scriptures, he [Nie Chengyuan] would frequently examine and revise them” (CSZJJ, vol. 55, 98a.26–27). I will return to Nie Chengyuan and his possible influence on the translation of the SP below.

73 The crucial word here is chu 出, a very common verb, yet difficult to pin down, describing translation procedures in China. It is often translated as “to publish,” but that does nothing to clarify the designated activity. Arthur Waley (1957, 196) has argued that chu refers to an oral translation as opposed to yi 譯, a written one. Since all translations by Indian and Central Asian missionaries were carried out orally, there appears little point to such a contrast. Richard Robinson (1967, 298, n. 28) contends that chu at least sometimes refers to the recitation of the Indic text, not its translation into Chinese; he cites several examples. Robert Shih seems, in part, to support this position: “Dans les préfaces, la différence entre ‘publier’ et ‘traduire’ apparaît clairement. Celui qui tient en mains le texte indien joue un rôle plus important que celui qui traduit l’indien en chinois” (Shih 1968, 168). While the greater importance of the foreign master was certainly acknowledged by the Chinese bibliographers, we have looked at data that calls this into question—at least without substantial qualification. Arthur Link has gone further to suggest that chu is “an abbreviation for the technical Buddhist compound i-ch’u [給出]... That is i-ch’u means ‘translated [with the result that a book] is issued,’ or more simply, ‘translate’” (Link 1960, 30). None of these positions is fully satisfying. To “issue” an Indian text is to bring it out of its native guise, to make it available. That process, however, required at least two steps that were not necessarily performed by the same person. The Indian text had to be recited aloud, its esoteric script being otherwise impenetrable to native assistants. It also had to be glossed in Chinese, since the Indic sounds were no less befuddling than the manuscript. While we can reasonably hypothesize that Dharmarakṣa both recited the Indian text of the SP and explained it in at least general terms for his Chinese assistants, it is unlikely that chu can be thought of as “to translate” in the way that we now use the word.


75 See, for example, the colophon to his Lalitavistara, translated in 308 C.E. (CSZJJ, vol. 55, 48b.27–c.1).
The "translator" of the SP is by comparison more difficult to discern and this very well may have been intentional. It is easy to imagine that Dharmarakṣa, despite having attained considerably improved skill in Chinese over the course of twenty years of translation work, would still have been unable to translate the text on his own. He would in all likelihood have contributed considerably to his assistants' understanding of the text, adding exegetical comments as well as his own suggestions about appropriate renderings. Nevertheless, much of the translation was shaped, I suspect, by a Chinese who was almost certainly not fully qualified in the Indic languages.\footnote{Aside from the pilgrims who studied extensively in India, it is unlikely that any Chinese in traditional times truly commanded any Indian literary language. Cf. the remarks by R. H. van Gulik: "...[T]he average Chinese scholar considered a knowledge of the Indian script alone tantamount to a knowledge of the Sanskrit language. Chinese terms like fan-hsiahseng a monk who has studied Sanskrit as a rule means nothing more than a 'monk who has mastered the Indian script'" (van Gulik 1956, 13). For a fascinating discussion of how even a very learned Chinese Buddhist scholastic fundamentally misunderstood the nature of Indian languages, see Link 1961, 281–99.} Obviously the significance of this for an understanding of the underlying language of the Indic text is considerable.

The colophon also tells us that quite a number of individuals "encouraged and assisted" in the translation. We have no way to know what "encouragement" and "assistance" consisted of, though we would expect that those named were the most generous patrons of the translation committee. The translation was proofread after completion by an Indian monk and Kucheian layman—Kucheian who, as we saw above, had previous experience with Dharmarakṣa. This combination of disparate nationalities and Buddhist "ranks" in what should have been an important conclusion to the translation is perhaps not as unusual as it might seem, given the generally international character of Dharmarakṣa’s cohorts at Dunhuang and Chang’ān. But it should again be borne in mind that whereas the translation of the Indic text may have been substantially shaped by a Chinese assistant, the Chinese translation is here checked by an Indian and a Tokharian.

This short but rich record of the translation process is not the last we hear of the fortunes of this text. The following anonymous colophon is also preserved in the Chu sangzang ji ji:

On the twenty-eighth day of the eighth month of the first year of Yongxi reign period [= October 18, 290], the bhiksū Kang Nalü copied the whole of the Zhenglahu at Luoyang. Then, together with the upāsakas of pure conduct and restraint Zhang Jibo, Dong Yingxuan, Liu Changwu, Chang Wen, and others, he took the sūtra original in hand and went to the White Horse Monastery (Baima si 白馬寺)\footnote{Read si 寺 with the variant.} to face Dharmarakṣa. He [Dharmarakṣa] orally collated the ancient teaching [with the translation] and explained its profound meaning. On the upoṣadha day\footnote{I read benzhai 本斋 (lit., "original fast") as referring to the monastic holy day, the upoṣadha, at which time monks often recited the prātimokṣa and laymen took special vows. This designation occurs again in the colophon to Dharmarakṣa’s translation of the Lalitavistara (CSZIJ, vol. 55, 48b.28).}\textsuperscript{78}—the fourteenth—in the ninth month [= November 3, 290], he gave\textsuperscript{79} to a great assembly at the Eastern Ox Monastery (Dongniu si 東牛寺) a lecture on this sūtra. All day and all night everyone was completely enraptured (by his talk). [The translation] was again revised (chongyi jiaoding 重已校定, lit., "collated and established").\footnote{Shitan 師讎 appears to be a translation-transcription of dāna, "giving."}\textsuperscript{80}

Once again a few points deserve to be highlighted. First of all, besides the copying of the translation recorded in the first colophon of the year 291, this colophon records yet another copy being made in the year 290, this time at Luoyang. Moreover, the international constituency of Dharmarakṣa’s associates continues, here involving a Sogdian\footnote{The ethnikon kæng 康 is generally taken to represent Sogdian, but Wolfram Eberhard has shown that there is some reason to believe that early use of this ethnikon may have designated two different clans: one that was native to Kangguo (present-day Samarkand) and another, the old Kangju, who were native to Gansu before being forced to emigrate to Transoxiana; these latter may have been Yuezi (Eberhard 1955, 150). It is also possible that this ethnikon was adopted by a Chinese monk after ordination by a Sogdian preceptor, a practice which became common among Chinese clerics in the third and fourth centuries.}\textsuperscript{81} monk, and interestingly, a number of Chinese upāsakas who probably were under his tutelage. Dharmarakṣa himself is also on the move, travelling to the famous White Horse temple of Luoyang to spread the teaching of this newly translated scripture.\textsuperscript{82}

\footnote{78 Read si 寺 with the variant.} \footnote{I read benzhai 本斋 (lit., "original fast") as referring to the monastic holy day, the upoṣadha, at which time monks often recited the prātimokṣa and laymen took special vows. This designation occurs again in the colophon to Dharmarakṣa’s translation of the Lalitavistara (CSZIJ, vol. 55, 48b.28).} \footnote{Shitan 師讎 appears to be a translation-transcription of dāna, "giving."} \footnote{The ethnikon kæng 康 is generally taken to represent Sogdian, but Wolfram Eberhard has shown that there is some reason to believe that early use of this ethnikon may have designated two different clans: one that was native to Kangguo (present-day Samarkand) and another, the old Kangju, who were native to Gansu before being forced to emigrate to Transoxiana; these latter may have been Yuezi (Eberhard 1955, 150). It is also possible that this ethnikon was adopted by a Chinese monk after ordination by a Sogdian preceptor, a practice which became common among Chinese clerics in the third and fourth centuries.}
The most important observation from this colophon is the last line: "[the translation] was again revised." The colophon is not specific as to who revised the translation or for what reason. It seems reasonable in the context to suppose that Dharmarakṣa had revised the translation as a result of his oral collation and lecture in Luoyang. Although we do not know what alterations he may have made, for our purposes it is important to note that several years after the original work of the translation committee—the committee upon whom the recitation of the Indic text was conferred and by whom it was translated, written down, and proofread—Dharmarakṣa independently changed its shape. It is this revised text that we presumably have received.

Having discussed in some detail what is known about the method by which the SP was translated in 286, we can begin to reconsider our evidence for the connection between the underlying language of Dharmarakṣa's Indic text and Gāndhārī Prakrit. Dharmarakṣa's recitation of the SP was almost certainly influenced by a recension of the text containing many more Prakritic forms than any of the manuscripts that have come down to us, not to mention the likelihood of interference from his native language and the habits of his Indian teacher. We may seriously question then whether his Chinese assistant or assistants would have been able consistently to distinguish Indic locations whose pronunciation in Prakrit—whichever Prakrit—would have presented numerous opportunities for confusion.

Thus mistakes such as the bho(n)ji/bodhi confusion can hardly be attributed to Dharmarakṣa. If it is possible that Dharmarakṣa could have read a manuscript that interchanged bh and b (e.g., a kharoṣṭhī manuscript in Gāndhārī Prakrit), it is nearly impossible that the same manuscript would have also added aspiration to -nji.

The fact that most instances of both bho(n)ji and bodhi in the text are translated correctly makes it all the more unlikely that the person with the greatest knowledge of Indic languages would have confused these words only occasionally. On the contrary, it is not difficult to imagine a Chinese assistant with an incomplete knowledge of Sanskrit or Prakrit vocabulary and little knowledge of grammar misunderstand phoemes that may not have been easily distinguished in pronunciation. We would expect that the general purport of a given passage would have been explained to him by Dharmarakṣa; at the same time, his own understandings and misunderstandings of what he perceived to be key lexical items may have intruded into the translation, producing at times a quite different if not nonsensical rendition of the passage. That Dharmarakṣa felt the need "to revise again" the translation during his preaching at Luoyang is then not surprising. That he did not find every mistake confirms our sense of his limited Chinese skills.

Thus the very phonological features that point to a Gāndhārī source text—mistakes with regard to vowel length, aspirated and unaspirated stops, and distinctions between the nasals—are precisely the sounds that we might expect a Chinese assistant to have difficulty distinguishing. In addition, this situation would have been complicated no doubt by the influence of Central Asian pronunciation habits in Dharmarakṣa's recitation of the Indic text. I have noted above the possibility of voiced intervocalic stops taking on sparsity in Iranian fashion (e.g., avalokitēśvara > ābhā-lopā-svara: -v- > [β] > -bh-) or being devoiced as in Tocharian (e.g., durgāti understood as durgati: -(n)dh > -t-). It should be clear by now that the oral/aural nature of the translation process must be treated with as much consideration as the linguistic data itself. Furthermore, there is a considerable body of other kinds of evidence that may provide even more details about the underlying language of the Indic text and the roles of the translation participants.

IV. ADDITIONAL DATA

**Double Translations**

One of the most unusual features of Dharmarakṣa's translation idiom and one to which I have alluded already is the occurrence of what I call double translations. These are cases in which an Indic term is rendered twice in close proximity, presumably because two different words had collapsed together in pronunciation, at least as recited by Dharmarakṣa. His translation assistants, unable to decide between two or more possible options, offered both possibilities despite the fact that such a rendering almost always resulted in nonsense. We will look at several examples of this phenomenon below.

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83 The dubiousness of a Gāndhārī influence in this example has been further emphasized by Gérard Fussman (personal communication, June 1995): bhavati is almost always attested as hōti (pronounced hōti, hōdi, or hōi) in northwest kharoṣṭhī inscriptions; bodhi is often written bōsī (pronounced [bōzī]), at least from the first century of the common era. A phonemic overlap between the two words is thus highly unlikely in a Gāndhārī text dating from the third century.

84 For an interesting parallel to this phenomenon in the Uighur translations of Chinese Buddhist texts, see Zieme 1992.
Dharmarakṣa appears to have rendered both -vidā (wise) and -pitu (father). While there are a number of instances of an interchange between p and v in kharoṣṭhī documents and inscriptions—if that were the script of Dharmarakṣa’s manuscript—it is obvious that both words could not have been represented in the same place. Such a mistake suggests that the pronunciation of these two words (-vidā and -pitu) had coalesced, and therefore, Dharmarakṣa’s translation assistants, unable to determine the proper reading, deduced that two voiced consonants here (-v,-d-) could have been derived from two unvoiced consonants (-p-, -t-). It is also possible, as I have mentioned several times now, that Dharmarakṣa’s pronunciation habits were influenced by a Tokharian idiom in which -v- and -d- were devoiced, which would also account for the uncertainty of interpretation.

It appears here that Dharmarakṣa and/or his assistants understood both ākāra (ground, reason, cause, disposition; cf. BHSD, 86) and āgāra (dwelling, house, room). Of course we have already seen several examples of confusions between voiced and unvoiced intervocalic consonants. What is astounding here though is that a decision was not made between the two possibilities, resulting in an incoherent translation.

Dharmarakṣa himself would have been unclear as to the actual word intended by the Indic manuscript. At the very least we are reminded of the complexity of deciding among multiple indeterminable factors in the transmission and reception of these texts.

85 We might also hypothesize that such a confusion could have resulted from a kharoṣṭhī manuscript in which the notation -k- could stand for -g-, as in the Gāndhārī Dharmapada (cf. Brough 1962, §§30-31) or, conversely, the notation -g- [= γ] could stand for either -k- or -g- as in the Niya documents (cf. Burrow 1937, §16). If this were the case, it is possible that

86 There have been two rather unsatisfactory monographs on the pratyekapuddha figure: Kloppenburg 1974 and, more re-
of the philological problems related to this figure is by K. R. Norman. Norman convincingly demonstrates that the available Pāli, Prakrit, and Sanskrit evidence in Buddhist and Jain texts and inscriptions points to pratayahuddha as the original form of the word, and that pratyekabuddha represents an incorrect back-formation (as would the Jain patteya-buddha).

Translations reflecting one or the other form of the term occur throughout the Chinese Buddhist canon, including those of Dharmarakṣa as well. Yet there are also instances in which Dharmarakṣa (or perhaps his assistants) was unable to decide between the two:

**KN 10.4:** pratyekāyānaṁ ca vadam tēsāṁ
they speak to them about the solitary vehicle

**Dh 64b.4:** 又得達至 緣一覺乘

furthermore they are able to obtain the vehicle of the conditioned-solitary buddhas

Dharmarakṣa’s rendering reflects an underlying pratyaveka-buddha-yaṇa, clearly nonsensical in any context, but cognizant, interestingly, of the two possible words that could have collapsed in Prakritic pronunciation. We should also note that this particular double translation predates Dharmarakṣa. In his translation of the Vimalakīrtinirdesāsūtra, Zhi Qian (ca. 220–52) has the following: 復立人為弟子緣一覺行 (furthermore [I] will establish others in the practice of the śrāvakas and of the pratyaya-eka-buddhas) (Taishō 474, vol. 14, 522a.26). Thus, as in previous examples, we must consider the possibility that Dharmarakṣa and his team borrowed well-known locutions from previous translations.

**yaṇa/jñāna**

Besides a number of alternations between these two words—cases where Dharmarakṣa reads yaṇa when one or more of the Sanskrit manuscripts reads jñāna and vice versa—there are several instances in which a Chinese rendering of both terms was provided for one or the other Indic word.88

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87 Norman 1983.
88 I will in this section draw upon an article that Karashima published in 1993. He there makes the provocative claim that the very conception of “vehicle” as a central motif of identification for the Mahāyāna may very well be founded on an incorrect back-formation of the Middle Indic word for “knowledge” in the process of Sanskritization. It is my intention to produce an English translation of this very interesting article in the near future.

**KN 49.2:** ekam idaṁ yaṇaṁ dvitiya nāsti
this is the only vehicle; there is no second

**Dh 71a.2:** 深乘有一 未曾有二
as for wisdom/vehicle, there is one, never two (Krsh 1993, 139)

**KN 49.7–8:** sarve ca te darśayi ekayānam ekam ca yānam avatārayanti
ekasmi yāne paripācaayanti acintiya prāṇi-sahasrakotiyaḥ
All [buddhas] have manifested but a single vehicle, and they introduce one vehicle only. With this one vehicle they bring to maturational inconceivably numerous thousands of kotis of living beings

**Dh 71a.8–10:** 普為眾生示現一乘 是故說破度未度者
常為人說 平等道慧 開化眾生 偏百千億
For the sake of beings everywhere, [the buddhas] manifest one vehicle; therefore they teach this path to liberate the unliberated. They always teach for the sake of men the equanimous path/knowledge, converting hundreds of thousands of millions of kotis of beings (Krsh 1993, 143)

Note that besides the double translation here (daohui 道慧), this verse also clearly establishes the semantic equivalence of sheng 乘 (vehicle) and dao 道 (path).

**KN 189.1–2:** mā khalv ima ekam eva buddhaḥjñānam śrutvā dravenaiva pratinivartayeyur naivopasamkrameyuh
bahuponiklesam idaṁ buddhaḥjñānam samudānayāvayam ītī
These [beings], having heard this one and only buddha-knowledge, should not casually turn back and not go all the way [thinking]: “To acquire this buddha-knowledge is fraught with too many difficulties.”

**Dh 92c.14–15:** 仿佛從本說有一乘 開佛講說不受道慧
Furthermore, the Buddha taught from the beginning that there is one vehicle; having heard the Buddha teach the dharma, [these beings] do not accept the path/knowledge (Krsh 1993, 140)

89 Karashima (1993, 139) notes that one Sanskrit MS (Add 1682 housed at the Cambridge University Library) reads jñāna here.
90 Kash 183a.3 reads: buddhayānam.
91 Kash 183a.4 reads: buddhayānam.
What is especially striking about this example is that in both lines of this verse we have buddhajñānaṃ (or in the case of the Kashgar ms, buddhayānāṃ) represented in the Sanskrit, but two different renderings in the Chinese, the latter a double translation. While Dharmarākṣa's strict adherence to four-character prosody certainly motivated the use of a two-character equivalent here, this example would suggest either a certain amount of indecision on the part of the scribe, or perhaps an intentional attempt to indicate the ambiguity of a Prakritic locution.

jñāna/dhyāna

There are several instances in which jñāna is rendered as dhyāna and vice versa in Dharmarākṣa's translation. Such an interchange presumably would have taken place, as Karashima rightly suggests, through a Prakritic development jñāna > jāna (or jāna) < jhāna < dhyāna, making them at least in some contexts indistinguishable, especially to the ear.92 There is also at least one case where a rendering of both terms appears together:

KN 53.2: yenā vineśyanti 'ha prāṇakotyo baudhāsmiti jñānasmiti anāsravasmin
by which means [the buddhas] will train kotis of beings here in the buddha-knowledge which is without deprivations

Dh 71c.23–24: 所以闡化 儱數眾生 聖定智慧 以消諸漏
by which they spur on beings numbering in the kotis in the meditation/wisdom with which they dry up the "outflows" (Krsh 1993, 149)

The confusion between jñāna and dhyāna provides additional information concerning pronunciation. We know that the consonant clusters in both words would have been assimilated to nearly homophonous sounds in at least some contexts (jñ > jį > j and dhy > jh with loss of perceived aspiration). This is further confirmed by the fact that jñāna is also confused with jana (people):

Kash 31a.2–3: samādapi bahu bodhissattvāḥ(acintīkā koṭiṣasahasra jñāne)93
[the buddha] inspires inconceivably many thousands of kotis of bodhissattvas toward knowledge

Dh 66c.2–3: 勸助發起 無數菩薩 不可思議 儱百千人
[the buddha] will encourage and develop innumerable bodhisattvas and inconceivable hundreds of thousands of kotis of men (Krsh 1993, 148)94

To complicate matters further, there are also instances in which Dharmarākṣa confused dhyāna with dāna (giving):

KN 13.10: dhyānena te prasthitā agrabodhim
they set out for highest enlightenment through meditation

Dh 65a.13: 布施立意求尊佛道
setting their thoughts on giving, they seek the noble enlightenment (Krsh, 32)95

KN 24.13: sarvasvasadānāni paraśajantaḥ
forsaking donations of their whole property

Dh 67a.3–4: 一切聖定 不起因緣
no meditation gives rise to causes [sic!] (Krsh, 40)96

These examples would appear to represent a confusion between dhy and d. We should expect the assimilation of dental stops with y conjuncts to palatal stops, though there are exceptions among the Prakrits (cf. Pischel 1955, §281). Moreover, we can never rule out the possibility of redactional differences playing a role in the disparity between the Sanskrit and Chinese versions. To give one relevant example, KN 14.4 reads: deśenti te prāṇasahasrakotīnāṃ jñāna te prasthitā agrabodhim (they [the buddhas] teach thousands of kotis of beings, and these beings) set out for highest enlightenment by means of knowledge). As Karashima points out (Krsh, 33), the Central Asian ms fragment from the Stein Collection (H3 Kha. i 24, fol. 4a.8; Toda 1981, 265) also reads jñānena here. But the Kashgar ms (Kash 20a.6) and the Gilgit ms97 both read dānena. Dharmarākṣa appears to follow the latter.

92 For example, in the Sanskrit kha rosteri document no. 511 from Nīya we find dhyāna represented as jāna: te jāna parami gata (they attain mastery in meditation); see Boyer et al. 1927, 186 (reverse, l. 6).
93 KN 23.6 reads: samādapi bahubodhissattvān acintiyān uttami buddhajñāne.

94 There are other instances in which jñāna is confused with jana, prajana, and jina; see Karashima 1993, 147–48.
95 But note that in the first pada of this same line Dharmarākṣa renders the word dhyāna correctly: dhyāyanta varṣāṇa sahasrakotīyā (“being in concentration for thousands of kotis of years . . .”); 欲思惟尊百千歲 (“meditating for hundreds of thousands of kotis of years . . .”).
96 Besides the dhyāna/dāna confusion, Karashima also proposes that Dharmarākṣa mistook pariyajanataḥ as pratijaya νjan, leading to his rather bizarre rendering.
97 Watanabe 1975, 2: 10.8.
The examples we have examined in this section provide us with some information concerning Dharmarākṣa’s pronunciation of his Indic text. Confusions between jñāna and jana suggest that the jñ- conjunct had been assimilated to j- (< j). The confusion with yāna is possible “since in the North-Indian dialects ya and ja have in many cases coalesced together” (Pischel 1955, §236). The confusion with dhyāna, pronounced jāna (or jhāna), would also seem to confirm this, as would its rendering by the transcription chan (Evans Early Middle Chinese džian). And such a hypothesis will also help us with the dhyāna/dāna confusion. If dental stops became increasingly voiced, tending toward the fricative [θ] as in Gândhārī pronunciation (under Iranian influence), it is not at all difficult to imagine that a word with initial or intervocalic j (dhyāna > jāna), pronounced in Northwest fashion as [z], would have been confusable with [θ].

But even if this hypothesis be accepted—and it is certainly not clear that it should be—the underlying language of the text is still not determined. As Edgerton has convincingly demonstrated, Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit orthography can be quite misleading as an index of actual pronunciation. It is clear from an examination of the verse portions of BHS texts that these sūtras were originally pronounced with far more Prakritic features than are now preserved in the manuscripts. For example, the most widely occurring meter in the SP is the triśṭubh-jagati, which requires that the third, sixth, seventh, and ninth syllables be light. Thus a consonant conjunct occurring initially in a following syllable would have to be pronounced as assimilated even if it were not resolved orthographically. In one of the examples just cited, acintikā koṣṭhasaras jīnē, the ninth syllable, -sra must be metrically light, though orthographically it is heavy by position, being followed by the conjunct jñ—which must therefore have been assimilated in actual pronunciation.

What is not as clear from the Indic texts, however, is exactly how such conjuncts would have been assimilated. In the case of jñ- there are a number of possibilities: j- (< j), n (e.g., nāna), n (e.g., ānā < ājñā), and ń (e.g., nāna) (cf. Pischel 1955, §276). It is entirely possible that such conjuncts could have been assimilated in different fashions by speakers of diverse Prakrits and certainly by foreign translators of these texts. It is in this regard that the evidence for phonetic confusions in Dharmarākṣa's translation become particularly telling. All of the examples we have considered in this section are from verse. Unless I have seriously misinterpreted the data, there appears to be evidence that Dharmarākṣa may in fact have pronounced the same word (jñāna) in various contexts in different ways, though this data also suggests that his manuscript would have at least sometimes written this word as jāna. We would be hard pressed to account for the range of mistakes otherwise.

It is difficult to know what to make of this phenomenon of “double translation.” One is tempted to speculate—and, of course, only that—that given their obvious limitations in Indian linguistic matters, the Chinese assistants may have believed that both meanings of similarly pronounced expressions inhered in the Indic term before them. In some cases this stretches our imagination to rather severe limits, and we are left to explain the often extreme semantic disparity of words in such translation “binomes.” We might, at the very least, hypothesize that whoever was responsible for these double translations in all probability viewed both meanings as somehow compatible with the reading of the text. It is difficult, it seems to me, to attribute these double translations to the sole agency of Dharmarākṣa himself. Surely he could not have understood such Chinese renderings as sensible. On the contrary, such a hypothesis highlights not only the linguistic shortcomings of his Chinese assistants—in this case almost certainly Nie Chengyuan—but also a rather underdeveloped knowledge of fundamental Buddhist terms and ideas. Nevertheless, these examples may merit a broader and more systematic investigation, as they could illuminate more precisely the burgeoning attempts of Chinese Buddhist literati to deal with a thoroughly linguistic and religious “other” for the first time in Chinese history.

In the following few sections I would like to discuss other kinds of data that do not primarily depend upon phonetic confusions caused by the pronunciation of the

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98 In a Taxila seal inscription (Konow 1929, 100), for example, we find a case in which mahājana almost certainly stands for mahādhāna, where j- = [z] was interchanged with -dh- = [θ]; cf. Brough 1962, §6b.

99 See Edgerton 1935 and 1946.

100 It is important to recognize, however, that these translations of jñāna and dhyāna do not require a text written in Gândhārī Prakrit, but only a Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit manuscript read aloud under the influence of a Prakrit dialect in which both jñ- and dhy- were assimilated to j- (jh-). We cannot assume that Indian texts were pronounced by Central Asians in Indian fashion. Even in the Buddhist Sanskrit texts preserved at Gilgit, we find evidence for pronunciations differentiated under the influence of Iranian habits; see von Hinüber 1989, 357–58. Given the overwhelming importance of oral/aural interaction to the Chinese translation process, such a consideration must always be central to our examination of data for the underlying Indic text.
Indic text. Instead we will look at evidence in the translation that points to the translators' understanding of the text—its grammar, idiom, and ideas.

Grammatical Mistakes

There are several instances in which Dharmarakṣa's translation reflects a seeming confusion between -māṇa, the inflectional ending of the present middle participle, and manas (mind, thought):

KN 24.15: anīṇjamanāś avedhamāṇāḥ
the bodhisattvas are immovable and without stirring

Dh 67a.6: 心念無常 不為放逸
their minds contemplate impermanence and they do not become unrestrained (Krsh, 40)

Dharmarakṣa's rendering appears to reflect two confusions. First, he seems to have taken anīṇa- as derived from anītya (impermanent), probably through the common Prakritic pronunciation of the latter as anīcca (Gandhāri anīca), assuming loss of nasal and confusion of voiced and unvoiced palatal stops.101 Secondly, Dharmarakṣa appears to have taken the present middle participle ending in -māṇa as manas (mind, thought).

KN 120.7: tathāgataś caryā prajānamāṇaḥ sarveṣa sattvāna ‘tha pūdgalānām
the tathāgata, knowing the actions of all beings and persons . . .

Kash 121a.2–3: tathāgataśdhyāsaya jānamāṇaḥ pa(re)ṣa sattvāna ca pūdgalāna ca
the tathāgatas, knowing the dispositions of other beings and persons . . .

Dh 83a.26–27: 如來皆睹 昼人行行 他人心念 一切群萌
the tathāgatas all observe the traits and actions of people, the thoughts of others, and all mankind (Krsh, 91)

It is difficult to determine to which of these two Sanskrit recensions (among others: cf. Krsh, 91) Dharmarakṣa's translation corresponds. Dharmarakṣa's xīng xīng 進行 could reflect either carya or adhyāsaya; his taren 他人 seems to render Kashgar's pa(re)ṣa sattvāna but his yi/qie qunmeng 一切群萌 could also be an attempt to translate sarveṣa sattvāna of KN. Regardless of the redactional differences, it appears that Dharmarakṣa has mistakenly taken jānamāṇaḥ (or prajānamāṇaḥ) as consisting of two words: jāna- (men) and -māṇaḥ (thoughts) rather than as a participle derived from vṛṣṭha.

Abstract suffix -tva

KN 255.3–4: koṭisahasrān bahavah arhatve yo ‘pi sthāpayet
śadabhijñān mahābhāgān yathā gangāya vālikāḥ

Even should one establish in arhat-ship many thousands of koṭis of the greatly virtuous, endowed with the six supernatural faculties and [numerous] as the sands of the Ganges . . .

Dh 105a.6–7: 若無數億千 興立無著塔
六通極大聖 猶如恆邊沙
If innumerable thousands of koṭis [of people?] erect arhat-stūpa [sic!]—the most excellent sages [possessed] of the six supernatural faculties, [numerous] as the sands on the banks of the Ganges . . . (Krsh, 153)

Karashima proposed that Dharmarakṣa's ta 塔 (stūpa)—completely out of place here—derives from a confusion between the abstract suffix -tva in arhatve and one of the Middle Indic words for stūpa (thva), one that is attested in inscriptions from Mathurā and Taxila.102 This would assume a confusion between the aspired and unaspirated dental consonants, noted already above, as well as the regular development of p > v. We would also have to presume the insertion of an epenthetic -u-, here under the influence of the labial semivowel, again a fairly common Prakritic development (cf. von Hinüber 1986, §155). While this explanation may seem to stretch credibility, it is difficult to discern an alternative. In addition, the syntax of Dharmarakṣa's translation, generously strained in my own rendering, suggests that he did not perceive both koṭisahasrān bahavah and śadabhijñān as referring to mahābhāgān (literally, “those possessed

101 With regard to Gandhāri, Fussman (1989, §18 and n. 32) gives an early example of the development of j < c. If this development is authentic—and that is not clear—it is unusual. We should expect both j and c to develop to ya-śruti before final disappearance. A good example of the j > ya-śruti shift is exhibited in one of Dharmarakṣa's few transcriptions: the name Ajita is rendered as ayy阿逸 (66a.17), Early Middle Chinese ?a jīt (j here is IPA high front glide). Elsewhere he translated this name as moneng sheng 莫能勝 (“cannot be surpassed”).

102 See Konow 1929, 48 (Mathurā Lion Capital) and 87 (Taxila Vase inscription).
of a great share,” thus the highly fortunate, illustrious, and in religious contexts, the virtuous and holy).\(^{103}\) This verse then provides yet another piece of evidence for the erratic—to put it charitably—knowledge of Sanskrit grammar of Dharmarakṣa’s translation team.

**Mistaken Division of Words**

We have already noted several examples above in which Dharmarakṣa or his assistants misconstrued a passage by dividing the words in the sentence improperly. In one case, for example, Dharmarakṣa took vividhāīr upā-yaiḥ as vividhai rupā(yaiḥ). I will note two other apparent cases of such a mistake.

**KN 120.3–4:**  
\(\text{anuvartāmānas tatha nityakālāṃ nimittacārīṇa braviti dharmam dharmēśvara īsvaru sarvaloke mahēśvara lokavināyakendraḥ} \)

The lord of the dharma, lord over the whole world, great lord, chief of the world, always preaches the dharma in conformity with those who follow [mere] appearances.

**Dh 83a.21–23:**  
\(\text{安撫勸進 恒以時節 未曾修設 望懇福行 於一切世 諸法中尊 皆為普 神最勝如來} \)

In consoling and urging on [others] always at just the right time, he has never engaged in acts out of hope for merit; in the whole world he is the venerable of the dharma, and is considered by all as the great lord, the supreme tathāgata. (Krṣṇ, 91)

While there are several interesting problems in this verse, the one that principally concerns us here is the fact that Dharmarakṣa or a member of his translation team has mistakenly interpreted the first line in the negative, presumably by taking the -\(n\)a of the gen. pl. nimittacārīṇa as the negative marker \(n\)a.\(^{104}\) We have already noted above that the Gāndhāra sources differ in their treatment of these two nasals. Obviously such a mistake plays havoc with the understanding of the verse and cannot be attributed merely to phonological confusions.

**KN 27.12:**  
\(\text{pūjān ca teṣām vipulāṃ akāṛṣit} \)

he performed extensive homage to them

Two Nepalese mss (one [K’) brought from Tibet by E. Kawaguchi and preserved in the Tōyō Bunko in Tokyo\(^{105}\) and MS no. 3/672 [9678] preserved in the National Archives of Kathmandu, Nepal) read vipulām ahaṛṣit (< \(\sqrt{hr} \) “to offer”) instead. This latter reading seems to account for Dharmarakṣa’s translation:

**Dh 67c.8:**  
\(\text{廣音大聖} \)

universal great sage (Krṣṇ, 42)

Karashima has proposed that Dharmarakṣa read the end of this line as vipulā-mahāṛṣi(t), taking the final verb as mahāṛṣi (great seer).

**Semantic Misinterpretations**

There are a number of instances in which Dharmarakṣa’s rendering of a word or phrase indicates that he or his assistant had correctly perceived the respective Indic locution but had construed it with an incorrect connotation. I will cite only two examples.

**KN 14.4:**  
\(\text{deṣenti te prāṇasahasra koṭināṃ} \)

they [the bodhisattvas] teach thousands of koṭis of living beings

**Dh 65a.29:**  
\(\text{發起民庶 使其悔過} \)

[the bodhisattvas] induce people to make their confessions (Krṣṇ, 33)

Dharmarakṣa seems to have interchanged two senses of the verb deṣenti/deṣayati (< \(\sqrt{di} \)š): “to teach, impart” and “to confess” (cf. BHSD, 272).

**KN 16.4:**  
\(\text{lokanatho atha vyākarisaty ayu bodhisattvān} \)

then the protector of the world will make a prediction for these bodhisattvas

**Dh 65c.3–4:**  
\(\text{願為分別 此諸菩薩} \)

may [the world hero] explicate for our sake [matters concerning] these bodhisattvas (Krṣṇ, 35)

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\(^{103}\) In all fairness to Dharmarakṣa, it would appear that Kern also mistranslated this verse in his English rendering (Kern 1884, 242, v. 32); Iwamoto’s Japanese translation is to be preferred (Iwamoto 1964, 2: 199, v. 32).

\(^{104}\) Karashima would also like to see a mistake here between braviti (“speaks, teaches”) and bhāveti (< bhāvayati, “cultivates”) through the confusion of \(b(r)\) and \(bh\) and an unnoticed distinction between weakly articulated palatal vowels. While this again is certainly possible, I am more inclined to see an emendation by Dharmarakṣa (or, of course, his assistants) as the source. Having interpreted the -\(n\)a as a negative particle, they would likely have been inspired to continue a sense for this passage that focused upon nimittacārī, albeit in a rather strained fashion.

\(^{105}\) Toda 1980, 11b.1.
Dharmarakṣa has confused here two meanings of the verb *vād-vākṛ: "to elucidate, explain" and "to predict, prophesize" (cf. *BHSD, 517); the syntax of this clause is seriously strained by this misconstrual. Clearly the person responsible for these renderings was not able consistently to appreciate the precise nuances of certain Buddhist technical terms.

One of the issues raised by these various misunderstandings within Dharmarakṣa's translation—be they phonetic, semantic, or grammatical—is to understand why Dharmarakṣa and/or his translation assistants interpreted certain words or phrases correctly in some places but not in others. While a systematic survey of all the possibilities is well beyond the scope of this paper, I would like to examine at least one clear case of the role that seems to have been played by the context in which certain words occur within the text.

We examined two instances above in which the epithet *lokavidu (one who understands the world) was construed as *lokapitu (father of the world). This epithet of a buddha occurs twenty-eight times in the Sanskrit text (KN edition) of the *SP. Twenty-two of these occurrences are found within the standard list of ten epithets of a buddha, and in every case, Dharmarakṣa has rendered the term correctly: shi jian jie 世間解. Of the six remaining instances of *lokavidu, all of which occur outside the standard list, two of these are not represented in the Kashgar manuscript of the Sanskrit text, and these are also cases where they are not found in Dharmarakṣa's translation, suggesting the likelihood of a redactional difference between the KN edition and the Indic text underlying his translation. In two other instances Dharmarakṣa's translation offers a double rendering, *lokavida/pitu, as already discussed. In another case Dharmarakṣa renders the epithet as shixiong 世雄 (world-hero < *lokavira ?), and in the sixth instance he leaves the term untranslated.

What we find then is considerable inconsistency—redactional differences aside—in the way Dharmarakṣa handles the term *lokavid(u) when it occurs outside the context of the standard list of the ten epithets of a buddha. How shall we account for this? Should we hypothesize that Dharmarakṣa himself misconstrued the word when it was isolated from the standard list? This is certainly a possibility. However, it would seem at least curious that the very translator who adequately and sometimes expertly translated many more technical passages elsewhere in the text would have sometimes understood a standard title of a buddha and sometimes not.

I would contend on the contrary that this is yet another piece of a growing body of evidence that points toward Dharmarakṣa's principal assistant, Nie Chengyuan, as the source of such problems. We can easily imagine that Dharmarakṣa's recitation of the Indic text—replete with Prakritisms together with possible Central Asian influences—would have presented numerous difficulties to a Chinese assistant, however learned, for understanding key terms in the text and rendering them adequately into Chinese. Deprived of an illuminating context, not to mention a thorough Sanskrit education, Nie Chengyuan would almost certainly have been at a loss to separate out various possible meanings of certain Middle Indic words pronounced by a Yuezhi monk. Presumably Dharmarakṣa often provided glosses, which accounts for the large number of correct renderings of most terms. But it also appears that on many occasions Nie Chengyuan would have trusted his instincts, unwisely at times, and translated what he heard, or what he deduced from what he heard. Thus in the case of the two renderings of *lokavidu as "wise father of the world," Nie Chengyuan, unable to decide between two possible meanings of a word as pronounced, arrived at a compromise solution. It is virtually certain that Dharmarakṣa's manuscript could not have read *lokapitu or any variation thereof in these places.

It is not difficult to appreciate the appeal of this interpretation to a Chinese assistant. And it should be pointed out that the term *lokapitṛ, "father of the world," does occur in the *SP itself (see KN 77.8, 80.4, 326.7). Interestingly, at KN 80.4, which reads te tathāgatasya lokapitṛ abhisraddhānti (they have faith in the tathāgata, the father of the world), Dharmarakṣa translates as 如來出世 有信樂者 (76a.15, those who have faith and take pleasure in the tathāgata who has pronounced the world). Though not noticed by Karashima, there appears to be a confusion here between *lokapitṛ...
and *loka-vidhu(ta) (one who has abandoned the world), exhibiting yet another confusion between /v/ and voiced/ unvoiced dentals with assumption of aspiration (or, more likely, spirancy). This kind of inconsistency, the fact that identical terms received such varied interpretations, reveals, I suspect, something of the dynamics of the translation process itself. It would be difficult, it seems to me, to suppose that a single bilingual agent was fundamentally responsible for the final version of this translation. In essence we would have to believe that such a translator’s skills in Indic languages would have fluctuated so wildly as to inspire absolute nonsense in some places, despite well-translated passages elsewhere. But before drawing final conclusions, let us look at one more type of evidence of a rather different nature.

**Chinese Literary Borrowings**

In speculating upon the roles of the participants in the translation process I have thus far exclusively examined the translators’ attempts to come to terms with the Indic or presumed Indic text. But we also find some evidence that one or more of the members of the translation committee supplied specific terms or passages that can only be understood as borrowings from Chinese literary and religious traditions. One such passage occurs very early in the first chapter of Dharmarakṣa’s SP and stands out as having no parallel in any extant Sanskrit manuscript, nor is it found in Kumārajiva’s fifth-century translation. I render it as follows:

[The bodhisattvas] roam through the *trailoka* like the rays of the sun. They understand all dharmas as illusory, as conjured, like shimmering air *(yema 野馬)* or reflections—all without real existence, abiding in non-abiding. Although these bodhisattvas experience *samsāra*, they neither go nor come. When they see color and form, these appear as original non-being *(benwu 本無)*. Although they emerge in multiple rebirths, they are perpetually without arising or cessation. They lead the masses without being attached to the three abodes. They elucidate the wisdom of emptiness but are without conceptualizations or inclinations. They give rise to the three gates of liberation and reach the three penetrating insights, but are without the thought of past, future, or present. They convert the masses and cause them to understand original non-being. (Dh 63a.20–26)

One of the first lexical items to note in this passage is what I rendered as “shimmering air,” *yema* 野馬 in Chinese, which literally means “wild horses.” This is without a doubt a metaphor drawn from the first chapter of the Daoist classic *Zhuangzi*, describing the wind generated by the great Peng bird as it flies toward the southern ocean. The *Zhuangzi* enjoyed a great resurgence of interest among the literati during the third century, as evidenced most notably by the commentary of Guo Xiang (d. ca. 312?), a contemporary of Dharmarakṣa.110

Twenty years before his translation of the *SP*, Dharmarakṣa had already used this metaphor to render the Sanskrit term māyā (illusion) in his translation of the *Suvikrāntacintidevaprataparīpucchā*. Since the Sanskrit text is not extant, I cite the Tibetan translation here (Stog Palace ms., vol. 69 *[tsha*], 368b.4): *nyon-mongs sprin ’dra sgyu-ma rmi-lam lta bur lta ([the bodhisattvas] see defilements *[kleśa*] as like a cloud, an illusion *[māyā*], like a dream). Dharmarakṣa renders this as follows: *所作若夢及野馬幻視一切法癡分如是* (What is produced is like a dream or an illusion of shimmering air. [The bodhisattvas] view all dharmas as foolishly distinguished like this [by deluded people?]!).111

It may be worth noting that the *Suvikrāntacinti* is Dharmarakṣa’s first recorded translation (267 C.E) and that two of his assistants from the *SP* translation—the *upāsaka* Nie Chengyuan and the Kuchean layman Bo Yuanxin—also participated in this work twenty years earlier.112 The colophon to the *Suvikrāntacinti* specifically states that Dharmarakṣa’s oral recitation was “linguistically transferred” *(chuanyan 傳言)* by two assistants, suggesting a limited level of ability in Chinese on the part of Dharmarakṣa at this early date. Assuming that the Kuchean and Parthian who “transferred the words” would have been unlikely to have been versed in the Chinese classics, we can reasonably take such literary allusions as *yema* to be the doing of the Chinese *upāsaka* Nie Chengyuan.113

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110 My rendering of this locution follows Guo Xiang’s commentary, which glosses the metaphor as *youqi* 遊氣 *(Sibu beiyao edition, 2a). For a discussion of the impact of this renewed interest in the *Zhuangzi* on third-century Chinese Buddhism, see Tsukamoto and Hurvitz 1985, 173–77.

111 *Taishō* 588, vol. 15, 97c.16–17. See also 107a.16 for another instance of this term.

112 See the colophon in *CSZJ*, vol. 55, 48b and the discussion of this colophon in section III of this paper.

113 Early records by native bibliographers indicate that Nie Chengyuan’s work on the translation committees extended beyond the usual scribal duties. From Dharmarakṣa’s biography we learn: “First Dharmarakṣa obtained the foreign text *(huben 胡本)* of the *Chao rimi* [sanmei] *jing* 超日明三昧鏡 from the Western Regions and translated it. But [his translation] was prolix and full of repetitions. Then the *upāsaka* Nie Chengyuan altered it, thoroughly correcting the prose and verse sections, reducing it to two rolls. The sūtra which is transmitted today is
Another location that stands out in this passage from the SP is *benwu* 本無, "original non-being." This term was a centerpiece of the negative ontology of the *Xuanxue* (Mysterious Learning) movement, embodied most notably in the third-century figure Wang Bi.\(^{114}\) For Wang Bi, drawing tangentially on the language of absence in the *Laozi*, *benwu* functions as the ontological ground of all reality. But even before Wang Bi, translators such as Lokakṣema (ca. 168–88) and Zhi Qian (ca. 220–52) had used this term to express the principles of Mahāyāna śūnyatā thought. We cannot engage here in the debate of what influence—if any—Mahāyāna emptiness doctrine exercised on early *Xuanxue* thought. Regardless, it is clear that terms like *benwu* and *yema* were already current among literati by the time Dharmarakṣa began his translation career.\(^{115}\) And these terms certainly would have been consciously chosen to express facets of Mahāyāna metaphysics so as to appeal to third-century Chinese intellectuals.

For our purposes in this paper, such indigenous expressions within clearly interpolated passages point to a decidedly Chinese source. And once again, the most likely candidate for this influence is Nie Chengyuan, providing yet another datum for what appears to have been a significant if not overwhelming native Chinese influence on the translation process.

V. CONCLUSION

I began this investigation by surveying the rather meager evidence marshalled to argue that the majority of early Chinese Buddhist texts were translated from Gândhārī originals. And we have also seen that the repetition of this claim has led to its widespread acceptance among scholars, generally without significantly augmented data.

In order to reevaluate this hypothesis, I examined evidence from the earliest translation of the *Sad-dharmapundarikāsūtra*, that of the third-century Yuezhi translator Dharmarakṣa, which indicated phonological confusions due to a transmission of this text in a language having similarities to Gândhārī Prakrit.

This evidence, culled for the most part from the study by Seishi Karashima, reveals possible confusions related to vowel length, aspirated and unaspirated consonants, voicing of intervocalic stops, and confusions related to nasalization. I also noted that despite the similarity between the possible source language influencing these phonological confusions and Gândhārī Prakrit, several of them are unlikely to have been represented in the Indic text underlying Dharmarakṣa's translation. Instances, for example, where Dharmarakṣa's translation assumes aspiration where none could have existed run counter not only to what we know of Gândhārī, which has a predilection for dropping aspiration, but also of the Prakrits generally.

We have also looked closely at the translation process itself as attested by the two extant colophons. These colophons present detailed but not entirely unambiguous information of the specific roles played by each member of this international translation committee. What stands out from this information is the fundamentally oral/aural nature of the translation process. Dharmarakṣa recited the Indic text aloud to his Chinese assistant Nie Chengyuan who, in conjunction with two other Chinese scribes, converted Dharmarakṣa's oral glosses into literary Chinese. I have supposed that Nie Chengyuan, who almost certainly would not have fully commanded any Indian literary language, would have been dependent upon Dharmarakṣa for a reading of the Indic manuscript. Nevertheless, his rendering into literary Chinese would have been simultaneously informed by his apprehensions and misapprehensions of specific Indic locutions—locutions that Dharmarakṣa may well have expected his pupil of twenty years to have understood. Despite the fact that this translation was subsequently proofread by an Indian monk and Kuchean layman and was later revised by Dharmarakṣa himself, many of the mistakes remained unnoticed. This confirms our sense that Dharmarakṣa, like the other foreigners on the committee, was not completely at home in literary Chinese.

To shore up this portrait of the dynamic within the translation team, I offered additional linguistic data that illustrate a range of problems of rather different types. First, I examined the phenomenon of "double translations" whereby two different Sanskrit words whose pronunciation had coalesced in Prakrit or Central Asian pronunciation were rendered side by side in Dharmar-
rakṣa's translation. Such an unusual translation practice highlights the lexical uncertainty that the translation assistant faced in determining an appropriate rendering for an Indic term that was neither clear nor made clear to him. If Dharmarakṣa's ability in Indic languages must to a large degree be assumed in order to account for the large number of correct readings throughout the translation, then such limitations again point to Nie Chengyuan. The confusions exhibited in relationship to yāna/ jñāṇa/dhyāṇa are particularly revealing of the overlapping of pronunciation that Nie Chengyuan almost certainly must have faced. If Dharmarakṣa's pronunciation of these words was affected, for example, by their position (verse or prose) or graphic irregularities in the manuscript, then we should not be surprised to find problems of interpretation by a Chinese assistant with only limited ability in discerning the correct form from among various Prakritic possibilities. While some of these confusions also suggest a pronunciation influenced by Central Asian habits, none of them requires an underlying text written in Gāndhārī Prakrit.

This also brings us to the problem of orthography and its relationship to pronunciation. It might be supposed that, regardless of the actual underlying language of Dharmarakṣa's Indic manuscript, some of these mistakes could be accounted for by supposing a text written in kharoṣṭhī script.\footnote{Karashima himself has hypothesized as much: “... judging from the confusion relating to anusvāra or the vowel length, we may assume that the original text was probably written in a kind of the Kharoṣṭhī script, in which these differentiations were not denoted” (Karashima 1992, 275). Of course we have no reason to doubt the presence of the kharoṣṭhī script in China. John Brough has published a kharoṣṭhī inscription found at Luoyang (Brough 1961) and Lin Meicun has similarly reported on a kharoṣṭhī inscription found on the base of a Buddha image discovered near ancient Chang’ān (Lin 1991).}

On this point I might also tentatively suggest that the designation of Dharmarakṣa's Indian manuscript as huben 胡本 by the anonymous author of the colophon might also support the proposal of a kharoṣṭhī script text as contrasted with fanshu 梵書 (brāhmaṇī ms) in other colophons. As possible supporting evidence, I would note that the colophon to Dharmarakṣa's translation of the LālitaVistāra also describes his Indic manuscript as huben and Brough has argued that this translation stems from a Gāndhārī Prakrit original, as evidenced by its arapacana formulary (Brough 1977). One way to test this hypothesis may be to examine Dharmarakṣa's translation of the Vīśeṣacintibrahmaparipṛcchāsūtra (Taihō 585). This text was translated less than six months before the SP and its colophon phonetic alternations, there are apparent confusions that may lend themselves to a graphic explanation:

KN 18.3–6: \textit{iti hy ajita\textit{itena paramparodhāreṇa} candrasūryapradipanāmakānāṁ tathāgataṇāṁ arhatāṁ samyaksambuddhānāṁ ekanāma\textit{deyānāṁ ēkakulagotraṇāṁ} yad idam bharavājāsagotraṇāṁ viṃśatihar ābha\textit{vān} | tatāra\textit{jīta}}

Thus, Ajita, there were successively 20,000 \textit{tathāgatas} who had the same name and the same family—namely, Bharadvāja—as the Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha Candrasūryapradipa. Then, Ajita . . .

\textit{SP} 65c.29–66a.1: \textit{如是等絹八十如來皆同一號日月燈明} 背紹一姓 若斯之比二萬如來 佛語莫能勝

Thus there were 80 \textit{tathāgatas} all having the same name Candrasūryapradipa,\footnote{The fact that Dharmarakṣa renders this name as riyou dengming 日月燈明 (*Sūryacandra-pradipa) merely reflects a Chinese predilection for the order “sun and moon” rather than the reverse.} all inheriting the same family name. If we were to line them up, there would be 20,000 \textit{tathāgatas}. The Buddha said to Ajita . . .

We have two instances of the name Ajita in the Sanskrit passage but only one in the Chinese. Moreover, we have a very strange state of affairs in the Chinese: Dharmarakṣa describes the number of tathāgatas who have successively appeared as Candrasūryapradipa to be eighty, and then immediately following, to be twenty thousand. There is, of course, no mention of “eighty” in our Indic text. But if we suppose Dharmarakṣa to have been working from a kharoṣṭhī manuscript that read *ayita, exhibiting the widespread Prakritic development $j > y$ (Pischel 1955, § 236), then we could speculate that he misread the kharoṣṭhī $y$ as $ś$ —two of the most graphically similar ākṣaras in this script—and understood āśīti (“eighty”). What is curious in this case is that this name was read correctly, both in transcription (cf. note 101) and in translation, several times in nearby passages. But states that Dharmarakṣa “recited and issued [shuo\textit{chu} 撰出] the brāhmaṇī text [fan\textit{wen} 梵文] in Chang’an, conferring it upon [Nie] Chengyuan” (CSZJJ, vol. 55, 57c.19–21). A close linguistic analysis of this translation, which was carried out with the same principal assistant and at nearly the same time, may inform us as to the respective difficulties of handling texts transmitted in kharoṣṭhī vis-à-vis brāhmaṇī script for Dharmarakṣa and his committees.
here Dharmarakaša not only misread the text, but produced a translation that is transparently incoherent. Thus, when the colophon states that this translation was proofread by a Kucheăn layman and an Indian śramaṇa, such mistakes remind us to take such information cum grano salis.

Moreover, there is no reason to assume that Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit manuscripts were not transmitted in kharoṣṭhī script. Among the kharoṣṭhī documents discovered at Niya are two that are written in Sanskrit: document no. 511 is composed in a mixed Buddhist Sanskrit with a number of Prakritisms and document no. 523 is in pure classical Sanskrit, replete with long vowels, visarga, virāma, and proper sandhi. These documents were certainly composed by someone conversant with the brāhmaṇi script as indicated by the fact that the verses are numbered in both documents with brāhmaṇi numerals. In all probability, the modifications to the kharoṣṭhī script that made correct Sanskrit possible would have occurred under a brāhmaṇi influence.

In addition to mistakes based upon phonological confusions, we have also found evidence for grammatical misunderstandings, mistaken division of words, and connotative misrenderings—all of which again point to a translator with limited skill in Indic languages. We discovered that context seems to have played a significant role in Dharmarakaša’s or his translation assistant’s arriving at an accurate rendering of certain lexical items.

Of course, we cannot presume that all of these mistakes are the result of Nie Chengyuan’s misunderstandings. It is likely that Dharmarakaša himself would have sometimes misread his Indian manuscript, which could have itself been fraught with scribal errors of indeterminable types. Furthermore, Dharmarakaša may have provided glosses to his assistants that would have been misleading. Nevertheless, the predominance of correctly translated items in much of the text (e.g., lokavid when it occurs within the standard list of epithets) side-by-side with occasional mistakes, even when context demanded a narrower reading, suggests a rendering by someone whose understanding of the Indic text was imperfectly mediated. Unless the Indic text contained unusually irregular variants of the same words, or Dharmarakaša’s understanding and recitation of the text fluctuated in erratic ways, the most probable explanation, it seems, rests with the middlemen: the Chinese assistants who were responsible for receiving the Indian text with a severely limited arsenal of linguistic tools and who transformed their understanding of it into a semi-literary Chinese translation.

Lastly, we have taken notice of an interpolation in Dharmarakaša’s translation that perhaps more than any other piece of data points to the strong likelihood of a native Chinese source. In this passage we observed two locutions that were doubtless derived from the contemporary Chinese literary vocabulary, reflecting an attempt by the Chinese members of the translation committee to narrow the gulf between the Indian and Chinese religious worlds.

In short, what this rather sizable mass of data would seem to indicate is that the evidence for the underlying

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118 See Boyer et al. 1927, 185—87 and 191, respectively. On document no. 511, see the recent though problematic article by Hasuike 1997.

119 Such influence between scripts can work in the other direction as well. Douglas Hitch (1984) has examined the influence of kharoṣṭhī on brāhmaṇi script in Iranian environments. Furthermore, it has been suggested that brāhmaṇi script could be used to write Gāndhāri Prakrit, though the evidence is by no means conclusive: see Harmatta 1967.

120 I should point out that while the investigation here has focused upon problems related to the reception of words on the part of the translation team, we could also mention the high incidence of syntactical problems that range from loose renderings of the Sanskrit to nearly incomprehensible strings of Chinese characters. Many of these loose renderings have the feel of paraphrases. Others appear to be word-by-word translations, often with considerable violation of Chinese syntax. Both types of renderings—the paraphrase and the literal—suggest that Dharmarakaša translated the Indic text in a piecemeal fashion, glossing words and phrases while providing some additional exegesis of the overall import. It would have fallen to Nie Chengyuan then to construct a coherent literary Chinese read-

121 The fact that the Chinese translations are nearly always attributed to one usually foreign translator, in our case Dharmarakaša, and not his committee has more to do with concerns for legitimation and orthodoxy in China than with historical accuracy. Antonino Forte has astutely observed: “The assignment of the responsibility for a translation was an extremely important matter as its purpose was to reassure the Buddhist establishment and the government of the full authenticity and orthodoxy of a work. This need to make one person responsible often meant that the actual contribution of other members of the team tended to be unacknowledged. The paradox thus often arose of the accredited translator, usually a foreigner, being unable to speak or write Chinese, while the actual translators received so little attention that, but for the colophons at the end of a number of translations, we would often not have even known their names” (Forte 1984, 316).
Indic text of this translation is in fact evidence for the Chinese reception of the Indic text. And this reception, as we have seen, suffered at times from rather severe limitations in expertise.\textsuperscript{122} Thus the attempt to see Gândhāri Prakrit specifically beneath our extant Chinese translation must take into account the complex interaction between an orthographically indeterminable Indic text, its recitation by a Yuezhi monk trained by an Indian master at Dunhuang, and its transmission to a linguistically underprepared Chinese upāsaka.

In addition, the linguistic complexity of the underlying Indic text cannot be underestimated. Even if we want to suppose the existence of a considerable number of Buddhist texts written in the Gândhāri language, most canonical texts used in the northwest would have originated from central Indian Prakrits. And the process of turning such Prakrits into Gândhāri would have decidedly shaped and perhaps significantly altered the final text. K. R. Norman, for example, has argued: "It cannot be emphasized too much that all the versions of canonical Hinayāna Buddhist texts which we possess are translations, and even the earliest we possess are translations of some still earlier version, now lost."\textsuperscript{123} Heinz Bechert, on the other hand, has suggested that translation—a linguistic transfer between mutually unintelligible languages or dialects—is too strong a characterization of this process:

Some scholars believed that this transformation was a real "translation" of texts which at that time already existed as written literary texts. Others think—and I agree—

with them—that the transposition was no formalized translation. It was another kind of transformation from one dialect into another dialect, that took place in the course of a tradition, which was still an oral tradition, but had already entered the process of being formalized linguistically . . . . \textsuperscript{124}

However, these positions are not necessarily as sharply opposed as they might first appear. Norman has shown that these "translations" were often carried out by scribes who applied certain phonetic rules mechanically.\textsuperscript{125} Nevertheless, some of these transpositions led to hypercorrections and mistaken interpretations, suggesting that the movement between these dialects was not always clear even to learned scribes.\textsuperscript{126} This problem was especially acute in Gândhāri, as Gérard Fussman has recently indicated:

Il ne faut pas surestimer la gêne qu'apporte à l'usager l'existence d'une orthographe vieillie assez éloignée de la prononciation réelle. . . . Dans ces conditions les textes bouddhiques gandh. s'écartaient tellement de la norme parlée qu'ils n'étaient parfois plus comprenables, même à leur rédacteur.\textsuperscript{127}

For our purposes then it is important to realize that before an Indian sūtra arrived in China, it may have undergone one or more stages of transference between Middle Indic languages. This process almost certainly would have resulted in a very mixed and layered text.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{122} There is another well-known case, from a much later period, of a translation going awry through the inadequacy in Sanskrit lexical and syntactical knowledge of the Chinese "translators." This is the pseudo-translation of the Jātakamālā from the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127), discussed most cogently in Brough 1964. Brough demonstrated that while this supposed translation certainly did no justice to Āryaśātra's poetic masterpiece, it was related to it in a particular way. The Chinese who worked on this text clearly did not understand the Sanskrit, but they did recognize—sometimes erroneously—certain Sanskrit words in an order parallel enough to the Sanskrit text to rule out chance association. For a recent attempt to explain the reason behind this stark decline in translation competence, see Bowring 1992. Of course Dharmarākṣa's SP translation is not nearly so incompetent as this pathetic attempt; but it is illuminating to observe that Chinese understandings of Sanskrit texts were perhaps always focused at the lexical level, excluding those few pilgrims who had studied in India.\textsuperscript{123} Norman 1990, 34.

\textsuperscript{124} Bechert 1980, 12.

\textsuperscript{125} Norman 1993, esp. pp. 95 ff. on translation techniques. Cf. Brough's remarks on the Gândhāri Dharmapada: "We can, however, see immediately that the translation involved—whether it was done in one or more deliberate stages, or simply happened through imperceptible gradations in different lines of descent—is scarcely more than a mechanical transposition between the sound systems of the dialects" (Brough 1962, 113).

\textsuperscript{126} For an amusing story from the Mālasarvāstivādavinaya showing the effects of an uncomprehended "translation," see Brough 1962, 45–48.

\textsuperscript{127} Fussman 1989, 485.

\textsuperscript{128} On this issue I have been reminded by Professor Jens-Uwe Hartmann (personal communication, June 1995) that it may be necessary to separate the redactional history of āgama texts from that of Mahāyāna sūtras. It is highly likely that almost all āgama texts were composed in Middle Indic languages that were liable to phonological shifts as the bearers of these texts migrated across India. It is certainly possible that some of these texts, such as the Dirghāgama, could have undergone a
Moreover, it is precisely this predicament, Fussman suggests, that led Buddhists in the northwest to adopt the use of Sanskrit as their linguistic norm:

Surtout il n'existait à ma connaissance aucun texte gandh. dont le prestige fût tel qu'il pût servir de norme: on sait bien que le bouddhisme n'est pas originaire de Gandhâra et les grands sūtra bouddhiques, s'ils existaient en gandh., n'y existaient qu'en traduction faite ou refondue sur un original en m-i ganâtique. La seule norme possible était le skt., dont le prestige est bien attesté aux environs de n.e. . . .

We would expect then that the Indic text of the SP was shaped by the burgeoning role of Sanskrit in north India beginning from approximately the first century B.C.E. 130 Edgerton has in fact already shown that the idiom he called Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit “was not a pure Prakrit but a hybrid dialect, based on a Prakrit, but partially Sanskritized from the start.” 131 Though the Indic text underlying Dharmarâkâ’s translation would have certainly contained many more Prakritic forms that were increasingly disguised with an orthographically Sanskritic veneer, there can be little doubt that the original composition was already in the hybrid language. And this language, as Edgerton repeatedly emphasized, was an artificial language, in no way identical to any living vernacular or otherwise literary Prakrit. Given the debate that has surrounded the linguistic status of BHS since Edgerton’s monumental study, as well as the continued uncertainty as to the location(s) of the early Mahâyâna, these philological discussions are likely to have ramifications beyond any particular text.

It must be emphasized at this point that I have not proven—nor have I attempted to prove—that Dharmarâkâ’s underlying Indic manuscript was not written under the influence of Gândhârî Prakrit. If, despite some qualifications, there is sufficient evidence that points to this manuscript as having been written in kharoṣṭhī script, we would expect a fair number of Gândhâri features to be represented even in a Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit text. 132 But what I have attempted to show is that these early Chinese translations are imperfect testimonies to the Indian source texts. There is much that is not well understood about these early translations and much of this will have to be solved within sinology. As should be abundantly clear by now, the Chinese-ness of these series of phonetic transpositions that coincided in many ways with features of the Northwest Prakrit. On the other hand, Mahâyâna sūtras were in all probability composed in a language already undergoing Sanskritization and may have been more likely to have been circulated in written form at a date close to their composition, causing a somewhat greater fixity in their linguistic shape. This supposition, however, is difficult to prove on the basis of our extant sources.

130 Th. Damsteegt, in his monographic study of epigraphical hybrid Sanskrit, attempts to show that the Sanskritization evidenced in Buddhist inscriptions began in Mathurâ with the coming of the Saka satraps and radiated out from there, while at the same time absorbing linguistic features from the northwest. He hypothesizes that BHS would have developed in such an environment, from which it too would have spread to Buddhist communities elsewhere (Damsteegt 1979, 238–66). Despite the mass of data presented, several aspects of his thesis are in serious doubt: see the review by Fussman 1980.

131 Edgerton 1936; see also his BHSG, §1.33 ff.

132 On this matter it would be appropriate then to ask what we mean by a “Gândhârî text.” Richard Salomon has suggested (personal communication, July 1995) that what we should mean is a text written in kharoṣṭhī script. The real Gândhârî-ness of such a text would consist largely in its graphically derived phonemic features through which an original Middle Indic text was channelled. There is considerable merit in this proposal, especially in that it allows us to focus our investigation somewhat. However, to the extent possible, I would tentatively like to differentiate the language of composition from the language of transposition. That is to say, a Central Indian Prakrit text—especially one still transmitted orally—would in all probability have been more linguistically fluid, more prone to “translation” across Prakrits, than a text originally composed in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. Both are hybrid works and both may have taken on Gândhâri phonemic features by a transmission through northwest India (and transcription in kharoṣṭhī). But the linguistic nature of a text composed in BHS, insured in many cases by an analysis of the verse sections, may well represent a different genre, a different set of literary, political, and religious forces that distinguishes it from the use of Prakrit. There is much about the beginnings of Sanskritization that we still do not understand. It would be premature, it seems to me, to prejudice our investigation strictly at the level of script. Again, document no. 511 from Niya may be a good example of a BHS text filtered through a Gândhârî-using environment. And the language of this document is clearly distinguishable from the others found at this site though nearly all are in kharoṣṭhī script. To label this document as aberrant, to dismiss the possibility of more texts of this kind, would be to beg the question our investigation of the Chinese translations poses: “Were there more?”
texts intrudes throughout and must be taken seriously in any assessment of the source language.

The gist of this long digression is that any proposal that a Chinese Buddhist translation derives from Gāndhārī must also take into account the complex history of Indian Buddhist texts, generally, and the process of their translation into Chinese, specifically. Given the importance of such philological discussions for Buddhist textual history, we obviously must proceed carefully.\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{133} The recent acquisition of several new kharoṣṭhī script Gāndhārī Prakrit Buddhist texts by the British Library will, we hope, add important new data to our very partial understanding of Gāndhārīn textual history. See the preliminary report on these manuscripts by Salomon (1997). It is interesting to note that all of the texts identified among these new manuscripts to date belong to a mainstream—probably Dharmaguptaka—order. Thus there remains no Indian textual evidence to link the Gāndhārī language and the early Mahāyāna, though, of course, we cannot exclude the possibility of still more discoveries.

Despite all the uncertainties, I hope to have shown that these early Chinese translations hold tremendous potential for advancing our knowledge about the language of the Buddhist texts transmitted from India in the first half of the first millennium. Above all else it should be evident that we need fewer generic statements that merely repeat the scholarly assumptions of our predecessors and more focused studies—one text at a time—that unpack the philological clues contained in these mongrel documents. Karashima's study is but the first serious attempt in this regard. Obviously we are in need of many more.

\section*{BIBLIOGRAPHY}


