

**Candrakīrti's Āgama: A Study of the Concept and Uses of
Scripture in Classical Indian Buddhism**

by

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For my mother

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Abstract

This dissertation examines scripture as a concept and the various roles that authoritative Buddhist texts play as such in the intellectual history of Buddhism. While it considers what Buddhist authors explicitly speak about scripture, the project brings into focus the recorded uses of authoritative texts, with an interest in discovering intellectual practices and learning about the management and transmission of knowledge. The main source materials of this study consist of instances of scriptural references found in the scholastic and commentarial works of several influential Indian and Tibetan authors, all of whom are connected with the pivotal figure of Candrakīrti (ca. 570-640), whose major writings lie at the center of the investigation. The deployment of scripture rests upon a commentary-scripture dichotomy between scholastic literature and the texts that it accepts as authoritative. However, a close examination also reveals the complexity of the relationship, illustrated by the changing scope of scripture, the authority that commentary enjoys in the matter of interpretation, and the creation of practical canons of scriptures and passages through the scholastic traditions' selective usage of the scriptural sources that they regard as most relevant.

Emphasizing the acts of using scripture, the dissertation argues that hermeneutics occupies a central place in Buddhist scholastic practices. In so doing, it explores two specific aspects of engagement with scripture: scriptural citation, a particularly visible albeit largely neglected feature of Buddhist scholastic texts, and the element of exegesis that is incorporated into the development of new philosophical systems. In the latter case,

the embedding of literary patterns of scripture in the design of epistemological categories and metaphysical arguments demonstrate that the exegetical mode of thinking plays a significant role in the moments of innovation and ingenuity as well. Buddhist authors themselves indeed acknowledge both scripture and reason as the basic tools of their scholastic enterprise. Highlighting a keen awareness of the problem of reifying reason displayed by certain Buddhist writers from the Madhyamaka School of thought, the dissertation argues more specifically that the Buddhist scholastic tradition is cognizant of the hermeneutical condition of understanding and of reason's contingency upon language, context, and tradition.

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Chapter One

An Introduction to the Study of Buddhist Texts as Scripture

na hi kiṃcid apūrvam atra vācyaṃ

There is indeed nothing novel to be spoken here.

Bodhicāryāvatāra I 2a

The eighth-century Buddhist writer Śāntideva wrote this line in the second stanza of his classical treatise on Mahāyāna Buddhism, expressing an idea that a contemporary reader would find very alien. Just before this line, Śāntideva sheds more light on the point by saying that he treats his subject *yathāgamaṃ*, “according to scripture,” and *samāsāt*, “by way of a summary.”¹ Prajñākaramati’s commentary on these two phrases reveals a tension between the binding force of scripture and a writer’s freedom and creativity, which is framed in the idiom of an Indian commentarial tradition. The phrase, “according to scripture,” Prajñākaramati explains, addresses the tradition’s reservation about an author’s expression of the views that are independent from scripture; the second phrase,

¹ *Bodhicāryāvatāra* I 1d. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Bodhicāryāvatāra of Śāntideva with the Commentary Pañjikā of Prajñākaramati*, second edition edited by Dr. Sridhar Tripathi (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute of Post-graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1988), 1.

“by way of a summary,” shows that the new work is not a thoughtless repetition, as it now presents the subject in a new form, in this case, as a summary.²

The rhetoric that “there is nothing worth saying that has not already been said before” has indeed been used across the religious societies in the world.³ What it indicates is a preoccupation with scripture and tradition that has been identified as a shared characteristic of scholastic cultures globally.⁴ Although contemporary scholars often discover a much greater degree of freedom and novelty displayed in the scholastic writings than what the authors themselves claim in their spirit of humility, a strong sense of tradition is what often makes these texts distinctively hermeneutical in their orientation. It is this preoccupation with scripture, along with the notions and various practices relating to the uses of scripture, the likes of which we find in Śāntideva’s and Prajñākaramati’s texts, that will occupy us in this dissertation.

1.1 Scripture as a Theoretical Category

In the previous section, I have translated the Sanskrit term *āgama* as “scripture.” The English word “scripture” is loaded with connotations and a history of its own. What concerns us here is that in the last two centuries its connotations have changed so that it

² Ibid., 3.2-5: *nanu tvayā svātantryeṇa kathitaṃ kathanam katham grahīṣyantīty āha yathāgam iti/ ... anena āgamāt svātantryam pariḥṛtaṃ bhavati/ utsūtram idaṃ na bhavatīty arthaḥ/*. “[Question]: ‘How can a statement spoken by you independently be accepted?’ [Reply]: ‘[Śāntideva] spoke: “According to scripture.” ... by this [phrase the problem of] independence from scripture is avoided. It means that this is not deviant.’” Ibid., 3.: *yadi nāma āgame ‘pi kathitaḥ tatrāpi tatra ativistareṇa nānāsūtrānteṣu pratipādanāt/ ahaṃ tu piṇḍikṛtya saṃkṣepeṇa kathayīṣyāmīti/ viśeṣaḥ anena punaruktam idaṃ bhavatīti pariḥṛtam/*. “[This] indeed has been spoken in the scripture as well. Since in those various *sūtras* [it] has also been demonstrated in an exceedingly extensive manner, therefore, having made a compendium, I, on the other hand, will speak concisely. Therefore, [this work] is distinct. By this [phrase] the [allegation] that ‘this [work] is a [redundant] restatement’ is rejected.”

³ José Ignacio Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language: A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 23.

no longer only refers to the Bible as revelation, but encompasses now the sense of “a body of writings considered sacred or authoritative.”⁵ This shift reflects a growing awareness of the pluralistic nature of the religious communities around the world.⁶ In the process, the word “scripture” has been frequently used to refer to the authoritative and highly prized texts of the societies around the world. Thus, phrases such as “world scriptures,” “Hindu Scriptures,” and “Buddhist scriptures” began to appear in book titles.⁷

However, even while the term undergoes a process of generalization, certain peculiarities of its former association remain. Most significantly, the word “scripture” signifies something that is written and singular. Its semantic value, moreover, is coordinated with the idea of scripture as a book, an idea that was crystallized through a long process involving Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and other religious traditions that came into contact with them.⁸ More specifically, the perception of scripture in its present form as a single bounded volume emerged largely with the advent of the Gutenberg era, when the printed Bible became available. As the term “scripture” is applied more widely to the sacred texts of the religious traditions around the world, certain preoccupation of its original affiliation is still maintained.

⁴ Ibid., 15, 23.

⁵ *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. “scripture.”

⁶ A very brief account of this transition can be found in Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *What Is Scripture?: A Comparative Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 10-12.

⁷ Some books that anthologize, or use the framework of, “world scripture(s)” are given in the following work, which serves an example of the category itself: Robert E. van Voorst, *Anthology of World Scriptures*, 4th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thompson Learning, 2003), 2-4. As for anthologies and books treating specific scriptural traditions, see, for instance, R. C. Zaehner and Nicol Macnicol, *Hindu Scriptures* (London: Dent, 1966); Edward Conze, *Buddhist Scriptures* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1959); and Edward Conze and Lewis R. Lancaster, *Buddhist Scriptures: A Bibliography* (New York: Garland Pub., 1982).

⁸ Wilfred C. Smith analyzes the historical process in *What Is Scripture*, 45-64. A previous version is found in Smith, “Scripture as Form and Concept: Their Emergence for the Western World,” in *Rethinking Scripture: Essays from a Comparative Perspective*, ed. Miriam Levering (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 29-57.

Recognizing the linguistic peculiarities and cultural specificities of different instances of sacred texts in the diverse religious communities is indeed an imperative.⁹ However, to propose scripture as a theoretical category and to comprehend it generally, what is required is a process of abstraction. The essential tool for the process is comparison, which is used to observe the particulars for the purpose of obtaining generalized knowledge of a cross-cultural phenomenon under investigation. The comparative approach presupposes, in part, the adoption of the subject being studied as a functional term that is divested of its own semantic content, cultural specificity, and history.

In a more successful example of a comparative study launched by a scholar of Buddhism, José Cabezón has spoken about the importance of abstraction and decontextualization in a comparative study. Cabezón's work was an attempt to extend scholasticism to the religious traditions outside Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, to which the term had been largely confined.¹⁰ The first half of his work is still the best scholarly treatment of the scholastic Buddhist view on scripture, the engagement with which is considered as an essential aspect of scholasticism. A mechanical compilation of a list of similarities and differences is an ineffective way of comparing. Rather, in Cabezón's view, comparison is a dialectical process that, having observed the patterns that one finds in one or several religious traditions, asks the question of how those patterns manifest in a

⁹ On a distinction between "scripture" and "sacred texts" as critical terms, see Miriam Levering, *Rethinking Scripture: Essays from a Comparative Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 4-7. Levering notes that some have used "sacred texts" as a generic term in part to avoid the cultural specificities words such as "scripture" carry, but the category of "sacred texts" is still "underdeveloped." In contrast, using "scripture" as a category allows us to confront our own assumptions that might otherwise remain hidden. The present study adopts "scripture" as the primary category in part to participate in the theoretical discussions that have taken place recently, while bringing them into conversation with what Buddhist authors have written about their sacred texts.

¹⁰ Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language*, 11-12, 16, 194-5.

different tradition. As one investigates the questions in that latter tradition, instead of applying the category as it stands, the category itself becomes refined and transformed, while new knowledge is generated.¹¹

Modern studies of Buddhist texts have examined these writings as historical documents, philosophical treatises, literary works, statements of doctrinal points and so on, but rarely has the fact that they function as scriptures for the Buddhist communities and individuals been brought into focus. The use of Mahāyāna *sūtras* in recent research as evidence for the discovery of the origin of the Mahāyāna movement and the effort to discern textual strata within them, as useful as such scholarship is for the history of Indian Buddhism, emphasize the texts in their pre-scriptural phase. The study of Buddhist scholastic texts and commentaries, on the other hand, tends to focus on their philosophical aspects, such that their inclusion of non-philosophical elements is often viewed as an intrusion on the more worthy projects. Such studies emphasize these texts in their post-scriptural phase.¹² Studying these texts as scriptures requires a focus on the “rich, complex, and powerful”¹³ roles that these text play in the various periods of the intervening long centuries in which they are used as such. Scholars of Buddhism will therefore benefit from the models and questions that have emerged from the study of scripture in the other religious traditions. As these questions are asked of the Buddhist

¹¹ Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language*, 13-16. Cabezón shows here that Masson-Oursel, who was a pioneer in comparative philosophy, has already suggested this dialectical process in his early work on scholasticism. Cabezón speaks of this dialectical process in part as a repeated process of abstraction and decontextualization. As one uses a partially decontextualized category to a different tradition, a further abstraction occurs, that refined category is then applied to other contexts to remove the unique set of idiosyncracies of that tradition. Ibid., 207-8 n. 16.

¹² Smith, *What Is Scripture*, 4. I am borrowing from Smith the idea that applying the methods of literary criticism to the Bible is to “deal with the texts in their post scriptural phase, just as historical criticism studies them in their pre-scriptural phase.”

¹³ Ibid.

texts, the richness and peculiarities of the Buddhist case will, in turn, help expand and refine scripture as a general category.

The fact that the texts that have been accepted as sacred and authoritative by the diverse religious traditions in the world differ widely in form, content, genre, intended purpose, and use defy a generalization of scripture as a category. This diversity makes it an impossible task to discover the essential properties that characterize all instances of scripture of the religious communities globally.¹⁴ Instead of looking for the intrinsic qualities that might inhere in these texts to make them scriptures, an influential comparative approach that have emerged about two decades ago proposes to focus on the dynamic relations that scriptures form with the religious communities.¹⁵

The study of scripture as a relational concept examines the many different roles that scriptures have played in different places and in different periods in the life of these texts as scriptures.¹⁶ Following this mode of thinking, to study the meaning of a scripture is to study what the text has meant variously to the exegetes and devotees in the long centuries during which it has enjoyed the status of scripture.¹⁷ Related inquiries explore the development of the form of scripture as a book through a historical process and highlight the fact that although modern readers tend to perceive scripture as a printed volume of written text, various religious communities have experienced scriptures in

¹⁴ See a list of seven generalizations of scripture and their critique in Levering, *Rethinking Scripture*, 7-11.

¹⁵ Smith, *What is Scripture*; Levering, *Rethinking Scripture*. It is fortuitous that the relational concept of scripture coincides with the general outlook of the Madhyamaka school of Buddhism, which will concern us later, that the essence of an entity cannot be found independently when it is subjected to analysis. Rather, an entity is constituted dependently by the objects that it is associated with.

¹⁶ A very illuminating description of how such a study would look like in the case of Bible is found in Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "The Study of Religion and the Study of the Bible." in Levering, *Rethinking Scripture*, 18-28. Another example of such an inquiry using the case of the Song of Songs is provided in Smith, *What Is Scripture*, 21-44.

¹⁷ See, for instance, Smith, *What Is Scripture*, 65-91.

many different manners, including in the form of the spoken word.¹⁸ In short, in contrast to a general tendency to look for the origin and to discover the factors that led to the creation of a text as a document, the study of scripture as a relational concept emphasizes the dynamic functions that the text has performed after it has become a scripture for the communities and individuals.

The questions about religious texts' productive force and the foundational and changing functions that they perform in the social life of the religious communities indeed should inform the study of Buddhist texts in their role as scriptures; they certainly will be central to the investigations of this dissertation. As for the utility of the evidence from the Buddhist traditions for the understanding of scripture as a general category, a promising area of study concerns the form of scripture. As said earlier, the study of scripture as a relational concept emphasizes how the experience of religious communities is influenced by the different forms that scriptures take. This is precisely where the Buddhist traditions can supply unique materials for the research on the transition from one form of scripture to another and its impact on the life of the religious communities.

An example that illustrate this point is the formation of Buddhist scriptural collections in China, which involves the story, not yet adequately told in the Western languages, of the gradual evolution of the form of scripture. The development has undergone the partially overlapping processes of the translation of individual Buddhist texts, the compilation of scriptural catalogs, the formation and production of handwritten versions of the scriptural collections, the age of woodblock printing that lasts for about

¹⁸ Ibid., 45-64; William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Some other issues that have been examined in the study of scripture as a relational concept are summarized in Levering, *Rethinking Scripture*, 11-14.

one thousand years, the use of new printing technologies in the modern period, and finally the advent of the digital Buddhist scriptures.¹⁹

The evolution of Buddhist scriptures in pre-modern China as a vast and organized collection of texts printed from woodblocks bears witness to the Buddhist scriptures' encounter with a culture of written texts. As a part of this encounter, Buddhist texts also experienced, in addition to the technologies of book production, different forms of writing media and book binding.²⁰ When Buddhism first came to China, books on bamboo and wooden tablets were still in use. Early Buddhist texts were also written on silk, and later paper became widely used from the third and fourth centuries.²¹ Likewise, in pre-modern China there had been a gradual evolution of the method of binding books on paper, progressing from paper scrolls, sutra binding, whirlwind binding, butterfly

¹⁹ A treatment of Chinese Buddhist catalogs that places it within the larger history of catalog making in China is Yao Mingda 姚名達, *Zhongguo muluxue shi* 中國目錄學史 [A history of the Science of Catalog Making in China] (Taipei: Zhonghua wenhua chubanshe, 1954). Another comprehensive study of this subject is Hayashiya Tomojirō, *Kyōroku kenkyū: Zenpen* [A study of scriptural catalogs: part one] (Tokyo: Hayashiya Tomojirō, 1941). An excellent and comprehensive treatment of the handwritten versions of Chinese Buddhist scriptural collections is Fang Guangchang 方廣鎔, *Zhongguo xieben dazangjing yanjiu* 中國寫本大藏經研究 [A Study of the handwritten Buddhist scriptural collections of China]. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006. Fang indicates that early evidence of officially sponsored and privately initiated efforts to systematically copy large collections of Buddhist texts date back to early sixth century and late fifth century respectively. He attributes the practice to the notion of devotion to the Dharma Jewel and the idea, especially in the Mahāyāna Buddhism, of merit making through the copying of Buddhist texts. For the facts about the printed versions of the Chinese Buddhist scriptural collections, see Li Fuhua and He Mei, *Hanwen fojiao dazangjing yanjiu* 漢文佛教大藏經研究 [A study of the Chinese Buddhist scriptural collections] (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2003), 69-742. For discussions of the printing of Buddhist texts in China within the larger context of the history of paper and printing in China, see Tsien Tsuen-Hsuei, *Paper and Printing*, vol. 5, pt. 1, *Science and Civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge: University Press, 1954); Thomas Francis Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and Its Spread Westward*, rev. L. Carrington Goodrich (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1955). A survey of the various stages in the development of the Buddhist scriptural collections in China, along with a discussion of the major issues in the individual phases, is provided in Fang, *Zhongguo xieben dazangjing*, 1-38.

²⁰ Fang, *Zhongguo xieben dazangjing*, 12-13. I use the term “book” mainly in the sense of “a set of written, printed, or blank sheets bound together into a volume.” See *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. “book.” The term “text,” therefore, represent a larger category than “book” in that the latter must take a physical form. “Scripture,” moreover, is also a subcategory of “text” in that it refers to the texts that are accepted to be sacred and authoritative.

binding, wrapped-back binding, to thread binding,²² providing different ways in which Buddhist books were handled.

The mark that Buddhism left on the bibliophilic culture in China, on the other hand, was equally immense. It was the religious drive of the Buddhists to reproduce Buddhist images, *dhāraṇīs*, and texts that motivated the immediate steps that led to the invention of block printing. The demand to multiply Buddhist texts was also an overwhelming force behind the early uses of this new printing technology.²³ It has also been suggested that the transition from paper scrolls to *sūtra* binding, through which folded flat pages that open like an accordion replaced paper rolls, was introduced as an imitation of the palm-leaf manuscripts from South Asia.²⁴

A related significant event in the history of Buddhist scriptures was the spread of the woodblock printing technology from China to the Tibetan cultural sphere, marked in particular by the blockprint edition of the Tibetan Buddhist scriptural collection Yongle Bka' 'gyur prepared in Beijing in 1410.²⁵ The Tibetan Buddhists who availed themselves

²¹ On Chinese books on various writing media, see Tsien Tsuen-hsuei, *Written on Bamboo & Silk: The Beginnings of Chinese Books & Inscriptions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 90-157. For an estimation of the periods in which bamboo, silk, and paper were used as writing media, see *ibid.*, 91-2.

²² Before the use of woodblock printing, Buddhist texts were written on papers pasted together to form the long scrolls that are called *jūan* 卷, usually translated as fascicle, providing divisions to a book based more on the quantity of the text than on content. This method is apparently based on an earlier model by which bamboo or wooden strips were bound together. See Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 374. A brief overview of the history of writing media and book production and binding in China is provided in Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual* (Cambridge, MA: Published by the Harvard University Asia Center for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 2000), 444-53.

²³ The important role Buddhism played in the invention of printing and its early uses in China, along with the earliest samples that have survived (among which is the world's earliest book, the *Diamond Sūtra*), is discussed in Carter, *Invention of Printing*, 26-66. Carter (pp. 40 and 50) makes a specific connection between the emphasis on duplication in the Buddhist act of merit making and the multiplication in printing. For a recent treatment of the invention of printing in China, see T. H. Barrett, *The Woman Who Discovered Printing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

²⁴ Tsien, *Paper and Printing*, 230-231.

²⁵ Jonathan A. Silk, "Notes on the History of the Yongle Kanjur," in *Suhrllekhāḥ: Festgabe für Helmut Eimer*, eds. Michael Hahn, Jens-Uwe Hartmann and Roland Steiner (Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1996), 153-200. Small scale woodblock printing of Tibetan books had started prior to that event.

of the new block printing technology were self-conscious of its significance and spoke particularly of the “inexhaustible prints,” the “rain of dharma,” and “a gift of dharma increased to fill the sky.”²⁶ The advent of the woodblock printing of the Buddhist scriptural collections in China—the first edition was published from 971 to 983—does not seem to have ushered in an age of Buddhist learning, arriving at a time when the creative energy of Chinese Buddhism was in decline. It appears that the demand of producing Chinese Buddhist books, which contributed to the invention of woodblock printing, mainly fulfills the devotional need of procuring merit efficiently.²⁷ It was the printing of the Confucian classics, the historical works, and secular texts, along with the educational uses of them, that spurred a Chinese Gutenberg era in the Song Dynasty. In contrast, the printing technology made much contribution in Tibet to a thriving scholastic Buddhist culture, while it also fulfilled the devotional purposes. Preliminary evidence has already suggested that the dynamism of various Tibetan Buddhist schools were enhanced substantially by the printing of the collected works and biographies of their patriarchs.²⁸

The oral text as an early form of Buddhist scriptures and its persistence, the adoption of writing, the long periods of use of printing technology in the Buddhist societies, and various points of intersection of these textual media combine to make the

For earlier instances, see Kurtis R. Schaeffer, *The Culture of the Book in Tibet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 9-10.

²⁶ Ibid., 68-70, 115.

²⁷ Carter, “Invention of Printing, 37-66, esp. 61.

²⁸ David P. Jackson, “The Earliest Printings of Tsong-kha-pa’s Works: The Old Dga’-ldan Editions,” in *Reflections on Tibetan Culture: Essays in Memory of Turrell V. Wylie*, eds. Lawrence Epstein and Richard F. Sherburne (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 107-116; David P. Jackson, “More on the Old dGa’-ldan and Gong-dkar-ba Xylographic Editions,” *Studies in Central and East Asian Religions* 2 (1989): 1-18; David P. Jackson, “Notes on Two Early Printed Editions of Sa-skya-pa Works,” *The Tibet Journal* 8, no. 2 (1983): 3-24; Fushimi Hidetoshi. “Recent Finds from the Old Sa-skya Xylographic Editions,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens und Archiv für Indische Philosophie* 43 (1999): 95-108. On Gtsang smyon He ru ka and his disciples’ printing projects, see Schaeffer, *Culture of Book*, 54-63. Schaeffer has made the most substantial contribution on the study of print culture in Tibet, while the extent

Buddhist texts an especially valuable object for the study of the form of scripture and its relationship with the religious communities. In addition to the medium, another important aspect of the form of scripture is its number. Indeed, the fact that scripture is experienced in many Asian religious traditions in its plurality complicates—and can potentially contribute to—the comparative study of scripture to even a greater degree. In these religious traditions, the model of a single book’s enduring influence has only a limited scope of applicability. To be sure, cases of singular focus on one scripture are not rare in the Buddhist history. Many schools of Chinese Buddhism, for instance, typically recognize one or selected few Buddhist texts as their fundamental scriptures.

The case of the *Lotus Sūtra* serves as an illustration of the practice of selecting one out of many. This *sūtra* enjoys much of its preeminence in its afterlife as a Chinese translation that Kumārajīva and his team produced in the beginning of the fifth century.²⁹ The Tiantai School in China and Korea and its Japanese derivative of Tendai, as well as the Nichiren School in Japan, all rely on the *Lotus Sūtra* for their institutional identity. The enterprise of interpreting the *sūtra* is a continually evolving affair in East Asia, as generations of commentators built upon the work of their predecessors while responding

of the impact of printing on the development of Tibetan Buddhist sects has yet to be undertaken by comprehensive studies.

²⁹ This text is no. 262 in the standard Taishō edition of Chinese Buddhist collection: Takakusu Junjirō and Kaigyoku Watanabe, eds., *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924-1932), 9:1a2-62c14. Reference to the Taishō edition and its texts will be abbreviated as T. henceforth. In an effort to transform the Sanskrit text into an elegant Chinese literary style that values brevity, Kumārajīva’s translation typically departs from the literal expressions of the Sanskrit original while trying to capture the perceived core ideas of the individual paragraphs. The idea of a translation as the afterlife in relation to its original is presented in Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), 71, 73. For a survey of the history of textual practices relating to the *Lotus Sūtra* in India, China, and Japan with references to the voluminous modern scholarship, see Stephen F. Teiser and Jacqueline I. Stone, eds., *Readings of the Lotus Sūtra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 1-61.

to their own cultural contexts to reformulate the respective schools' systems of religious thought and practices.³⁰

Besides the schools of Buddhist thought that acknowledge the *Lotus Sūtra* as their primary scripture, the *sūtra* itself was a favorite choice in China and Japan to receive not only the attention from the scholars who wrote commentaries on it but widespread and intense religious devotion as well, which places emphasis on the text as a physical object. The devotional acts of upholding, reading, reciting, explaining, and copying, recommended in Kumārajīva's Chinese translation of the *sūtra* itself, were widely practiced with elaborate rituals. Texts collecting the stories of miraculous responses (*ganying* 感應) that devotees of the *Lotus Sūtra* received were also composed and circulated.³¹ More generally, the *sūtra* is the source that supplied a host of doctrines, parables, Bodhisattvas, devotional practices, and religious symbols, which played a formative role in East Asian Buddhism.³² It also inspired a range of artistic expressions in East Asia, including painting, sculpture, architecture, calligraphy, jeweled *stūpa* *maṇḍalas*, and transformation pictures or tableaux.³³

³⁰ See Kanno Hiroshi, "A General Survey of Research Concerning Chinese Commentaries on the *Lotus Sūtra*," in *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University for the Academic Year 2006* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, 2007), 417-44; Leon Hurvitz, *Chih-I (538-597): An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk* (Bruxelles: Institut belge des hautes écoles chinoises, 1962), 188-214.

³¹ On the devotional practices and miracle tales relating to the *Lotus Sūtra*, see Daniel B. Stevenson, "Buddhist Practice and the *Lotus Sūtra* in China," in *Readings of the Lotus Sūtra*, ed. Stephen F. Teiser and Jacqueline I. Stone (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 132-50. Stevenson remarks that he focuses "in particular on practices that center on the physical text as a repository of sacred power and object of ritual devotion" (ibid., 133). On *ganyin*, literally "stimulus and response," see ibid., 134-36, 146-47, and p. 35 of the same volume.

³² Teiser and Stone, *Readings of the Lotus Sūtra*, 45-51.

³³ Teiser and Stone, *Readings of the Lotus Sūtra*, 151-185; Bunsaku Kurata and Yoshirō Tamura, *Art of the Lotus Sutra: Japanese Masterpieces* (Tokyo: Kōsei Pub. Co, 1987); Willa J. Tanabe, *Paintings of the Lotus Sutra* (New York: Weatherhill, 1988); Eugene Yuejin Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005).

The case of *Lotus Sūtra* thus supplies a Buddhist model of continuous involvement with one scripture, which serves as a reference point for the evolution of a hermeneutical tradition, the building of institutions, and a wide variety of religious and cultural expressions. In the history of Buddhism, there is indeed no lack of individuals and communities who choose to focus exclusively on one text, as illustrated by the instance of the *Lotus Sūtra* devotion. However, as it is common for the Buddhist communities to gather large quantity of texts, the use of multiple texts is often the norm. In the writings of the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist exegetes, we often find references to dozens, if not hundreds, of scriptural sources, testifying that the scholastic cultures in which they lived maintained a large number of texts in active use. Each text often has a history of its own, as illustrated by the well-documented case of the *Lotus Sūtra*, but it is the coordinated use of many texts that characterizes these cultures.

The study of scripture as a relational concept is less concerned with the content of scripture than its function and form. As for the form of scripture, the present study of scripture in classical Indian Buddhism pays closer attention to the fact that a multitude of scriptures is employed than the medium of scripture. The active involvement with multiple scriptures is not unique to the Buddhist or Asian religious traditions, and the examination of the phenomenon requires an appropriate conceptual framework. In the following section, we will turn to “canon,” a term that accommodates the multiplicity of scriptures and has frequently been used by scholars of Buddhism. Our purpose is to determine whether “canon” provides an effective framework for the examination of the use of many scripture in the form of Buddhist culture that we will study in this dissertation.

1.2 The Plurality of Canons and the Open-endedness of Scriptures

The word canon, adopted in Christianity from the Greek, Latin, and ancient Near East traditions, involves the two senses of a measuring rod, and therefore a standard or norm, and a closed list of authoritative items.³⁴ Curiously, the first sense of canon corresponds to the literal sense of the word *pramāṇa* in the Indic languages as an instrument of measuring and, therefore, its one derived meaning of standard and authority. Vasubandhu uses the word *pramāṇa* in this manner when he calls on the Buddhas to be the arbiters of his well-known work *Abhidharmakośa*:

The sages are the standard in regard to the way of the excellent dharma.”³⁵

However, scholars of Buddhism almost exclusively use the second sense of canon and always in reference to a list of texts, rather than other authoritative items.³⁶

Scholars of Buddhism often use the word “canon” in reference to the authoritative Buddhist scriptural collections that exist in the Asian languages, such that it often functions as an equivalent for the indigenous Asian language terms by which these

³⁴ Smith, *What Is Scripture*, 247 n. 18; Gerald T. Sheppard, “Canon,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, Mircea Eliade, and Charles J. Adams (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 3:1406.

³⁵ AK VIII 40d. Swāmī Dwārikādās Śāstrī, ed., *Ācāryayaśomitakṛtasphuṭārthavyākhyopetam Ācāryavasubandhuviracitam svopajñābhāṣyasahitaṁ ca Abhidharmakośam* (Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati, 1998), 2:921: *saddharmanītau munayaḥ pramāṇam*. I have adopted the *karmadhāraya* reading of the compound *saddharma* here. For an alternative reading of the compound, see Chapter Two, section 2.

³⁶ One can indeed reflect on the lists of other highly prized matters in Buddhism. One example is the list(s) of pilgrimage sites associated with the Buddha. Another is that of the authoritative persons: the word *pāli* has been used in this sense of a line or list of preeminent persons, in addition to its normal sense as scripture. See Steven Collins, “On the Very Idea of the Pali Canon,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 15 (1990): 106-107 n. 7. In some Buddhist schools of thought, texts are legitimized based on whether their authors are identified as sharing membership in a list of recognized authorities.

scriptural collections are known, including the Pāli *tipiṭaka*, the Chinese *Dazangjing* 大藏經, and the dual Tibetan collections of Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur. It therefore accommodates several indigenous Asian Buddhist concepts with the connotation of a complete set of scriptures. In an influential essay, Jonathan Z. Smith defines a canon in distinction from a list and a catalog. He shows that catalogs are lists that “exhibit relatively clear principles of order,” while both lists and catalogs are open. What distinguishes a canon from a catalog is its closure. According to this analysis, a canon is an organized list of items that is closed.³⁷

In the remaining pages of this section, we will assess the utility of the term “canon” as a theoretical category for the study of Buddhist scriptures, focusing on the idea of a canon’s closure and completeness. We will briefly consider the idea of canon in relation to Buddhist scriptures in several Asian Buddhist contexts, while taking stock of the relevant research that has already been done in Buddhist Studies. Since the historical circumstances surrounding what might have been the attempts to establish closed scriptural collections in India is far less clear, and the continuous developments in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism challenge the very notion of a closed canon, we will omit Buddhist scriptures in India from this exercise, treating them in the meanwhile as the canonical Buddhist literature in other Asian Buddhist cultures. As comparison of the particulars functions a basic tool for the construction of a general theory, the perspectives gained from several Asian Buddhist cultures will inform the questions that we ask of the Indian instance in the rest of the dissertation.

³⁷ Jonathan Z. Smith, “Sacred Persistence: Toward a Redescription of Canon.” In *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 44-52.

While our overall concern is whether the category of canon is applicable to the study of scripture in several Asian Buddhist cultures, we will begin with canon formation, on which the uses of canon in Jonathan Z. Smith explanatory model rest. For Smith, canon formation as an arbitrary process of closure, by which additional matters are prevented from entering the canon. Here, a canon of scriptures also appears to be a relational entity, being defined under specific historical circumstances by a community of religious scholars and functioning as an authoritative body of texts subsequently.

The Pāli canon of Theravāda Buddhism is a scriptural collection that has a clearly demarcated boundary. Steven Collins' essay on the idea of the Pāli canon in Theravāda Buddhism singles out two most significant events in the process of canon formation: the writing down of the scriptures toward the end of the first-century BCE and the subsequent production of the authoritative Pāli commentaries in the fifth-century CE by Buddhaghosa based on the earlier Sinhala texts, around which time the Pāli canon became closed and assumed the final form that we know it today. Both events occurred during the time when the Mahāvihārin monks, the group that was responsible for creating and finalizing the canon that we now have, faced a political threat as the kings of Sri Lanka favored their rivals. Collins observes that the process of canon formation reflects the political agenda of self-legitimation of the Mahāvahārins who, by virtue of creating a closed list of authorized scriptures of its own institution, excluded from the canon what might have been parallel texts from the Abhayagiri monastery and the Mahāyāna scriptures that appeared in the early centuries after the Common Era.³⁸

Slightly later than the processes that took place in Sri Lanka, a series of scriptural catalogs written in China between the fourth to the eighth centuries played a decisive role

in the process of canon formation. They culminated in the compilation in the year 730 of *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄, or *Record of Śākyamuni's Teachings Compiled the Kaiyuan Era*. This catalog was adopted later in that century as the standard used for the preparation of handwritten Buddhist canons; and it also exerted special influence on the printed editions of the Buddhist canon, the first of which appeared in 971-983.³⁹ This series of scriptural catalogs, which was aided by an older Chinese bibliographical tradition and perfected itself gradually, both documented the Buddhist texts that were known in their times and identified Chinese Buddhist apocryphal texts, writings of Chinese authorship that present themselves as Indian scriptures, to be excluded from the scriptural corpus,⁴⁰ thus effectively setting the boundary of the canon.

The critical function that the catalogs perform in the shaping of the Chinese Buddhist scriptural collections is consistent with the chief motives of their compilers to “distinguish the genuine from the spurious,”⁴¹ for which these individuals developed a set of criteria for the task.⁴² An analysis of these criteria indicates that the Chinese Buddhist orthodoxy as represented by these individuals comprehends canonicity primarily in terms of the texts’ foreign origin, which is revealed in the decision of the compilers of the

³⁸ Collins, “Idea of Pāli Canon,” 95-102.

³⁹ Tokuno Kyoko, “The Evaluation of Indigenous Scriptures in Chinese Buddhist Bibliographical Catalogues,” in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 52-53.

⁴⁰ Tokuno, “Chinese Buddhist Catalogues,” 31-74. For a scholarly treatment of the subject of Chinese Buddhist apocryphal texts, see Buswell, *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*.

⁴¹ Zhisheng’s *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* makes this point plainly clear. See T. 2154 LV 477a4-10. A translation of the relevant passage is provided in Tokuno, “Chinese Buddhist Catalogues,” 32: “Now as far as the inception of catalogues is concerned, they were intended to distinguish the genuine from the spurious, clarify what is authentic and unauthentic, record the period of the translation, indicate the number of sections and *chüan*, add what was omitted, and eliminate what was superfluous ... However, since the teachings of the dharma originated in the remote past ... the datings of the translations were changed and their periods altered, scriptures were often dispersed or lost, and *chüan* were arranged out of order. Moreover, from time to time odd persons added spurious and fallacious [scriptures to the canon], scrambling [the genuine and the spurious] and making it difficult to ascertain their identity. This is why former sages and scholars compiled these catalogues.”

catalogs to judge a text as apocryphal frequently on the basis of the textual or circumstantial evidence of its Chinese authorship or its inclusion of distinctive Chinese elements. Moreover, this particular notion of canonicity manifests in an overwhelming tendency of these scriptural catalogs to exclude the vast majority of indigenous Chinese Buddhist works that do not present themselves as Indian scriptures.⁴³ Finally, the intersection of the political and scriptural domains in the formation of the Chinese Buddhist canon is particularly visible in the perceived authority of the secular power to authenticate the scriptural authority.⁴⁴

The Buddhist canon is commonly referred to in Chinese as *Dazangjing* 大藏經, or the “great repository scripture.” It is also known by the alternative names, such as *Zhongjing* 眾經, *Yiqiejing* 一切經, and *Yiqiezhongjing* 一切眾經, all bearing the meaning of “all scriptures.”⁴⁵ These terms testify that what is involved here is a concept of the totality of scriptures. However, for the compilers of the scriptural catalogs and those who engaged in the devotional practice of copying the scriptural collections, there was often a limitation on how thorough they were able to collect the scriptures by using the resources that were at their disposal.⁴⁶ The titles of *Zhongjing* and *Yiqiejing*, or “*All Scriptures*,”

⁴² See the discussion of these criteria in Tokuno, “Chinese Buddhist Catalogues,” 31-74.

⁴³ Furthermore, Chinese Buddhist scriptural collections also includes occasional non-Buddhist texts of Indian origin, such as Paramārtha’s translation of *Sāṃkhyakārikā* (T. 2137) and Xuanzang’s translation of *Vaiśeṣikadāśapadārthaśāstra* (T. 2138).

⁴⁴ Some significant aspects of the intervention of the political power include: (1) the imperial court’s official endorsement of the activities of translation bureaus, (2) the preparation of a large quantity of manuscripts and printed versions of the Buddhist scriptural collections and the distribution of them under the sponsorship of the state, and (3) a practice put in place since the Kaiyuan era (713-741) that only allowed new translations to be registered and placed in the scriptural collections after they have been approved by the imperial court.

⁴⁵ For the various names of the scriptural collections and a list of definitions of *Dazangjing* provided by Japanese and Chinese scholars, see Fang, *Zhongguo xieben dazangjing*, 2-11.

⁴⁶ On the limitations imposed by the condition of the ancient society on the thoroughness of the scripture collections, see the example provided in Fang, *Zhongguo xieben dazangjing*, 544. Some compilers, working in the libraries of major monastic centers or even under the sponsorship of the state, had access to extremely large amounts of Buddhist books.

were used by the early scribes and cataloguers even while the number of available Buddhist scriptures was still expanding, as new texts continued to be translated. In the ritual context, the concept manifests apparently in the devotees' imagination of the idea of the totality of Buddhist scriptures, while they symbolically relate that concept to a physical collection of books as large as it can practically be gathered.⁴⁷

In Tibet, canon formation also took the similar preliminary steps of the translation of individual Buddhist texts, the making of the catalogs, and copying and gathering of the texts especially at monasteries and palaces.⁴⁸ Large scale gathering of Buddhist books at an early age is attested by the earliest catalogs of Buddhist scriptures that have survived, among which the *Ldan* (or *Lhan*) *dkar ma* catalog compiled in the early ninth century has been accessible to scholars of Buddhism for some time.⁴⁹ As the process continued, by the time of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries at the latest “the largest collections of translated scripture came to be called *bka' gyur* and *bstan gyur*.”⁵⁰ Previous scholarship singled out an event that took place in the Narthang monastery in the fourteenth century to be an instance that set the precedence for large-scale Tibetan *Bka' gyur* projects.⁵¹

⁴⁷ For a description of the practices of reading, copying, and venerating the Chinese *Dazangjing*, see Fang, *Zhongguo xieben dazangjing*, 210-22. The physical volumes apparently vary according to the time and place, while the devotional practices involve a sense of the completion of scriptures.

⁴⁸ A work on canon formation in Tibetan Buddhism is Peter Skilling, “From *bKa' bstan bcos* to *bKa' gyur* and *bsTan gyur*,” in *Transmission of the Tibetan Canon: Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*, ed. Helmut Eimer (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997), 87-111. For a description of the history of Tibetan Buddhist scriptures with a focus on the *Bka' gyur*, see Paul Harrison, “A Brief History of the Tibetan *bKa' gyur*,” in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre. Essays in Honor of Geshe Lhundup Sopa*, ed. José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger Jackson (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1996), 70-94.

⁴⁹ The text of *Ldan dkar ma* is edited in Marcelle Lalou, “Contribution à bibliographie du kanjur et du tanjur. Les textes bouddhiques au temps du roi Khri-sron-lde-bcan,” *Journal Asiatique* 241 (1953): 313-353; Yoshimura Shyuki, *The Denkar-ma. An Oldest Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons* (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1950). For more recent comments on the earliest Tibetan Buddhist catalogs, see Kurtis R. Schaeffer and Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp, *An Early Tibetan Survey of Buddhist Literature: The Bstan pa rgyas pa rgyan gyi nyi 'od of Bcom ldan ral gri* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 53-7.

⁵⁰ Schaeffer and van der Kuijp, *Early Tibetan Survey*, 10 ff.

⁵¹ Skilling, “*bKa' bstan bcos*,” 98-100; Harrison, “History of *bKa' gyur*,” 74-78.

Although newly emerged evidence has challenged that view,⁵² what Peter Skilling has observed is still apt for the larger processes: that the outcome is the permanent bifurcation of Buddhist scriptures in Tibet into the two collections of Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur, respectively the translations of the word (of the Buddha) and the translations of *śāstras* of commentarial or derivative nature.

The *Ldan dkar ma* catalog has already emphasized that it registers all the Tibetan translations of Bka' (*vacana*) and Bstan bcos (*śāstras*). However, it was not until much later that the conceptual framework became embodied in the two physical collections of scriptures. The Pāli canon is an illustration of an early structure of the Buddhist scriptures, which comprise the three divisions of Sūtra, Vinaya, and Abhidharma. The tripartite structure continues in some Chinese Buddhist scriptural collections. Beginning from the end of the sixth century, it became a standard practice for the Chinese catalogers to divide the translated texts in the scriptural collections into the Mahāyāna and early Buddhist varieties, each further placed in the three categories of Sūtra, Vinaya, and Abhidharma/Śāstra. In the collections of Tibetan Buddhist scriptures, the distinction between the word of the Buddha and *śāstras* of scholastic nature became paramount. This organizing principle, along with the greater visibility of the *śāstras*, will concern us later in this dissertation. While the development of the organization of Buddhist scriptures outside India reflected changes that were taking place within Indian Buddhism, the evolution of the forms that Buddhist scriptures adopted, ranging from oral to written and printed texts, is a larger process that unfolded in several Asian Buddhist cultures.

Although scholars of Buddhism often use the word “canon” to describe scriptural collections that exist in several Asian languages, evidence from these Buddhist cultures

⁵² See Schaeffer and van der Kuijp, *Early Tibetan Survey*, esp. 60, 25-6.

often contradicts the very idea of canon. In the case of Tibetan Buddhist scriptures, Peter Skilling has pointed out that new translations continue to be added to the collections of Buddhist scriptures and that the closure of canon never took place. The same can be said of Chinese Buddhist scriptures as well. The research in the recent decades on the recensional history of Tibetan Buddhist scriptural collections on the basis of text-critical study of specific texts has invalidated the notions of textual archetype and lineal transmission of the Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur collections.⁵³ In light of what we have already learned, Peter Skilling wrote that "there is not one Kanjur, there are only Kanjurs," which vary with regard to the texts that they contain and the textual sources from which they have descended.⁵⁴ The multiplicity of Tibetan Buddhist "canons" results in part from the regional variations of the Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur collections and the incidental circumstances of their compilation.⁵⁵ Moreover, the formation of alternative canons of individual schools of Buddhist thought also contributes to the open-endedness of Buddhist scriptures.

One specific example of an alternative canonical collection is the *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum*, a conglomeration of tantric texts falling outside the Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur collections that is maintained by the Rnying ma School of Tibetan Buddhism. The *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* differs from other alternative Tibetan sectarian scriptural

⁵³ Some of the researches that have taken place are represented in Helmut Eimer, ed., *Transmission of the Tibetan Canon: Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997); Helmut Eimer and David Germano, eds., *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism* (Leiden: Brill, 2002). A summary of the earlier scholarship is provided in Helmut Eimer's introductory remarks in the latter publication, in *ibid.*, 1-12.

⁵⁴ Skilling, "bKa' bstan bcos," 100-101.

⁵⁵ See Skilling, "bKa' bstan bcos," 95 ff. In *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*, Schaeffer discusses more generally how a large project of textual production functions as an expression of piety, serves as a means of legitimizing the kingship of a local ruler, and stimulates social and economic activities of his realm. For an example of including extra materials in a scriptural collection based on an incidental circumstance, see Schaeffer and van der Kuijp, *Early Tibetan Survey*, 41-6.

collections in that its authority is argued through a claim of its Indian origin—further evidence of a conception of canonicity conceived in terms of the texts’ foreign provenance—and the authentic lineages from which it has come down.⁵⁶ The authenticity of *Rnying ma’i rgyud ‘bum* was contested by some premodern Tibetan scholars, while preliminary modern scholarship regards it as “a complex mix of translations, original Tibetan compositions, and literary products falling somewhere in between.”⁵⁷

The case of *Rnying ma’i rgyud ‘bum* is illustrative of a Buddhist institution’s need to maintain a body of scriptures of its own to mark its identity and for the purpose of self-legitimation.⁵⁸ Indeed, most schools of Buddhism associate themselves with a body of authoritative texts, usually the writings and the mixed accounts of the lives and teachings of their patriarchs,⁵⁹ which they maintain outside the primary scriptural collections of Bka’ ‘gyur and Bstan ‘gyur. The formation of alternative canons is a process of secondary formation, or virtual canonization, and it establishes scriptural authorities that are other than the more recognized or shared primary scriptures. The process may occur in relation to smaller Buddhist institutions such as a monastery, whose

⁵⁶ David Germano, “The Seven Descents and the Early History of Rnying ma Transmissions,” in *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism*, ed. Helmut Eimer and David Germano (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 225-63.

⁵⁷ Eimer and Germano, *Many Canons*, 201. Most contributions in part two of the same volume, especially those by Germano and Wangchuk, deal with the question of the authenticity of the *Rnying ma’i rgyud ‘bum*.

⁵⁸ For a history of *Rnying ma’i rgyud ‘bum* in general, see Mihai Derbac, “Rnying ma’i rgyud ‘bum: A Tibetan Buddhist Canon” (Master’s Thesis, University of Alberta, 2007). Ibid., 68: “most Tibetans had a vested interest in the process of textual legitimation as it was central for the Tibetan scriptures and their lineage holder’s survival. Tibetans responded to these challenges by developing a process of authentication ... that made it possible ... for indigenous Tibetan spirituality to flourish and to develop a vision of Buddhism that was indeed truly Tibetan.”

⁵⁹ Examples of such secondary scriptural collections include the collected works of the patriarchs of the Sa skya and Dge lugs schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the *Life* and *Songs* of Mi la ras pa compiled by Gtsang smyon He ru ka’s (1452-1507). Similar instances in Chinese Buddhism include the *Platform Sūtra* of Huineng 惠能, the Tiantai Scriptures 天台教典, the Vinaya collection 毗尼藏, and the Chan collection 禪藏. For alternative collections of Chinese Buddhist scriptures in the late first millennium, see Fang, *Zhongguo xieben dazangjing*, 227-279, 345-348. On Gtsang smyon He ru ka and his disciples’ printing projects, see Schaeffer, *Culture of Book*, 54-63.

luminaries' writings may be linked with the identity of that institution.⁶⁰ In light of the instances of secondary formation in other Buddhist cultures, it is relevant to ask whether the Pāli canon is a case of an alternative canon, being one of the parallel canons linked with a specific Buddhist institution. Indeed, since they arise from specific historical circumstances, the alternative canons are more likely to be closed for a period of time before further developments occur. Moreover, scriptures belonging to a secondary formation often play a greater role in the life of the religious communities than the more recognized primary scriptures, which are older and have higher status.

While much of the *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* collection still claims a conventional means of textual transmission, within this corpus and indeed pervasive in most genres of Rnying ma literature is a different type of text called *gter ma*, or Treasures, which is purported to be concealed and transmitted directly to its authorized retriever.⁶¹ The destined discoverer is said to have received the teachings in a former life from the text's burier, identified in most cases as Padmasambhava, who is credited with bringing tantric Buddhism to Tibet. The discoverer often goes through a personal struggle to discover the text and subsequently decodes its message and recovers his or her own memory of that teaching from a former life.⁶² The concern for legitimation that the *gter ma* literature itself expresses brings into focus its defenders' belief in these texts' status as scripture.⁶³

⁶⁰ See, for instance, the discussion of the printing of 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa's works in Schaeffer, *Culture of Book*, 34-43.

⁶¹ For a survey of the *gter ma* literature, see Janet Gyatso, "Drawn from the Tibetan Treasure: The *gTer ma* Literature," in Cabezón and Jackson, *Tibetan Literature*, 147-69. For a discussion of the distinction between the more conventional "long transmission" and the "close transmission" of the *gter ma* texts, see, e.g., *ibid.*, 150.

⁶² The traditional accounts of the process of transmission and discovery of the *gter ma* texts is provided, with an emphasis on semiosis, memory, and the embeddedness of Tibetan history in it, in Janet Gyatso, "Signs, Memory and History: A Tantric Buddhist Theory of Scriptural Transmission," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 9, no. 2 (1986): 7-35.

⁶³ For discussions of the ways in which *gter ma* texts legitimize themselves, see Janet Gyatso, "The Logic of Legitimation in the Tibetan Treasure Tradition," *History of Religion* 33, no. 2 (1993): 97-134. A debate

Since new scriptures continually arrive on the scene in the history of Buddhism, expression of concern with the new texts' authenticity is indeed very common, as illustrated by the defense of the Mahāyāna *sūtras* in India.⁶⁴

More significant, however, is the fact that the *gter ma* literature, with the voluminous documents that it supplies on the circumstances, procedures, individuals involved, the notion of direct transmission, as well as its continued creation in the contemporary period, provides a primary example of visionary's revelation as a mode of textual production in Buddhism. Buswell has pointed out that certain aspects of the *gter ma* literature can be compared with the Chinese Buddhist apocryphal texts.⁶⁵ It has also been noted that the *gter ma* tradition shares with the Mahāyāna movement earlier in India the idea that the source of the teachings is no longer to be traced back to the finite teaching career of the historical Buddha.⁶⁶ Indeed, Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist authors often speak of the teachings of many Buddhas, as the following well-known line from Nāgārjuna indicates:

The teaching of the Buddhas depends on the two truths.⁶⁷

concerning the authenticity of the *gter ma* texts is treated in Matthew Kapstein, "The Purificatory Gem and Its Cleansing: A Late Tibetan Polemical Discussion of Apocryphal Texts," *History of Religions* 28, no. 3 (1989): 217-244.

⁶⁴ See, for instance, Vasubandhu's defense of the Mahāyāna *sūtras* presented in José Ignacio Cabezón, "Vasubandhu's Vyākhyāyukti on the Authenticity of the Mahāyāna Sūtras," in *Texts in Context: Traditional Hermeneutics in South Asia*, ed. Jeffrey Richard Timm (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 221-243. Cabezón notes that the same issue has occupied the attention of Nāgārjuna, Bhāviveka, and Śāntideva. *Ibid.*, 223.

⁶⁵ See Buswell, *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, 20-22.

⁶⁶ Gyatso, "Sign, Memory, History," 9-10; Gyatso, "Logic of Legitimation," 104-5. Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism and the *gter ma* tradition agree that the Buddhas in the Buddha fields can serve as a source for Buddhist scriptures.

⁶⁷ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXIV 8ab: *dve satye samupāśritya buddhānāṃ dharmadeśanā*/. See Ye Shaoyong, ed., *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā: Dbu ma rtsa ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa shes rab ces bya ba; Zhonglun song; Fanzanghan hejiao, daodu, yizhu* (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2011), 420. References to

Nāgārjuna's commentator Candrakīrti often refers to many Buddhas when he discusses Buddhist scriptures generally, while frequently ascribing specific *sūtras* to "the Blessed One (*bhagavat*).⁶⁸ In fact, the framework of teachings of many Buddhas exists outside Mahāyāna Buddhism, as we have seen earlier in the Abhidharma work of Vasubandhu.⁶⁸

Moreover, in a study that focuses on the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, Graeme MacQueen has suggested that *pratibhāna*, or inspiration, can serve as a source of the Mahāyāna *sūtras*.⁶⁹ The *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthita-samādhisūtra*, preserved now in Chinese and Tibetan translations, also predicts that it will "go into a cave in the ground" after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, to be recovered and circulated in the "last age."⁷⁰ Taken together, texts retrieved from hidden places and revelations of the visionaries constitute an important motif of Buddhist scripture.⁷¹

many Buddhas appear a number of times in this treatise, and we will encounter more examples in the later chapters.

⁶⁸ See Vasubandhu's mention of the Buddhas as "sages" (*munayah*) in the line from AK discussed at the beginning of this section.

⁶⁹ Graeme MacQueen, "Inspired Speech in Early Mahāyāna Buddhism I," *Religion* 11 (1981): 303-19; MacQueen, Graeme. "Inspired Speech in Early Mahāyāna Buddhism II." *Religion* 12 (1982): 49-65.

⁷⁰ Paul Harrison, *The Samādhi of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present: An Annotated English Translation of the Tibetan Version of the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Sammukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra with Several Appendices Relating to the History of the Text* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1990), 96-109; Paul Harrison, "Buddhānumśrī in the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 6 (1978): 57 n. 22.

⁷¹ *Gter ma* texts are distinct from simply hidden books in that the retrieval of their contents requires the deciphering of the code and the recovery of the memory of former teachings. *Gter ma* is also distinguished from *dag snang*, or Pure Vision, in which a visionary meets directly with a Buddha or a teacher from a different era in a worldly setting or in a Buddhist pure land. See, e.g., Janet Gyatso, "Genre, Authorship, and Transmission in Visionary Buddhism: The Literary Tradition of Thang-stong rGyal-po," in *Tibetan Buddhism: Reason and Revelation*, ed. Steven D. Goodman and Ronald M. Davidson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 98. See also Gyatso, "Signs, Memory and History," 10, 31 n. 13, where it is noted that Aśaṅga's revelation from Maitreya is reckoned retrospectively as a classical instance of *dag snang*. For references to other instances that are cited by Rnying ma scholars as belonging to the category of direct transmission, see Gyatso, "Logic of Legitimation," 101 n. 10, 115 n. 17. On the relevance of *gter ma* literature to the Chinese Buddhist apocrypha, see Buswell, *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, 20-22. José Cabezón has suggested that some tantras display the theme of heavenly library that are found in other religious traditions. "Scripture," in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Robert E. Buswell (New York: Macmillan Reference, USA, 2004), 2:755-58. For a short summary of the notion of heavenly book, which is found in ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman cultures and the Jewish, Christian, and

In his comparative study of scriptures in the global religious traditions, Wilfred C. Smith observed that one of the most striking features of the Buddhist traditions is the proliferation of the texts have been accorded the scriptural status.⁷² The mechanisms of the Buddhist traditions' accommodation of new scriptures had in fact been in place in Indian Buddhism, as some Pāli and Indian Mahāyana Buddhist texts themselves can testify. The Pāli Tipiṭaka itself contains many passages spoken by the disciples of the Buddha that were certified as reliable by him.⁷³ The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* also says that whatever the Blessed One's disciples teach is to be known as the work of the person of Tathāgata.⁷⁴ The *Anguttara Nikāya* also says that whatever leads to complete disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, appeasement, knowledge, awakening, *nibbāna* is to be held as dharma, Vinaya, and the teaching of the Buddha.⁷⁵ Both this Pāli scripture⁷⁶ and the Mahāyāna *Adhyāśāyaśamcodanasūtra*⁷⁷ say that "whatever is well-spoken is spoken by the Buddha."

Islamic traditions, see William A. Graham, "Scripture," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, Eliade Mircea, and Charles J. Adams (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 12:8195-6. However, the idea of a heavenly book is not prominent within the class of hidden Buddhist texts and revelations of the visionaries.

⁷² Smith, *What Is Scripture*, 146-150.

⁷³ Ibid., 150.

⁷⁴ Gyatso, "Signs, Memory and History," 10, 31 n. 10. The Sanskrit text is found in P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā haribhadraviracitayā ālokākhyavyākhyayā sahita* (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1960), 2: *yat kiṃcid āyuṣman śāriputra bhagavataḥ śrāvakā bhāṣante deśayanti upadiśanti udīrayanti prakāśayanti samprakāśayanti, sa sarvas tathāgatasya puruṣakāro veditavyaḥ*.

⁷⁵ MacQueen, "Inspired Speech I," 315; Smith, *What Is Scripture*, 150-1, 312-3 nos. 26-7. The passage concerned is found in Richard Morris, Edmund Hardy, Mabel Hunt, and Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids, eds. *The Anguttara-nikāya* (London: Published for the Pali Text Society by Luzac, 1955-1961), 4:143: *Ye ca kho tvaṃ upāli, dhamme jāneyyāsi: ime dhammā ekantanibbidāya virāgaya nirodhāya upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya samvattantīti, ekaṃ senupāli, dhāreyyāsi: eso dhammo, eso vinayo, etaṃ satthusāsanantī*.

⁷⁶ Morris, Hardy, Hunt, and Rhys Davids, *Anguttara-nikāya*, 4:164: *yaṃ kiñci subhāsitam sabbam taṃ tassa bhagavato vacanam arahato sammāsambuddhassa*. For the context of this statement, see Collins, "Idea of Pāli Canon," 94-5; MacQueen, "Inspired Speech I," 314.

⁷⁷ Collins, "Idea of Pāli Canon," 110 n. 23. The Sanskrit of the passage in question is found in Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya*. See Cecil Bendall, ed., *Çikshāsamuccaya: a Compendium of Buddhist Teaching* (S-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1957), 15: *yat kiṃcin maitreya subhāsitam sarvaṃ tad buddhabhāṣitam*.

The evidence from several Buddhist cultures, especially that from the Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions, therefore demonstrates that there are many ways for the Buddhist scriptures to remain open-ended, through either accommodating additional materials in the scriptural corpus or the formulation of alternative scriptural collections. In light of this survey, “canon” is often not an accurate, let alone helpful, category for the study of scripture in many Buddhist communities. At any rate, the closure of the “canon” is more often than not irrelevant. More importantly, the discussions of “canon” in Buddhist traditions have rarely brought into focus the functions that canons of scriptures might perform in Asian Buddhist cultures.

1.3 Hermeneutics, Practical Canon, and the Study of Textual Practices

In his influential essay on canon, Jonathan Z. Smith has emphasized the uses of canon of scriptures, expressing his view that the hermeneutical processes that are associated with the canon ought to be “a prime object of study for the historian of religion.” The relationship between canon formation and hermeneutics, according to him, is one between the “arbitrary limitation” that is imposed by the closure of the canon and the “exegetical ingenuity” of overcoming that limitation through “applying the canon to every dimension of human life” and “cover[ing] new situation without adding new matter to the canon.”⁷⁸ The closure of scriptures may be afforded circumstantially by way of an individual’s situation in a specific historical time and place, where the quantity of available scriptures is relatively stable. In the history of Buddhism, there indeed have

been events that involve the setting of scriptures' boundary. There were also devotional and exegetical practices where the notion of the totality or completeness of scriptures is imagined.⁷⁹ In such instances, the term "canon" can provide a useful angle. However, the previous section has demonstrated that there are many ways in which the "Buddhist canon" does not remain closed in the first place.

This dissertation is indeed broadly concerned with scriptural exegesis in the Buddhist scholasticism, but it argues that the ingenuity of the exegetes relates to an expanding body of scriptures rather than a closed canon. A specific kind of expansion of authoritative Buddhist texts that will concern us here will be the acquisition of quasi-scriptural status of the writings of the exegetes themselves. These scholastic texts, known as the *śāstras*, have been said to function as complete compendia of all the teachings of the Buddha and the great teachers of the past,⁸⁰ to have "become the word of the Buddha," to be given even the title *sūtra*, or to possess "in theory equal authority with Siddhartha's [word], and in practice greater authority."⁸¹ Indeed, the phenomenon that older texts are accorded higher authority while later texts play a greater role in the life of the religious communities manifests in many religious traditions. Wilfred C. Smith, for instance, has noted that it can be observed in the pair of the Bible and Talmud in the

⁷⁸ Jonathan Z. Smith, "Sacred Persistence: Toward a Redescription of Canon," in *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 43-44, 49-50, 52; Smith, "Religion and Bible," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128, no. 1 (2009): 22.

⁷⁹ On the idea of the completeness of scripture, see Cabezon, *Buddhism and Language*, 77-82, 91-92, 101-2. On the practices of reading, copying, and devotional practices relating to *Dazangjing* in China, see Fang, *Zhongguo xieben dazangjing*, 210-22. A Tibetan practice that involves the Buddhist scriptural collections is the *lung*, or the passing of the living transmission, of the Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur or one of the sectarian scriptural collections. The Tibetan term *lung*, an equivalent of the Sanskrit *āgama*, means in this context a reading transmission of a text given to a gathering of disciples by a teacher who has received it from a source of the text transmission that is considered authentic.

⁸⁰ See, for instance, Tsong kha pa's characterization of *lam rim* instructions, in Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa, *Mnyam med tsong kha pa chen pos mdzad pa'i byang chub lam rim che ba* (Xining, China: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1985), 3.

⁸¹ Smith, *What Is Scripture*, 150, 151, 154.

Jewish case, in the Qur'an and Sunnah in the Islamic case, and in Śruti and Smṛti in the Hindu case. It is indeed often the case that there are “two authoritative bodies of writings of which one is considered loftier in theory, in cosmic status, even while in practice the other may be also decidedly consequential—and at times equally, if not actually more, authoritative.”⁸²

Even in a situation where a scriptural corpus is not continuously evolving, its extremely large size, or circumstances that prevent it from being accessed in its entirety, can also make its closure irrelevant. Scholars of Southeast Asian Buddhism have often highlighted this point in relation to the primary scriptures of that tradition. Louis Finot noticed in 1917 in his survey of monastery libraries in Laos that none of them possessed a complete set of the Pāli canon.⁸³ Charles F. Keyes has likewise noted that the collections of scriptures in the monastery and temple libraries in Thailand and Laos vary from place to place, and that texts accessible to the communities through these libraries include “only a small portion of the total *Tipiṭaka*, some semi-canonical commentaries such as Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*, a large number of pseudo-*jātaka* and other pseudo-canonical works, histories of shrines and other sacred histories, liturgical works, and popular commentaries.”⁸⁴ Based on these observations of Theravāda Buddhist scriptures' limited accessibility, Collins calls for historical and ethnographical researches to discover

⁸² Ibid., 204.

⁸³ Louis Finot, “Recherches sur la littérature laotienne,” *Bulletin de l'école française de l'extrême orient* 17 (1917): 41-60.

⁸⁴ Charles F. Keyes, “Merit-Transference in the Kammic Theory of Popular Theravāda Buddhism,” in *Karma: An Anthropological Inquiry*, eds. Charles F. Keyes and E. Valentine Daniel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 272. Keyes mentions here the scholars who have contributed to these observations.

what he calls the “actual ‘canon,’” or “‘canons’ of scripture (in the wider sense) in use at different times and places.”⁸⁵

Building upon the observations of the previous scholars, Anne Blackburn formulated a distinction between “formal canon” and “practical canon.” The formal canon refers, in the context of Southeast Asian Buddhism, to the Tipiṭaka that functions mainly as an ideal concept and serves as the locus of final authority. In contrast, the practical canon refers to the texts and portions thereof—either from the Tipiṭaka, its commentaries, or other works that are understood as relating to the Buddhist dhamma—that are actually employed in the various religious activities involving texts.⁸⁶ In terms of its referent, Blackburn’s practical canon is essentially not different from Collins’ “‘canons’ of scripture in use at different times and places,” but she speaks more specifically of the need to “identify a set of textual strategies through which the formal canon is made relevant to textual production.”⁸⁷ Blackburn also suggests that, in the pre-modern period where the literary evidence is scarce and the ethnographical data unavailable, the intertextual references be profitably used for the study of practical canons.

The selective use of the available texts is a corollary of the expansion of the body of scriptures. The idea of practical canon shifts from a closed canon and brings this selectivity into focus. Another theoretical advantage that the term practical canon provides is the emphasis on the acts of active use of scriptures, as the objects of study are the instances of scriptures’ use that are recorded in specific times and places, along with

⁸⁵ Collins, “Idea of Pāli Canon,” 103-104.

⁸⁶ Anne M. Blackburn, “Looking for the Vinaya: Monastic Discipline in the Practical Canons of the Theravāda,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 22, no. 2 (1999): 283-284. Note that Blackburn has already used the term practical canon in her 1996 dissertation: “The Play of the Teaching in the Life of the Sāsana” (unpublished PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1996).

the notions and practices that are embedded in these acts, rather than the received body of texts themselves. As a binary relation between the canon and exegesis is displaced, the researcher also needs to be attentive to the alternative structures of scriptures that have emerged in actual practice, either formed through historical processes or developed conceptually.

In light of all these studies and collective thinking that have already taken place, our study of Buddhist texts in the roles that they play in the Buddhist communities as scripture can be formulated by way of a redescription of its orientations. First, it must pay close attention to the texts and fragments thereof that the individuals and communities use in the acts of citation, paraphrasing, indirect reference, and incorporation, with an interest in discovering the scopes of the scripture in use at specific times and places. Second, it must examine the manners in which the scriptures are used in various devotional and hermeneutical practices, in such acts as ritual, exegesis, original composition, and argumentation. Some scholars have used terms such as “ritual canon” and “curricular canon” in reference to the specific functions that a body of Buddhist texts perform.⁸⁸ In this regard, a number of recent studies that concern themselves with the roles that specific texts play in Buddhist education as pedagogical texts have proved to be fruitful.⁸⁹ What we learn about the texts and passages in actual use and the textual practices that are employed in relation to them in various times and places will enable us to reconstruct the intellectual worlds in which the Buddhist devotees and scholastics live.

⁸⁷ Blackburn, “Practical Canon,” 285.

⁸⁸ See, for instance, Collins, “Idea of Pāli Canon,” 103-104; Justin Thomas McDaniel, *Gathering Leaves & Lifting Words: Histories of Buddhist Monastic Education in Laos and Thailand* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 199; McDaniel, “Curricular Canon in Northern Thailand and Laos,” special issue, *Manusya: Journal of Thai Language and Literature* (2002): 20-59.

⁸⁹ See, for instance, McDaniel, *Gathering Leaves*; Georges B. J. Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

Third, in addition to the uses of scriptures in specific points in time, a related question concerns the transmission of knowledge over an extended period of time. We can learn about the gradual evolution of a practical canon by examining how the range of texts used by a particular school of thought or in a chain of commentaries has changed. Repeated use is a sign of the preservation of knowledge, while the discontinuation of specific source in a tradition signifies the change and the fading away of memory. Finally, in view of various forms of secondary formation that occurred in the history of Buddhism, as noted in our survey in the previous section, we must pay attention to the layers of texts, the varying manners in which they serve as scriptural authorities, and how different Buddhist cultures and communities respond to these textual layers differently. Outside India, the stratification of scriptures based on a distinction between the transregional and local traditions is often predominant; within India, other modes of differentiation such as the one between the early Buddhist and Mahāyāna varieties, or a hierarchy between the word of the Buddha and the scholastic texts, may be more relevant.

1.4 A Summary of the Survey of Theoretical Models

We began our search for a theoretical framework for the study of Buddhist scriptures with a consideration of scripture as a relational entity, which emphasizes the roles that scripture plays in the religious communities. As we affirmed the centrality of the social life of scripture in the religious societies as a subject of study, we turned to the scholarship on “Buddhist canons” in Asian Buddhist cultures for possible models that accommodate the multiplicity of scriptures in the Buddhist traditions. Our survey raises

questions about the applicability of canon as a critical category to several Buddhist scriptural traditions, as it also reveals mechanisms for admitting new materials into a corpus of Buddhist scriptures and demonstrates the formulation of “secondary canons” as a common procedure and its link with the rise of new Buddhist institutions.

This dissertation is primarily a study of the uses of scripture in the Buddhist scholastic traditions, in a context that involves a relationship that Jonathan Z. Smith has said to obtain between canon and hermeneutics. Our study also shares Smith’s preoccupation with the exegetical acts that ingenuously extend scriptures to new situations. However, in the Buddhist context exegesis relates not to a closed canon but an evolving body of scriptures. As we move away from the category of canon, close examinations will also demonstrate that the relationship between scripture and commentary is complex. The complexity is illustrated in this study especially by commentary’s acquisition of scriptural status and the formation of practical canon through commentary’s selective use of the scriptural corpus, which further demonstrate that scripture is an entity that is constituted by its relation with a religious community.

1.5 Candrakīrti and the Source Materials of This Study

The main figure that will occupy our attention in this dissertation is the Indian writer Candrakīrti, (ca. 570-640),⁹⁰ who was a pivotal figure in the Madhyamaka School of Mahāyāna Buddhism. As we have mentioned earlier, contemporary work on Buddhist

⁹⁰ Kimura Toshihiko, “A New Chronology of Dharmakīrti,” in *Dharmakīrti’s Thought and Its Impact on Indian and Tibetan Philosophy*, ed. Shoryu Katsura (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999), 209-14. Earlier, the date of 600-650 was proposed in David Seyfort Ruegg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1981), 71.

scripture is rare; and when scholars do turn to the theme, they often choose to write about what Buddhist authors explicitly speak about scripture, rather than focusing on what Buddhists *do* with scripture. As a Buddhist scholastic who was particularly concerned with scripture, Candrakīrti has indeed made many remarks on the subject. What makes his writings even more valuable for our purpose is the fact that they contain profuse references to various categories of Buddhist scripture, which provide an excellent case for the study of the uses of Buddhist scriptures in India around the seventh century. In his history of the literature of the Madhyamaka School in India, David Ruegg has briefly commented on the copious *sūtras* citations that are found in Candrakīrti's writings.⁹¹ Our investigation will mainly be focused on the three major works of Candrakīrti: (1) *Prasannapadā*, his commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*; ⁹² (2) *Madhyamakāvatāra*, a treatise on Madhyamaka thought within the framework of treating the Mahāyāna Buddhist path; and (3) *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, his own commentary on *Madhyamakāvatāra*.⁹³

This classical Indian Buddhist author brings us to a mature age in the history of Indian Buddhism, where a plethora of early Buddhist and Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures were widely used in scholastic and devotional practices. We have so far used the term “early Buddhism” to refer to Indian Buddhism that existed before the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhist movement as well as that form of Buddhism that continued alongside the Mahāyāna after the latter has arisen. The fact it coexisted with Mahāyāna makes the term

⁹¹ David Seyfort Ruegg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1981), 7.

⁹² Louis de La Vallée Poussin, ed., *Madhyamakavṛttiḥ: Mūlamadhyamakakārikā (Mādhyamikasūtras) de Nāgārjuna avec la Prasannapadā, Commentaire de Candrakīrti* (St. Petersburg: Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1903-1913).

“early Buddhism” ill suited for our purpose. Indeed, since it has passed through various stages and has many varieties of its own, and because it often needs to be defined in relation to the Mahāyāna movement, whose advocates often speak about it in derogatory terms, this form of Buddhism has defied any descriptive term that has been used for it. The term “mainstream Buddhism,” used in some recent scholarly works to characterize its relation with Mahāyāna Buddhism in the latter’s early stage of development, for instance, is not well suited for Candrakīrti’s time when Mahāyāna Buddhists were no longer a minority.

The Madhyamaka authors such as Bhāviveka⁹⁴ and Candrakīrti in fact have tried to avoid explicit derogatory terms, preferring to use phrases such as *śrāvakayāna*, “the vehicle of the listeners (of the Buddha),” or to refer to those who are affiliated with it as *svayūthya*, “those belonging to one’s own group.” Despite these nuances, the fact remains that these are the names for the other. Occasionally, Bhāviveka and Candrakīrti also mention the fact that this other form of Buddhism has many *nikāya*, or divisions, of its own, and they also note certain similarities and differences that are found in the doctrines and scriptures of all these divisions (*sarvanikāya*). These specific textual references have influenced the decision here to adopt “Nikāya Buddhism” as the main descriptive term for the continuing forms of early Buddhism.⁹⁵ The term “Nikāya Buddhism” was introduced by Hirakawa Akira in the context of Indian Buddhism history, and it

⁹³ Only Tibetan translations of these last two works have been published, both of which are edited in Louis de La Vallée Poussin, ed., *Madhyamakāvatāra par Candrakīrti: traduction Tibétaine* (St. Petersburg: Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1907-1912).

⁹⁴ For a long time, Bhāvaviveka was the preferred spelling of this author’s name. On the adoption of the new spelling, see Malcolm David Eckel, *Bhāviveka and His Buddhist Opponents*, Harvard Oriental Series 70 (Cambridge, MA: Dept. of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University, 2008), 88 n. 1.

⁹⁵ The terms “early Buddhism” and “mainstream Buddhism” will be used occasionally only when the context permits.

highlights the existence of many schools of the form of Buddhism that it describes.⁹⁶ The term is applicable only after the schism that resulted in the division between the Mahāsaṅghika and Sthaviara schools had occurred. Although “Nikāya Buddhism” reflects certain conceptual framework that existed in the period of time that we are mainly concerned with,⁹⁷ we are again using it in the manner of constructing the other. Moreover, even while acknowledging a degree of diversity, it imposes a sense of uniformity upon what is historically and socially varied.

In the domain of scriptures, the Nikāya-Mahāyāna distinction manifests in the existence of two groups of texts. It is not surprising that Mahāyāna Buddhists identify themselves with the Mahāyāna *sūtras*; and when Madhyamaka authors such as Bhāviveka and Candrakīrti made references to Nikāya Buddhist texts, they were often quite conscious about these texts’ *yāna* affiliation. While the polemical nature of Mahāyāna Buddhists’ references to Nikāya Buddhist texts naturally will be considered, this dissertation will also investigate the specific uses of Nikāya Buddhist literature that have contributed significantly to the development of the Madhyamaka thought and Buddhist epistemology. In so doing, we will highlight the complex relationship between various groups of Buddhists, on the one hand, and the two tiers of Buddhist scriptures, on the other. This dissertation places greater emphasis on Mahāyāna Buddhist authors’ uses of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures, in spite of the fact that these writers’ references to Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures are more numerous. This choice is based on our opinion that the Mahāyāna Buddhist authors’ uses of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures that we will

⁹⁶ See Hirakawa Akira, *A History of Indian Buddhism: From Śākyamuni to Early Mahāyāna*, trans. and ed. Paul Groner (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998), 105 ff.

⁹⁷ On the Chinese pilgrim Yijing’s use of the term *nikāya* for schools of Nikāya Buddhism, see *ibid.*, 315 n. 8.1.

consider here are illuminating illustrations of ingenuity in exegesis: such uses of scripture are often incorporated into the careful arguments that these writers make when they are aware of the challenges that they face from the Nikāya Buddhists; some instances show in particular the application of scripture to new contexts and the aspect of exegesis involved in the creation of new categories and forms. The citations of Mahāyāna *sūtras* found in the writings of Candrakīrti, for instance, often illustrate how scripture enriches the experience of the exegete through its variety in expression.

While we may generally associate the three divisions of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures—the Sūtra, Vinaya, and Abhidharma—and the Mahāyāna *sūtras* with two different stages in the history of Indian Buddhism, the texts themselves in fact coexisted at the time of the Indian Buddhist authors that we will consider. Thus, the structural distinction made here between the Nikāya Buddhist texts and Mahāyāna *sūtras* is based on a conceptual framework that exists in the minds of these Mahāyāna Buddhist authors. The textual evidence that we possess today—the Pāli *suttas*, Chinese and Tibetan translations, and Sanskrit editions—moreover, usually comes from the periods that are different from the points of these texts' origin. Among Nikāya Buddhist scriptures, we will often refer to the texts belonging to the Sūtra division that are generally known in Pāli as the five Nikāyas, along with those that are found in the parallel corpus in Chinese translation known as the Āgamas. Nikāya as a category of scripture is to be distinguished from Nikāya as a designation we adopt here for a form of Buddhism.

Although this dissertation is concerned with the concept and uses of Buddhist scripture in general, due to the enormous amount of available sources, we have chosen to study several authors who have left large impact on the scholastic Buddhist cultures. All

of these individuals are connected with Candrakīrti, who is the central focus of this study. Recent scholarship has suggested that in his own time Candrakīrti was not a particularly well known figure in his school, although for a few hundred years the Indian Madhyamaka tradition maintained a series of commentaries on the early Madhyamaka works that he had composed, until he began to receive wide recognition toward the end of the first millennium. Later in Tibetan Buddhism, Candrakīrti was eventually reckoned as one of the most important Indian Buddhist writers, with his interpretation of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, the founding members of the Madhyamaka School, being regarded as the most authoritative among the Indian commentators.⁹⁸ The pivotal position that he occupies in the larger history of Madhyamaka School makes Candrakīrti an especially illuminating example for the understanding of the relationship between a scholastic tradition and the body of scriptures, as the specific texts and passages that he was concerned with continued to occupy the later Madhyamaka writers. The diachronic perspective provided by a group of Buddhist authors self-consciously identifying themselves as the members of the same tradition allows us to measure the mechanisms by which a specific practical canon is created and transmitted and how it changes over time.

The focus on a chain of Buddhist authors will bring our attention to Candrakīrti's (ca. 570-640) predecessors and successors within the Madhyamaka School, including Nāgārjuna (who lived in the early centuries of the Common Era), Bhāviveka (ca. 500-570), and the Tibetan writer Tsong kha pa (1357-1419). As a sample from outside the

⁹⁸ See Georges B. J Dreyfus and Sara L. McClintock, eds., *The Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika Distinction: What Difference Does a Difference Make?* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003); Kevin A. Vose, *Resurrecting Candrakīrti: Disputes in the Tibetan Creation of Prāsaṅgika* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2009). Vose traces the historical processes that led to the gradual ascendance of Candrakīrti's work in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism.

Madhyamaka tradition, the role of scripture in Dignāga's (ca. 480-540) work on Buddhist epistemology will be considered along with Candrakīrti's critical response.

The study of the uses of Buddhist scriptures in this dissertation focuses on the Buddhist intellectual traditions, as represented by these authors, whose literary expressions take the form of a specific kind of scholastic writing known as *śāstra*. In so far as the world of Buddhist scriptures is concerned, the growth of scholastic Buddhism has the consequence that the *śāstras* come to assert virtual scriptural authority, even though they often formulate themselves as commentaries on the earlier scriptures. As we study the uses of scripture in the *śāstras*, themselves forming another layer of authoritative Buddhist texts for the later generations of Buddhist scholastics, we must be conscious of the specific features of this literary medium as we examine the textual practices that are carried out on that platform. Here, reflection on scriptural exegesis takes place alongside the developments in the theories of logic, epistemology, and metaphysics. Indeed, the *śāstra* authors self-consciously characterize their scholastic enterprise in terms of its reliance on both scripture and reason as its two basic tools.

1.6 The Argument and a Plan for the Chapters

Modern studies of Buddhist *śāstras* generally have a tendency to emphasize the philosophical aspects of these texts, both influenced by and reinforcing a persistent preference to see Buddhism as a purely rationalistic religion. Much emphasis has been placed on the role of reason in Buddhist scholasticism, to such an extent that the presence of scripture in Buddhist *śāstras* is sometimes viewed as an unwelcome intrusion. This dissertation argues that the profuse uses of scripture in the Buddhist *śāstras* testify that

hermeneutics occupies a central place in Buddhist scholastic practices. The work presented in the following chapters analyzes in detail various textual practices involving scripture, ranging from scriptural citation to the elements of exegesis that are discovered in the philosophical writings in the areas of epistemology and logic. As we affirm Buddhist authors' acknowledgement of scripture and reason as the primary tools of the scholastic culture, we will demonstrate more specifically that writers such as Candrakīrti have refused to grant autonomy upon reason and that for them the use of scripture provides a way to avoid reifying reason.

The chapters of this dissertation treat the two themes of the concept of Buddhist scripture and the textual practices relating to the uses of scriptures. Chapter Two discusses *āgama* as an indigenous term for Buddhist scripture, with an emphasis on the concept's accommodation of both the expansion of the Buddhists scriptures and their selective use. Chapter Three treats the rise of *śāstra* and its growing power as a form of scholastic writing, and it demonstrates the hermeneutical elements in the Buddhist *śāstras* in both their methods and the mode of legitimation. The remaining parts of the dissertation treat the actual uses of scriptures in scholastic Buddhism as seen through the medium of *śāstras*. The second part of Chapter Two and Chapter Five present the evidence of the uses of scripture, respectively, in Dignāga's construction of a general framework of Buddhist epistemology and the arguments that Nāgārjuna and his Madhyamaka successors developed for the Mahāyāna doctrine of emptiness. While in these two cases the selected contents of scriptures are incorporated into Buddhist philosophical systems leaving little trace of their origin behind, the Madhyamaka *śāstras* and commentaries' citations of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures treated in Chapter Four

illustrate the explicit invocation of scriptural authority in the justification of a *śāstra* tradition's own views.

Chapter Two

Notions of Scripture and the Function of Exegesis as Scripture in Indian Buddhist Scholasticism

To construct a category such as scripture in a larger comparative framework, it is necessary to temporarily suspend the peculiarities of its instances. However, the refining of the general category requires a consideration of the specificities of individual cases, which is necessary for the further steps of abstraction. Both generalization and individuation are thus necessary in the dialogical procedure that occurs between the general category and the instance. Indeed, as we adopt “scripture” as a general category, we become aware of the fact that the term itself has linguistic and conceptual specificities that comes from its own past. The result is that the category of scripture may carry the peculiarities of specific religious traditions.

In the previous chapter, we have already had an occasion to briefly consider some of the peculiarities of the term scripture. On the semantic level, for instance, scripture implies something that is written,¹ although a major comparative study of sacred texts has already shown the primacy of orality over the written aspect of scripture on a worldwide level.² The supremacy of orality is even more overwhelming in India, where sacred texts primarily took the former form, while writing is considered as inferior or even contaminating.³ Functioning in such a cultural environment, early Buddhists also preserved their sacred literature orally.⁴ It was not until the last quarter of the first century BCE, when Buddhist texts were committed to writing in Ceylon, that we have the first clear evidence of writing in the Buddhist tradition.⁵ Future studies will need to investigate more thoroughly the relative importance of orality and written texts in pre-modern Indian Buddhist history. Even in modern Tibetan Buddhism, orality still plays an extremely substantial role, and it appears that the significance of writing is growing in very recent years.⁶

Another problem with the term “scripture” involves its singularity, which registers another aspect of the history of religion in Europe. Indeed, before it became

¹ The English word “scripture” is derived from the Latin *scriptura*, “writing.” Wilfred C. Smith mentions its cognates in the various languages and other related words signifying writing. *What Is Scripture*, 7.

² William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Graham shows in chapter three of this work (pp. 30-44) that the oral aspect of scripture had been significant even in the pre-modern West.

³ Thomas B. Coburn, “‘Scripture’ in India: Toward a Typology of the Word in Hindu Life,” in *Rethinking Scripture: Essays from a Comparative Perspective*, ed. Miriam Levering (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 102-128. Coburn cites a late Vedic text which states that “a pupil should not recite the Veda after he has eaten meat, seen blood or a dead body, had intercourse or engaged in writing.” Ibid., 104. See also Graham, *Beyond Written Word*, 67-77.

⁴ Speaking of the era that preceded the writing down of Buddhist texts in Ceylon, *Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvāṃsa* both state, “Previously, intelligent monks (had) preserved the text of the three *piṭaka* and its commentary orally.” Both the translation, reproduced here, and the Pāli text are found in Collins, “Idea of Pāli Canon,” 97. As a general rule, a translation is not produced by myself when its source is specified.

⁵ Collins, “Idea of Pāli Canon,” 95 and 110-111 n. 25.

⁶ See, for instance, Dreyfus, *Sound of Hands Clapping*, 149-63.

singular, “the scriptures” in its plural form designated “Biblical books, passages, or even what we today call ‘verses.’”⁷ On this particular point, the singularity of “scripture” contrasts sharply with the situations in many Buddhist cultures, where some of the authoritative textual collections contain thousands of text.⁸ The semantic incompatibility indicated here merely illustrates a part of the dilemma that we face when scripture is proposed as a general category of inquiry.

These considerations, along with the problems of applying the term “canon” to the corpora of scriptures in several Buddhist cultures considered in the previous chapter, should alert us to the potential risk of incommensurability. Therefore, the construction of scripture as a generic category requires that we explore comparable terms and concepts from a variety of religious traditions. The consideration of alternative concepts of sacred text will help us refine the category and become aware of the peculiarities that are associated with specific scriptural traditions. The present chapter is a treatment of a Buddhist concept of scripture. It aims, first of all, to contribute to the comparative study of scripture as a global phenomenon. Secondly, the exploration of the notion of scripture presented here will set the stage for the examination of the uses of Buddhist scriptures, to which we will turn in the later chapters.

The Asian Buddhist term that we will focus on in this chapter is *āgama*. As we will see below, *āgama* is only one of the Buddhist terms for scripture, but it is one that

⁷ Wilfred C. Smith, *What Is Scripture*, 13, 246 n. 17.

⁸ For instance, the standard catalog of Sde dge edition of the Tibetan Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur registers 4567 texts, while that of an East Asian corpus of Buddhist texts collected in Korea records 1513 texts in the main entries. Ui Hakuju et al., *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons: (Bkaḥ-ḥgyur and Bstan-ḥgyur)* (Sendai, Japan: Tōhoku Imperial University aided by the Saitō Gratitude Foundation, 1934); Lewis R. Lancaster and Sung-bae Park, *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

Indian Buddhist writers often use when speak about the intervention of scripture in a *śāstra* or a commentary. The recognition of *āgama* as a major tool, along with reason, that Buddhist writers employ, therefore, emphasizes the role that scripture plays in scholastic practices. While the intervention of scripture in a text highlights the selective use of scripture—indeed, *āgama* means *inter alia* a citation—our analysis will demonstrate that *āgama* is a term that has come to designate increasingly more groups of authoritative texts. The idea of *āgama*, therefore, signifies both the selective use and the expanding scope of scripture in Buddhism. More specifically, the chapter will provide examples of the use of Abhidharma, a group of early Buddhist scholastic texts that has acquired the designation of *āgama*. The inclusion of scholastic literature as a part of the scriptural corpus demonstrates that scripture is an involving concept in the Buddhist case and that the scripture-commentary dichotomy is not as rigid as we might presume.

Our procedure in this chapter is to follow closely the twists and turns of the idea of *āgama*, based mainly on the discussions that are found in the writings of Candrakīrti. An Asian Buddhist term's multivalence, long history, and its embeddedness in a different cultural context can make it elusive and resistant to translation. John Ross Carter's study of the concept of *dhamma* in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition has demonstrated this situation very well in its treatment of the history of modern academics' attempts to understand the concept of *dharma/dhamma*.⁹ Thus, we will do well to take into account an Asian Buddhist term's polysemic lexical content, historical variation, and philosophical complexity, as Carter has done in his exploration of the term *dhamma* in the Pāli *suttas* and the subsequent Pāli and Sinhalese commentarial traditions.

⁹ John Ross Carter, *Dhamma: Western Academic and Sinhalese Buddhist Interpretations: A study of a Religious Concept* (Tokyo: The Okuseido Press, 1978), 3-53.

2.1 Searching for Buddhist Terms for Scripture

As we turn to our subject at hand, *dhamma*/dharma, along with its derivatives in various Asian Buddhist cultures, in fact constitutes a possible candidate for the term “scripture” in one dimension of this important term. Among the very numerous meanings that it contains,¹⁰ *dhamma* conveys the idea of authoritative teaching or texts, which is captured in the Pāli word *pariyatti*, as “something with which one is to familiarize oneself, to learn by heart, to keep in mind,” registering in this case an oral aspect of scripture’s use.¹¹ But *dhamma* encompasses more than *pariyatti* as something in which “language is involved.”¹² In an interpretation that became central to the Theravāda Buddhist understanding of the term, presented in Buddhaghosa’s fifth-century Pāli text *Visuddhimagga*, *dhamma* is said to include *pariyatti* as well as the ninefold *dhamma* that transcends the world (*navavidhalokuttaradhamma*), the latter being a series of states of religious attainments and the path that are described in *pariyatti*.¹³ An alternative line of Theravāda interpretation conceptualizes *dhamma* in the three aspects of authoritative teaching (*pariyatti*), practice (*paṭipatti*), and realization/attainment (*paṭivedha/adhigama*). These established interpretations show that the idea of *dhamma* itself captures the Theravāda tradition’s tendency to understand scripture in the form of text as something

¹⁰ A comprehensive study of the term *dhamma* based on the materials that range from the Pāli *suttas* to the twentieth-century Sinhalese interpretations is presented in Carter, *Dhamma*, 55-170. The different senses of the term *dhamma* as delineated in the Pāli commentaries, in the Sinhalese Buddhist tradition, and in the Pāli and Sinhalese sources are given in *ibid.* 58-64, 138-140, and 156-9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 65-6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 118.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 115-129.

that lends itself to religious practices and leads to salvific experiences that are free from the linguistic medium.

José Cabezón also appears to have dharma in mind when he speaks of the place of scripture in Indo-Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism. Examining a host of Buddhist terms that are related to scripture—*dharmaskandha*, *dharmacakra*, *dharmaratna*—Cabezón observes that in the Indian and Tibetan scholastic traditions too there is a tension between scripture’s linguistic and physical aspects, on the one hand, and its experiential aspects and soteriological purpose, on the other.¹⁴ Often, the emphasis is rather placed on the latter, giving priority of scripture’s transcendence to its textuality. This tendency accounts, to some extent, for the lack of attention paid in the traditional Buddhist writings to the mundane and physical aspects of scripture that are significant in terms of the roles that scripture plays in the life of Buddhist communities.

Indian Buddhist traditions and the subsequent interpretations that depend on them share an etymology of the term dharma/*dhmma* that understands the word to have derived from the root √*dhṛ*, which means to bear.¹⁵ Drawing from that tradition, Candrakīrti explains in the *Prasannapadā* that in the Buddhist scripture (*pravacana*) the word dharma has three connotations, all sharing the sense of *dhāraṇa*, “bearing,” or the related form *vidhāraṇa*, “preventing”: (1) as anything that exists, falling under the category of either *sāsrava* or *anāsrava*, in the sense of that which *bears* its own characteristics; (2) as ten virtues, in the sense of that which *prevents* one from going to the bad rebirths; and (3) as *nirvāṇa*, in the sense of that which *prevents* one from going to

¹⁴ Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language*, 29-52.

¹⁵ For discussions of the etymology of *dhmma* in the Theravāda tradition, which also derives the term from the root √*dhṛ*, see Carter, *Dhmma*, 112 and 179. This basic etymological pattern is also followed in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition’s discussion of the word *dharmā/chos*.

saṃsāra, which consists of five types of rebirth.¹⁶ Elsewhere in the *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti has given other etymologies of dharma, but the range of its meanings does not go beyond what we have just seen.¹⁷

The conspicuous fact that the sense of Buddhist texts is not one of the uses of the word dharma that Candrakīrti has found in the scriptures should cause us to become aware of the divergent orientations of dharma and scripture. In addition to the sense of dharma as anything that exists, which is used in the *Abhidharma* and later in the Mahāyāna philosophical literature,¹⁸ for Candrakīrti dharma is something that has salvific properties, capable of lifting a devotee either from the lower rebirths or from the whole of *saṃsāra* altogether. His description shows that the concept of dharma signifies more properly the soteriologically efficacious content, which exceeds the linguistically mediated text which describes it.

There are indeed a number of other Asian Buddhist terms that are potential candidates for the category of scripture. A list of some the most enduring and

¹⁶ PPMV 304.3-8: *dharmasābdo 'yaṃ pravacane tridhā vyavasthāpitaḥ svalakṣaṇadhāraṇārthena kugatigamanavidhāraṇārthena pāñcagatikasaṃsāragamanavidhāraṇārthena// tatra svalakṣaṇadhāraṇārthena sarve sāsravā anāsravāś ca dharmā ity ucyante// kugatigamanavidhāraṇārthena daśakuśalādayo dharmā ity ucyante ... pāñcagatikasaṃsāragamanavidhāraṇārthena nirvāṇaṃ dharma ity ucyate/ dharmasāraṇaṃ gacchatīty*. Emendations to the text are based on J. W. de Jong, "Textcritical Notes on the *Prasannapadā*," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 20 (1978): 220. I generally follow the reading established in Louis de La Vallée Poussin, ed., *Madhyamakavṛttiḥ: Mūlamadhyamakakārikā (Mādhyamikasūtras) de Nāgārjuna avec la Prasannapadā, Commentaire de Candrakīrti*, Bibliotheca Buddhica 4 (St. Petersburg: Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1903-1913; repr., Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970). Citations refer to the 1970 edition. Emendations to La Vallée Poussin's text will be indicated along with the source of suggested changes. Candrakīrti notes that the last sense of *dharma*—*nirvāṇa*—is the one which is found in the well-known formula "that one goes to dharma as refuge." See also a new edition of this passage in Ulrich Timme Kragh, *Early Buddhist Theories of Action and Result: a Study of Karmaphalasambandha: Candrakīrti's Prasannapadā, Verses 17.1-20* (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 2006) 88, 90, where the reading of *dharmasāraṇaṃ gacchatīty* is given for the last sentence.

¹⁷ PPMV 457.1 and PPMV 592.4.

¹⁸ See Th. Stcherbatsky, *The Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the Word "Dharma"* (Calcutta: S. Gupta, 1961). In this connection, not only is dharma equated with existent, Candrakīrti also invokes a way of classifying dharma as such into the two categories of *sāsrava* and *anāsrava*, which Vasubandhu presents at the beginning of *Abhidharmakośa*. AK I 4a, 1:13: *sāsravā 'nāsravā dharmāḥ*.

transregional terms that signify scripture would include (1) *buddhavacana/bka'*, (2) *tripiṭaka/tipiṭaka/san zang* 三藏/*sde snod gsum*, (3) *śāsana/sāsana/shengjiao* 聖教/*bstan pa*, (4) *sūtra/sutta/jing* 經/*mdo*, (5) *saddharma/saddhamma/正法/妙法/dam pa'i chos*, (6) *pravacana/pāvacana/shengyan* 聖言/*gsung rab*, (7) *samaya/gzhung lugs* 宗, (8) *āgama/jiao* 教/阿笈摩/*lung*. Each of these terms has a long history and is regionally varied. An investigation of every one of these terms in one Buddhist tradition would require a study of monographic length.¹⁹

For our present purpose, we will focus on a term that has been particularly theorized in the Indian scholastic Buddhist tradition in which Candrakīrti participates. We have noted above that the Theravāda conception of *dhmma* contains a sense of the term as *pariyatti* or authoritative texts. The Theravāda commentarial tradition also associates *pariyatti* with the alternative word *āgama*,²⁰ which is a common term used in the Sanskrit

¹⁹ In addition to his work on the concept of *dhmma*, Carter also mentions the two related terms *saddharma* and *sāsana* (Sanskrit: *śāsana*). See Carter, *Dhamma*, 131-4, 166-170. On *sāsana*, see also John Ross Carter, "A History of Early Buddhism," *Religious Studies* 13, no. 3 (September 1977): 263-287, esp. 266-270. The concepts of *buddhavacana* and *tipiṭaka* in the Theravāda tradition have been addressed in George D. Bond, "The Word of the Buddha:" *The Tipiṭaka and Its Interpretation in Theravada Buddhism* (Colombo: Gunasena, 1982). The concept and textual practices relating to the Buddhist *sūtras* mainly in the Chinese context have been treated in Kōgen Mizuno, *Buddhist Sutras: Origin, Development, Transmission* (Tokyo: Kōsei Publishing Co., 1982). The term *pravacana* carries the sense of sacred speech, and Candrakīrti uses it with some regularity in PPMV as a word for scripture. See PPMV: 113.3, 129.4, 159.5, 214.6, 246.7, 246.9-10, 248.8, 267.10, 304.4, 337.7, 355.9, 358.5-6, 422.3, 448.10, 491.19, 492.2, 539.14, 594.9. At *Mahāvīyutpatti* no. 1266, the term is used in association with twelve divisions of scripture: *dvādaśadharmappravacana/gsung rab yan lag bcu gnyis*. The twelve divisions of *pravacana* are listed in nos. 1267-1278. Sakaki Ryōzaburō, *Honyaku myōgi taishū: Bon-Zō-Kan-Wa yonyaku taikō* (Kyoto: Shingonshū Kyōto Daigaku, 1916-1925), 1:97. On Buddhist scriptures in the form of Tibetan Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur, see Helmut Eimer and David Germano, eds., *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 1-196; David Philip Stanley, "The Threefold Formal, Practical, and Inclusive Canons of Tibetan Buddhism in the Context of a Pan-Asian Paradigm: Utilizing a New Methodology for Analyzing Canonical Collections," Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2009. In the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, the word *pāli* also denotes the canonical writings, as apposed to the commentaries.

²⁰ Carter, *Dhamma*, 132-3.

Buddhist tradition,²¹ and it emphasizes the textual dimension of the concept of *dhamma*/dharma that we may call scripture.

2.2 The Many Facets of *Āgama* as a Term and a Concept:

Evidence from the Work of Candrakīrti

The word *āgama* is term for scripture that is shared by a number of Indian religious traditions. The canonical literature of Jainism is known as *āgama*.²² *Āgama* is also a name for the enormous literary collections that the Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, and Śākta traditions of medieval Hinduism accept as their scriptures.²³

In the Buddhist context, *āgama* signifies more properly the texts, and it contrasts with practice and realization, while all of them collectively constitute the concept of *dhamma*/dharma. This bifurcation of dharma into scripture and internal experience already manifested in Vasubandhu's classification of *saddharma* into the two categories of *āgama* and *adhigama*,²⁴ and its prevalence is attested elsewhere as well.²⁵ Candrakīrti also follows this classification of *saddharma* into scripture and realization, where *saddharma* means either (1) dharma of the good people (*sat*), which for him refer to the noble ones (*ārya*)—those whose work is done, or (2) simply good dharma.²⁶ “The

²¹ The Sanskrit form of *pariyatti* is *paryāpti*, which is rarely used in the Sanskrit Buddhist tradition.

²² See, for instance, Kendall W. Forkert, *Scripture and Community: Collected Essays on the Jains* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 78-81; Paul Dundas, *The Jains* (London: Routledge, 1992), 53-73.

²³ For a survey of this literature, see Jan Gonda, *Medieval Religious Literature in Sanskrit* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1977). A general overview is provided in *ibid.*, 1-6.

²⁴ AK VIII 39ab, 2:920: *saddharmo dvididhaḥ śāstur āgamādhigamātmakaḥ*. “The *saddharma* of the Teacher is of two kinds: those having the nature of *āgama* and of realization.”

²⁵ Carter mentions a Sinhalese text that repeats this classification. *Dhamma*, 132. The Sinhalese text, *Dahampiyā Aṭuvā Gātapadaya*, is a glossary of a commentary on the *Dhammapada*.

²⁶ Candrakīrti appears to prefer the first sense, as he first glosses *saddharma* as dharma of the good or noble ones in *Prasannapadā*. PPMV 487.9: *satām āryāṇām dharmāḥ saddharmaḥ*. Later, the sense of good *dharma* is admitted as an alternative meaning of *saddharma*, in addition to the *dharma* of the *āryas*, or

dharma which is *āgama*,” Candrakīrti explains, “is the teaching that elucidates the dharma which is *adhigama*,”²⁷ or realization.

With *pariyatti* and *āgama*, we are already in the domain of texts, but the tendency to conceive texts as a means that leads to the salvific experiences, which we have observed in the concept of *dhamma*/dharma, continues with the concept of *āgama* as well. In the *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti explains the semantic dimension of the word *āgama* as follows:

(1) Because [it] has come (*āgata*) from the trustworthy persons who have removed defects altogether; (2) because [it] causes one to understand (*āgamayati*), as it causes one to understand the reality entirely, or going (*gamana*) face-to-face [with it]; (3) and because on the basis of that the world goes (*gamana*) to *nirvāṇa*, the status of scripture (*āgamatva*) is established for the word of the perfect Buddha alone.²⁸

The etymology of *āgama* that Candrakīrti offers in this passage is based on the multiple meanings that are generated when the Sanskrit verbal prefix *ā* comes into contact with the verbal root $\sqrt{\text{gam}}$. As the combined form *āgam* takes the sense “to

those whose work is done (*kṛtakārya*). PPMV 592.5-6: *yadi vā śobhano dharmāḥ saddharmāḥ sakalasamsāraduḥkhaḥsayakarātvena praśamsanīyatvāt*. “Or, if excellent *dharma* is *saddharma*, [this is so] because of its being praiseworthy on account of exhausting the sufferings of the entire *samsāra*.” Carter has shown that the textual device of breaking the compound *saddharma* in the two ways is used in Theravāda Buddhism as well, although the explanation might vary slightly. *Dhamma*, 166.

²⁷ PPMV 488.1-2: ... *adhigamadharmaḥ/ tatsamprakāśikā deśanā āgamadharmāḥ*. What *āgama* elucidates is the dharma that is realization, which, according to Candrakīrti, consists of cessation and path in the context of four noble truths. PPMV 488.1: *nirodhasatyam phaladharmāḥ/ mārgasatyam tu phalāvatāradharmaḥ/ eṣa tāvad adhigamadharmaḥ*.

²⁸ PPMV 268-9: *āptebyaḥ prahīṇāśeṣadoṣebhya āgatavāt/ āgamayatīti samantāt tattvaṁ gamayatīti vābhimukhyād gamanād vā tadāśrayeṇa lokasya nirvāṇagama[nā]t sambuddhavadanasyaivāgamatvaṁ vyavasthāpyate/*. See de Jong, “Textcritical Notes,” 58.

come,” *āgama* signifies that which has come (*āgata*) from the trustworthy persons, and hence a tradition. In connection with the causative form *āgamayati*, *āgama* signifies something that causes one to understand, and for Candrakīrti what *āgama* causes to understand is the reality; or, as one separates the prefix *ā* from the root $\sqrt{\text{gam}}$, to even have a direction experience of the reality.²⁹ Finally, based on the experience of reality, the world goes (*gamana*) to *nirvāṇa*.

This explanation, given on the basis of Sanskrit grammar, again indicates a preference to link scripture with transcendence, which is expressed here first as reality (*tattva*) and then as *nirvāṇa*, the final goal of the Buddhist path. In Wilfred C. Smith’s view, what lies at the heart of the global phenomenon of scripture is human beings’ awareness or sense of transcendence. The transcendent stands in contrast with the mundane, and the two form the double environment in which human beings live. The transcendent and the mundane are also referred to as the absolute and finite and by other various names. The transcendent signifies God, reality, truth, goodness and so on in various religious traditions, and Smith is of the view that it is from human beings’ heightened awareness of transcendence that traditions of scripture, which are encoded in the limited medium of language, have derived.³⁰ What Smith calls the double environment of transcendence and mundane may be translated into the ultimate (*paramārtha*) and conventional (*saṃvṛti*) in Candrakīrti’s Madhyamaka vocabulary. The ultimate is the reality that Candrakīrti speaks of here, and it is the central theme of Candrakīrti writings. Candrakīrti has also spoken on many occasions about the

²⁹ Literary, going (*gamana*) face-to-face (*ābhimukhya*) with it, where *ābhimukhya* apparently glosses the prefix *ā*.

³⁰ Smith, *What Is Scripture*, 227-33.

soteriological efficaciousness of the experience of that reality, which is the primary means to bring out the final Buddhist goal of *nirvāṇa*.

For Wilfred C. Smith, in so far as it directs our attention from the mundane plane of our existence to what is beyond, scripture is not unlike poetry.³¹ However, with his formulation of prose, poetry, and scripture as the three modes of language, he clearly sees scripture as going beyond poetry.³² Indeed, both Nikāya and Mahāyāna Buddhist texts have used the term “poetry created by poets” to indicate texts of dubious status when they present themselves as scripture.³³ Candrakīrti also refers to the Yogācāra author Dharmapāla as a poet, when he cast the latter in an unfavorable light, as both writers commented on Āryadeva’s Madhyamaka treatise *Catuḥśataka* and disagreed in their interpretations.³⁴ What makes scripture more than poetry appears to revolve around a distinctive form of transcendence that scripture signifies. However, to dwell more on what that transcendence might be by comparing different forms of transcendence that scriptures of the world’s religious traditions signify might involve us in an essentialist

³¹ Ibid., 233.

³² Ibid., 66, 227.

³³ One such instance is found in *Samyuttanikāya*, which uses the phrase *kavikatā kāveyyā*. Léon Feer, ed., *The Samyutta-nikāya of the Sutta-piṭaka* (London: Pub. for the Pali text society, by H. Frowde, 1884-1904), 2:267. See Lang, *Four Illusions*, 210 n. 19. In the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā*, it is Māra who makes an attempt to deceive a bodhisattva into thinking that the teachings the latter received is *kavikṛta kāvyā*, “poetry created by a poet.” See Vaidya, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā*, 163. An English translation of the passage in question is found in Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines & Its Verse Summary* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1973), 202. The latter instance is mentioned in Smith, *What Is Scripture*, 157 and 321-2 n. 62. Smith’s contrasting of poetry with scripture appears to have been done partly out of his awareness of Buddhists’, Muslims’, and other religious groups’ unwillingness to associate scripture with poetry.

³⁴ Lang, *Four Illusions*, 18 and 210 n. 19. On Candrakīrti’s reference to Dharmapāla as a poet, see also Tom J. F. Tillemans, *Materials for the Study of Āryadeva, Dharmapāla, and Candrakīrti: The Catuḥśataka of Āryadeva, Chapters XII and XIII, with the Commentaries of Dharmapāla and Candrakīrti: Introduction, Translation, Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese Texts, Notes* (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 1990), 1:12. See also Candrakīrti’s less than favorable reference to Dharmapāla in MABh, in Louis de la Vallée Poussin, ed. *Madhyamakāvatāra par Candrakīrti: traduction Tibétaine* (St. Petersburg: Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1907-1912; repr., Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970), 407. Page references are to the 1970 edition.

view of scripture;³⁵ and to enter deeper into Candrakīrti's notion of reality will bring us into the field of Madhyamaka philosophy proper. We therefore focus on the study of scripture's performative aspect instead.

Candrakīrti's etymology of *āgama* is situated within a long passage in the *Prasannapadā*, where Candrakīrti reflects on scripture. In an immediately preceding description, Candrakīrti discusses scripture in the epistemological framework of the Indian philosophical discourse, framing scripture as a *pramāṇa*, or a source of knowledge.

The sagacious ones say, “The speech of the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, alone is a *pramāṇa*.” This is because it is indisputable (*avisamvādaka*), since it possesses logical proof (*sopapattika*).³⁶

Here Candrakīrti indicates his view that scripture takes its place as one of the sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), alongside perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), and analogy (*upamāna*).³⁷ The inclusion of scripture among a group of four *pramāṇas* is not an uncommon position in early Buddhist theories of knowledge, although it is at odd with a development in Dignāga and Dharmakīrti's school of Buddhist epistemology, which eventually became the predominant Buddhist *pramāṇa* theory. According to the Buddhist epistemological school, scripture is not an independent source of knowledge, while the use of scripture is counted as an act of inference.³⁸

³⁵ For a critique of the essentialist approaches, where one view holds that “[s]acred texts testify to that which is ultimate,” see Levering, *Rethinking Scripture*, 7-11.

³⁶ PPMV 268.1-2: *buddhānām eva bhagavatām vacanaṃ pramāṇam ity upavarṇayanti vicakṣaṇāḥ sopapattikatvenāvisamvādatvāt/*.

³⁷ See PPMV 75.2-8.

³⁸ For studies of this subject, see Tillemans, *Materials*, 1:23-35; Tillemans, *Scripture, Logic, Language: Essays on Dharmakīrti and His Tibetan Successors* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1999), 27-51.

Whether scripture is accepted as an independent *pramāṇa*, what the Buddhist authors share in common, however, is the view that scripture is not devoided from reason, which manifests here in Candrakīrti's claim that scripture is supported by logical proof. Immediately following the etymology of *āgama*, Candrakīrti also expresses his sectarian belief that scriptures "belonging to other schools of thought," contrasting apparently with Buddhist scriptures, "are established as not having the status of a *pramāṇa*" or even as "having the status of spurious scripture (*āgamābhāsatva*)," because these are "disassociated from logical proof."³⁹ In thus contrasting the two groups of scriptures, Candrakīrti identifies scripture's ability to function as a source of knowledge and even its status as scripture with whether it is in consonance with reason. We will come back, especially in Chapter Five, to the multifaceted relationship between scripture and reason, which is built primarily upon a general notion of their compatibility.

The word *āgama* generally takes the singular form grammatically in Sanskrit texts, especially in the manner that Candrakīrti uses it,⁴⁰ although its referents vary according to the context. In some cases, the word *āgama* refers to scripture as a concept. An instance of this usage is found in what appears to be Candrakīrti's definition of *āgama* itself as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).

The speech of trustworthy persons who know without mediation the objects that are beyond the sense organs is *āgama*.⁴¹

³⁹ PPMV 269.2-3: *tadanyamatānāṃ tūpapattivīyuktatvān na prāmāṇyam āgamābhāsatvaṃ ca vyavasthāpyate/*.

The association of scripture with the knowledge of matters that are beyond senses is a common theme in Indian philosophy. The fact that Candrakīrti does not elaborate on this particular characterization of scripture may be an indication that he simply draws from a well-known notion of scripture in his time. Taken together, however, scripture's compatibility with reason and the belief in its originator's capability to access the supersensible objects make scripture at once transcendent and immanent. These two somewhat divergent themes coexist in the Indian Buddhist notion of scripture. In the school of Buddhist epistemologists, the conflict is resolved in one manner by subordinating the mystical aspect of scripture to its rational aspect.

Besides scripture as a concept, the term *āgama* can also instantiate a specific text that is accorded the status of scripture and may in its singular form be translated naturally as “a scripture.” Such is the case when Candrakīrti cites a stanza from a scriptural source with the expression *yathoktam āgame*, “as it is spoken in an *āgama*.”⁴² However, the singular form of *āgama* may also refer to a number of texts collectively and therefore stands for “scriptures.” For instance, when Candrakīrti explains that three types of mind bring about desirable fruits in both the present life and a future existence, he recommends that his readers learn the topic extensively from *āgama*.⁴³ What he has in mind is apparently the discussion of the two-fold effect of the actions found in a variety of

⁴⁰ See, however, the discussion in Chapter Four (section 4.2) of an instance in Bhāviveka's *Prajñāpradīpa*, now surviving only in translation, where the Tibetan equivalent *lung dag* appears to suggest the dual form *āgamau* in the Sanskrit original.

⁴¹ PPMV 75: *sākṣād atīndriyārthavidām āptānām yad vacanaṃ sa āgamaḥ*.

⁴² PPMV 331.4-6: *yathoktam āgame// ekasya bhāṣamāṇasya sarve bhāṣanti nirmīṭāḥ/ ekasya tūṣṇīmbhūtasya sarve tūṣṇīmbhavanti hi//*.

⁴³ PPMV 305.10: *etac cāgamād vistareṇa boddhavyam//*. This sentence appears in Candrakīrti's commentary on MMK XVII 1, where the three types of mind—*ātmasaṃyamaka*, *parānugrāhaka*, *maitra*—are listed and referred to as dharma. The discussion of the three types of mind is found in PPMV 303-5. For the new Sanskrit edition, English translation, and comments, see Ulrich Timme Kragh, *Early Buddhist Theories of Action and Result: a Study of Karmaphalasambandha: Candrakīrti's Prasannapadā, Verses*

Buddhist scriptures.⁴⁴ Moreover, the term *āgama* can even refer to all scriptures. When Candrakīrti argues against Dignāga's definition of perception (*pratyakṣa*) as devoid of conceptual thought (*kalpanāpoḍha*), for instance, one of the points that he raises is that the latter's novel characterization is not found in the *āgama*,⁴⁵ extending *āgama* in this case to all the texts that are considered as scriptures.⁴⁶

Thus, *āgama* in its singularity alone corresponds to “scripture,” “a scripture,” and “scriptures.” Despite an incidental shared preference for the singular form, it should be clear by now that the range of semantic meanings of the term *āgama*, especially in the manner that Candrakīrti has described it, differs drastically from “scripture.”⁴⁷ Thus, scripture and *āgama* should be linked rather on the basis of the comparable ways in which different religious communities have related to their own tradition's authoritative texts.⁴⁸

17.1-20 (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 2006), 92, 180-191, 204-12.

⁴⁴ Oskar von Hinüber, for instance, has shown that AN, MN, and SN contain statements regarding the effects of the actions in the present life and thereafter. *Selected Papers on Pāli Studies* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), 47.

⁴⁵ PPMV 75.1-2: *nāgamād api kalpanāpoḍhasyaiva vijñānasya pratyakṣatvam iti na yuktam etad* “Nor is the status of perception [granted to] a consciousness that is simply devoid of conceptualization in the *āgama*. Therefore, it is not reasonable” Cf. the translation in David Seyfort Ruegg, *Two Prolegomena to Madhyamaka Philosophy: Candrakīrti's Prasannapadā Madhyamakavṛttiḥ on Madhyamakakārikā I.1, and Tsoṅ kha pa Blo bzang grags pa / Rgyal Tshab Dar ma rin chen's Dka' gnad/gnas brgyad kyi zin bris : Annotated Translations* (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 2002), 130-1.

⁴⁶ In contrast, the terms such as *sūtra* and *śāstra* may take the plural form. Witness the forms *āgamasūtreṣu* (PPMV 548.5), *sarvanikāyaśāstrasūtreṣu* (PPMV 549.8), and *mahāyānasūtreṣu* (PPMV 549.10).

⁴⁷ “Scriptural tradition” can only capture the sense that the texts came down (*āgata*) from trustworthy persons (*āptebhyaḥ*). Franklin Edgerton's “traditional or canonical texts” also corresponds to this sense of *āgama*. *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1953), s.v. *āgama*. In addition to Candrakīrti's etymology of *āgama* in PPMV 268.2-269.2, other senses of this term can be found in Pali Text Society, T. W. Rhys Davids, and Wilhelm Stede, *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary* (Chipstead: Pali Text Society, 1925), s.v. *āgama*; V. Trenckner et al., *A Critical Pāli Dictionary* (Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy of Letters and Sciences, 1924), s.v. *āgama*.

⁴⁸ John Henderson, for instance, has observed that although scriptures of various religious traditions differ a great deal among themselves, it “appears not to have greatly affected the exegetical devices employed in

2.3 The Selective Use and the Expanding Scope of *Āgama*

So far, we have been focusing on what has been explicitly said about scripture. Alternatively, we may also gather notions of scripture and understand the practices involving scripture through examining the instances where scripture is used. For the period of Indian Buddhism that we are concerned with, a major source for the assessment of the functions that scripture performs is the scriptural citations.⁴⁹ A scriptural citation may be signified by the locative or ablative form of the word *āgama*;⁵⁰ it may also be marked by the mention of the title of a text, indicating that the cited passage comes from a specific scriptural source. Alternatively, an author may indicate that the cited passage is spoken by the Buddha⁵¹ or an authoritative person. Besides referring to a scripture from which a passage is extracted, in the context of citing a scriptural passage the word *āgama* itself sometimes simply means a citation, rather than the entire text from which a passage is cited.⁵²

One instance where the word *āgama* means a cited passage appears in an opponent's comment on a stanza that Candrakīrti has cited from

the commentarial traditions to which it is related." *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 4-6.

⁴⁹ Anne Blackburn has argued that the study of intertextual references will help us understand the practical canon that was in actual use and may bring us closer to the textual experience of many Buddhists in the pre-printing era. "Practical Canon," 284-5, n. 7.

⁵⁰ PPMV 331.4-6: *yathoktam āgame// ekasya bhāṣamāṇasya sarve bhāṣanti nirmītāḥ/ ekasya tūṣṇīmbhūtasya sarve tūṣṇīmbhavanti hi//*. PPMV 160.5-6: *yo dharmaṃ paśyati sa buddhaṃ paśyatīty āgamāt*.

⁵¹ PPMV 120.3-5: *uktaṃ hi bhagavatā/ na cakṣuḥ prekṣate rūpaṃ mano dharmān na vetti ca/ etat tu paramaṃ satyaṃ yatra loka na gāhate//...* De Jong has identified the source of this citation as *Bhavaśaṃkrāntisūtra* 14. "Textcritical Notes," 242. See N. Aiyaswami Sastri, *Bhavaśaṃkrānti Sūtra and Nāgārjuna's Bhavaśaṃkrānti śāstra* (Adyar: Adyar Library, 1938), 6, 18-9, 27, 71, 76.

⁵² In PPMV, *āgama* is the only term for citation in the sense of a scriptural passage being cited. For alternative Sanskrit words for citation, see Vaman Shivram Apte, *The Student's English-Sanskrit Dictionary* (Bombay: Mrs. Radhabai Atmaram Sagoon, 1893), 54. Candrakīrti also uses the word

Anavataptahradāpasamkramaṇasūtra, which is intended to show that the Buddha has taught emptiness, the Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine that the essence (*svabhāva*) or intrinsic nature of things, which is presumed to exist in every object, does not arise.⁵³ The opponent says here that “this *āgama* does not elucidate the non-arising of the essence of things,”⁵⁴ apparently using the word *āgama* to refer to the stanza cited. On another occasion, a dissenting voice in the *Prasannapadā* objects to the view of the absence of the self and emptiness that the text espouses by citing three stanzas from scriptures that appear to approve of the idea of the self.⁵⁵ To this Candrakīrti responds by citing three scriptural passages that support the idea of the absence of the self.⁵⁶ Again using the word *āgama* in the sense of scriptural citation rather than scripture from which the passages are cited, Candrakīrti asks the rhetorical question: how do the three scriptural citations—or *āgama*—that he cites not contradict those cited earlier by his opponent?⁵⁷

In its sense as citation, *āgama* brings into focus the selective use of scripture, as scripture must take the fragmentary form when it is embedded in another text. An instance of citation is also an act of using scripture. Scholars of Buddhism have typically treated scriptural citations as incidental elements of a text. Even in the translations of Buddhist texts, where the sources of citation need to be identified as a matter of scholarly convention, they are normally consigned to the footnotes and indexes without much

upanyasta, “cited,” but in PPMV it is only used to refer to the citing or mentioning of an analogy (PPMV 114.7) or the parts of a logical argument (PPMV 31.12 and 341.5-6).

⁵³ PPMV 239.10-13.

⁵⁴ PPMV 240.1: *nāyam āgamo bhāvasvabhāvanutpādaṃ paridīpayati*.

⁵⁵ PPMV 354.5-355.2.

⁵⁶ PPMV 355.4-7. Both the opponent’s and Candrakīrti’s uses of these scriptural passages will be discussed later in this section.

⁵⁷ PPMV 355.7-8: *katham idānīm anenāgamena pūrvakasyāgamasya virodho na syāt*/. See de Jong, “Textcritical Notes,” 226. “Now, how is the previous *āgama* not contradicted by this *āgama*.” This line indicates that *āgama* remains singular in number when it takes the sense of citation, even when passages cited are many. Thus, Candrakīrti is asking in this context how are the stanzas (“previous *āgama*”) cited by his opponent not contradicted by the three passage (“this *āgama*”) that he himself cites.

attention being paid to them. However, just as inscriptions that record frozen episodes of previous events can yield knowledge of the past when critical historical methods are applied to them, citations, which are inscriptions in the texts, too can tell us a great deal about what texts were used in specific periods of the past and how they were used. In the works of many Indian Buddhist writers, scriptural citations constitute a non-negligible portion of the texts. For instance, in Chapter Eighteen of the *Prasannapadā*, forty-two pages of Candrakīrti's commentary on Nāgārjuna's twelve stanzas in La Vallée Poussin's edition are interspersed with fifty-two citations.⁵⁸ This reckoning does not even include the stanzas of Nāgārjuna or parts thereof that Candrakīrti is directly commenting on and the intertextual references that do not cite the source texts directly.⁵⁹ The substantial amount and the frequent presence of these citations demonstrate that a constant engagement with scripture constitutes an important aspect of the writers' thought process. The conspicuous fact of their presence in the texts therefore demands critical attention.

Indeed, it is in these instances of scriptural citation that we will find elements of scriptural exegesis in actual practice. The citations are meant to fulfill various purposes in the surrounding text into which they are inserted. Sometimes a scriptural citation is simply used to give credence to a point that has been put forward. At other times, authors reason with the scriptural passages—brought up for the sake of its relevance or adduced by a real or imagined opponent in an argument—to develop a more robust and nuanced position and occasionally to even produce new ideas. The concern with scripture in exegesis and debate in classical Indian Buddhism also demand that hermeneutical

⁵⁸ These citations will be listed in Table Two in Chapter Three. The eighteenth chapter occupies about seven percent of the entire text of *Prasannapadā*.

⁵⁹ Such intertextual references that have been identified include PPMV 341.5, 344.10, 345.2, 346.9-13, 357.4-5.

strategies be developed by each school of thought to order the various groups of Buddhist scripture and their associated ideas in alignment with the school's own system. The two examples just cited, where *āgama* means citation, illustrate some of the processes involved in the engagement with scripture.

In the first example, the stanza that Candrakīrti cites from a Mahāyāna *sūtra* speaks about emptiness, which is frequently framed as the state of there being no essence (*niḥsvabhāvatva*).

As it is said in the *Anavataptahradāpasamkramaṇasūtra*, “That which arises from conditions is not arisen. It has no arising by way of essence. That which is dependent on the conditions is said to be empty. He who knows emptiness is not negligent.”⁶⁰

A respondent who opposes the Madhyamaka view uses the strategy of taking essencelessness to mean that essence is in the state of flux,⁶¹ in accordance with the more general Buddhist view of impermanence. The opponent reasons that if things have no essence, which means for him that they do not exist at all,⁶² how can they possess the property of alteration?⁶³ Another point this respondent makes is that things must possess

⁶⁰ PPMV 239.9-13: *yathoktam anavataptahradāpasamkramaṇasūtre/ yaḥ pratyayair jāyati sa hy ajāto / no tasya utpādu sabhāvato 'sti/ yaḥ pratyayādhiṇu sa śūnya ukto yaḥ śūnyatām jānati so 'pramattaḥ // iti //*. A variant reading of the stanza is given in de Jong, “Textcritical Notes,” 55. The Sanskrit title is given as *Āryānavataptanāgarājaparipṛcchā* in the Tibetan translation of the text, where the stanza is found in D (To. 156) Mdo sde, vol. *pha*, 230b2-3; the Chinese translation of this stanza is found at T. 635 XV 497b3-4.

⁶¹ PPMV 240.1-2: *niḥsvabhāvatvaṃ svabhāvasyānavasthāpitvaṃ vināśitvaṃ iti*. “Essencelessness is the essence's state of not remaining and perishing.”

⁶² PPMV 240.9: *yo hy asvabhāvo bhāvaḥ sa nāsti*. “For a thing which is without essence does not exist.”

⁶³ PPMV 240.4-5: *yadi bhāvānām svabhāvo na syāt tadānām naivaiśām anyathātvam upalabhyeta / upalabhyate ca vipariṇāmaḥ /*. See de Jong's emendation. “Textcritical Notes,” 55. “If things had no essence, then their alteration would not be observed at all. But transformation is observed.” PPMV 241.3: *yadi bhāvānām svabhāvo na syāt yo 'yam vipariṇāmalakṣaṇo 'nyathābhāvo sa kasya syāt iti //*. “Were

essence in order for them to possess property. Even if one asserts that emptiness is a property of things, they must have essence in the first place.⁶⁴

Here, the Madhyamaka response is to push the opponent's reasoning further to arrive at the position that the scriptural passage expresses. Essence, Candrakīrti explains, is the property of an object that it does not divert from. Therefore, as long as there is essence, change is inhibited. Since alteration is observed, essence does not exist.⁶⁵

While in the first example the interpretations of scripture involve the process of reasoning, when an opponent in the second example objects to the idea of emptiness and the nonexistence of a personal self,⁶⁶ he does so by citing scriptural sources that appear to support the existence of persons.

things to have no essence, whose [property] would be the characteristic of transformation and the nature of alteration?" The word *anyathātva*, translated here as the property of alteration, suggests a type of change that is turning into something which is other than itself, rather than vicissitude.

⁶⁴ PPMV 240.10: *bhāvānām ca śūnyatā nāma dharma iṣyate / na cāśati dharmāṇi tadāśrito dharma upapadyate*. "A property of things known as emptiness is asserted. When the substratum does not exist, [the existence of] the property that depends upon it is unreasonable."

⁶⁵ PPMV 241.7-12: *iha yo dharmo yaṃ padārthaṃ na vyabhicarati sa tasya svabhāva iti vyapadiśyate / aparapratibaddhatvāt / agner auṣṇyaṃ hi loka tadavyabhicāritvāt svabhāva ity ucyate / tad evauṣṇyam apsūpalabhyamānaṃ parapratyayasambhūtatvāt kṛtrimatvān na svabhāva iti / yadā caivam avyabhicāriṇā svabhāvena bhavitavyaṃ tadāśyavyabhicāritvād anyathābhāvaḥ syād abhāvaḥ / na hy agneḥ śaityaṃ pratipadyate / evaṃ bhāvānām sati svabhāvābhyupagame 'nyathātvam eva na sambhavet / upalabhyate caiśāṃ anyathātvam ato nāsti svabhāvaḥ //*. "Here, [when] a thing does not divert from an object, that [object] is called that [thing]'s essence, because of being bound by the other. For in the world the heat of fire is called [fire's] essence, because of [fire's] not diverting from it. For this very reason, the heat that is being observed in the water is not called essence, because of being produced from other conditions and being incidental. Thus, when there must be essence and no diversion, there would be no alteration on account of there being no diversion of it. For, fire does not have coldness. In this way, as long as essence is accepted, alteration would be impossible. However, the alteration of these [things] is observed. Hence, there is no essence." "Dharma" in this passage takes the first of the three senses of the word discussed in PPMV 304.3-8 (see section 2.1 above), and it is translated accordingly as "thing" here.

⁶⁶ PPMV 354.3-4, 355.3: *atrāha/ yady evaṃ ādhyātmikabāhyavastvanupalambhād adhyātmam bahiś cāhaṃ mameti kalpanājālānām anutpādas tat tattvam iti vyavasthāpitam / yat tarhy etad uktaṃ bhagavatā ... tat katham na virudhyata iti//*. See de Jong, "Textcritical Notes," 226. "Here [someone] says: 'If in this way through not observing internal and external things, the absence of the coming into being of the webs of conception of "I" and "mine" internally and externally is established as reality, how is that not contradicted by what has been spoken by the Blessed One?'"

The Blessed One spoke this: “The self is one’s own protector, what other protector is there? By a self who is well-tamed, the wise obtains heaven.”

“The self is one’s own protector, what other protector is there? The self is the witness of one’s own work and wrongdoing.”

Likewise, it is spoken in the *Āryasamādhirāja[sūtra]* extensively: “The dark or pure action does not perish, what is done by the self will be experienced. Nor is there the transference of the action and fruit, nor does one enjoy without a cause.”⁶⁷

Here Candrakīrti also responds with scriptural citations, which lend support to the contrary.

Did the Blessed One not also speak this: “There is no being or self here; but these things are possessed of causes.”

Likewise, “Form is not self; nor is self possessed of form; self is not in the form; form is not in the self ...” up to “... consciousness is not self; self is

⁶⁷ PPMV 354.5-8: *etad uktam bhagavatā/ ātmā hi ātmano nāthaḥ ko nu nāthaḥ paro bhavet / ātmanā hi sudāntena svargaṃ prāpnoti paṇḍitaḥ // ātmā hi ātmano nāthaḥ ko nu nāthaḥ paro bhavet / ātmā hi ātmanaḥ sākṣī kṛtasyāpākṛtasya ca //* PPMV 354.9-355.2: *tathāryasamādhirāje / kṛṣṇa śubhaṃ ca na naśyati karma ātmana kṛtvā ca vedayitavyam / no ca pi saṃkrama karmaphalasya no ca ahetuka pratyanubhotī // iti vistaraḥ /*. See de Jong, “Textcritical Notes,” 226 for confirmation of LVP’s conjecture of the lacunae in the first two stanzas and the reading of an additional manuscript for the last stanza. On the sources of these stanzas, see Chapter Three, Table Two, nos. 21 and 22.

not possessed of consciousness; self is not in the consciousness;
consciousness is not in the self.”

Likewise, “All dharmas are without the self.”⁶⁸

Nevertheless, Candrakīrti does not mean that some scriptural passages are nullified simply because there are others that express different views.⁶⁹ Instead, he lays out a hierarchical structure of the Buddhist teachings that are arranged according to the three different levels of disciples.⁷⁰ According this scheme, the idea of self is taught in order to prevent those who deny future lives and the fruits of the actions from performing non-virtuous actions.⁷¹ To those who have already turned away from non-virtue, the absence of self is taught to loosen their habit of adhering to the idea of a self and to bring them closer to *nirvāṇa*.⁷² To the disciples who are close to *nirvāṇa* and ready for the most

⁶⁸ PPMV 355.3-4: *idam api kiṃ noktaṃ bhagavatā / nāstīha sattva ātmā vā dharmās tv ete sahetukāḥ / iti //*. PPMV 355.5-6: *tathā hi / rūpaṃ nātmā rūpavān nāpi cātmā rūpe nātmā nātmani rūpaṃ / evaṃ yāvat vijñānaṃ nātmā vijñānavān nātmā vijñāne nātmā nātmani vijñānam iti //*. PPMV 355.7: *tathā / anātmānaḥ sarvadharmā iti //*. On the sources of these passages, see Chapter Three, Table Two, nos. 23, 24, and 25.

⁶⁹ For the question of abrogation of certain Qur’anic verses by others or by the prophetic tradition, the rationale behind it, and the views of some notable Islamic authorities on this issue, see F. E. Peters, *A Reader on Classical Islam* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994), 243-6.

⁷⁰ Here, the Buddhas are said to be teaching “out of a desire to show kindness to the inferior, intermediate, and superior disciples.” PPMV 357.2-3: *hīnamadhyotkrṣṭavineyajanānujighrṣayā*.

⁷¹ PPMV 356.5-7: *pūrvāntāparāntāpavādapravṛttāḥ santaḥ paralokam ātmānaṃ cāpavadante / nāsty ayaṃ loko nāsti paraloko nāsti sukṛtaduṣkṛtānāṃ karmaṇāṃ phalavipāko ...* “Being involved with the denial of the previous and future existence, [they] deny the future life and self: ‘There is no this life, there is no future life, there is no effectuation of the fruits of the actions that are well performed and wickedly performed ...’” PPMV 357.3-4: *hīnānāṃ vineyānām akuśalakarmakāriṇāṃ akuśalād vinivartayitūṃ buddhair bhagavadbhiḥ kvacid ātmety api prajñāpitam / loke vyavasthāpitam*/. See de Jong’s emendation, in “Textcritical Notes,” 227. “To turn away the inferior disciples who perform non-virtuous actions from non-virtue, the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, in some places also designated—presented in the world—the ‘self.’”

⁷² PPMV 357.7-358.3: *ye tu ... kuśalakarmakāriṇo ‘kuśalakarmapathavyāvṛtyā api na śaknuvanti ... śivam ajaram amaraṇam nirvāṇapuram abhigantum / teṣāṃ madhyānām vineyānām satkāyadarśanābhīniveśasīthilīkaraṇāya nirvāṇābhilāṣasaṃjānanārtham buddhair bhagavadbhir vineyajanānugrahacikīrṣubhir anātmety api deśitam //*. “Those who ... perform virtuous actions, even by turning away from the non-virtuous course of action, are not able to approach ... the city of *nirvāṇa*, the peace which is without birth and death. In order to loosen the adherence to the view of real personality of

profound truth of the meaning of Buddhist scriptures, it is also taught that “there is neither any self nor any no self.”⁷³ Within this topical structure of Buddhist scriptures, the teachings of the self are superceded by those of the absence of the self. The unification of apparently conflicting ideas in the scriptures under one overarching structure perhaps provides the conceptual framework in which *āgama* is comprehended in its singularity linguistically.

Indeed, the explanation that Candrakīrti gives here fleshes out Nāgārjuna’s basic argument found in the tersely worded stanzas of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. The citations that he has supplied in part fulfill his duty as a commentator to provide the possible scriptural sources that Nāgārjuna merely alludes to.⁷⁴ Moreover, the conversations between a Mādhyamika and an interlocutor that we see here also represent the dialogs between the Buddhist authors and scripture.⁷⁵ The speakers represented in these two examples extrapolate ideas from scriptural passages, question the mutual

those intermediate disciples, and to engender the desire for *nirvāṇa*, the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, who are desirous of showing kindness to the disciples, also taught ‘the absence of the self.’”

⁷³ PPMV 358.4-6: *ye tu ... pratyāsannavartino nirvāṇe teṣāṃ utkr̥ṣṭānāṃ vineyānāṃ vīgatātmasnehānāṃ paramagambhīramauṇīndrapravacanārthatattvāvagāhanasamarthānāṃ adhimuktiviśeṣaṃ avadhārya / buddhair ātmā na cānātmā kaścīd ity api deśitam //*. See de Jong’s emendation in “Textcritical Notes,” 227. “To those superior disciples, being close to *nirvāṇa* and whose attachment to the [idea of] the self has disappeared, who are capable of immersing in the most profound truth of the meaning of the Lord of Sages’ scripture, the Buddhas, having determined the specificities of [their] inclination, also taught, ‘there is neither any self nor any no self.’” Within the structure of Buddhist soteriology, the processes of moving away from non-virtue toward virtue and gradually going toward *nirvāṇa* explained here within the context of the three levels of disciples can be correlated with virtue and *nirvāṇa* as two of three aspects of *dharma*, as Candrakīrti has observed (see the discussion in section 2.1).

⁷⁴ The first of the two examples from the *Prasannapadā* presented above explains Nāgārjuna’s MMK XIII 2cd-4. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 210, 212: *etat tūktaṃ bhagavatā śūnyatāparidīpakam // bhāvānāṃ niḥsvabhāvatvam anyathābhāvadārśanāt / nāsvabhāvaś ca bhāvo ‘sti bhāvānāṃ śūnyatā yataḥ // kasya syād anyathābhāvaḥ svabhāvaś cen na vidyate / kasya syād anyathābhāvaḥ svabhāvo yadi vidyate //*. “The Blessed One has spoken about that which elucidates emptiness. [Opponent:] Things have essencelessness because alteration is seen. There is nothing which is without essence, wherefore things have emptiness. If essence does not exist, whose alteration would it be? [Mādhyamika:] If essence does exist, whose alteration would it be?” The second example from the *Prasannapadā* comments on MMK XVIII 6. Ibid., 302: *ātmety api prajñāpitam anātmety api deśitam / buddhair nātmā na cānātmā kaścīd ity api deśitam //*. “Buddhas designated ‘self,’ [they] also taught ‘the absence of the self,’ [and they] have demonstrated that ‘there is neither any self nor any absence of self.’”

contradictions among them, and sometimes come to the conclusions that are distinct from what the source texts literally say. The authority of scripture may be invoked, but the assumption of its rationality is never given up. These interpretive acts often involve specific passages, but they sometimes also concern the scriptural corpus globally.

These two instances of engagement with scripture already offer a glimpse into “the rule-governed exegetical enterprise,” which constitutes for Jonathan Z. Smith the “most characteristic, persistent, and obsessive religious activity.”⁷⁶ When Jonathan Z. Smith speaks of the importance of exegesis for a historian of religion, it stands in relation to a closed canon, whose formation is a “process of arbitrary limitation” that is left to the hermeneute to overcome through exegetical novelty.⁷⁷ Smith himself later became cognizant of the possibility that the sheer volume of Buddhist scriptures could have very different implications for the work of the Buddhist hermeneute.⁷⁸ The Buddhist corpus indeed presents an outstanding example where scripture does not remain as a stable and closed canon. What also complicates the matter is the fact—indeed something that is common to many religious traditions—that the interpretation of scripture is often mediated through the exegetical models of earlier commentarial authorities, as we have already observed in the case of Candrakīrti’s citing of scriptural passages within Nāgārjuna’s interpretive framework.

What Candrakīrti sees as a body of scriptures with a hierarchical structure is for modern scholars a constantly evolving corpus of Buddhist texts. Among the texts that

⁷⁵ A Mādhyamika is a follower or someone versed in the Madhyamaka School of Buddhist thought. It is also the adjectival form designating something that pertains to the Madhyamaka.

⁷⁶ Smith, “Sacred Persistence,” 43.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 52.

⁷⁸ Having referred to the fact that some Asian Buddhist scriptural collections contain thousands of texts, Smith asks, “In ritual contexts, is there a ‘canon within the canon’? What are the implications of a canon so large that it may not be readily possessed, in its entirety?” “Religion and Bible,” 18.

Candrakīrti cites and speaks of as *āgama*, the most enduring are those found in the Sūtrapīṭaka of Nikāya Buddhism. Candrakīrti often refers to the passages that he extracts from these texts as what “has been spoken by the Blessed One.”⁷⁹ Sometimes, he also describes passages from these texts as what is found “in the *āgama*” or “from the *āgama*.”⁸⁰ These texts are arranged in the four or five collections that are generally called Nikāyas in Pāli and Āgamas in Sanskrit Buddhism, although the reverse is also used in these two languages as well.⁸¹ These collections indeed constitute another referent of the term *āgama*,⁸² in addition to “scripture(s)” and “scriptural passage.” As said earlier, the term *āgama* is also used by the Jains and various Hindu groups to designate their scriptures. In Buddhism, since the Āgamas served as the main source of doctrinal and scriptural authority in the early history, it is not unlikely that the adoption of the word

⁷⁹ See, for instance, the use of the phrase *bhagavatoktaṃ* at PPMV 370.6 in reference to a passage that is now found in SN and SĀ. See the next note. At PPMV 306.2-3, Candrakīrti also refer to the two terms cited there as having been spoken by the *paramarṣi*, “the highest seer,” in a *sūtra*: *tena paramarṣiṇā cetanā karma cetaiyivā ca karmety uktaṃ sūtre* // “Therefore, the highest seer has spoken in a *sūtra* of action of intention and action following intention.” Cf. Kragh, *Early Buddhist Theories*, 94, 218-224. The sources of the citation are identified as *Madhyamāgama* 中阿含經 at T. 26 I 600a24, *Itivṛttakasūtra* 本事經 at T. 765 XVII 663b6, and AN 3.415.

⁸⁰ PPMV 331.5-6: *yathoktaṃ āgame // ekasya bhāṣamāṇasya sarve bhāṣanti nirmatāḥ / ekasya tūṣṇīmbhūtasya sarve tūṣṇīmbhavanti hi* // “As it is spoken in the *āgama*, ‘When one is speaking, all emanations speak; when one remains silent, all remain silent.’” The Pāli version is found in DN 2.212; the Chinese version in *Dīrghāgama* 長阿含經 is found at T. 1 I 36a22-3. Here the story of Brahmā’s emanations is told to echo Nāgārjuna’s theme that even unreal beings or entities can perform functions in the world. A reference that uses the term *āgama* in the ablative appears at PPMV 370.6-8: *tathā ca bhagavatoktaṃ / loka mayā sārddhaṃ vivadati nāhaṃ lokena sārddhaṃ vivadāmi // yal loka ‘sti saṃmatam tan mamāpy asti saṃmatam / yal loka nāsti saṃmatam mamāpi tan nāsti saṃmatam ity āgamāc ca* // “Likewise, the Blessed One has said in the *āgama* ...” For the source of this citation, see Chapter Three, Table Two, no. 41.

⁸¹ Buddhaghosa, for instance, refers to the Dīgha-, Majjhima-, Saṃyutta-, and Aṅguttara-Nikāyas as Āgamas in his Pāli commentaries on these texts: *Majjhe Visuddhimaggo esa catunnam pi āgamānaṃ hi*. “For this [text of] *Visuddhimagga* is in the middle of the four Āgamas.” See K. R. Norman, *Pāli Literature: Including the Canonical Literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit of All the Hīnayāna Schools of Buddhism* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1983), 31. Note that the term *āgama* can take the plural form when it is used to refer to the Āgama collections. See also Oskar von Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 24. Candrakīrti does not refer to the four or five Āgama collections by their individual titles.

⁸² Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, 2, s.v. *āgama*. When

āgama as a general term for scripture derived from its use as the primary instance of scripture for the early Buddhist communities.

Candrakīrti's citations from the Āgama literature follows a long tradition of the uses of these texts. We learn from the early Buddhist literature and inscriptions about those who specialize in these texts, known as the *sūtradhāras* or *suttantikas*, and the reciters of one or more of these collections or portions thereof, known as the *bhāṇakas*.⁸³ The scholastic literature also cites passages from the Āgamas as a part of its routine procedure of exposition. We find extensive Āgama quotations in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*⁸⁴ and other Abhidharma texts; the Mahāyāna Buddhists are no exception in this regard. Chapters Four and Five will discuss the uses of the Āgama/Nikāya literature in the Madhyamaka School of Buddhist thought.

Besides the Āgama/Nikāya literature, the term *āgama* in Candrakīrti's writings also designates other groups of authoritative texts. As a Mahāyāna Buddhist, for him *āgama* is naturally also applied to the Mahāyāna *sūtras*. In the *Prasannapadā*, the Mahāyāna *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, for instance, is referred to as an *āgama*.⁸⁵ In an essay on the interpretation of the Mahāyāna *sūtras* with some emphasis on Candrakīrti's case, Donald Lopez, referring to the historical question of the rise of the Mahāyāna, says that Mahāyāna Buddhists were apparently sincere about their belief in the status of Mahāyāna

⁸³ Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origin to the Śaka Era*, Translated from French by Sara Webb-Boin (Louvain: Peeters Press, 1988), 149-50. E. W. Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon: Or, State of Buddhism in Ceylon As Revealed by the Pāli Commentaries of the 5th Century A.D.* (Migoda: D. S. Puswella, 1946), 24-32.

⁸⁴ See Bhikkhu Pāsādika, *Kanonische Zitate im Abhidharmakośabhāṣya des Vasubandhu* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), where 9 citations from *Dīrghāgama*, 79 from *Madhyamāgama*, 162 from *Samyuktāgama*, and 19 from *Ekottarāgama*, in addition to those from the individual *sūtras* that also belong to the Āgamas, have been identified.

⁸⁵ PPMV 174.10-12: *api ca maraṇam api dvividhakāryapratyupasthānam saṃskāravidhvamsanam ca karoti / aparijñānānupacchedaṃ ... cety āgamāt* /. The Sanskrit is found in P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Daśabhūmikasūtram* (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1967) 32.31-2. Tibetan translation is in D (To. 44) Phal

sūtras as the word of the Buddha, although authors like Candrakīrti would likely to have been aware of the composition of the texts in their lifetimes. Lopez also speaks about the difficulty of completely bracketing the question of the authorship of the Mahāyāna *sūtra* in part due to the historical problem of the influence of the schools of interpretation on the composition of the *sūtras* themselves.⁸⁶ The problem that he mentions is another issue that complicates the scripture-commentary distinction. However, in view of the fact that no Indian Mahāyāna Buddhists themselves are known to have questioned the status of the Mahāyāna *sūtras* as the word of the Buddha(s), the bracketing of the issue of authorship needs to be in place when the exegetical enterprise and the productiveness of the notion of scripture, rather than text production, are our main concern.⁸⁷

Within the Nikāya Buddhist corpus, the scope of *āgama* is also extended to the divisions of scripture outside the Sūtrapīṭaka that contains the Āgamas/Nikāyas. In the context of his critique of Dignāga's work on Buddhist epistemology, Candrakīrti disputes Dignāga's interpretation of a passage from an Abhidharma text, which he refers to as an *āgama*.

The *āgama*, stating that “one that is equipped with visual consciousness recognizes dark blue [color], but not [the linguistic content that] ‘this is blue,’” is

chen, vol. *kha*, 221b1-2. A longer passage from this *sūtra* is cited at MABh 186-7 ad MA VI 88, within which the lines cited in PPMV appear at 189.3-5.

⁸⁶ See Donald S. Lopez, Jr., “On the Interpretation of the Mahāyāna Sūtras,” in *Buddhist Hermeneutics*, ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 51-2.

⁸⁷ In the context of speaking of the centrality of the “elements of theological endeavor that are concerned with canon and its exegesis” for a historian of religion, Jonathan Z. Smith also recommends “bracketing any presuppositions” as to the canon’s “character as revelation.” “Sacred Persistence,” 43.

not [spoken] in the context where [its] meaning is the description of the characteristics of perception.⁸⁸

As it will be noted in the next section, the earliest instance of this statement can be traced to the Abhidharma text *Vijñānakāya*. On another occasion, an opponent in the *Prasannapadā* refers to Abhidharma as *pravacana*,⁸⁹ another term for scripture. Evidence from Yaśomitra's commentary on *Abhidharmakośa* also confirms the convention of calling Abhidharma texts *pravacana*.⁹⁰

Although Candrakīrti's explicit citations of the Vinaya materials in the *Prasannapadā* name the source simply as Vinaya,⁹¹ it is clear they are invoked as a scriptural authority. These specific instances of intertextual reference therefore confirm that all three divisions of Nikāya Buddhist texts have been accorded the status of *āgama*. The same is attested in Vasubandhu's explicit statement in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*:

The *āgama* is Sūtra, Vinaya, and Abhidharma.⁹²

In short, the various types of Buddhist texts that the term *āgama* comes to encompass demonstrate the growing numbers and categories of texts that have acquired the status of scripture. While its scope is expanding, *āgama* in the sense of scriptural citation highlights, on the other hand, the selective use of scripture. Particularly notable

⁸⁸ PPMV 74.8-9: *cakṣurvijñānasa[ma]ṅgī nīlaṃ jānāti no tu nīlaṃ iti cāgamasya pratyakṣalakṣaṇābhidhānārthasyāprastutatvāt.*

⁸⁹ PPMV 113.3-4.

⁹⁰ Yaśomitra's reference to Abhidharma works as *pravacana* is found in Śāstrī, *Abhidharmakośam*, 1:30. We will come back to this passage in the following section (2.4).

⁹¹ PPMV 46.5-6 and 334.1-2. The Vinaya story mentioned in the first passage is again alluded to at PPMV 238.3.

among the groups of texts surveyed here that possess the status of *āgama* is Abhidharma. Abhidharma has been shown to be the latest member in the tripartite structure of Tripiṭaka, and the materials included in this group are commentarial and scholastic in character. That Abhidharma is regarded as *āgama* and has occupied special attention of the Buddhist authors indicates the growing involvement with and intensification of Buddhist scholasticism. Dignāga's use of Abhidharma in his novel work on Buddhist epistemology, as revealed from the perspective of Candrakīrti's critique, is a case that illustrates how Abhidharma serves as a foundation for the Buddhist schools of thought that emerged in the middle of the first millennium.

2.4 Conceiving a Concept of the Conceptual and Constructing a Buddhist

Epistemology: On the Uses of Abhidharma

As said earlier, the concept of *āgama* accommodates the growth of the scope of scripture, and for our purpose the acquisition of the status of scripture by Abhidharma texts from the evidence that comes from the middle of the first millennium is noteworthy. The Abhidharma texts invoke earlier scriptures extensively, while at the same times they rely on distinctively scholastic methods in the manners of their exposition.⁹² The acknowledgement of Abhidharma as *āgama*, therefore, is simply the acceptance of exegesis as scripture. The process is an illustration of the expansion of scripture's scope, one that we are particularly concerned with in this study, as it shows that the relationship

⁹² AKBh 2:920, ad VIII 39ab: [ā]gamāḥ sūtravīṇayābhidharmāḥ.

⁹³ For a brief summary of Abhidharma texts' methods of exposition, see Collett Cox, *Disputed Dharma: Early Buddhist Theories on Existence: An Annotated Translation of the Section on Factors Dissociated*

between scripture and commentary is more complex than we might presume. In the present section, we will focus on the use of Abhidharma as a scriptural authority.

The example that we have chosen here is Dignāga's use of Abhidharma in the creation of a Buddhist epistemology and Candrakīrti's critique of the ways in which Dignāga uses Abhidharma. Dignāga has hardly left any explicit trace of his indebtedness to Abhidharma in his work on epistemology, only directly citing one Abhidharma passage in the discussion of the general structure of his epistemological system.⁹⁴ His use of the Abhidharma sources, therefore, does not take the form of scriptural citation. The following pages of this section will be devoted to the establishment of a consistent textual link between the Abhidharma texts and Dignāga's work, thereby showing that Dignāga was working with the distinctions and conceptual frameworks found in the Abhidharma sources. To be more specific, Dignāga has transformed types of consciousness that are described in the Abhidharma texts into epistemological categories that are generally used by various schools of Indian thought. Dignāga epistemology has rightly been considered as one of the greatest monuments in the intellectual history of India. His use of Abhidharma, therefore, serves as an illustration of exegetical ingenuity and the application of scripture to a new domain of human activity in the way that Jonathan Z. Smith has described them.

Candrakīrti's sustained critique in the *Prasannapadā* (55.11-75.13) of Dignāga's view on perception preserves for us an early and indeed rare critical Buddhist voice against Dignāga's epistemology, which eventually transformed the trajectory of Buddhist

from *Thought from Saṅghabhadra's Nyāyānusāra* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1995), 10-6.

⁹⁴ PSV ad I 4ab: *caḥsurvijñānasamaṅgī nīlaṃ vijānāti no tu nīlaṃ iti*. Hattori, *Dignāga on Perception*, 241. In PPMV 74.8-9, Candrakīrti has criticized the way in which the passage is used. See the discussion below.

philosophy. Some recent scholarly work have contributed to our understanding of this significant episode in the history of Buddhist thought,⁹⁵ which offers a response to Dignāga from a more conservative Madhyamaka perspective that sees him as proposing a competing view on logic and perception. However, what remains largely unexplored is the curious fact of Candrakīrti's repeated invocation of the Abhidharma sources in his critique of Dignāga.

Candrakīrti's Abhidharma references, which follow the same pattern of approving Abhidharma interpretations and using them to contrast with Dignāga's, may simply be taken as a sign of Candrakīrti's preference for Abhidharma over Dignāga's epistemology. Alternatively, they may be interpreted as an indication that Candrakīrti has detected a link between Dignāga's work and the Abhidharma texts and that he has formed a judgment that Dignāga misused the Abhidharma sources. Pursuing the suggestion of this second reading, we will take a slight detour in this section to examine the specific textual evidence that reveals Dignāga's indebtedness to the Abhidharma texts in his groundbreaking work on epistemology and the nature of perception. While Candrakīrti's critical assessment ostensibly concerns the philosophical disagreement between Dignāga's epistemology and Madhyamaka thought, the subtext of the debate has much to do with the readings and uses of Abhidharma texts. For our present purpose, the debate also provides an illuminating example of how Buddhist writers find scripture relevant to a subject that is at once empirical and philosophical.

⁹⁵ Part III in Dan Arnold, *Buddhists, Brahmins, and Belief: Epistemology in South Asian Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 117-204. Mark Siderits, "The Madhyamaka Critique of Epistemology II," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 9 (1981): 121-60. Ruegg, *Two Prolegomena*, 95-135.

The link between Dignāga's epistemology and Abhidharma is not a new subject,⁹⁶ but scholars of Buddhism who worked on this issue usually confine their effort to the evidence that is found in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* and his *bhāṣya*. The decision is understandable, given that the two works of Vasubandhu are already so vast and complex. However, even when *Abhidharmakośa* and its *bhāṣya* are helpful, the reading of these two texts by themselves does not give a sense of a long Abhidharma tradition that stands behind the interpretive choices that Dignāga has made. At other times, both *Abhidharmakośa* and its *bhāṣya* are obscure or even silent on certain issues, and it is not until we turn to the other texts—mostly the older Abhidharma texts of the Sarvāstivāda School—that Dignāga's Abhidharma connections become visible. It is when we take the larger Abhidharma literature into account that we begin to gain a glimpse into the process of Dignāga's creative mind at work.

Dignāga participates in a pan-Indian epistemological discourse, which operates with a shared vocabulary and assumption and recognizes source, or means, of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) as a central term in its discussion of nature of knowledge.⁹⁷ The angles from which Candrakīrti takes Dignāga to task for deviating from Abhidharma are specific. Nevertheless, he touches on some aspects of the general structure of Dignāga's

⁹⁶ See Katsura Shoryu, "Dignāga and Dharmakīrti on *apoha*," in *Studies in the Buddhist Epistemological Tradition: Proceedings of the Second International Dharmakīrti Conference, Vienna, June 11-16, 1989*, ed. Ernst Steinkellner, (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1991), 129-146; *Buddhists, Brahmins, and Belief*, 13-56; Katsura Shoryu, "From Abhidharma to Dharmakīrti – With a Special Reference to the Concept of *Svabhāva*," in *Religion and Logic in Buddhist Philosophical Analysis: Proceedings of the Fourth International Dharmakīrti Conference, Vienna, August 23-27, 2005*, ed. Helmut Krasser (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2011), 271-80.

⁹⁷ For a brief discussion of the cultural context and the shared vocabulary and assumptions of the Indian theories of knowledge, see John D. Dunne, *Foundations of Dharmakīrti's Philosophy* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004), 15 ff. As Dunne has clarified (17-22), Indian epistemologists express themselves in the "kāraṇa system" of Sanskrit grammar when they describe various elements in an act of knowing that includes the agent (*pramātṛ*), object (*prameya*), the means (*pramāṇa*), and the act of knowing (*pramā* or *pramiti*) itself. Among these elements, instrument or means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is the central focus of

epistemology, the centerpiece of which is the admission that there are two means of knowledge, namely perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*).⁹⁸ Candrakīrti's critique focuses on (1) the use of the terms *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* and (2) Dignāga's idea that perception is free from conceptual construction.⁹⁹ I take Candrakīrti's questioning of Dignāga as my point of departure and will therefore focus on these specific areas of Dignāga's thought.

In the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, Dignāga maintains a twofold classification of means of knowledge based on his view that there are only two types of objects: *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*. The two objects are commonly translated as “particular” and “universal” in the context of Buddhist epistemology, although we will shortly deal with the multiple meanings of these terms. Between these two types of object, *svalakṣaṇa* is known without mediation by perception alone, while *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, which is mentally constructed and has no reality, is known by inference exclusively.¹⁰⁰ In accordance with this sharp distinction between the twofold means of knowledge and the respective objects, Dignāga makes perception distinct from cognitions other than it by characterizing it as

the Indian epistemological discourse. On the choice of the English word “knowledge” as an equivalent of *pramā* in Sanskrit, see *ibid.*, 16, n. 2.

⁹⁸ PS I 2ab: *pratyakṣam anumānam ca pramāṇe*. “Perception and inference are means of knowledge.” See Masaaki Hattori, *Dignāga, On Perception, Being the Pratyakṣapariccheda of Dignāga's Pramāṇasamuccaya from Sanskrit Fragments and the Tibetan Versions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 24, 76, 239. For the Sanskrit of Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* I and its *Vṛtti*, see also Ernst Steinkellner, “Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, Chapter 1: A Hypothetical Reconstruction of the Sanskrit Text with the Help of the Two Tibetan Translations on the Basis of the Hitherto Known Sanskrit Fragments and the Linguistic Materials Gained from Jinendrabuddhi's *Ṭīkā*,” last modified April, 2005, accessed June 8, 2012, www.oeaw.ac.at/ias/Mat/dignaga_PS_1.pdf.

⁹⁹ See Part III of Arnold, *Buddhists, Brahmins, and Belief*. Candrakīrti's direct reference to Dignāga view that perception is free from conceptual construction is in PPMV 73.4. For Candrakīrti, perception is always mixed with conceptuality. See, for instance, his Mahāyāna *sūtra* citations in PPMV 120.4-122.7 that support his view.

¹⁰⁰ PS I 2bc: *lakṣaṇadvayam / prameyam*. “[because] the knowable object consists of two characteristics.” Dignāga's own *vṛtti* explains: *na hi svasāmānyalakṣaṇābhyām anyat prameyam asti / svalakṣaṇaviṣayam hi pratyakṣam sāmānyalakṣaṇaviṣayam anumānam iti pratipādayiṣyāmaḥ*. “For there is no knowable object other than particular and universal, as we will prove that that which has particular as the object is

what is “devoid of conceptual construction.”¹⁰¹ In the tradition of Buddhist epistemology, conceptual construction, which perception is devoid of, is identified with the mental process of associating objects with names and words.¹⁰²

These notions are among some of the most fundamental premises on which the Buddhist epistemologist tradition founded by Dignāga rests. It will be argued below that the prototype of these ideas already existed in a range of Abhidharma texts that include [Abhidharma]vijñānakāya[śāstra] (T. 1539), [Abhidharma]mahāvibhāṣā[śāstra] (T. 1545), *Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītīśāstra (T. 1549), *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdaya-śāstra (T. 1552), Pañcavastukavibhāṣāśāstra (T. 1555), Vasubandhu’s Abhidharmakośa the author own commentary, *[Abhidharma]nyāyānusāra[śāstra] (T. 1562), *Abhidharmasamayapradīpikā (1563).¹⁰³ Most of these Abhidharma texts represent the influential Sarvāstivāda school of Nikāya Buddhism, although Vasubandhu often adopts the viewpoints of the Sautrāntika School in his own commentary on the Abhidharmakośa. That these Abhidharma texts had an impact on Dignāga is suggested by a Tibetan tradition that identifies Vasubandhu as a teacher of Dignāga,¹⁰⁴ who in any case

perception, and that which has universal as the object is inference.” Hattori, *Dignāga On Perception*, 24, 79, 239. See *ibid.*, 79-80, n. 14 for a discussion of particular and universal.

¹⁰¹ PS I 3c: *pratyakṣaṃ kalpāpodhaṃ*. Hattori, *Dignāga On Perception*, 25, 82, 240.

¹⁰² Dignāga characterizes conceptual construction as association with names and so on in PS I 3d: *nāmajātyādiyojanā*. “Association with name, genus, etc.” See his *vr̥tti* on this in Hattori, *Dignāga on Perception*, 25, 240. Dignāga’s successor Dharmakīrti also describes conceptual construction in the similar way. *Pramāṇavārttika* III 123d: *vikalpo nāmasaṃśrayaḥ*. “Conceptual Construction is the association with name.” Manorathanandin’s *vr̥tti* adds *śabdasaṃsargavān* “something that has [the process of] commingling with words.” Ram Chandra Pandeya, *The Pramāṇavārttika of Ācārya Dharmakīrti with Commentaries: The Svopajñāvṛtti of the Author and Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti of Manorathanandin* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989), 90.

¹⁰³ For a history of the Abhidharma texts in the Sarvāstivāda School and a review of the texts mentioned here, see Charles Willeman, Bart Dessein, and Collett Cox, *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 138-254.

¹⁰⁴ The sources are Bu ston’s and Tāranātha’s histories of Buddhism. See Hattori, *Dignāga on Perception*, 1; Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, 31-4.

is credited with *Abhidharmakośamarmadīpa* (To. 4095), which is a summary of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*.

The idea that perception is free from conceptual construction¹⁰⁵ is fundamental to the edifice of Dignāga's epistemological project. Since Dignāga and his *pramāṇavādin* followers describe conceptual construction as the association of objects of cognitive activities with names or words, in this school of Buddhist thought perception is generally characterized as a category of mind that is incapable of processing objects of linguistic nature. As far as the justification of this idea is concerned, Dharmakīrti refers to a person's internal experience as a piece of empirical evidence.¹⁰⁶ However, Dignāga himself gives no justification for the idea other than citing the following Abhidharma passage:

One that is equipped with visual consciousness recognizes the dark blue
[color], but not [the linguistic content] that “this is dark blue.”¹⁰⁷

As we have seen earlier, this is one of Dignāga's uses of Abhidharma sources that Candrakīrti has contested. Statements of this kind are found in a cluster of texts that are associated with *Abhidharmakośa*, including Vasubandhu's own *bhāṣya*,¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Various Sanskrit words, such as *kalpanā*, *vikalpa*, and *vikalpaka*, are used for this concept.

¹⁰⁶ Dharmakīrti says that we can prove that perception is devoid of such conceptual construction because when we turn inward and withdraw from our conceptual thoughts, a perceptual awareness that only depends on a sense organ—one that is now free from conceptual construction—can still perceive visible objects. *Pramāṇavārttika* III 124: *saṃhṛtya sarvataś cintāṃ stīmitenāntarātmanā / sthito 'pi cakṣuṣā rūpam iṅkṣyate sākṣajā matiḥ* //. See F. Th. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic* (Dover: New York, 1962), 1:150-2.

¹⁰⁷ PSV ad I 4ab: *cakṣurvijñānasamaṅgī nīlaṃ vijānāti no tu nīlaṃ iti*. Hattori, *Dignāga on Perception*, 241.

¹⁰⁸ AKBh ad III 30cd, 1:372: *cakṣurvijñānena nīlaṃ vijānāti no tu nīlaṃ manovijñānena nīlaṃ vijānāti nīlaṃ iti ca vijānāti*.

Saṅghabhadra's *Nyāyānusāra* and *Abhidharmasamayapradīpikā*,¹⁰⁹ and Yaśomitra's *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*.¹¹⁰ Moreover, earlier versions of this view also appear in the *Vijñānakāya*, which is one of the seven Abhidharmas of Sarvāstivāda School, and in the *Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītiśāstra*.¹¹¹

The basic distinction that these Abhidharma passages make between the two classes of mind agrees with Dignāga's; it essentially distinguishes those that can process linguistic objects from those that cannot. However, in the Abhidharma texts the two groups of consciousnesses so distinguished are respectively the five sense consciousnesses (*indriyavijñāna* or *indriyavijñapti*) and mental consciousness (*manovijñāna*). In *Vijñānakāya*, visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile consciousnesses are formulaically contrasted with the mental consciousness. Thus, the five sense consciousnesses is said to only recognize physical objects, whereas the mental consciousness recognizes not only physical objects but linguistic entities as well, knowing, for instance, that "this is dark blue."¹¹² As it will become clear later, the distinctions that Abhidharma texts make between the sense and mental consciousnesses often align with the distinctions that Dignāga makes between perception and inference.

¹⁰⁹ T. 1562 XXXIX 506c8-9 and T. 1563 XXXIX 845a20-21.

¹¹⁰ See Śāstrī, *Abhidharmakośam*, 1:372 and 1:72.

¹¹¹ T. 1549 XXVIII 745a24-25.

¹¹² T. 1539 XXVI 559b27-c2: 眼識唯能了別青色。不能了別此是青色。意識亦能了別青色。乃至未能了別其名。不能了別此是青色。若能了別其名。爾時亦能了別青色。亦能了別此是青色。 "A visual consciousness can only recognize blue color, but cannot recognize that 'this is blue color.' A mental consciousness can also recognize color. As long as the name of [blue] is not recognized, it cannot recognize that 'this is blue color.' If it is able to recognize its name, it can both recognize blue color and that 'this is blue color.'" The distinction that *Vijñānakāya* makes here in regard to mental consciousness anticipates, if not serving as a source of, Dharmakīrti's refinement of Dignāga's notion of conceptual construction. Rather than the process of associating with language, for Dharmakīrti conceptual construction is something that has the potential to do so. Thus, in *Nyāyabindu* of Ācārya Dharmakīrti the term *abhilāpasamsargayogya* is used (1.4). See Swāmī Dwārikādās Śāstrī, ed., *Nyāyabindu of Ācārya Dharmakīrti with the Commentaries by Ārya Vinītadeva & Dharmottara & Dharmottaraṭīkāṭippaṇī* (Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati, 1994), 23. *Vijñānakāya* also repeats the same distinction between the sense and mental consciousnesses with regard to the visual

Indeed, evidence suggests that the five sense consciousnesses in the Abhidharma texts taken as a group constitute the prototype of Dignāga's perception.

In classifying minds into the conceptual and non-conceptual varieties, Dignāga preserves a distinction found in the Abhidharma texts, which distinguishes the minds that are capable of handling linguistic data from those that are incapable of doing so. However, Abhidharma texts and Dignāga differ on what it means to be conceptual. In *Abhidharmakośa* and its *bhāṣya*, Vasubandhu explains that there are three kinds of conceptualization. The first is rough inquiry (*vitarka*), which is described as a gross state of the mind. The second type of conceptual mind is examination (*abhinirūpaṇa*), described as a form of discerning awareness not remaining in meditative absorption that is associated with a mental consciousness. The third is remembrance, which is also mental (*mānasa*).¹¹³ The description of the threefold conceptualization also appears in the *Mahāvibhāṣā*¹¹⁴ and in Saṅghabhadra's *Nyāyānusāra*.¹¹⁵ In the Abhidharma texts the five sense consciousnesses are said to be non-conceptual, but only in the sense that they are free from the last two of the three forms of conceptualization, although they still possess

consciousnesses that recognize other colors as well as other sense consciousnesses. T. 1539 XXVI 559c2-3: 如青色黃赤白等色亦爾。耳識唯能了別聲 ...

¹¹³ AKBh ad I 33 1:72: *trividhaḥ kila vikalpaḥ svabhāvābhinirūpaṇānusmaraṇavikalpaḥ / ... tatra svabhāvavikalpo vitarkaḥ / ... manovijñānasamprayuktā prajñā mānasīty uccyate / asamāhitā vyagrety uccyate / sā hy abhinirūpaṇāvikalpaḥ / mānasy eva sarvā smṛtiḥ samāhitā cāsamāhitā ca anusmaraṇavikalpaḥ* /. "It is said that conceptual construction is of three kinds: conceptual construction by its own nature, [conceptual construction that is] examination, and [conceptual construction that is] memory ... rough inquiry (*vitarka*) is conceptual construction by its own nature ... Discerning awareness that is associated with mental consciousness is called 'mental;' not in meditative absorption is called 'dispersed.' That [dispersed mental discerning awareness] is the conceptual construction that is examination. Every remembrance that is mental—both in and not in meditative absorption—is the conceptual construction that is memory."

¹¹⁴ T 1545 XXVII 219b7-23. However, in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* the first type of conceptual construction is defined as both rough (*vitarka*) and fine inquiry (*vicāra*). T 1545 219b7-8: 一自性分別。謂尋伺。"The first is conceptual construction by its own nature, that is to say, rough and fine inquiry."

¹¹⁵ T 1562 XXIX 350b7-26. See also Collett Cox, "On the Possibility of a Non-existent Object of Perceptual Consciousness," *Journal of International Association of Buddhist Studies* 11 (1988): 37, where two additional meanings of conceptuality provided by Saṅghabhadra are presented.

the first kind. Vasubandhu explains that the five consciousnesses possessing the first of three types of conceptualization are called non-conceptual in the same way that a horse possessing only one leg is called a horse without legs.¹¹⁶

We have enumerated this threefold scheme, in part to show that there is somewhat a lack of conceptual unity behind the three types of conceptualization. That is possibly a reason behind Dignāga's decision to keep the idea that sense consciousnesses are non-conceptual, while moving away from the exact meaning of conceptualization found in the Abhidharma system. In fact, Saṃgabhadra is able to provide a sense of unity by explaining in *Nyāyānusāra* that the three types of conceptualization basically come down to the same idea of being a form of searching (*tuiqiu* 推求), which is said to contribute to the clarity of the mind. According to him, the five sense consciousnesses are weak in their functions of discerning and recollecting in comparison with the mental consciousness.¹¹⁷ Even following this interpretation, the distinction is quantitative and not qualitative. Hence, we can understand that for Dignāga the distinction between consciousnesses that are able and unable to recognize linguistic objects appears more distinctive and suitable for the purpose of constructing epistemological categories.

What Dignāga has done is to keep the idea that sense consciousnesses are non-conceptual, but to change what it means to be conceptual to something else, although the new connotation of conceptualization still has its source in the Abhidharma texts. With

¹¹⁶ AKBh ad AK I 33ab, 1:72: *yathā ekapādako 'śvo 'pādaka iti.*

¹¹⁷ T 1562 XXIX 350b17-21: 五識雖與慧念相應。擇記用微。故唯取意。夫分別者。推求行相。故說尋爲自性分別。簡擇明記。行似順尋。故分別名亦通慧念。由此三行差別攝持。皆令於境明了轉異。 “Although the five consciousnesses are associated with discerning awareness and memory, the functions of discerning and recollecting is weak. Therefore, only mental [consciousness] is taken [to be conceptual]. As for conceptuality, it is something that has the activity of searching. Thus, it is said that inquiry (*vitarka*) is conceptual by its nature. Discernment and recollection have similar activities and are in conformity with inquiry, thus the epithet of conceptuality is shared by discerning awareness and recollection as well. Joined

this analysis, we hope that we have been able to establish a pattern in which Dignāga works with his Abhidharma sources. It is also important to recognize that in the Abhidharma texts consciousnesses that are non-conceptual and those that are unable to recognize words are the same group of five sense consciousnesses. These are the most prominent members of Dignāga's category of perception, but they are not the exclusive members. Therefore, they only serve as the prototype of Dignāga's perception.

The cognitive objects of Dignāga's twofold means of knowledge—perception and inference—are respectively *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*. Scholars of Buddhist philosophy are familiar with the more general sense of the two terms as they are used in the Abhidharma texts. In the most common usage, *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* can be rendered as unique characteristic and common characteristic respectively. In the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the *svalakṣaṇa* of an object as its unique characteristic is said to be its essence (*svabhāva*).¹¹⁸ As for *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* gives impermanence as the common characteristic of all conditioned things, suffering for contaminated things (*sāsrava*), and emptiness and selflessness (*śūnyatānātmate*) for all dharmas,¹¹⁹ as such characterizations are commonly known in Buddhism. Candrakīrti also describes *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* this way.¹²⁰

However, Abhidharma texts also use the terms *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* differently, in a way that is much closer to how Dignāga employs them in his epistemological work. In the context of discussing the second sense of *svalakṣaṇa*, Yaśomitra states the following established position of the Sarvāstivāda School:

with these three specific activities, the clarity with respect to the object is in all cases made to become distinctive.” Cf. *Mahāvibhāṣā* at T 1545 XXVII 219b9-12.

¹¹⁸ AKBh ad VI 14cd, 2:709: *svabhāva evaiṣāṃ svalakṣaṇam*.

¹¹⁹ AKBh ad AK VI 14cd, 2:709: *sāmānyalakṣaṇaṃ tu anityatā saṃskṛtānāṃ duḥkhatā sāsravāṇāṃ śūnyatānātmate sarvadharmāṇāṃ /*.

It is asserted in the scripture (*pravacana*) that five varieties of consciousness are those which have *svalakṣaṇa* as the object.¹²¹

As we have suggested earlier, the five sense consciousnesses will eventually be translated into Dignāga's perception. Therefore, this Abhidharma position is apparently the source of Dignāga's view that perception takes *svalakṣaṇa* as its object. What Yaśomitra describes here as scripture are in fact various Abhidharma texts, as statements of this view appear in a number of earlier Abhidharma texts, including *Mahāvibhāṣā*,¹²² **Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītisāstra*,¹²³ and **Samyuktābhidharmahrdayaśāstra*.¹²⁴ *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* also alludes to this position,¹²⁵ only adding that *svalakṣaṇa* in this context takes the specific sense of *āyatanasvalakṣaṇa*.¹²⁶ However, Vasubandhu himself does not elaborate what the position implies.

Yaśomitra's commentary on *Abhidharmakośa* clarifies that the statement that five sense consciousnesses take *svalakṣaṇa* as their object, in the specific sense of *āyatanasvalakṣaṇa*, means that each of the five sense consciousnesses cognizes only its

¹²⁰ See the reference given later in this section.

¹²¹ Śāstrī, *Abhidharmakośam*, 1:30: *ete pañca vijñānakāyāḥ svalakṣaṇaviṣayā iṣyante pravacane*.

¹²² T. 1545 XXVII 65a12-3: 以五識身緣自相故. "Because the five varieties of consciousness take *svalakṣaṇa* as the object-support (*ālambana*)."
T. 1545 XXVII 665b1: 豈不五識唯取自相境耶? "Do the five consciousnesses not take *svalakṣaṇa* alone as the object?"
T. 1545 XXVII 665b3-4: 五識身取自相境. "The five varieties of consciousness take *svalakṣaṇa* as the object."

¹²³ T. 1549 XXVIII 738b29-c1: 復次自相所攝五識身. T. 1549 XXVIII 739c28: 復次自相攝五識身. T. 1549 XXVIII 793c12: 五識身境界五識身自相.

¹²⁴ T. 1552 XXVIII 880a20-1: 以五識身自相境界故. The English translation of the passage in question is found in Bart Dessein, *Samyuktābhidharmahrdaya: Heart of Scholasticism with Miscellaneous Additions* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999), 1:84-5.

¹²⁵ AKBh ad AK I 10, 1:30: *nanu caivaṃ samastālambanatvāt sāmānyaviṣayāḥ pañca vijñānakāyāḥ prāpnvanti na svalakṣaṇaviṣayāḥ*. "In this way, would it not obtain that the group of five consciousnesses are those that take a generality as [their] object, and not [the consciousnesses] that take *svalakṣaṇa* as the object, on account of taking a whole as the object-support?"

own specific sense sphere—that is to say, a visual consciousness only cognizes form, an auditory consciousness only sound, and so forth.¹²⁷ This Abhidharma position therefore conveys the idea that the sense consciousnesses are restricted in terms of their domain of cognitive activity. In contrast, a mental consciousness is capable of crossing the borders of the sense spheres and constructing a composite entity consisting of the objects that are perceived by multiple sense consciousnesses. It is in this sense, says Yaśomitra, that the mental consciousness takes *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* as its object.¹²⁸ The interpretation that Yaśomitra provides here is also touched on in *Nyāyānusāra*, *Mahāvibhāṣya*, *Samyuktābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra*, and *Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītīśāstra*.¹²⁹

In these Abhidharma passages, a second set of meaning of *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* emerges. Here the two *lakṣaṇas* are no longer unique and common characteristics. Rather, they are respectively the specific objects of the sense consciousnesses, which are described as restricted in terms of their sphere of operation, and the object of mental consciousness, which is able to construct a composite entity consisting of the objects that come from multiple sense spheres. *Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītīśāstra* likens this particular function of mental

¹²⁶ AKBh ad AK I 10, 1:30: *āyatanasvalakṣaṇam praty ete svalakṣaṇaviṣayā iṣyante na dravyasvalakṣaṇam ity adoṣaḥ*/.
¹²⁷ See Śāstrī, *Abhidharmakośam*, 1:30.

¹²⁸ Śāstrī, *Abhidharmakośam*, 1:30: *caḥṣuśrotraghñāṇajihvākāyavijñānālambanāny abhisamasya manovijñānam grhṇātīti kṛtvā sāmānyalakṣaṇaviṣayaṃ tad vyavasthāpyete*. “Having assembled the objects of visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile consciousnesses, the mental consciousness apprehends. Therefore, it is established to be a [consciousness] that takes *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* as its object.”

¹²⁹ Some of the discussions occur in the context of distinguishing between *āyatanasvalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*. T. 1545 XXVII 65a14-15: 若依事自相說者。五識身亦緣共相。若依處自相說。則五識唯緣自相。 “If one speaks in reference to *dravyasvalakṣaṇa*, the five varieties of consciousnesses also observe *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*. If one speaks in reference to *āyatanasvalakṣaṇa*, the five consciousnesses only observe *svalakṣaṇa*.” T. 1545 XXVII 66b2-7: 依事自相說緣十一種觸生於身識。依處自相說五識身取自相境 … 故五識身通緣總別。 “Speaking in reference to *dravyasvalakṣaṇa*, the tactile consciousness is produced by way of observing eleven types of tactile object; speaking in reference to *āyatanasvalakṣaṇa*, the five varieties of consciousnesses take the object of *svalakṣaṇa* ... therefore the five varieties of

consciousness to the imparting of the individual skills of the five hundred artisans to one single person.¹³⁰

The second set of meaning of *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* found in these Abhidharma texts is much closer to the way in which Dignāga uses them. First of all, here *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* means constructed object, which is similar to Dignāga's object of inference. Secondly, *svalakṣaṇa*, for its part, is the specific object of sense consciousnesses. Apparently, Dignāga has adopted another established position from the Abhidharma texts. However, in that specific context of the Abhidharma texts, *svalakṣaṇa* refers to the objects of sense consciousnesses whose cognitive domains are restricted to their corresponding sense spheres (*āyatana*s). This specific distinction does not appear to have been carried into Dignāga's system, as the restriction of sense consciousnesses' activities to their own sense spheres is less relevant to Dignāga's epistemological project. At this point, however, we are already familiar with Dignāga's pattern in which he accepts an Abhidharma position while changing the connotation of a term involved. If this pattern that we have discovered earlier can serve as a guide, we still need to look in the Abhidharma texts to find out what *svalakṣaṇa* means to Dignāga.

One problem that the Abhidharma experts of the Sarvāstivādin School face is how the content of perception can be a gross object while the actual cause of perception consists of atoms, which are real but invisible to the senses.¹³¹ This issue comes up a few times in Dignāga's writings. In *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, at one point Dignāga seems to have

consciousnesses observe both the generality and the particularity." See also T. 1562 XXIX 675b8-10 ad AK VI 14 and T. 1552 XXVIII 872c22-24 and 941c13-14.

¹³⁰ T. 1549 XXVIII 793c9-13: 猶如五匠師各有伎藝往諮受一人 … 五識身境界五識身自相。現意識集聚而更之。 "Just like five hundred artisans impart onto one person the crafts that each possesses, the objects of the five varieties of consciousnesses constitute the *svalakṣaṇa* of the five varieties of consciousnesses, whereas the mental consciousness of the present assembles and alters."

¹³¹ See the discussion of this issue in Cox, "Non-Existent Object."

adopted the Sarvāstivāda school's atomic model, describing perception as being “produced by multiple substances.”¹³² However, in other contexts, Dignāga is critical of the Sarvāstivāda position that the invisible atoms function as the real cause, while at the same time he also disapproves the Sautrāntika-Dārṣṭāntika School's alternative position that allows a composite entity to serve as the object of perception.¹³³

In *Ālambanaparīkṣā*, critical of both the Sarvāstivādin and Sautrāntika alternatives, Dignāga decides in favor of the Yogācāra position, describing the object of a sense consciousness as something that is internal to that consciousness.¹³⁴ However, even when he argues for the Yogācāra position, Dignāga asserts that he retains the two essential requirements from both the Sarvāstivādins and the Sautrāntikas. He says that when something internal to the consciousness functions as the object, it fulfills the Sarvāstivāda requirement that sense consciousness is produced by a real cause (*pratyaya*). At the same time, since that internal object also appears to the consciousness itself, the Sautrāntika requirement is also fulfilled, as for them the object must be something that appears to the consciousness.¹³⁵

¹³² PS and PSV ad I 4cd. Hattori, *Dignāga on Perception*, 89 n. 1.40: [a]nekārthajanyatvāt. Ibid., 90 n. 1.41: anekadravyotpadyatvāt.

¹³³ This occurs in the second section of *Pramāṇasamuccaya* I, where Dignāga examines the definition of perception in *Vādhavidhi*. The two Tibetan versions of the text are found in Hattori, *Dignāga on Perception*, 186-191; Hattori's English translation is in ibid., 32-5.

¹³⁴ *Ālambanaparīkṣā* ad 8: nang gi dmigs pa. See Fernando Tola and Carmen Dragonetti, “Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣā*,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 10 (1982): 123. Further, it is “something having the nature of an internal object of the consciousness, although it appears as if it is something that is external.” *Ālambanaparīkṣā* 6ab. The Sanskrit fragments are given in Tola and Dragonetti, “Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣā*,” 107: yad antarjñeyarūpaṃ tu bahirvad avabhāsate/.

¹³⁵ *Ālambanaparīkṣā* 6cd, in Tola and Dragonetti, “Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣā*,” 107: so 'rtho vijñānarūpatvāt tatpratyayatayāpi ca. “That [which has the nature of an internal object of knowledge, antarjñeyarūpa] is the object, because of having the nature of a consciousness and being a [causal] condition.” *Ālambanaparīkṣā* ad 6cd: nang gi rnam par shes pa ni don du snang ba dang/ de las skyes pa yin pas/ chos nyid gnyis dang ldan pa'i phyir nang na yod pa kho na dmigs pa'i rkyen yin no. Ibid., 122. “An internal consciousness appears as the object, and [that consciousness] is produced from it. Therefore, because of possessing the two qualities, simply what exists internally is the object-support condition (*ālambanapratyaya*).” Dignāga concludes his short treatise by repeating the same point: de ltar nang gi

We have shown that there is a consistent textual link between Dignāga's epistemology and the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma. On the issue of the object of perception, even when Dignāga refutes the Sarvāstivāda position in the *Ālambanaparīkṣā*, he still retains the Sarvāstivāda stipulation that the object must be real and the true cause of perception. We may therefore surmise that in Dignāga's epistemology *svalakṣaṇa*, the object of perception, is both real (*dravyasat*) and the condition (*pratyaya*) that causes perception.¹³⁶

In short, in the Abhidharma texts of the Sarvāstivāda School the five sense consciousnesses, which are the conceptual prototype of Dignāga's perception, have already been described as (1) free from conceptualization; (2) having no capacity to process language; (3) perceiving *svalakṣaṇa* as their object; and (4) cognizing only real entities. These distinctions of the five sense consciousnesses are often presented in contrast with mental consciousness, which, in addition to possessing the functions that sense consciousnesses have, is described as capable of the full range of conceptual thought,¹³⁷ not restricted with respect to its domain of cognitive function, having the capacity or the potential to process language, and capable of cognizing the objects that exist only provisionally (*prajñaptisat*). When Dignāga speaks about inference (*anumāna*) his reference point appears to be these distinctive and additional features of the mental consciousness, which sense consciousnesses do not possess. That mental consciousness is

dmigs pa ni chos nyid gnyis dang ldan pa'i phyir yul nyid du 'thed do. Ibid., 123. "In this way, an internal object-support has the nature of the object [of the consciousness], since it possesses the two qualities."

¹³⁶ Hattori has also remarked in his work on perception in Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* that the Buddhist epistemologist makes a radical distinction between *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* as the exclusive objects of perception and inference respectively, and he identifies the former as real and particular and the latter as lacking reality and universal. *Dignāga on Perception*, 80.

¹³⁷ As mentioned above, the five sense consciousnesses are said to be non-conceptual based on the idea that they possess only the first of the three forms of conceptuality: *vitarka*, *abhinirrūpaṇa*, and *anusmaraṇa*. The mental consciousness, on the other hand, may be associated with all three forms of conceptuality. See

described as capable of the functions that sense consciousnesses can perform, while also possessing its own special abilities, is significant. This explains why mental consciousness falls partly in the category of perception and partly in the category of inference and why there is mental perception¹³⁸ in Dignāga's system. Indeed, it is explicitly stated in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* that “a visual consciousness apprehends *svalakṣaṇa*; while a mental consciousness apprehends both *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*.”¹³⁹ In *Samyuktābhidharmahrdaya* and *Pañcavastukavibhāṣāśāstra*, these distinctions are repeated for the other four sense consciousnesses as well.¹⁴⁰

The areas of Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma that are relevant to the larger framework of Dignāga's epistemological project concern mainly a set of distinctions that are made between the five sense consciousnesses and the mental consciousness. These distinctions in fact figure prominently in what we may call the epistemology of the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma, which has been capitulated in an essay of Collett Cox where she discusses the Sarvāstivāda model of perception.¹⁴¹ The distinctions between the sense and mental consciousnesses that we have outlined here emerge in fact very clearly in Cox's work.¹⁴² Once we have discovered the Abhidharma connection of the general framework of Dignāga's epistemology, it becomes clear that Dignāga's twofold means of knowledge

Cox, “Non-existent Object,” 37. Notice also that *abhinirrūpaṇa* and *anusmaraṇa* are explicitly described as mental (*mānasa*) in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*.

¹³⁸ The existence of mental perception in Dignāga's system appears to be predicated on the Abhidharma idea that mental consciousness shares the functions that sense consciousnesses are capable of. Thus, a visual consciousness only cognizes blue color, while a mental consciousness cognizes both the blue color and the linguistic content “this is blue.” See AKBh 1:372 ad III 30cd: *caḥsurvijñānena nīlaṃ vijānāti no tu nīlaṃ manovijñānena nīlaṃ vijānāti nīlaṃ iti ca vijānāti*. See also the Abhidharma view described below that mental consciousness cognizes both *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*.

¹³⁹ T. 1545 XXVII 689b18: 眼識取自相。意識取自相共相。

¹⁴⁰ T. 1552 XXVIII 880a16-22 and T. 1555 XXVIII 992a16-25.

¹⁴¹ Cox, “Non-Existent Object.”

¹⁴² Cox, “Non-Existent Object,” 33-8.

(*pramāṇa*) are modeled on the five sense consciousnesses and the aspects of mental consciousness that are distinct from the former.

In these specific areas, Dignāga's procedure may be characterized as a process of translation, as he was translating a pre-existing Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma epistemology into the *pramāṇa* framework in the Pan-Indian theory of knowledge. Dignāga also wrote a short summary of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* entitled *Abhidharmakośamarmadīpa*. However, in that text his description of conceptualization (*vikalpa*),¹⁴³ *svalakṣaṇa*, and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*¹⁴⁴ follows the Abhidharma interpretation very closely. It is in his work on epistemology that he has taken the license of switching the connotations of the terms, mixing different concepts, and transforming categories. In this area, his work resembles that of a creative translator.

Dignāga's transformation of the old Abhidharma categories has undoubtedly alienated Candrakīrti, who prefers the more common meanings of *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* as they are found in the Abhidharma texts.¹⁴⁵ Candrakīrti also disputes Dignāga's definition of perception and the latter's invocation of the Abhidharma passage, "One that is equipped with visual consciousness recognizes the dark blue [color], but not [the linguistic content] that 'this is dark blue,'" to justify the view that perception is free

¹⁴³ Dignāga follows *Abhidharmakośa*'s explanation of the three types of *vikalpa* in his comments on the same section of AK (I 33) in his *Abhidharmakośamarmadīpa*, at D (To. 4095) Mngon pa, vol. *nyu*, 104a6-b2.

¹⁴⁴ *Abhidharmakośavṛttimarmadīpa* at D (To. 4095) Mngon pa, vol. *nyu*, 184b7: *de dag gi rang gi mtshan nyid ni rang gi ngo bo'o/ /spyi'i mtshan nyid ni 'dus byas rnams ni mi rtag pa nyid dang/ zag pa dang bcas pa rnams sdug bsngal nyid dang/ chos thams cad stong pa dang bdag med pa nyid dag go/*/. "Their unique characteristic is [their] essence. As for *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, impermanence is the common characteristic of all conditioned things, suffering in the case of contaminated things, and emptiness and selflessness for all dharmas." As for the *svalakṣaṇa*, AKBh (ad VI 14cd 2: 709) also says: *svabhāva evaiṣām svalakṣaṇam/*. "Their unique characteristic is simply [their] essence." Only the word *eva* is not represented in the Tibetan translation of *Abhidharmakośavṛttimarmadīpa*.

¹⁴⁵ PPMV 261.3-7: *bālā lakṣaṇam ācakṣate, agner auṣṇyaṃ svalakṣaṇam / tato 'nyatrānupalambhād asādhāraṇatvena svam eva lakṣaṇam iti kṛtvā / bālajanaprasiddyaiva ca bhagavatā tad evaiṣām sāmṃvṛtaṃ svarūpam abhidharme vyavasthāpitaṃ / sādharmaṇam tv anityatvādikam sāmānyalakṣaṇam iti coktaṃ /*.

from conceptual construction.¹⁴⁶ Finally, Candrakīrti argues against Dignāga's etymology of perception by denying that it bears similarity with the designation of the individual consciousnesses found in the Abhidharma texts.¹⁴⁷ A consistent concern with disentangling Dignāga's ideas from the credence of the Abhidharma works is therefore evident in Candrakīrti's critique.

The fact that the *pramāṇas* are real for Dignāga proves irreconcilable with Candrakīrti's Mādhyamika position that the essence of things does not arise, such that *pramāṇas* and their objects, like anything else, do not exist in the ultimate reality. However, a Mādhyamika can still admit their relative existence on the plane of the conventional in accord with the common view of the world.¹⁴⁸ The thrust of Candrakīrti's

¹⁴⁶ PPMV 74.8-75.2. See the references to this passage in this and the previous sections.

¹⁴⁷ In PSV ad PS I 4ab, Dignāga first asks the question as to why perception (*pratyakṣa*) is named after the sense (*akṣa*) and not after the object (as *prativijñāya*) even though it depends on both. In PS I 4ab and PSV thereof, he explains that perception is so named because the object is the common cause, as it also gives rise to mental consciousness and the consciousness in other persons as well, whereas a sense organ is the unique causes (*asādhāraṇahetu*). In AK I 45 and AKBh ad thereof, Vasubandhu, addressing the question as to why individual consciousnesses—*caḥsurvijñāna*, *śrotravijñāna*, etc. (lit. eye consciousness, ear consciousness, etc.)—are named after the sense organs and not the objects, gives the following two reasons: (1) the strength or clarity of the consciousnesses changes according to the state of the sense organs; and (2) the sense organs are the unique causes. AK I 45: *tadvikāravikārād āśrayās caḥsurādayaḥ ato 'sādhāraṇatvāc ca vijñānaṃ tair nirucyate*. Dignāga's justification of the etymology of perception follows very closely Vasubandhu's second reason for naming of the individual consciousnesses after the sense organs. Dignāga gives the same reasons as to why the objects only constitute a common cause of the consciousnesses and the same examples of the appellations that are based on unique causes: the sound of drum (*bheṣabda*, as apposed to, say, the sound of hand) and a sprout of barley (*yavāṅkura*, as apposed to a sprout from the earth). See Hattori, *Dignāga on Perception*, 25-6, 76-7 n. 1.11, 86-7 nn. 1.31, 1.32, 1.33. Candrakīrti's response is found in PPMV 72.1-73.8. Hattori claims that Dignāga cites the second of Vasubandhu's two reasons, to which Candrakīrti's critique does not respond. *Dignāga on Perception*, 87 n. 1.33. In fact, Candrakīrti has made a specific point that the issue of the sense organs being the unique causes of consciousnesses, the mention of which in Abhidharma texts he does not question, has no relevance in Dignāga's discussion of perception. Candrakīrti argues: (1) when perception is defined by Dignāga as that which is devoid of conceptual construction, the status of sense organs as the unique causes is irrelevant (PPMV 73.4-6); (2) Dignāga's twofold classification of means of knowledge is based on the idea that there are only two kinds of object: *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* (PS I 2abc and PSV: *pratyakṣam anumānam ca pramāṇe de gnyis kho na ste/ yasmād lakṣaṇadvayam/ prameyam*. See Hattori, *Dignāga on Perception*, 239). Therefore, the naming of the means of knowledge should rather be based on the objects of knowledge and not the sense organs (PPMV 73.6-8).

¹⁴⁸ PPMV 75.10-13: *tāni ca parasparāpekṣayā sidhyanti / satsu pramāṇeṣu prameyārthāḥ / satsu prameyeṣu artheṣu pramāṇāni / no tu khalu svābhāvikiḥ pramāṇaprameyayoh siddhir iti tasmāl laukikam evāstu yathādr̥ṣṭam ... laukika eva darśane sthitiḥ buddhānām bhagavatām dharmadeśanā //*. "These [means of knowledge and knowable objects] are established by way of mutual dependence—when the

critical response to Dignāga's theory of knowledge is therefore to assail the Buddhist epistemologist for deviating from the conventional nature of things. Thus, a part of Candrakīrti's critique is directed at Dignāga's terminology, which is described as having departed from the convention of language usage, as Dan Arnold's work has detailed.¹⁴⁹ On another level of the critique, Candrakīrti is concerned with disassociating Dignāga's epistemological theory from the authority of Abhidharma, which Candrakīrti also associates incidentally with the description of the conventional world. Later in *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti writes more explicitly that, "by using what is widely accepted by the ignorant beings, the Blessed One established the mere conventional nature of these [things] in the Abhidharma."¹⁵⁰ Thus, for Candrakīrti the scriptural status of Abhidharma is based on an understanding that it originates from the Buddha himself.

Conventional truth is an area that is not clearly defined by the writings of Nāgārjuna, who concerned himself mainly with the ultimate truth. In the Indian Madhyamaka literature, the conventional is most often described through the concept of causality that is expressed in the framework of *pratītyasamutpāda* and as something that is without any reality. Candrakīrti appears to have grappled with the obscurity of the conventional, of which he offers several descriptions. In the citation given immediately above, he accepts Abhidharma as a source of information for the conventional, while acknowledging that it is something which operates on the force of what is widely

means of knowledge exists, knowable objects [also] exist; when knowable objects exist, means of knowledge [also] exists. But there is really no essential establishment of means of knowledge and the knowable object. Therefore, may there only be what is worldly, as it is seen ... Having just remained in the view of the world do the Buddhas teach the *dharma*." PPMV 69.6-9: *atha paramārthas tadā ... kutaḥ pramāṇadvayaṃ* // "If it is the ultimate [reality] ... how can there be a twofold means of knowledge?"

¹⁴⁹ Arnold, *Buddhists, Brahmins, and Belief*, 117-204.

¹⁵⁰ PPMV 261.5-6: *bālajanaprasiddhyaiva bhagavatā tad evaiṣāṃ sāmṃvṛtaṃ svarūpam abhidharma vyavasthāpitaṃ* /.

accepted by ignorant beings (*bālajanaprasiddhi*).¹⁵¹ Within the section of *Prasannapadā* where he criticizes Dignāga, he also characterizes the conventional as a purely linguistic phenomenon, functioning on the level of the relationship between the action conveyed by the verb and their associated linguistically formulated factors called *kāraṅgas* in Sanskrit grammar.¹⁵² With these two accounts, Candrakīrti can be seen as resorting to Abhidharma and grammar as two educational resources for the management of the knowledge of the conventional. It therefore comes as no surprise that Candrakīrti has written an Abhidharma-style treatise on the five *skandhas*,¹⁵³ a subject which rarely receives literary attention from the Madhyamaka writers. Taking into account both Dignāga's and Candrakīrti's interests in it, Abhidharma can rather be seen as a powerful tool around the sixth and seventh centuries for the Indian Buddhist scholastics in the uncertain areas of Buddhist philosophy and hermeneutics.

2.5 Scripture as the Word of the Buddha

An idea about scripture that has not been highlighted so far is *āgama* as the word of the Buddha. As mentioned earlier, Candrakīrti describes “the status of scripture

¹⁵¹ In the immediate context of this passage, Candrakīrti also describes conventional as what is experienced by ordinary beings under the influence of ignorance, and in this way it is analogous to the false vision that is perceived by a person who is visually impaired and, therefore, stands in stark contrast with the ultimate reality. PPMV 261.2-4 : *yathā hi taimirikās timirapratyayād asat tam eva keśādisvabhāvaṃ sasvabhāvatvenābhiniṣṭhā / evam avidyātimiro-pahatamatinayanatayā bālā niḥsvabhāvaṃ bhāvajātaṃ sasvabhāvatvenābhiniṣṭhā yathābhiniṣṭhā lakṣaṇam ācakṣate*/. “For, just like those who have eye disease adhere to what is merely the unreal—the essence of the [falsely perceived] hair and so on—as if it has essence. Likewise, because [their] eyes of intelligence are impaired by the eye disease of ignorance, the ignorant beings adhere to the things that are without essence as if they had an essence. As they adhere to [the essence], they speak of [their] characteristics.”

¹⁵² PPMV 69.8-10.

¹⁵³ To. 3866. *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa*. The Tibetan translation is edited in Christian Lindtner, “Candrakīrti's *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa*, I. Tibetan Text,” *Acta Orientalia* 41 (1979): 95-145.

(*āgamatva*)” as what is “established for the word of the perfect Buddha alone.”¹⁵⁴ That *āgama* represents for the Buddhists the word of the Buddha is also supported by the fact that the alternative term for scripture, *pravacana* or sacred speech, also bears a similar meaning.¹⁵⁵ In the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa also links *āgama* to the word of the Buddha, while casting it as the mastery—thus a form of *pariyatti*, the learning itself—of the word of the Buddha even if a small portion of it, such as “the chapter on similes.”¹⁵⁶

As scripture is conceived as the speech of an enlightened person, the prevalence of the question of authorial intention (*abhiprāya*) in Buddhist hermeneutics, the attempts to comprehend the vastness of scriptures with hierarchical structures, and the need to reconcile scriptural inconsistencies in Buddhist hermeneutical practices all become comprehensible. The fact that superhuman authorship functions as the model of Buddhist scripture has profound impacts on the Buddhist religious life. As far as the category of Abhidharma is concerned, there is a question as to how these texts become legitimized as scripture while they apparently function in the commentarial mode. It appears that there are different ways of linking Abhidharma to the word of the Buddha.

The origin of Abhidharma has been a subject of scholarly speculation.¹⁵⁷ Besides other pieces of evidence, the fact that the Abhidharma literatures of various Buddhist schools substantially differ from each suggest that their development came after the

¹⁵⁴ PPMV 269.1-2 ad XV 6: *sambuddhavadanasyaivāgamatvaṃ vyavasthāpyate*.

¹⁵⁵ See Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit*, s.v. *pravacana*. See also Pali Text Society, T. W. Rhys Davids, and Wilhelm Stede, *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary* (Chipstead: Pali Text Society, 1925), s.v. *pāvācana*, where the term is defined as “a word, esp. the word of the Buddha.”

¹⁵⁶ The Pali Text Society's *Pali-English Dictionary* cites the following passage from the *Visuddhimagga*: *āgamo nāma antamaso opammavaggamattassa pi buddhavadanassa pariyāpuṇaṇaṃ*. Pali Text Society, Rhys Davis, and Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary*, s.v. *āgama*.

¹⁵⁷ Collett Cox, *Disputed Dharma: Early Buddhist Theories on Existence: An Annotated Translation of the Section on Factors Dissociated from Thought from Saṅghabhadra's Nyāyānusāra* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1995), 7-10; Willeman, Dessein, and Cox, *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism*, 10-16. Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 183-4, 188.

divisions of the schools had occurred.¹⁵⁸ Indeed, opinions expressed by Buddhists themselves in the extant early literary records regarding the source of Abhidharma are extremely divergent. From Lamotte's summary of these opinions we learn that the majority of the accounts of the first Buddhist council speak of the compilation of Abhidharma, while others mention only that of Dharma and Vinaya. Many early documents consider the Buddha as the originator of Abhidharma, some even linking Abhidharma with certain episodes in the life of the Buddha, while others ascribe these texts to the great disciples of the Buddha such as Śāriputra, Mahātyāyana, and Maudgalyāyana, who are often described to having obtained the approval of their work from the Buddha. Yet other sources attribute the authorship of the specific works to the later writers. As a general rule, however, the authors of the Abhidharma texts are regarded as the "authorized interpreters of the word of the Buddha."¹⁵⁹

As we have seen earlier, by the time of Candrakīrti it has already become common to accept Abhidharma as the teachings of the Buddha. This occurred even while the Buddhist traditions have preserved the names of the authors of the authoritative Abhidharma works in the Sarāvastivāda School.¹⁶⁰ The conflicting opinions appear to have been accommodated in a description found at the beginning of *Mahāvibhāṣā*. There, the ultimate source of Abhidharma is attributed to the Buddha, while the text of immediate concern, *Jñānaprasthāna*, is said to have been compiled by Kātyāyanīputra either from

¹⁵⁸ Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 180; Willeman, Dessein, and Cox, *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism*, 15.

¹⁵⁹ Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 185. Lamotte's summary of the opinions regarding the status of Abhidharma literature is found in *ibid.*, 179-191.

¹⁶⁰ Tibetan and Chinese sources, however, diverge on the authors of the seven Abhidharma texts of the Sarvāstivāda School. See Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 184-5.

what he learned from the tradition or through his own aspiration and knowledge.¹⁶¹ By Kātyāyanīputra's aspiration, the compilers of *Mahāvibhāṣā* were apparently referring to the legend according to which the author of *Jñānaprasthāna* aspired in the presence of five hundred Buddhas in the past that he would compose a work on Abhidharma after the *nirvāṇa* of Śākyamuni Buddha.¹⁶²

As Abhidharma has become a division of the Tripiṭaka,¹⁶³ the available model to accord scriptural status to a group of texts is to ascribe to them the status of the word of the Buddha. Alternatively, an author can be linked to the Buddha(s), such as by obtaining the Buddha's permission to compose a work in a past life. The conflicted views that Buddhists have expressed here regarding the origin of Abhidharma texts shows that they were grappling with the scriptural status of Abhidharma. The divergence in their opinions perhaps indicates, more than simply a collective amnesia of the past historical events, a need to recognize commentarial and scholastic works as scripture.

¹⁶¹ T. 1545 XXVII 1b20-23: 阿毘達磨本是佛說。亦是尊者隨順纂集。又若佛說若弟子說不違法性。世尊皆許苾芻受持。故彼尊者展轉得聞。或願智力觀察纂集。"Abhidharma was originally spoken by the Buddha, it is also compiled by Ārya [Kātyāyanīputra]. It does not contradict the principle (*dharmatā*) whether it was spoken by the Buddha or a disciple. The Blessed Ones in any case intended for the *bhikṣus* to maintain [Abhidharma]. Therefore, that noble one compiled it either through hearing from a tradition or by examining through [his] aspiration (*praṇidhi*) and knowledge." Cf. Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 186-7.

¹⁶² T. 1545 XXVII 1a21-b1: 問豈不前言以一切種所知法性甚深微妙。非佛世尊一切智者誰能究竟等覺開示。云何彼尊者能造此論耶。答以彼尊者亦有微妙甚深猛利善巧覺慧。善知諸法自相共相。通達文義及前後際。善解三藏離三界染成就三明。具六神通及八解脫。得無礙解。獲妙願智。曾於過去五百佛所。積修梵行發弘誓願。我於未來釋迦牟尼佛般涅槃後造阿毘達磨。故如是說。"Question: has it not been said earlier that 'other than the Buddha, the Blessed One who is omniscient, who can be ultimately completely enlightened in, and reveal, the reality of the knowable objects of all kinds that is profound and marvelous' (1a8-10)? How can that venerable one (*bhadanta*) compose this treatise (*śāstra*)? Answer: Since that venerable one ... had in the presence of five hundred Buddhas of the past amassed and practiced *brahmacarya*, and he made a great aspiration: 'I will compose [a work on] Abhidharma after the *parinirvāṇa* of the Śākyamuni Buddha,' therefore it is so said [that he composed *Jñānaprasthāna*]."

¹⁶³ Early epigraphical references to the term *tripiṭaka*, which appears to go as far back as the second century BEC, are given in Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 150. Cf. Willeman, Dessein, and Cox, *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism*, 15-6.

2.6 Reflections

The present chapter studies the ideas about Buddhist scripture through the examination of a specific Buddhist term for scripture. Following a range of connotations and associations that are linked with the word *āgama*, we have explored the articulation of scripture's transcendence, the belief that scripture is rational and therefore compatible with reason, the ascription of mystical knowledge to the originator of scripture, and views regarding scripture's epistemological status as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Most of these ideas, especially the relationship between scripture and reason, will serve as a background for our discussion of the uses of scripture later.

What we have particularly emphasized in our discussion is the fact that *āgama* also refers to a scriptural citation, thus a fragment of scripture that is embedded in a later text which uses it, while the scope of the term is always expanding such that more categories of authoritative texts acquire the designation of *āgama*. Therefore, *āgama* both contracts and expands, a linguistic phenomenon that is correlated with our contention that the use of Buddhist scripture is selective while the boundary of scripture continuously expands. Thus, the scriptures that serve as the foundation of Buddhist textual practices is not a stable entity. In the scholastic context, another factor that complicates the scripture-commentary dichotomy is the fact that commentary also becomes scripture, suggested by the evidence that Abhidharma texts which possess clear exegetical character are said to be *āgama* and even considered as the word of the Buddha. Candrakīrti's critique of Dignāga's references to Abhidharma texts is a controversy between two schools of

Buddhist thought based in part on differing opinions about how to use Abhidharma. This chapter also presents a lengthy examination of the specific links between the analyses of consciousnesses found in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma and Dignāga's epistemological categories, which shows the extent to which Abhidharma has influenced the direction of Buddhist thought. The function of Abhidharma as a scriptural authority is indicative of a process of scripturalization of commentary, one that accompanies the intensification of scholasticism, when successive interpretive models develop from the earlier ones.

The structural equivalent to Abhidharma in the Mahāyāna Buddhist literature is the Mahāyāna Buddhist treatises, the chief instances of which are, for the Mādhyamika Candrakīrti, the works of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva. In Candrakīrti's writings, the term *āgama* no longer applies to this group of texts, as they are identified as the works by human authors who are other than the Buddhas. However, as far as the uses of the authoritative texts is concerned, Candrakīrti is just as involved with the Mahāyāna treatises as he is with the texts that are recognized as *āgama*. Indeed, the attitude that Candrakīrti displays toward Nāgārjuna's writings indicates that he considers the Madhyamaka's founder to be the single authority on scriptural interpretation and the way to reach the ultimate Buddhist goal, as he professes in *Madhyamakāvatāra* that "there is no technique leading to the peace that lies outside the path stipulated by the venerable *ācārya* Nāgārjuna."¹⁶⁴ In both Madhyamaka thought and the school of Buddhist epistemology, there is a tendency to become more involved with the recent interpretive models in textual practices. With both Abhidharma and Mahāyāna treatises, eventually grouped together in the single category of *śāstra*, the transcendent nature of scripture

¹⁶⁴ MA VI 79ab, 174: *slob dpon klu sgrub zhabs kyi lam las ni/ phyi rol gyur la zhi ba'i thabs med do/*.

encounters the interpretive, scholastic, and ratiocinative processes that are distinctively human.

Chapter Three

Śāstra As a Textual Category and Its Hermeneutical Dimension

The scriptural corpora of most schools of Nikāya Buddhism are organized with a tripartite structure of Sūtra, Vinaya, and Abhidharma, which are said to enfold matters relating to doctrine, discipline, and scholasticism respectively.¹ In the previous chapter, we focused our attention on the third member of the Tripiṭaka and showed that as a group of writings they both depend on the earlier *sūtra* literature, which they admit as the textual authority, and evolve on their own as a part of a scholastic discipline. Among the world's religious traditions, the growth of literatures that are derivative from and exegetical toward scriptures and their inclusion as a part of the scriptures are both common processes.² In the context of Hinduism, the example that easily comes to the mind is the category of Smṛti. Although “secondary to Śruti,” writes J. A. B. van

¹ Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 149.

² John B. Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 62-4.

Buitenen, Smṛti is “bringing out the hidden meanings of the revelation, restating it for a wider audience, providing more precise instructions concerning moral conduct, and complementing Śruti in matters of religion.” Within the scholarly context, “in practice the Hindu acquires his knowledge of religion almost exclusively through Smṛti.”³

With the rise of Mahāyāna in India, the treatises that identify themselves with the new movement also manifest the kind of exegetical and generative features that we find in the Abhidharma texts, suggesting that these treatises be recognized as the counterpart to Abhidharma in the Mahāyāna literature. As we will see in the following section, Buddhists themselves indeed view Mahāyāna treatises and the Abhidharma texts as structural equivalents in their respective *yānas*, and they conceive the two as forming the single category of texts called *śāstra*.

3.1 The Rise of Buddhist *Śāstras*

Evidence suggesting the conception of *śāstra* as a category of Buddhist texts encompassing both Abhidharma texts and Mahāyāna treatises can be gathered from the Buddhist catalogs of translated texts compiled in China and later in Tibet, which are attempts to envisage the corpus of Buddhist scriptures globally. In fact, in the earliest Chinese attempt to conceptualize the structure of the Buddhist scriptural corpus, launched in the anonymous and now lost work of *Zhongjīng biē lū*, a separate category of *lunlu* 論

³ J. A. B. van Buitenen, “Hindu Sacred Literature,” *Encyclopedia Britannica III, Macropaedia* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1975), 8:932-3. The qualification of “scholarly context” is needed to distinguish it from popular religion.

錄, or “a record of *śāstras*,” had already been developed.⁴ In the tradition of Chinese bibliographies that record Buddhist scriptures, the category of *lun*, which is a common Chinese equivalent for *śāstra*, saw its bifurcation into Nikāya and Mahāyāna varieties in a subsequent catalog compiled by Li Kuo 李廓.⁵ Beginning with Fajing’s 法經 *Zhongjing mulu* 眾經目錄, compiled in the year 594, it became a standard practice for the Chinese catalogers to divide the translated texts in the scriptural collection into Mahāyāna and Nikāya Buddhist portions, each consisting of the three divisions of Sūtra, Vinaya, and Śāstra.⁶ Some catalogs even place Mahāyāna treatises under the heading of Mahāyāna Abhidharma,⁷ making explicit the assumption that Mahāyāna *śāstras* and Abhidharma texts are considered as counterparts in the scriptural collections of their respective *yānas*.

The visibility of *śāstra* as a scriptural category increases even more in the organizations and catalogs of Tibetan Buddhist collections. As noted in Chapter One, one of the oldest extant Tibetan scriptural catalogs, one that registers Tibetan translations of Buddhist texts deposited in the Ldan dkar Palace, already described itself as one that recorded “all the translations of the word (of the Buddha) and *śāstras*” or “all sacred

⁴ Fang, *Zhongguo xieben dazangjing*, 45-7. Fang regards *Zhongjing bie lu* 眾經別錄, or *An Independent Catalog of All (Buddhist) Scriptures*, as roughly contemporaneous with Sengyou’s 僧祐 *Chu sangzang jiji* 出三藏記集, a catalog which is dated around the year 515. On the date of the latter work, see also Shi Sengyou 釋僧祐, comp., *Chu sangzang jiji* 出三藏記集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 9-11.

⁵ Fang, *Zhongguo xieben dazangjing*, 47-8. Li Kuo’s *Zhongjing mulu* 眾經目錄, *A Catalog of All (Buddhist) Scriptures*, contains “a catalog of Mahāyāna *śāstras*” (大乘論目錄) and “a catalog of Nikāya Buddhist *śāstras*” (小乘論目錄), occupying respectively the second and sixth parts of the work.

⁶ On the structural evolution of the Chinese Buddhist catalogs beginning with Fajing, see Fang, *Zhongguo xieben dazangjing*, 51 ff. Although the question of what constitutes a Mahāyāna Vinaya is intriguing, an exploration of this complex issue will divert our attention from our subject at hand.

⁷ *Dacheng Apitan (zang)* 大乘阿毗曇(藏)—Mahāyāna Abhidharma (Piṭaka)—or *Pusa duifa zang* 菩薩對法藏—(Bodhisattva Abhidharma Piṭaka). Notable examples include Fajing’s own *Zhongjing mulu*, Fei Changfang’s 費長房 *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記, and Zhisheng’s *Kaiyan shijiao lu*. Fang, *Zhongguo xieben dazangjing*, 52-3, 54, and 63.

speech (*pravacana*)—the *sūtras*—and *śāstras*.”⁸ In this catalog there are six explicit *śāstra* categories, recording texts of Indian origin that are associated with Abhidharma, Nikāya Buddhism in general, the Madhyamaka School, the Yogācāra School, Mahāyāna Buddhism in general, and *śāstras* in the process of translation.⁹ When the *Ldan dkar ma* catalog was written in the early ninth century, the word of the Buddha (*bka’*, *vacana*) and *śāstra* (*bstan bcos*) were merely conceptual frames of reference. However, by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries they were already materially embodied in the two scriptural collections of Bka’ ‘gyur and Bstan ‘gyur, which began to refer to the largest physical collections of Tibetan translations of the word of the Buddha and *śāstras*.¹⁰ Dbus pa Blo gsal Rtsod pa’i seng ge’s (ca. 1270-ca. 1355) catalog, *Bstan ‘gyur gyi dkar chag*, bears witness to a clear instance of an early Tibetan Bstan ‘gyur, which was stored in the Snar thang monastery.¹¹

Considered together, the Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist bibliographical traditions provide evidence for the growing importance of *śāstra* as a scriptural category, which finally stands alongside the word of the Buddha as scripture of ostensible human authorship. Chinese and Tibetan Buddhists’ understanding of the general structure of Buddhist *śāstra* literature can be gathered from a perusal of some representative Chinese and Tibetan scriptural catalogs, such as Zhisheng’s *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* of 730, the *Ldan*

⁸ Lalou, “Contribution à bibliographie,” 319: *bka’ dang bstan ‘gyur ro cog gi dkar chag*. Ibid., 337: *gsung rab mdo sde dang bstan bcos thams cad*.

⁹ These six categories are: (XXVI) *theg pa chung ngu’i bstan bcos* (Hīnayāna *śāstras*); (XI) *bstan bcos* (*śāstras*, the texts in this category are associated with Nikāya Buddhism); (XXII) *dbu ma’i bstan bcos* (Madhyamaka *śāstras*); (XXIV) *rnam par shes pa’i bstan bcos* (Vijñāna *śāstras*); (XXV) *theg pa chen po’i bstan bcos sna tshogs* (Miscellaneous Mahāyāna *śāstras*); and (XXX) *bstan bcos sgyur ‘phro* (*śāstras* in the process of translation). Lalou, “Contribution à bibliographie,” 326-337.

¹⁰ Schaeffer and van der Kuijp, *Early Tibetan Survey*, 10.

¹¹ Ibid., 10, 60. An outline of this catalog is found in *ibid.*, 75-6.

dkar ma from the early ninth century, Bu ston Rin chen grub's 1322 catalog,¹² and the catalog of the Sde dge edition of the Tibetan Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur produced in the early half of the eighteenth century.¹³ They show that Buddhist *śāstras* have Nikāya and Mahāyāna varieties, among which the Abhidharma texts constitute the chief member in the former category, while the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra works figure prominently in the latter. Other major categories found in both Tibetan and Chinese scriptural catalogs include commentaries on the *sūtras*¹⁴ and works on epistemology and logic, highlighting respectively the exegetical, epistemological, and ratiocinative aspects of the scholastic treatises.

In the absence of any surviving catalog of Buddhist texts from ancient India, we need to be cautious about the weight we attach to the Chinese and Tibetan bibliographical sources, which may reflect certain conceptions of scriptural categories that are peculiar to these geographical regions, where religious and cultural contexts and chronologies of events differ. While the Chinese and Tibetan catalogs of Buddhist texts primarily of Indian origin point to a gradual ascendance of *śāstra* in a process that extended beyond India and the life of Buddhism therein, Buddhist *śāstra* as a genre originated and reached a mature stage in South Asia. As far as the formative stage of Buddhist *śāstra* is concerned, we may note that it is common for the Chinese translations of early Abhidharma texts to bear the word *lun* 論, normally translating *śāstra*, in the titles.¹⁵

¹² This is the catalog part of the following work: Bu ston Rin chen grub, *Bde bar gshegs pa'i bstan pa'i gsal byed chos kyi 'byung gnas gsung rab rin po che'i mdzod*, in *The Collected Works of Bu ston* (and *sgra tshad pa*) [Lhasa print], part 24 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971), 633-1055.

¹³ Ue Hakuju et al., *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons: (Bkaḥ-ḥgyur and Bstan-ḥgyur)* (Sendai, Japan: Tōhoku Imperial University aided by the Saitō Gratitude Foundation, 1934).

¹⁴ Commentaries on the *śāstras* are usually found in the parts of the catalogs where the works that they comment on are located. Therefore, they do not form a separate category.

¹⁵ For a list of Chinese translations of Abhidharma works, see Willeman, Dessein, and Cox, *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism*, 289-90.

Thus, the use of the term *śāstra* to refer to a Buddhist literary genre may indeed have started with the Abhidharma texts, although it remains a possibility that the word *lun* in the titles of some Chinese translations was inserted based on a Chinese convention,¹⁶ or that it corresponds in some cases with a different Indic word—as it is indeed known to translate *upadeśa* at times.¹⁷

However, by the middle of the first millennium, the identification of Abhidharma texts as *śāstras* is evident in Vasubandhu’s famous work, now preserved in Sanskrit, where he announces in the first stanza, “I will compose *Abhidharmakośa*, a *śāstra*.”¹⁸ Vasubandhu’s own *bhāṣya* also reports that *Dharmaskandha*, an earlier Abhidharma text, is referred to as a *śāstra*.¹⁹ His commentator Yaśomitra also mentions a reference to Kātyāyanīputra’s *Jñānaprasthāna* as a *śāstra* that, resembling a body itself, has the “six feet” (*ṣaṭpādāḥ*) which consist of the other six Abhidharma texts of the Sarvāstivādin school: “*Prakaraṇapāda*, *Vijñānakāya*, *Dharmaskandha*, *Prajñaptiśāstra*, *Dhātukāya*, and *Śaṅgītiparyāya*.”²⁰ In short, by Vasubandhu’s time at the latest Abhidharma texts have been regarded as belonging to the category of *śāstra*.²¹

¹⁶ The seven Pāli Abhidhamma works of the Theravādin school, on the other hand, do not bear such words in their titles.

¹⁷ See Ding Fubao 丁福保, *Foxue da cidian* 佛學大辭典 (Shanghai: Yixue shudian, 1925), s.v. *lun* 論.

¹⁸ AK I 1d, 1:3: *śāstram pravakṣyāmy abhidharmakośam*.

¹⁹ Vasubandhu reports a tradition which holds that the Buddha has spoken 80,000 *dharmaskandhas*, or heaps of dharma in AK I 25ab, 1:57: *dharmaskandhāṇi yāny aśītiṃ jagau munīḥ/ tāni* ... In addressing the question, “what is the measure of a *dharmaskandha*,” Vasubandhu reports in the subsequent stanza and its *bhāṣya* that one group holds that the size of one *dharmaskandha* is “simply the measure of the Abhidharma *śāstra* that bears *Dharmaskandha* as its title, which consists of 6,000 stanzas.” AK I 26a: *śāstrapramāṇa ity eke*. AKBh ad I 26a 1:57: *eke tāvat āḥuḥ dharmaskandhasamjñakasyaivābhidharmaśāstrasyāsyā pramāṇam iti/ tac ca ṣaṣṭhasrāṇi*.

²⁰ Yaśomitra’s *Sphuṭārthā Vyākhyā* ad AK I 2b. Śāstrī, *Abhidharmakośam*, 1:10: *anye vyācakṣate śāstram iti jñānaprasthānam/ tasya śarīrabhūtasya ṣaṭpādāḥ prakaraṇapādaḥ vijñānakāyaḥ dharmaskandhaḥ prajñaptiśāstram dhātukāyaḥ saṅgītiparyāya iti/*

²¹ In the versified “root text” of AK, the term *śāstra* appears in I 1d, I 2b, I 26a, and VII 12d.

For his part, Candrakīrti also describes Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* as a *śāstra*, and sometimes he simply calls it *Madhyamaka Śāstra*.²² Likewise, Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* refers to Āryadeva's *Catuḥśataka*, which enjoys an unquestioned authority in the Madhyamaka school along with Nāgārjuna's works, as *Śatakaśāstra* as well as *Śataka*.²³ Besides authoritative works of his own school, Candrakīrti also uses the term *śāstra* to describe texts in other recognized fields of learning to which he may not attach any importance.

In *Madhyamakāvatāra*, for instance, Candrakīrti refers to various *śāstras*, such as those associated with Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika schools of Hindu thought, that teach the existence of the self and its characteristics.²⁴ In his critical response to Bhāviveka's adoption of Dignāga's logic in Mādhyamika argumentation, Candrakīrti accuses his fellow Mādhyamika scholar (*aṅgīkṛtamadhyamakadarśana*) of "uttering autonomous syllogistic statement" (*svatantraprayogavākyābhidhāna*) "out of a desire to making known simply his own great expertise in the *śāstras* of speculative reasoning (*tarka*)."²⁵ Candrakīrti remains a stern critic of Dignāga's school of epistemology and logic and its

²² See PPMV 40.7-41.1: (*i*)*daṃ madhyamakaśāstraṃ praṇītaṃ ācāryeṇa*. "This *Madhyamaka Śāstra* was composed by ācārya [Nāgārjuna];" (2) PPMV 548.5: *utpādanīrodhayor asaṃbhava eva pratipāditāḥ śāstre madhyamake*. "In the *Madhyamaka Śāstra*, the impossibility of production and cessation is demonstrated."

²³ (1) PPMV 506.7-9: *tathā ca śatakaśāstre / anityasya dhuvā pīḍā pīḍā yasya na tat sukham / tasmād anityaṃ yat sarvaṃ duḥkhaṃ tad iti jāyate // iti* /. The stanza cited here, and later again at PPMV 460.9-10, is *Catuḥśataka* II 25. See the Sanskrit, Tibetan, and English translation of the stanza in Karen Lang's edition, *Āryadeva's Catuḥśataka: On Bodhisattva's Cultivation of Merit and Knowledge* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1986), 38-9. (2) *śatakaśāstre cāryadevapādair mahābodhicaryāsthīraprasthānasthītaiḥ / alātacakranirmāṇasvapnamāyāmbucandrakaiḥ / dhūmikāntaḥpratiśrutkāmarīcyabhraiḥ samo bhavaḥ // iti*. "The venerable Āryadeva, who remains in the journey of the firm activities of great awakening, states in the *Śatakaśāstra*, 'the existence is similar to ...' The stanza, cited at PPMV 173.2-3, where the source is named as *Śataka*, is *Catuḥśataka* XIII 25. Lang, *Āryadeva's Catuḥśataka*, 124-5.

²⁴ MA VI 123ab, 241: *bstan bcos bstan bcos las de'i phyad/ /mu stegs rnams kyi gang bstan de kun la/*. "With regard to all those distinctions of that [self] taught by the non-Buddhists in various *śāstras* ..." See the response given in MABh on that stanza (ibid.) to the distinctions of the self taught in the Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika texts.

²⁵ PPMV 25.7: (*ā*)*tmanas tarkaśāstrātikauśalamātram ācikyāsor*. See de Jong's emendation. "Textcritical Notes," 30.

influence on the Madhyamaka thought. For him reason should rather be something that is commonsensical.²⁶

In his debate with the *pramāṇavādin* followers of Dignāga in *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti's opponents, speaking of their writing as a form of *śāstra*, attempt to characterize their "usage of means of knowledge and knowable objects" (*pramāṇaprameyavyavahāro*) as "belonging to the ordinary life" (*laukika*).²⁷ But this suggestion is rejected.²⁸ In Candrakīrti's vocabulary, *tarka* and *tārkika*, the latter being a person who specializes in speculative reasoning, are always negative terms that are associated with a new form of logic that is unduly technical. He refers to Bhāviveka as a *tārkika* when he speaks critically of him;²⁹ and he even describes his own *Prasannapadā* in the prologue as a work that is "undisturbed by the wind of *tarka*" (*tarkānilāvyākulitā*).³⁰ As he associates *tarka/tārkika* with Dignāga's thought and its influence in Madhyamaka, Candrakīrti is aware that in the twenty-first stanza of *Lokātitastava*, which he cites twice in the *Prasannapadā* (55.2-4 and 234.8-9), Nāgārjuna also uses the term *tārkika* to describe his own opponents.³¹

²⁶ The general word for reason is *yukti*, which we will discuss in the next two chapters. Other alternative word for reason include *upapatti* and *nyāya*.

²⁷ PPMV 58.14-5: *eṣa eva pramāṇaprameyavyavahāro laukiko 'smābhiḥ śāstreṇānuvarṇita iti*. "[Opponents:] This customary usage of means of knowledge and knowable objects, which belongs to the ordinary life, is described by us by way of a *śāstra*."

²⁸ PPMV 58.15-59.3.

²⁹ PPMV 25.8 and 31.1.

³⁰ PPMV 2.3-4: *nāgārjunāya praṇipatya tasmai tatkārikāṇām vivṛtiṃ kariṣye / tarkānilāvyākulitām prasannam* // "Having bowed to Nāgārjuna, I will compose a lucid commentary on his *kārikās*, one which is ... undisturbed by the wind of *tarka*."

³¹ PPMV 55.2-4 gives Nāgārjuna's stanza in question as: *ata evoktaṃ svayaṃ kṛtaṃ parakṛtaṃ dvābhyāṃ kṛtaṃ ahetukaṃ / tārkikair iṣyate duḥkhaṃ tvayā tūktaṃ pratītyajam* // *iti*. This same stanza is cited at PPMV 234.8-9, introduced with the phrase *yathoktaṃ*. For the Sanskrit, Tibetan, and English translation of the stanza, see Chr. Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana: Studies in the Writings and Philosophy of Nāgārjuna* (Indiske Studier IV. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1982), 134, 135. See also the use of the term *kutārkika*, "bad logician," by Candrakīrti's *pramāṇavādin* opponents at PPMV 58.15 and 59.1-2. The term *kutārkika* also appears in PPMV 262.5 in a citation of *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* III 48. See P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram* (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute, 1963), 68. The same *sūtra* uses the term

In Candrakīrti's vocabulary, perhaps a neutral term for the texts on the science of reasoning, or the technical writings of this sort more generally, is *nyāyaśāstra*. The term does not refer to the texts in the Nyāya school of Indian philosophy, as it comes at the conclusion of Candrakīrti's lengthy critique of the logical aspect of Bhāviveka's Mādhyamika reasoning (PPMV 14.1-36.2). There Candrakīrti recommends that the common procedures in ordinary life be followed in the technical writings as far as the principle of reasoning is concerned.

However it is in the world, so let it be in reasoning, since only worldly interaction is befitting in a *śāstra* on reasoning.”³²

Besides Madhyamaka texts and works on logic and reasoning, Candrakīrti also speaks of *śāstras* and *sūtras* of all schools of Nikāya Buddhism (*sarvanikāyaśāstrasūtra*).³³ La Vallée Poussin, the editor of *Prasannapadā*, writes in a note that by *śāstras* of Nikāya Buddhism, Candrakīrti must without doubt have in his mind the books of Abhidharma.³⁴ The juxtaposition of *śāstra* with *sūtra*, if we do not read too much into the fact that it precedes *sūtra*, in this formulation is significant, as it confirms that *śāstra* stands now as an authoritative and overarching literary category next to *sūtra*, which corresponds with *bka'vacana*, the word of the Buddha, in the later Tibetan tradition.

tārīka few stanzas later (ibid., *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* III 52d), again in the negative light. Some Pāli *suttas* also use the term *tārīka* to refer to the logicians.

³² PPMV 35.3-4: *yathā ca loke tathā nyāye 'pi / laukikasyaiva vyavahārasya nyāyaśāstre prastutatvāt*.

³³ PPMV 549.8.

³⁴ PPMV 549 n. 2.

As an example from the later period of Indian Buddhism, we turn to *Sāratamā* of Ratnākaraśānti, who flourished in the early half of the eleventh century according to the Tibetan tradition.³⁵ *Sāratamā* is a commentary on the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, in which the author also makes use of another text called *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, which he refers to as a *śāstra*. *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* has itself been described as a “condensed table of contents” for the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature or a kind of “analytical digest” of the *sūtra* that Ratnākaraśānti comments on.³⁶ In a brief discussion of the exegetical method of *Sāratamā*, Paul Griffiths tells us that in this commentary on the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* Ratnākaraśānti quotes most of the verses of *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* and that by thus creating a link between *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* and *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* the author aims to show that the matter of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* should be coordinated with that of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*.³⁷ As Ratnākaraśānti uses the *śāstra* to explain the *sūtra*, his work is also “related” to *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* in a “quasi-commentarial fashion.”³⁸ Therefore, *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* supplies an example of a *śāstra* that is essentially a commentary, but one that has also become the fountain-head of a long and vibrant tradition of Indian and Tibetan commentaries and sub-commentaries that

³⁵ This work is edited in Padmanabh S. Jaini, ed., *Sāratamā: A Pañjikā on the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* by Ācārya Ratnākaraśānti (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1979). Jaini establishes in his introduction to the text that the title of this work is *Sāratamā* although, as the editor himself mentions, both the Tibetan transliteration and the translation (*Snying po mchog*) suggests *Sārottama* or *Sārottamā*. Ibid., 2-3. The Tibetan historians Bu ston and Tārānātha both mention Ratnākaraśānti in their histories. Ibid., 3.

³⁶ Paul J. Griffiths, *Religious Reading: The Place of Reading in the Practice of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 144.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 146. Further observation on Ratnākaraśānti’s exegetical method can be found in Jaini, *Sāratamā*, 4-21.

either explain the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* in connection with it, as in the case of *Sāratamā*, or simply expounds on *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* itself.³⁹

For our brief sampling of the Buddhist *śāstra* literature, the work of *Sāratamā* also serves as an example of a text that follows the Yogācāra School of Mahāyāna Buddhism, as it uses unique Yogācārin concepts such as *trīsvabhāva* in the interpretation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*.⁴⁰ This important Mahāyāna *sūtra*, on the other hand, has been explained from the perspective of the Madhyamaka School in the *Ālokā* of Haribhadra, who also follows *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* in his interpretation of the *sūtra*.⁴¹ The scholastic tradition that grows out of *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* therefore provides a *śāstra* model that focuses on scriptural hermeneutics, one that can be used by both Yogācāra and Madhyamaka schools of Buddhist philosophy.

From this preliminary examination of the rise of Buddhist *śāstras*, some visible features of this textual category have already emerged. (1) Considered collectively as texts other than the *sūtras*, the *śāstras* must display certain dependent characteristics, either by way of their secondary status in relation to the *sūtras*, which the tradition attributes to the Buddha, or by formulating itself textually and developing its own ideas around the earlier texts. (2) As the *śāstras* now stand between texts of a canonical status and readers, they often assume the role of an interpretive authority, sometimes even replacing the older texts as the sources of new commentarial traditions; and in any case, they function as the vital force that carries the tradition forward. (3) Buddhist *śāstras* are technical writings of many varieties, being associated with different schools of thought,

³⁹ For an elaborate, but by no means exhaustive, bibliography of this commentarial tradition, see Edward Conze, *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (Tokyo: Reiyukai, 1978), 112-120.

⁴⁰ See Jaini, *Sāratamā*, 13-21.

⁴¹ See a comparative study of Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā* and Haribhadra's *Ālokā* in Jaini, *Sāratamā*, 4-21.

such as Madhyamaka and Yogācāra, or various forms of inquiry, such as exegesis and logic. (4) It is common for rivalry to be developed between Buddhist writers who are committed to different schools of thought.

According to our initial observation, the emergence and development of *śāstras* constitute a broad-based process in the history of Indian Buddhism. However, if Buddhist *śāstras* are so diverse, are there any common internal characteristics that give coherence to these texts to make them the members of the same group? Are there consistent religious and historical circumstances under which the Buddhist *śāstras* emerged and flourished? To what extent did the authors of Buddhist *śāstras* participate in the larger Indian *śāstra* culture that involved other religious traditions and fields of learning as well? What different roles did *sūtras* and *śāstras* play in the Buddhist life in India? These are some general questions that pertain to the Buddhist *śāstra* as a literary category and its rise as a historical phenomenon, questions which have not been pursued with any sustained effort in Buddhist Studies. As Buddhist *śāstras* encompass a large body of texts, much ground work in the study of individual texts is still needed before we are able to address these larger questions with any confidence. However, we must bear these questions in mind as we study the individual texts.

The present chapter will concern itself mainly with a demonstration of the hermeneutical character of Buddhist *śāstras*, using the writings of Candrakīrti and the Mādhyamika authors associated with him as an example. The two immediately subsequent sections will attend to certain formal aspects of Buddhist *śāstras* that mark themselves and *sūtras* as commentary and scripture, emphasizing, however, the increasing power of *śāstras* in a process that may be called the scripturalization of

commentary. We will then move onto a consideration of how the authority of *śāstras* is envisaged through its authorship and soteriological purpose in a manner that is accommodated by the formal structure of *śāstra* composition. In the final section we will come to a consideration of the nature of Buddhist *śāstra* as a sub-genre in the larger context of the *śāstra* discourse in India. It is necessary to examine the nature of *śāstra* and the internal dynamics of its growth, because it is on the platform of *śāstra* that reflections on scripture and various textual practices involving the use of scripture take place.

3.2 The Changing Scope of *Āgama*

and the Growing Authority of *Śāstra* from the Perspective of a Later Age

In Chapter Two, we have chosen *āgama* from among a list of trans-regional Buddhist terms as the focal point of our discussion of the Buddhist concept of scripture. Indeed, each of the terms in the list provided earlier has its place in a nexus of ideas and textual practices that spread across the Buddhist cultures. Had the role of scripture in the transmission of Buddhism from India to China been the primary interest of a study, for instance, the term *sūtra* and its Chinese translation equivalent *jīng* 經 would have been an ideal choice. The translation and reception of Indian Buddhist *sūtras*, both the Nikāya Buddhist texts found in the Sūtrapiṭaka and the Mahāyāna *sūtras*, were momentous events in early Chinese Buddhist history, while selected Mahāyāna *sūtras* constituted the foundations of the indigenous schools of Buddhist thought that emerged in subsequent

periods.⁴² Even today, a few Mahāyāna *sūtras* continue to lie at the center of devotional and exegetical practices.⁴³ Moreover, the term *jing* also appears in the titles of the Chinese translations of Indian Buddhist texts that do not belong to the category of *Sūtra*. It therefore has the connotation of scripture generally,⁴⁴ and it is used in that manner in the title of Buddhist scriptural collections, called *Dazangjing* 大藏經, and Chinese Buddhist scriptural catalogs, called *jinglu* 經錄.

Buddhist texts of Chinese authorship that purport to be of Indian origin—for which scholars have used the terms “Chinese Buddhist apocrypha” and “indigenous scripture”⁴⁵—also call themselves *jing*. An influential document containing an account of the life and teaching of the sixth patriarch Huineng 惠能 of the Chan School, for instance, is entitled *Tanjing* 壇經, or the *Platform Sūtra*.⁴⁶ Thus, to choose the terms *sūtra* and *jing*, which became inclusive terms for Buddhist scripture in its broader sense, is to emphasize the enduring influence of Indian Buddhist *sūtras* and the cross-cultural aspect in the roles that Buddhist scriptures play in China⁴⁷ and to illustrate the ever evolving scripturalizing processes in Buddhism.⁴⁸

⁴² For a history of Chinese Buddhism with a treatment of the translation and reception of major Buddhist *sūtras* and the rise of Chinese Buddhist schools that are centered on the particular *sūtras*, see Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964).

⁴³ The *sūtra*-centered characteristic of contemporary Chinese Buddhism is evident, for instance, in Levering's observation of the religious life in a Buddhist convent in Taiwan. “Scripture and Its Reception,” 58-101.

⁴⁴ For a description of the meaning of the word *sūtra* in East Asian Buddhism, with both the restricted and broad senses, see Kōgen Mizuno, *Buddhist Sutras: Origin, Development, Transmission* (Tokyo: Kōsei Publishing Co., 1982), 15-7.

⁴⁵ Buswell, *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, 1-7, 32, 62 n. 7.

⁴⁶ Smith, *What Is Scripture*, 154, 310 n. 18, 318 n. 49.

⁴⁷ On the use of the word *jing* 經 for Confucian classics and Daoist scriptures, see *ibid.*, 176-182.

⁴⁸ For Smith, the abundance of scriptures that emerged in various Buddhist cultures is one of the most important aspects of the phenomenon of Buddhist scriptures. *What Is Scripture*, 147-9. A treatment of the translation, interpretation, debate, and material production of *sūtras* in Chinese Buddhism can be found in Kōgen, *Buddhist Sutras*.

However, if we highlight the growth and flourishing of *śāstras*, with the works of Candrakīrti as a case in point, and the Buddhist scholastics' reflection on the epistemological status of scripture, the term *āgama* in its Indo-Tibetan connection provides an excellent vantage point, one that is comparable to what *sūtraljing* offers in the transmission of Buddhism to China. Here, too, *āgama* is an evolving concept. In the previous chapter we have already observed that in Candrakīrti's time *āgama* is a term that is reserved for the texts that the tradition regards as the word of the Buddha, and this includes all three divisions of Sūtra, Vinaya, and Abhidharma and, for Mahāyāna Buddhists, the Mahāyāna *sūtras*. In the *Prasannapadā*, citations from the works of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva are just as numerous as those from the Nikāya and Mahāyāna Buddhist *sūtras*, but the writings of the founding fathers of the Madhyamaka School are called *śāstras* and not *āgama*. At least a hierarchical order of texts is maintained, although this does not necessarily reflect the degrees of importance that authors like Candrakīrti attach to these texts.

However, the situation changed in Tibetan Buddhism, where the Tibetan word *lung*, an equivalent for the Sanskrit *āgama*, is used not just for the *sūtras* but the *śāstras* as well. In a comprehensive Buddhist manual entitled *Lam rim chen mo*, which is described as “one of the most renowned works of Buddhist thought and practice to have been composed in Tibet”⁴⁹ and therefore a prominent example of a Tibetan Buddhist scripture, Tsong kha pa (1357-1419), for instance, uses the term *lung* to refer to both *sūtras* and *śāstras*. In the following example, he uses the term in reference to

⁴⁹ Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa, *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2000), 1:17.

Kāśyapaparivarta, which is a part of the collection of Mahāyāna *sūtras* called *Ratnakūṭa*, in an argument against a position held by his opponent.⁵⁰

As for the manner in which [that position] contradicts many scriptures (*lung*), it contradicts such statements as the one found in the *Kāśyapaparivarta* that says:⁵¹

Kāśyapa! Which is the middle way, the examination of the reality of all things? Kāśyapa! Where there is the examination of the lack of the self and the examination of the lack of sentient being, the lack of a soul, the lack of one who nourishes, the lack of a man, the lack of a person, the lack of a human, and the lack of a descendent from Manu, Kāśyapa, this is called the middle way, the examination of the reality of all things.

⁵⁰ Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa, *Mnyam med tsong kha pa chen pos mdzad pa'i byang chub lam rim che ba* (Xining, China: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1985), 793.14-20: *lung ma po dang 'gal bar 'gyur tshul ni/ 'od srungs le'u las/ 'od srungs/ dbu ma'i lam chos rnams la yang dag par so sor rtog pa gang zhe na/ 'od srungs/ gang la bdag med par so sor rtog pa dang sems can med pa dang srog med pa dang gso ba med pa dang skyes bu med pa dang gang zag med pa dang shed las skye ba med pa dang shed bu med par so sor rtog pa ste/ 'od srungs/ 'di ni dbu ma'i lam chos rnams la yang dag par so sor rtog pa zhes bya'o zhes gsungs pa la sogs pa 'di 'dra ba rnams dang 'gal ba'o/*. Tsong kha pa's *Lam rim chen mo* will be abbreviated as LRChM with reference to the text found in this edition. An alternative English translation of the passage is found in Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa, *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2002), 3:348.

⁵¹ LRChM 793.14-19. The Sanskrit, Tibetan, and four Chinese translations of the passage are found in Alexander Wilhelm Baron von Staël-Holstein, ed., *The Kāśyapaparivarta: A Mahāyānasūtra of the Ratnakūṭa Class* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1926), 82-3. The Sanskrit reads: *katamā ca kāśyapa sarvadharmāṇāṃ bhūtapratyavekṣā/ yatra kāśyapa nātmapatyavekṣā nasatvanajīvanapoṣanapudgalanamānavapratyavekṣā/ iyam ucyate kāśyapa madhyamā pratipad dharmāṇāṃ bhūtapratyavekṣā*.

In addition to the *sūtras*, Tsong kha pa also uses *lung* for the *śāstras* (Tib. *bstan bcos*) as well. In a debate on the question regarding whether Madhyamaka scholars present thesis in argumentation, for instance, Tsong kha pa refers to the passages from the works of Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, and Candrakīrti as *lung*.⁵² Elsewhere in the *Lam rim chen mo*, he applies the term to such texts as *Prasannapadā*⁵³ and *Catuḥśatakaṭīkā*⁵⁴ of Candrakīrti, his favorite Indian Buddhist author, and Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama*.⁵⁵

As the Tibetan equivalent for *āgama*, the term *lung* necessarily embraces the variety of meanings that are already associated with *āgama* as they are carried into the Tibetan translations of Indian texts. Thus, *lung* means scripture(s) as well as a scriptural passage. In association with the latter sense, the phrase *lung drangs (pa)*, literally extracting a scriptural passage,⁵⁶ also becomes a Tibetan compound verb which means to cite, in the context of citing from the scriptural sources,⁵⁷ where *lung* is the scriptural passage cited.⁵⁸ While both *āgama* in the Indic languages and *lung* in Tibetan have comparable semantic connotations, between the time of Candrakīrti and that of Tsong kha pa the scope of the texts that they encompassed changed. While Candrakīrti only uses *āgama* to refer to the texts that are considered as *buddhavadāna*, for Tsong kha pa, *śāstras*—such as those written by Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Candrakīrti, and Kamalaśīla—are also a constitutive part of *lung*. Among the primary words for scripture found in Candrakīrti's writings, the term that has retained the scope of its referent is *pravacana*. Its

⁵² The debate involves the passages that Tsong kha pa's opponents invoke in LRChM 677.3-678.4 to argue for their belief that the Mādhyamikas present no thesis. Tsong kha pa's response, in which he offers his own interpretation of these passages, is presented in LRChM 681.15-695.7.

⁵³ LRChM 712.8.

⁵⁴ LRChM 612.9, 760.8, 760.14, and 761.6.

⁵⁵ LRChM 787.8.

⁵⁶ In this context *lung* can only mean "scriptural passage" and not "scripture," since the transitive verb *drangs (pa)* does not admit the alternative reading of *lung las drangs pa*, "citing from a scripture."

⁵⁷ An example of the phrase *lung drangs* is found in LRChM 693.18.

Tibetan equivalent *gsung rab*, which also means the “sacred speech” literally, still signifies the word of the Buddha in contradistinction to the writings of less exalted authors, as is testified in Tsong kha pa’s expression “definitive sacred speech and Madhyamaka *śāstras*.”⁵⁹

Thus, the scope of the texts that the Buddhists called *āgama*, and later *lung* in Tibetan, are always expanding. In early Indian Buddhism, *āgama* refers to the four or five collections of Āgama Sūtras that belong to the Sūtrapiṭaka of various schools of Nikāya Buddhism.⁶⁰ As we have seen in Chapter Two, by the middle of the first millennium, Vasubandhu already used *āgama* for the texts in all three divisions of Tripiṭaka. According to our observation, Candrakīrti also used the term that way, although for him it naturally also includes the Mahāyāna *sūtras*. Finally, we have the evidence that in Tibetan Buddhism the term encompasses in its Tibetan form the *śāstras* as well. The changing scope of *āgama/lung*’s referents—just as that of *sūtra/jing*—therefore, demonstrates a continuous need to grant scriptural status to the new additions to the Buddhist literary corpus. But the new turn in the shifting range of *āgama/lung* has its particular significance, as it underscores the growing importance of *śāstras*.

Indeed this shift is not just terminological, or simply a matter of extending the definition of an old term to include new varieties of texts. Returning to Tsong kha pa’s *Lam rim chen mo* again, we discover that in the section of the text that deals with the subject of Madhyamaka *sūtra* citations are rare in comparison with the very numerous uses of *śāstra* sources. Even when *sūtra* passages are used, in most cases they are referred to simply because they were already cited in the *śāstras* that Tsong kha pa

⁵⁸ An alternative word for citation in Tibetan is *shes byed*.

⁵⁹ Eg., LRChM 693.15-6: *nges don gyi gsung rab dang dbu ma’i bstan bcos rnam*s.

himself is familiar with. As far as the *sūtra* sources are concerned, the lengthy portion of *Lam rim chen mo* that treats the subject of Madhyamaka (LRChM 564.1-805.6) is divided into a brief introduction (LRChM 564.1-567.12), a relatively short concluding section (LRChM 769.8-802.6), and the long middle section (LRChM 567.13-769.7) that analyzes the meaning of emptiness from the perspective of the Madhyamaka thought.

The introduction uses four *sūtra* passages, which have all been cited in Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama*.⁶¹ In the concluding section, most of the *sūtra* passages cited are also addressed in Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama*, Asaṅga's *Śrāvakabhūmi*, Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, or Ratnākaraśānti's *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*, which are the *śāstras* that Tsong kha pa himself discusses.⁶² One of the few passages that are not immediately clear as to whether they appear in the *śāstras* that Tsong kha pa is familiar with is the passage from *Kāśyapaparivarta*, which we mentioned above. However, Tsong kha pa is aware that Indian writers such as Candrakīrti and Kamalaśīla are acquainted with *Kāśyapaparivarta*. Moreover, the passage in question is also mentioned in a text that appears to be related to the *sūtra* citations in Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama*, entitled *Bhāvanākramasūtrasamuccaya*.⁶³

⁶⁰ Oskar von Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 24.

⁶¹ The four *sūtra* passages appear in (1) LRChM 564.19-565.2 and 565.8, 9-10, 11, 13-14; (2) LRChM 565.20-566.3; (3) LRChM 567.7-9; and (4) LRChM 567.10-12. The *sūtra* sources of the four passages are respectively (1) *Samādhirājasūtra* IX 36 and 37 (Sanskrit in Vaidya (1961): 49; Tibetan in D (To. 127) Mdo sde, vol. *da*, 27a7-b1; Chinese in T. 639 XV 558b7-10); (2) *Bodhisattvapīṭaka* (Tibetan in D (To. 56) Dkon brtsegs, vol. *ga*, 161b; Chinese in T. 311 XI 297b6-14); (3) *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* (Tibetan in D (To. 106) Mdo sde, vol. *ca*, 47a4-5; Chinese in T. 676 XVI 707b18-21); (4) *Mahāyānaprasādaprabhāvanasūtra* (Tibetan in D (To. 144) Mdo sde, vol. *ba*, 21b6). The citations of the four passages are found respectively in (1) the first *Bhāvanākrama* (Sanskrit in Tucci (1958): 210; Sanskrit and Tibetan in Gyaltsen Namdrol (1997): 46 and 215; Chinese in T. 1664, XXXII 567c) and the third *Bhāvanākrama* (Sanskrit in Tucci (1971): 18, Sanskrit and Tibetan in Gyaltsen Namdrol (1997): 170 and 265); (2) the second *Bhāvanākrama* (Tibetan in D (To. 3916) Dbu ma, vol. *ki*, 44c5-7); (3) the second *Bhāvanākrama* (Tibetan in D (To. 3916) Dbu ma, vol. *ki*, 48b1-2); and (4) the second *Bhāvanākrama* (Tibetan in D (To. 3916) Dbu ma, vol. *ki*, 45a2-3).

⁶² For an English translation of the section, see Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa, *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2002) 3:327-357.

⁶³ The *sūtra* passage is cited at D (To. 3933) Dbu ma, vol. *ki*, 146a3-4.

The second part of the section on Madhyamaka contains Tsong kha pa's treatment of the meaning of emptiness, the understanding of which is considered as essential in Mahāyāna Buddhist soteriology, and it occupies a quarter of the entire of book of *Lam rim chen mo*. The main textual sources that Tsong kha pa uses in this section are the Madhyamaka works of Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, and Candrakīrti. While making frequent references to other texts is a notable feature of Tsong kha pa's presentation, the number of the *sūtra* passages quoted here is no more than five percent of the total number of scriptural passages used. A list of the *sūtra* citations found in this middle section⁶⁴ given below reveals that Tsong kha pa's attention to these passages is heavily influenced by his reading of Candrakīrti's texts.

Table One: *Sūtra* Passages used in *Lam rim chen mo* 567.13-769.7

#	<i>Sūtra</i> Passages Cited in <i>Lam rim chen mo</i> 567.13-769.7	Sources of These Passage in the <i>Sūtras</i>	Citations of These Passages in Candrakīrti's Works
1	LRChM 568.18-569.3 and 569.6-12	<i>Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra</i> . Braarvig (1993): 1.117-18; Tibetan in D (To. 175) Mdo sde, vol. <i>ma</i> , 150a2-7 and 150b1-3; Chinese in T. 397 XIII 205b10-16 and b18-23.	<i>Prasannapadā</i> . Sanskrit in PPMV 43; Tibetan in D (To. 3860) Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 13b5-14a2.
2	LRChM 569.16-18	<i>Samādhirājasūtra</i> VII 5. Sanskrit in Vaidya (1961) 36; Tibetan in D (To. 127) Mdo sde, vol. <i>da</i> , 20b3; Chinese in T. 639 XV 556a19-20.	<i>Prasannapadā</i> . PPMV 44 and 276; Tibetan in D (To. 3860) Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 14a2-3 and 93a7-b1.
3	LRChM 581.4-5	<i>Samādhirājasūtra</i> IX 23. Sanskrit in Vaidya (1961): 47; Tibetan in D (To. 127) Mdo sde, vol. <i>da</i> , 26b5-6; Chinese in T 639 XV 558a18-19.	<i>Yuktiṣaṣṭhikāvṛtti</i> . Tibetan in D (To. 3864) Dbu ma, vol. <i>ya</i> , 5a7-b1. This stanza serves as the basis for <i>Madhyamakāvatāra</i> VI 30 and 31a. Tibetan in La Vallée Poussin (1907-

⁶⁴ For an English translation of this section, see Tsong-kha-pa, *Stages of the Path*, 3:111-325.

			1912): 112.
4	LRChM 614.11	The first <i>pāda</i> of <i>Samādhirājasūtra</i> IX 23 (see no. 3).	<i>Yuktiṣaṣṭhikāvṛtti</i> . Tibetan in D (To. 3864) Dbu ma, vol. <i>ya</i> , 5a7.
5	LRChM 636.8-10	<i>Anavataptanāgarājaparipṛcchā</i> . Tibetan in D (To. 156) Mdo sde, vol. <i>pha</i> , 230b2-3; Chinese in T. 635 XV 497b3-4.	<i>Prasannapadā</i> . PPMV 239, 491, 500, 504. Cited also in Bhāviveka's <i>Prajñāpradīpa</i> . Chinese in T. 1566 XXX 59b9-10.
6	LRChM 636.15-16	<i>Laṅkāvatārasūtra</i> . Sanskrit in Nanjio (1932): 76; Chinese in T. 670 XVI 488c12-13, T. 671 XVI 529a20-21, and T. 672 XVI 599a16-18.	<i>Prasannapadā</i> . PPMV 504; Tibetan in D (To. 3860) Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 167b1.
7	LRChM 641.15-16	<i>Prajñāpāramitāratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā</i> I 9cd. Sanskrit in Vaidya (2003): 353 and Yuyama (1976): 10; Tibetan in D (To. 13) Shes phyin, vol. <i>ka</i> , 2a7-b1; Chinese in T 229 VIII 677a14.	
8	LRChM 642.1-2	<i>Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya</i> . Sanskrit in Vaidya (2003): 98; Tibetan in D (To. 21) Shes phyin, vol. <i>ka</i> , 5a5; Chinese in T 225 VIII 850b3-4.	
9	LRChM 642.3-4	<i>Prajñāpāramitāratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā</i> I 28cd. Sanskrit in Vaidya (2003): 355 and Yuyama (1976): 16; Tibetan in D (To. 13) Shes phyin, vol. <i>ka</i> , 5a5; Chinese in T 229 VIII 677b23.	
10	LRChM 646.6-7	(1) <i>Śālistambasūtra</i> . Reat (1993): 33 and Vaidya (2003): 101. Tibetan in D (To. 210) Mdo sde, vol. <i>tsha</i> , 117a6; Chinese in T 710 XVI 819b7-8. (2) <i>Āṅguttaranikāya</i> . In Morris et al. (1955-1960): 1:286. (3) <i>Samyuktāgama</i> . Chinese in T. 99 II 84c19-20; the Pāli version in <i>Samyuttanikāya</i> is in Feer (1884-1904): 2:25.	<i>Prasannapadā</i> . PPMV 40. ⁶⁵
11	LRChM 666.3-9	<i>Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā</i> . Sanskrit in Dutt (1934): 260-261. Chinese in T. 222 VII 129b12-22 and T. 222 VIII 208c28-209a4. A similar passage is found in the Tibetan translation of <i>Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā</i> , in D (To. 8) Shes phyin, vol. <i>nga</i> , 239c2-6. Cf.	<i>Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya</i> . In La Vallée Poussin (1907-1912): 295 and D (To. 3862) Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 311a3-5.

⁶⁵ LVP notes in PPMV 40 n. 1 that the passage is also cited other texts that include Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and Yaśomitra's *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*.

		<i>Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā</i> , in Vaidya (1960): 15.	
12	LRChM 720.2-5	<i>Samyuktāgama</i> . Chinese in T. 99 II 327b7-10; Pāli version in <i>Samyuttanikāya</i> is in Feer (1884-1904): 1:135.	<i>Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya</i> . Tibetan in La Vallée Poussin (1907-1912): 257-8 and D (To 3862) Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 299c6-7. Cited also in Vasubandhu's <i>Abhidharmakośabhāṣya</i> IX. Chinese in T. 1558 XXIX 154b18-21. The second stanza is cited in Bhāviveka's <i>Tarkajvālā</i> . Tibetan in D (To. 3856) Dbu ma, vol. <i>dza</i> , 80b3.
13	LRChM 732.8	e.g., T. 40 I 825a13. ⁶⁶	<i>Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya</i> . Tibetan in D (To. 3862) Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 296b7-297a1 and La Vallée Poussin (1907-1912): 248. <i>Prasannapadā</i> . PPMV 574. Tibetan in D (To. 3860) Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 191a7-b1.
14	LRChM 732.19-20	Identified in LRChM as from the same <i>sūtra</i> as the line cited above in no. 13. ⁶⁷ Cf. T. 39 I 824a2-3.	<i>Prasannapadā</i> . PPMV 574.
15	LRChM 745.15-746.3	<i>Samādhirājasūtra</i> XXIX 13-16. Sanskrit in Vaidya (1961): 174; Tibetan in D (To. 127) Mdo sde, vol. <i>da</i> , 96a2-5.	<i>Prasannapadā</i> . PPMV 109-110. Tibetan in D (To. 3860) Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 37b6-38a1.
16	LRChM 749.6-750.8	<i>Samādhirājasūtra</i> IX 11-17 and 19-22. Sanskrit in Vaidya (1961): 46-47. Tibetan in D (To. 127) Dbu ma, vol. <i>da</i> , 26a6-b4. Chinese in T. 639 XV 577c29-558a1 and 558a6-7.	Some of the stanzas are cited in <i>Prasannapadā</i> : <i>Samādhirājasūtra</i> IX 11 cited in PPMV 178; <i>Samādhirājasūtra</i> IX 17 cited in PPMV 178; <i>Samādhirājasūtra</i> IX 20 cited in PPMV 178 and

⁶⁶ This version in Chinese comes closest to the sentence cited here, although the story of King Māndhātṛ is told in a wide variety of Buddhist texts. Māndhātṛ is mentioned in the epic and *purāṇic* sources. Fuller Chinese versions of his story include T. 39, 40, 165 and chap. 57 of T. 202. For the references in the Buddhist texts in the Indic languages, see Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit*, s.v. Māndhātṛ. He is mentioned, for instance, in *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, in P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram* (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1963), 57.

⁶⁷ If Tsong kha pa has a specific Tibetan source in mind, exactly which *sūtra* he is speaking of is not clear. Mentions of Māndhātṛ/Nga las nu abound in Bka' 'gyur. One Tibetan version of the story, for instance, is found in the translation of *Abhiniṣkramaṇasūtra*, in L 286 Mdo sde, vol. *la*, 175a5 ff.

			550.
17	LRChM 751.19-20	<i>Samyuktāgama</i> . Chinese in T. 99 II 8b16-26; Pāli version in <i>Samyuttanikāya</i> is in Feer (1884-1904): 3:138. Source misidentified in LRChM as <i>Trisaṃvaranirdeśaparivarta</i> , in D (To. 45) Dkon Brtsegs, vol. <i>ka</i> , 9b5.	<i>Prasannapadā</i> . PPMV 370. Also in <i>Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya</i> . Tibetan in La Vallée Poussin (1907-1912): 179.
18	LRChM 753.8-12	(1) <i>Samādhirājasūtra</i> XII 7. Sanskrit in Vaidya (1961): 77; Chinese in T. 639 XV 563c11-12. (2) <i>Samādhirājasūtra</i> XI 16. Sanskrit in Vaidya (1961): 70; Chinese in T. 639 XV 562a23-24.	<i>Prasannapadā</i> . PPMV 128.
19	LRChM 762.19-763.1	The same stanza from <i>Anavataptanāgarājaparipṛcchā</i> as no. 5 above.	<i>Prasannapadā</i> . PPMV 239, 491, 500, 504.
20	LRChM 763.5-6	<i>Anavataptanāgarājaparipṛcchā</i> . Tibetan in D (To 156) Mdo sde, vol. <i>pha</i> , 230b2. Chinese in T. 635 XV 497b1.	<i>Prasannapadā</i> . PPMV 505.
21	LRChM 763.10-12	<i>Hastikakṣyasūtra</i> . This cited stanza is not found in the available Tibetan (To. 207) and Chinese translations (T. 813 and 814).	<i>Prasannapadā</i> . PPMV 388.1-4 and 514.7-10.

In this relatively short list of the *sūtra* citations used in the section of *Lam rim chen mo* that discusses the meaning of emptiness from the Madhyamaka perspective, most of the passages Tsong kha pa refers to are either directly cited in or closely linked with Candrakīrti's writings. The exceptions here are (1) two half-stanzas from *Prajñāpāramitāratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā* (nos. 7 and 9), the well-known versified summary of *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*; and (2) a line from *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya* (no. 8). Although Candrakīrti has cited at least two different stanzas and a *pāda* from the former text,⁶⁸ Tsong kha pa is independently familiar with the text, and he also uses it elsewhere in the *Lam rim chen mo*.⁶⁹ As for *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*, commonly

⁶⁸ The two half-stanzas Tsong kha pa cites from *Prajñāpāramitāratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā* are (1) I 9cd and (2) I 28cd. The two stanzas and the *pāda* that Candrakīrti cites in PPMV 166.11-167.4 and 353.8-354.2 are respectively (1) XX 5 and II 3d and (2) II 4 of the same text.

⁶⁹ E.g. LRChM 450.12-14 and 454.10-12.

known as the *Heart Sūtra*, the text is regarded as a short sample of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras and is routinely recited. Dreyfus reports that the *Heart Sūtra* is among a few short *sūtras* that are used in the present-day Tibetan liturgies.⁷⁰

Next, we have an instance where Tsong kha pa's study of Candrakīrti's texts appears to have prompted him to pursue the *sūtra* passages that Candrakīrti had referred to. Toward the end of Tsong kha pa's critical examination of personal identity, he cites stanzas 11-17 and 19-22 from the ninth chapter of *Samādhirājasūtra* (no. 16). Only some of these stanzas appear in Candrakīrti's writings. Here we can easily imagine that Tsong kha pa was impressed by the powerful poetic expressions of idea of the absence of the self (*anātman*) found in these lines that he first encountered in Candrakīrti's texts. When he later composes *Lam rim chen mo*, he found in them the ideal words with which to bring a closure to his philosophical analysis of the notion of the self.

The rest of Tsong kha pa's *sūtra* citations found in this section of *Lam rim chen mo* all overlap with what have already been cited or used by Candrakīrti. Among them, the following passage (no. 18 in the list) allows us to observe a very clear instance of Candrakīrti's influence on Tsong kha pa.

In this manner the *Samādhirājasūtra* also says:

Just as you understand the idea of the self,

By mind it is likewise to be applied to all.

All things have that nature—

Pure and analogous to space.

⁷⁰ Dreyfus, *Sound of Hands Clapping*, 89.

One knows all by means of one,
 One sees all by means of one,
 No matter how much is expounded,
 His arrogance does not arise.⁷¹

The two stanzas are used as the transitional text between the examination of person and that of things other than persons in *Lam rim chen mo*. Tsong kha pa uses these lines here as a scriptural authority that gives weight to the idea that the arguments for persons' lack of reality that he has presented can be easily applied to other things to show their emptiness as well. The two stanzas that Tsong kha pa cites here are respectively stanza seven of Chapter Twelve and stanza sixteen of Chapter Eleven in the *Samādhirājasūtra*. The use of these stanzas from different chapters of the *sūtra* to serve a specific exegetic purpose presupposes a high level of familiarity with the source text. The credit, however, should go to Candrakīrti, who has extracted these two stanzas in that order in the *Prasannapadā*.⁷² Tsong kha pa's use of the *sūtra* passages in this instance is clearly mediated by a *śāstra* source.

There are also two *sūtra* passages in the list that do not exist in independent Tibetan translations that are available to Tsong kha pa apart from the fragmentary extractions found in the *śāstras*. The first is a stanza from the *Hastikakṣyasūtra*, which

⁷¹ LRChM 753.8-12: *de ltar yang ting nge 'dzin rgyal po las/ ji ltar khyod kyis bdag gi 'du shes ni/ shes pa de bzhin kun la blos sbyar bya/ /chos rnams thams cad de yi ngo bo nyid/ /rnam par dag pa nam mkha' lta bu yin/ /gcig gis kyang ni thams cad shes/ /gcig gis kyang ni thams cad mthong / /ji snyed mang ba bshad byas kyang / /de la dregs pa skye ba med/ /ces.*

⁷² PPMV 128.10-14: *samādhirājasūtre 'pi/ yatha nāta tayā 'tmasamjña tathaiva sarvatra peṣitā budhiḥ/ sarve ca tatsvabhāvā dharmā viśuddhā gagaṇakalpāḥ/ ekena sarvaṃ jñānāti sarvaṃ ekena paśyati/ kiyad*

Candrakīrti cites twice in the *Prasannapadā*.⁷³ Tsong kha pa repeats the same stanza in the *Lam rim chen mo*.⁷⁴ The *sūtra* has been translated into Tibetan and Chinese, and Sanskrit fragments from this text are found in *Prasannapadā*, *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and *Subhāṣitasamgraha*.⁷⁵ However, the stanza in question does not exist in the Tibetan and Chinese translations. Finally, a passage from *Samyuktāgama* that is used in Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* and *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* is also reproduced in *Lam rim chen mo* (no. 17). Tsong kha pa identifies its source as *Trisaṃvaranirdeśaparivarta* (To. 45), which is a part of the Mahāyāna *sūtra* collection called *Ratnakūṭa*. The passage in *Trisaṃvaranirdeśaparivarta*, however, differs from the version cited by Candrakīrti from the *Samyuktāgama*, which is not available in Tibetan except for some isolated *sūtras* from it. In such instances, the older texts to which Tibetan writers like Tsong kha pa have access remain only in the fragments that are preserved in the *śāstras*. An important function of the act of invoking sources of this kind is therefore to give expression to a sense of tradition.

The pattern of Tsong kha pa's *sūtra* citations in the Madhyamaka section of *Lam rim chen mo* therefore raises the question about the existence of a vigorous *sūtra* reading culture at this stage in the development of the Buddhist scholasticism. A similar pattern of *sūtra* citation is in fact evident in Tsong kha pa's other major works on

bahu pi bhāvetvā na tasyotpadyate madaḥ // iti /. See the alternative reading of the stanzas cited in de Jong, "Textcritical Notes," 41.

⁷³ PPMV 388.1-4 and 514.7-10. Cf. de Jong, "Textcritical Notes," 231.

⁷⁴ LRChM 763.10-12. No. 21 in Table One.

⁷⁵ On this *sūtra* and for references to it, see Edgerton, Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, s.v. *Hastikakṣya* and PPMV 387 n. 5. A citation from this *sūtra* is found in Cecil Bendall, ed., *Śikṣāsamuccaya: A Compendium of Buddhist Teaching* (St. Pétersbourg: Commissionnaires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1902; repr., 's-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1957), 133.4. There are two Chinese translations (T. 813 and 814) and one Tibetan translation (To. 207) of this *sūtra*. On the Chinese translations, see Lewis R. Lancaster and Sung-bae Park, *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 77-8.

Madhyamaka.⁷⁶ Observations have indeed been made about the Tibetans' lack of interest in the study of the *sūtra* sources in comparison with the Mahāyāna Buddhists in China.⁷⁷ Even if we refrain from generalizing about the uses of *sūtras* in Tibet, the case of Tsong kha pa might indicate that in his time the *sūtras* were already rarely used independently from their embeddedness in the *śāstra* sources in the area of Madhyamaka thought, of which they are the original sources. Tsong kha pa's is therefore a piece of internal evidence which indicates that *śāstras* have not only achieved scriptural status, which is corroborated by the change in the range of the texts that the term *āgama* signifies and the external evidence found in the scriptural catalogs, but in fact enjoy greater authority than the *sūtras* in practice. Much work remains to be done to trace the historical and social circumstances under which *śāstras* gradually gained importance. As we return to Candrakīrti, the perspective gained from examining the evidence from a later age makes it a relevant question to ask whether there is any mechanism already in place in the early seventh century that makes *śāstras* the medium through which the *sūtras* are experienced.

3.3 The Use of *Sūtras* and the Use of *Śāstras*: The Case of Candrakīrti

By choosing Candrakīrti and Tsong kha pa from among many Madhyamaka authors, we are not implying that there is any linear progression between the two as the choice might suggest. Recent research has suggested that in his own time Candrakīrti was

⁷⁶ These include (1) *Dbu ma dgongs pa rab gsal*, Tsong kha pa's commentary on Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra*; (2) his own commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, entitled *Rigs pa'i rgya mtsho*, which relies heavily on Candrakīrti's commentary *Prasannapadā*; and (3) *Drang ba dang nges pa'i don rnam par phye ba'i bstan bcos legs bshad snying po*, a *śāstra* that investigates the major paradigms for dividing the definitive and interpretable meanings of Buddhist scriptures in the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra schools of Indian Buddhist thought.

⁷⁷ See, for instance, Dreyfus, *Sound of Hands Clapping*, 109.

very likely a lesser known interpreter of Nāgārjuna. The historical process of his rise to prominence in the eleventh-century India and twelfth-century Tibet and why and how Indian and Tibetan Buddhists promoted his major works in that period have been studied by Kevin Vose.⁷⁸ In his own case, although Tsong kha pa was mainly guided by Candrakīrti in the subject of Madhyamaka, who was by that time an indisputable authority,⁷⁹ the former's writings in this area also evince a visible influence from the school of Buddhist epistemology and logic, of which Candrakīrti was very critical. But for our present purpose, the two writers' attitudes toward the place of the work of their predecessors among the received texts allow us to see how authoritative *śāstras* of a later age is perceived in relation to the older texts.

When Tsong kha pa reaches the section in *Lam rim chen mo* where he is about to explain the view of emptiness, the Buddhist *sūtras* first comes to his mind and he remarks that one must understand the “meaning of the definitive sacred speech” (*nges don gyi gsung rab kyi don, nītārthapravacanasya artha*).⁸⁰ In regard to the definitive scriptures, he further writes:⁸¹

Furthermore, without relying on the *śāstras* written by a trustworthy chariot-way creator that explain [the definitive *sūtras*] intention, it is like a blind person walking toward a dangerous place. Therefore, one must rely

⁷⁸ Vose, *Resurrecting Candrakīrti*.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 8.

⁸⁰ LRChM 568.1.

⁸¹ LRChM 568.1-9: ‘*di yang tshad mar gyur pa’i shing rta srol ‘byed chen po zhig gis dgongs pa bkral ba’i bstan bcos la ma brten na dmus long khrid med par nyam nga ba’i phyogs su ‘gro ba dang ‘dra bas dgongs ‘grel phyin ci ma log pa la brten par bya’o/ ji ‘dra ba zhig la brten par bya ba’i dgongs pa ‘grel pa ni/ sangs rgyas bcos ldan ‘das nyid kyis bstan pa’i snying po yod med kyi mtha thams cad dang bral ba’i zab mo’i don ‘grel par mdo rgyud du ma nas shin tu gsal bar lung bstan pa’i ‘phags pa klu sgrub ces sa gsum na yongs su grags pa de yin pas/ de’ gzung la brten nas stong nyid rtogs pa’i lta ba btsal bar bya’o/.*

on the commentaries (*dgongs 'grel*) that are not erroneous. What kind of commentary should be relied upon? It is those of the noble Nāgārjuna, renowned in three spheres, who is very clearly prophesized in many *sūtras* and *tantras* by the Buddha, the Blessed One himself, as one who explains the profound meaning, the essence of the teachings (*bstan pa, śāsana*), which is free from all the extremes of existence and non-existence. Thus, one must search for the view that realizes emptiness by relying on his works (*gzhung*).⁸²

Here Tsong kha pa identifies *śāstras* with the Tibetan term *dgongs 'grel*, literally “interpretation of the intention,” which has the general connotation of commentary, therefore highlighting their exegetical nature and placing them in relation with the *sūtras*.

When he takes upon himself the same task of presenting the view of emptiness at the beginning of the sixth chapter of *Madhyamakāvatāra*, Candrakīrti also faces a similar question:

[Interlocutor:] Has it⁸³ not been described by the *sūtras* such as the noble *Prajñāpāramitā* and *Daśabhūmika*, which are recited, as to how the bodhisattvas practicing the noble perfection of wisdom (*āryaprajñāpāramitā*) perceive the reality (*tattva*) of dependent

⁸² The term *gzhung*, translated here as “work,” is used often in Tsong kha pa’s text in reference to the *śāstras*. It corresponds with the Sanskrit word *grantha*, “book” or “volume,” or even *śāstra*, and it carries the sense of authoritative text.

⁸³ This refers to “the reality of dependent origination.” MABh 74.15-6: *rten nas 'byung ba'i de kho na nyid*.

origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*)? Therefore, it is appropriate to follow the scriptures (*lung*, *āgama*) to speak.

[Reply:] This is not so. Since the intention of the scriptures (*āgamasya abhiprāya*) is difficult to ascertain, those like us are not able to give instructions on reality even through *āgama*. I say so from the perspective of [giving instructions] independently. However, the intention of *āgama* is ascertained by seeing the correct interpretation of *āgama*, which is the *śāstras* composed by the trustworthy beings (*pramāṇabhūtapuruṣa*).⁸⁴

Since in Tsong kha pa's time the term *āgama/lung* has acquired extended meaning, he uses the term *pravacana/gsung rab* for what he regards as the scriptures of the Buddha, whereas Candrakīrti uses the term *āgama*, which still had the restricted connotation. Given the extent of his learning in the Buddhist *sūtras*, which his writings amply demonstrate, the humility that Candrakīrti displays here is startling when he says that he is unable to expound the meaning of emptiness on the basis of the *sūtras* independently.⁸⁵ Whether or not there are other unstated reasons, the statement is perhaps indicative of a general attitude already in place in Candrakīrti's time about the relationship between the *sūtras* and *śāstras*. Candrakīrti next specifies in

⁸⁴ MABh 75: *gal te 'phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa dang 'phags pa sa bcu pa la sogs pa mdo sde gang dag 'don pa de dag las/ 'phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la spyod pa'i byang chub sems dpa' ji ltar rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba'i de nyid mthong ba zhes bya ba gsungs pa ma yin nam/ de'i phyir lung gi rjes su 'brangs nas bshad par rigs so zhe na/ 'di yang yod pa ma yin te/ lung gi dgongs pa nges par dka' ba'i phyir bdag cag 'bra bas lung las kyang de kho na nyid bstan par mi nus so/ rang dbang nyid kyi dbang du byas nas de skad du brjod kyi/ bstan bcos tshad mar gyur pa'i skyes bus byas shing lung phyin ci ma log par 'chad pa mthong ba las lung gi dgongs pa nges pas ni/. Chad pa is amended to 'chad pa according to D (To. 3862) Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 245a1.*

⁸⁵ See also MABh 74.10-75.5 for a similar expression of Candrakīrti's humility.

Madhyamakāvatāra VI 3 that it is Nāgārjuna's *śāstras* that are to be relied upon in the ascertainment of the intention of *āgama*:

In the manner how he realizes the dharma of the profound nature

By means of scripture (*āgama*) as well as reasoning (*yukti*),

I will speak according to the view (*lugs*) that resides

In the system⁸⁶ of the noble Nāgārjuna.⁸⁷

In his own commentary, Candrakīrti mentions that his presentation is based on Nāgārjuna's "*Madhyamaka Śāstra*," that is to say, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, which "clearly teaches" emptiness, "the nature of things, through scripture and reasoning (*āgamayuktibhyām*)."⁸⁸ Like many other Indian and Tibetan Buddhists, Candrakīrti identifies here both scripture and reason as the basic tools of scholastic practices, a theme we already had an occasion to comment on in the previous chapter.

The mediation of tradition through new interpretive models is moreover repeatable, and it certainly does not stop with Nāgārjuna within the Madhyamaka School. We know that Bhāviveka was probably the more prominent Madhyamaka author in the second half of the second millennium, when two commentaries were known to have been written on his *Prajñāpradīpa*, which was also translated into both Chinese and Tibetan. But when Tsong kha pa was writing in the middle of the second millennium, Candrakīrti had become the superior interpreter to be relied upon for the understanding of Nāgārjuna,

⁸⁶ *Gzhung lugs*, corresponding to *mata* or *samaya* in Sanskrit.

⁸⁷ MABh 75.17-20: *ji ltar de yis chos zab chos rtogs pa/ /lung dang gzhan yang rigs pas yin pas na/ /de ltar 'phags pa khu sgrub gzhung lugs las/ /ji ltar gnas pa'i lugs bzhin brjod par bya/*. See correction on p. 412 of the edition (and also D (To. 3862) Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 245a1).

just as Candrakīrti himself relied on Nāgārjuna for the interpretation of the *sūtras*. Tsong kha pa also takes note of Candrakīrti's favorable opinion of Buddhapālita, and after he briefly reviewed a few “models that explains the intent of Nāgārjuna” (*phags pa klu sgrub kyi dgongs pa 'grel pa'i tshul*), he concludes in *Lam rim chen mo*:

Since I see that these two *ācāryas*' commentaries are most outstanding in explaining the works of the noble father [Nāgārjuna] and the son [Āryadeva], here I will follow *ācārya* Buddhapālita and *śrīmat* Candrakīrti to ascertain the intention of the noble one [Nāgārjuna].⁸⁹

Although Candrakīrti has defended Buddhapālita against Bhāviveka's criticism, and he also characterizes the latter as “correctly following the thought of Nāgārjuna”⁹⁰ in the *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti's reference to Buddhapālita's commentary are not frequent; nor indeed are Tsong kha pa's. Thus, Buddhapālita's commentary on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* constitutes a relatively minor influence in this tradition of commentaries rather than a full shift of paradigm in the tradition.

In this manner, as one sees older texts through the medium of a new interpretation, which may arise unexpectedly through unique historical and social processes, it assumes the highest interpretive authority in practice. Indeed, over time Tsong kha pa, and later the textbook writers of Tibetan monastic education centers in his tradition, would become such interpretive authorities. With this pattern of successive generations of interpretation,

⁸⁸ MABh 76.3-6: *dbu ma'i bstan bcos las rigs pa dang lung dag gis chos rnam kyi bdag nyid ... gsal bar bstan to/*.

the older texts become increasingly more distant. This is certainly a cause for the smaller role that *sūtras* play in late Tibetan Buddhism. The situation, however, is different in seventh-century India. Whereas *sūtra* passages used in Tsong kha pa's presentation of emptiness in *Lam rim chen mo* almost come entirely from the Indian *śāstras* where they are embedded, and they constitute less than five percent of his total citations, a sample of the scriptural sources used in Candrakīrti's writings shows that this Indian author is much more involved with the *sūtra* literature. The following is a list of explicit scriptural passages used in the eighteenth chapter (PPMV 340.1-381.13) of the *Prasannapadā*, which engages with Nikāya Buddhist concepts in some detail, a subject that will concern us in the next two chapters. The table shows that the citations of the *śāstra* and *sūtra* passages are roughly equal in number.

Table Two: Scriptural Passages Used in Chapter XVIII of the *Prasannapadā*

	The locations where the passages appear in the <i>Prasannapadā</i>	The sources of the passages
1	PPMV 340.8-11	<i>Madhyamakāvatāra</i> VI 120 (MA 233, To. 3861, D Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 210a4)
2	PPMV 341.11-12	<i>Mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i> XXVII 12
3	PPMV 342.2-3	<i>Mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i> XXVII 6
4	PPMV 342.5-12	<i>Madhyamakāvatāra</i> VI 127-128 (MA 245 and 247)
5	PPMV 344.5-8	<i>Madhyamakāvatāra</i> VI 121 (MA 235)
6	PPMV 345.5-12	<i>Ratnāvalī</i> I 31-34 (Hahn (1982): 14 and 15)
7	PPMV 346.5-8	<i>Ratnāvalī</i> I 29-30 (Hahn (1982): 12 and 13)
8	PPMV 347.5-10	<i>Ratnāvalī</i> I 52-54. (Hahn (1982): 22 and 23)
9	PPMV 348.11-12	<i>Kṣudrakāgama</i> (identified as such and cited in <i>Abhidharmakośabhāṣya</i> IX, in AKBh 2:933)
10	PPMV 348.14-349.2	Source not identified. Cited also in PPMV at 133.14-134.4 and 429.12-430.4

⁸⁹ LRChM 573.20-574.3: *slob dpon 'di gnyis kyi 'grel ba rnams ni 'phags pa yab sras kyi gzhung 'chad pa la che phul du byung bar mthong bas na/ 'dir ni slob dpon sangs rgyas bskyangs dang dpal ldan zla ba grags pa'i rjes su 'brangs nas 'phags pa'i dgongs pa gtan la dbab par bya'o/.*

⁹⁰ PPMV 24.1: *aviparītācāryanāgārjunamatānusāriṇa ācāryabuddhapālitasya.*

11	PPMV 349.4-7	Source not identified
12	PPMV 349.11-12	Source not identified, said here to be from a <i>sūtra</i>
13	PPMV 350.8-9	<i>Mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i> XXIII 1
14	PPMV 350.11-12	<i>Ekottarāgama</i> (T. 125 II 687b22). Cited also in PPMV at 451.12-13
15	PPMV 351.13-14	<i>Catuḥśataka</i> XII 23 (Lang (1986): 116; D (To. 3846) Dbu ma, vol. <i>tsha</i> , 14a3-4)
16	PPMV 351.16-352.6	<i>Prajñāpradīpa</i> (D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. <i>tsha</i> , 183b4-7; T. 1566, XXX 106a8-15)
17	PPMV 352.6	<i>Mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i> XVIII 3ab (appears within the previous passage in <i>Prajñāpradīpa</i>)
18	PPMV 353.1	<i>Madhyamakāvātāra</i> I 8d (MA 19)
19	PPMV 353.3-6	<i>Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā</i> (Vaidya (1960): 3-4; D (To. 12) Shes phyin, vol. <i>k</i> , 3b2-5)
20	PPMV 353.8-354.2	<i>Ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā</i> II 4 (Vaidya (2003): 356; T. 229 VIII 677c1-2; D (To. 13) Shes phyin, vol. <i>ka</i> , 3b4-5)
21	PPMV 354.5-8	The first of the two stanzas corresponds with <i>Dhammapada</i> 160 (Hinüber and Norman (1994): 45. Cited also in <i>Prajñāpradīpa</i> (D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. <i>tsha</i> , 180b4-5) and <i>Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā</i> (ad IX 73, Vaidya (1988): 232).
22	PPMV 354.10-355.02	<i>Samādhirājasūtra</i> XXXVII 35 (Vaidya (1961): 268; T. 639 XV 610a20-21)
23	PPMV 355.4	Said to be spoken by the Bhagavat. Cited also in Vasubandhu's own <i>vṛtti</i> ad <i>Viṃśatikā</i> 8 (Lévi, (1925): 5)
24	PPMV 355.5-6	<i>Samyuktāgama</i> (Chinese in T. 99 II 7c22-24, etc.; Pāli of <i>Samyuttanikāya</i> in Feer (1884-1904): 3:44 and 4:287)
25	PPMV 355.7	One of the 3 seals of Buddhism, ubiquitous
26	PPMV 358.10-12	<i>Kāśyapaparivarta</i> (mentioned here as from <i>Āryaratnakūṭa</i> , Staël-Holstein (1926): 90)
27	PPMV 359.1-4	<i>Ratnāvalī</i> (Hahn (1982): 40 and 41)
28	PPMV 359.8-9	<i>Catuḥśataka</i> VIII 15 (Lang (1986): 82)
29	PPMV 359.11-360.2	<i>Ratnāvalī</i> IV 94-96 (Hahn (1982): 128-131)
30	PPMV 360.6-7	<i>Lokatattvanirṇaya</i> 113 (Suali (1887): 290), also cited in <i>Prajñāpradīpa</i> (D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. <i>tsha</i> , 164a5; T. 1566 XXX 96a25-26)
31	PPMV 361.1-363.12	<i>Tathāgataguhyasūtra</i> (T. 312 XI 732b21-733a14; D (To. 47) Dkon brtsegs, vol. <i>ka</i> , 161a2-162a4)
32	PPMV 364.15-6	<i>Mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i> XXV 24
33	PPMV 365.1	<i>Mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i> XVIII 5 (a part of c and d of the stanza)
34	PPMV 366.1-7	<i>Tathāgataguhyasūtra</i> (T. 312 XI 719b22-24; D (To. 47) Dkon brtsegs, vol. <i>ka</i> , 132b6-133a1)
35	PPMV 366.9-367.4	<i>Tathāgataguhyasūtra</i> (T. 312 XI 722b23)
36	PPMV 367.6-10	<i>Avatamsakasūtra</i> (T. 279 X 79a23-b3)

37	PPMV 367.13-16	<i>Samādhirājasūtra</i> VIII 4, 5 (Vaidya (1961): 42; D (To. 127) Mdo sde, vol. <i>da</i> , 24a2-3; cf. T. 639 XV 557a12-14. Cited also in PPMV at 278.5-12)
38	PPMV 368.2-3	<i>Samādhirājasūtra</i> XIV 87 (Vaidya (1961): 93; D (To. 127) Mdo sde, vol. <i>da</i> , 50b6; T. 639 XV 567a17-18)
39	PPMV 370.2-3	Source not identified. Cited also in <i>Subhāṣitasamgraha</i> (Bendall (1903): 385)
40	PPMV 370.4-5	<i>Catuḥśataka</i> VIII 19 (Lang (1986): 84)
41	PPMV 370.6-8	<i>Samyuktāgama</i> (Chinese in T. 99 II 8b16-26, Pāli of <i>Samyuttanikāya</i> in Feer (1884-1904): 3.138. Cited also in <i>Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya</i> (MABh 179))
42	PPMV 372.5-6	<i>Catuḥśataka</i> VIII 20 (Lang (1986): 84)
43	PPMV 372.9	<i>Mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i> XVIII 7ab
44	PPMV 374.2-3	<i>Bodhisattvapiṭakasūtra</i> (T. 310(12) XI 300c26-27; T 316 XI 872b4-5)
45	PPMV 374.5-375.6	<i>Satyadvayāvatārasūtra</i> (D (To. 179, <i>Samvṛtiparamārthasatyānirdeśa</i>) Mdo sde, vol. <i>ma</i> , 148a5-149a4. A passage from this <i>sūtra</i> is cited in <i>Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā</i> ad IX 2, in Vaidya (1988): 183)
46	PPMV 376.8	<i>Mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i> XIV 6ab
47	PPMV 376.14-15	<i>Catuḥśataka</i> X 25 (Lang (1986): 102; D (To. 3846) Dbu ma, vol. <i>tsha</i> , 12a4)
48	PPMV 377.1-2	<i>Lalitavistarasūtra</i> XIII 102 (Vaidya (1958): 126; D (To. 95) Mdo sde, vol. <i>kha</i> , 89b1; T. 187 III 568b15-16; T. 190 III 717a3-4. Cited also in PPMV at 26.8-9)
49	PPMV 378.4-5	<i>Catuḥśataka</i> VIII 22 (Lang (1986): 86)
50	PPMV 379.4-380.2	<i>Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramita</i> (Vaidya (1960): 238; T. 220 VI 1059a22-c11; T. 221 VIII 141b22-c1; T. 223 VIII 416a23-b8; T. 224 VIII 471a21-b9; T. 225 VIII 504a24; T. 227 VIII 580a32-b8; T. 228 VIII 668a24-b11)
51	PPMV LVP 380.3-10	<i>Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramita</i> (Vaidya (1960): 257-258; T. 220 VI 1070c9-20; T. 221 VIII 146a9-17; T. 223 VIII 421c20-28; T. 225 VIII 506a14-16; T. 227 VIII 585c1-9; T. 224 VIII 474c2-7; T. 228 VIII 675b13-23)
52	PPMV 380.11-381.11	<i>Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramita</i> (Vaidya (1960): 259; T. 220 VI 1071a-1072b20; T. 221 VIII 146b4-16; T. 223 VIII 423a21-b21; T. 227 VIII 586a2-23; T. 228 VIII 675c14-676a11)

This list contains twenty four *śāstra* passages and about twenty three passages that are known to be originated from the *sūtras*.⁹¹ Among the *sūtra* passages, sixteen are from the Mahāyāna *sūtras*. They consist of (1) five passages from the two texts of the well-known Prajñāpāramitā class;⁹² (2) five passages from the three *sūtras* in what the Chinese and Tibetan scriptural catalogs call the Ratnakūṭa class;⁹³ (3) three passages from Candrakīrti's frequently cited *Samādhirājasūtra*;⁹⁴ one passage each from (4) *Lalitavistarasūtra* (no. 48); (5) *Avataṃsakasūtra* (no. 36); and (6) *Satyadvayāvatārasūtra* (no. 45). Candrakīrti apparently also has an interest in the Nikāya Buddhist scriptures, which are represented here by four passages from the Āgamas⁹⁵ and one stanza from *Dharmapada* (first stanza of no. 21), the corresponding Pali versions of which all belong to the Suttapiṭaka. Two unidentified passages also indicate their *sūtra* origin with the phrases “spoken in the *sūtra*” (*sūtre uktāḥ*, no. 12) and “did the Blessed One not say” (*kiṃ noktaṃ bhagavatā*, no. 23).

In his work on the seventeenth chapter of the *Prasannapadā*, Ulrich Timme Kragh has established that Candrakīrti's writings were heavily influenced by his immediate Madhyamaka predecessors, especially Bhāviveka. Kragh observes that

⁹¹ Among the fifty two passages included in the list, three passages are of unknown source (nos. 10, 11, 39; two other unidentified sources, discussed below, are marked as coming from the *sūtras*); one (no. 25) is ubiquitous in the Buddhist texts; one (no. 30) is affiliated with the non-Buddhist, Lokāyata school of Indian philosophy.

⁹² *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*: nos. 19, 50, 51, 52; *Ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā*: no. 20.

⁹³ *Tathāgataguhyā*: nos. 31, 34, 35; *Kāśyapaparivarta*: no. 26; *Bodhisattvapīṭaka*: no. 44. On Ratnakūṭa as a *sūtra* collection, see Jan Nattier, *A Few Good Men: The Bodhisattva Path According to the Inquiry of Ugra (Ugraparipṛcchā)* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 31-6. Nattier says here that there is no textual evidence from India as late as the eighth century that Ratnakūṭa refers to a collection of *sūtras* as we find them today in the Chinese and Tibetan scriptural collections. Like Śāntideva, Candrakīrti too uses *Ratnakūṭa* here as the title of the single text *Kāśyapaparivarta*, which is, according to the Chinese and Tibetan catalogs, the forty-third of the forty-nine *sūtras* that are collectively called Ratnakūṭa. What we learn here, however, is that some *sūtras* that eventually come under the rubric of Ratnakūṭa are influential in Candrakīrti's time.

⁹⁴ Nos. 22, 37, 38.

⁹⁵ *Samyuktāgama*: nos. 24, 41; *Kṣudrakāgama*: no. 9; *Ekottarāgama*: no. 14.

Candrakīrti “adopted so many phrases, examples, quotations, and sometimes even whole sentences,” that they amount to “about a third of all the sentences of his 17th chapter.” Such evidence shows that dependence on earlier texts is a distinctive feature of *śāstra* composition, and it further indicates the existence of an exegetical tradition behind such writings.⁹⁶ In the two lists of scriptural passages given in Tables One and Two, we have also found traces of influence on Candrakīrti’s scriptural citations, just he himself brings certain passages to Tsong kha pa’s attention. For instance, in Table Two one passage from *Kṣudrakāgama* (no. 9) and one half-stanza whose source is yet to be identified (no. 23), which Candrakīrti uses in the *Prasannapadā*, was cited in Vasubandhu’s well-known *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and *Vimśatikāvṛtti* respectively. Likewise, in the list of *sūtra* citations given in Table One, a stanza from *Anavataptanāgarājaparipṛcchā* (no. 5), which appears four times in *Prasannapadā*,⁹⁷ has been cited earlier in Bhāviveka’s *Prajñāpradīpa*, and therefore would have been familiar in the Madhyamaka School. Two stanzas from *Samyuktāgama* (Table One, no. 12), which inform the argument that Candrakīrti develops against the existence of the self in the *Madhyamakāvatāra* already appeared in Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and partially in Bhāviveka’s *Tarkajvālā*.⁹⁸ In this way, certain scriptural passages continue their life—sometimes in isolation from their original context—in the successive writings and in the collective memory of the tradition.

However, a different kind of use of the *sūtras* predominantly of Mahāyāna association also emerges from the two tables. Here we find a pattern of Candrakīrti’s

⁹⁶ Kragh, *Early Buddhist Theories of Action and Result*, 25-7.

⁹⁷ PPMV 239.10-13, 491.11-14, 500.7-10, and 504.1-4.

⁹⁸ Chapter Five will explore mainly how Nāgārjuna uses Nikāya Buddhist scriptures in the design of an earlier version of this argument. But the way in which Candrakīrti incorporates this particular source from

repeated use of Mahāyāna *sūtras* such as *Samādhirāja*, *Kāśyapaparivarta*, *Tathāgataguhyā*. Various passages from these same *sūtras* are also frequently used in other texts of this period where scriptural citations abound, such as Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama*. What we have then is the evidence of active use of these *sūtras*. Gathering the *sūtra* sources commonly used by different *śāstra* writers of a certain period will contribute to no less than the understanding of a practical canon in that period; analyzing these passages will also help us understand the different ways of engaging with the texts that are either shared by multiple writers or unique to the individuals.

In short, in Candrakīrti's time *sūtras* are still actively read or, as he says, "recited."⁹⁹ Therefore, his statement, that "the intention of *āgama* is ascertained by seeing the correct interpretation of *āgama*, which is the *śāstras* composed by the trustworthy beings,"¹⁰⁰ reflects an opinion that the reading of *sūtras* is to be guided by the interpretations found in the *śāstras*. Among the *śāstra* sources used in the eighteenth chapter of the *Prasannapadā*, his principal authorities are the works of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, represented here by eight passages from the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* and five passages from *Ratnāvalī*—the latter of which he clearly attributes to Nāgārjuna—and six passages from Āryadeva's *Catuḥśataka*.¹⁰¹ Candrakīrti also refers to the versified text of

the *Samyuktāgama* to further develop Nāgārjuna's argument follows a similar process. The passage is cited in MABh 257-8 ad MA VI 135.

⁹⁹ E.g. PPMV 574.6: *paṭhyate sūtre*—"recited in the sūtra;" MABh 75.7: *mdo sde gang dag 'don pa*—"sūtras which are recited."

¹⁰⁰ MABh 75.14-16. The Tibetan is given above. The Sanskrit might be reconstructed as: *pramāṇabhūtapuruṣakṛtāśāstrasya āgamāviparītavyākhyānasya darśanād āgamasya abhiprāyaṇīcitāt*.

¹⁰¹ MMK: nos. 2, 3, 13, 17, 32, 33, 43, 46; *Ratnāvalī*: nos. 6, 7, 8, 27, 29; *Catuḥśataka*: 15, 28, 40, 42, 47, 49. The stanzas from MMK XVIII that Candrakīrti cites before he explains them or the parts of these stanzas that he refers to in the process of explaining them are not counted among the citations from MMK that are included in Table Two.

his own *Madhyamakāvatāra*,¹⁰² mostly from the portion of this text that presents a critique of the notion of the self—the subject of Nāgārjuna’s chapter that he is commenting on. Finally, he also refers to a passage in Bhāviveka’s *Prajñāpradīpa* (no. 16) regarding a point on which he disagrees with the latter. As we would anticipate, the *śāstra* authorities that Candrakīrti relies on are the texts that are written by the founding members of the Madhyamaka School.

By virtue of choosing to comment on Nāgārjuna’s *śāstra*, the central concern of *Prasannapadā* inevitably becomes the ideas and arguments found in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, with which lines from the same work and other writings of Nāgārjuna and his disciple Āryadeva cohere and enter the commentary naturally. The *sūtra* passages therefore perform a subsidiary role in the text, mainly in the capacity of corroborating the points that Nāgārjuna’s text presents. When Kevin Vose traces the rise of Candrakīrti’s importance from the seventh to twelfth centuries, he demonstrates that the Madhyamaka writer’s works went through the phases from being neglected to receiving broad attention and being mentioned as a high authority.¹⁰³ One of the marks of Candrakīrti’s influence in the first two centuries of the second millennium, as Vose notes, is the fact that his writings became the object of commentaries—the only Indian attempts being Jayānanda’s commentary on *Madhyamakāvatāra* and the *Lakṣaṇaṭīkā*, notes on three of Candrakīrti’s works written mostly in Sanskrit, both of which were written in this period.¹⁰⁴ The decision to write a commentary, therefore, indicates the high regard that is accorded to a text being commented upon. Candrakīrti, the Mādhyamika, is not known to have written any commentary on the *sūtras*, whereas his commentaries on four

¹⁰² Nos. 1, 4, 5, and 18 in Table Two.

¹⁰³ Vose, *Resurrecting Candrakīrti*, 17-36.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 6, 18-9.

Madhyamaka texts—Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, *Yuktiṣaṣṭhikā*, and *Śūnyatāsaptati* and Āryadeva’s *Catuḥśataka*—have been preserved.¹⁰⁵ Candrakīrti also mentions in *Prasannapadā* Nāgārjuna’s autocommentary on *Vigrahavyāvartanī*,¹⁰⁶ which is therefore not in need of exegetical effort on his part. As Table Two shows, Candrakīrti also frequently cites from the *Ratnāvalī*, a presentation of Buddhist practices that treats the Madhyamaka view only within that framework. Thus, we may infer that for Candrakīrti these five works of Nāgārjuna along with Āryadeva’s *Catuḥśataka* hold a special place and even forms the core in the practical canon in his tradition.

Furthermore, a reversal of the relationship between the *sūtras* and Nāgārjuna’s *śāstras* as that of scripture and commentary is effected in Candrakīrti’s text, since the *sūtras* now supply the parallel passages in support of Nāgārjuna’s statements. Candrakīrti’s understanding and experience of the *sūtras* also become mediated and structured as they occur through the lenses of Nāgārjuna’s works.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the authors of the *śāstras* also use schemes of scriptural classification to place the *sūtras* in hierarchical orders. One such attempt to organize the *sūtras*, which we have discussed in Chapter Two through Candrakīrti’s *Prasannapadā*, is to describe three types of teachings in increasing levels of profundity according to the sequence mentioned in Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XVIII 6: “The Buddhas imputed ‘self;’ likewise [they] taught

¹⁰⁵ Candrakīrti’s *Prasannapadā*, *Yuktiṣaṣṭhikāvṛtti*, *Śūnyatāsaptati*, and *Catuḥśatakaṭīkā* all exist in Tibetan translations (To. 3860, 3864, 3867, and 3865); his *Prasannapadā* is preserved in Sanskrit, while *Catuḥśatakaṭīkā* survives partially in Sanskrit. For the latter, see Suzuki Kōshin, ed., *Sanskrit Fragments and Tibetan Translation of Candrakīrti’s Bodhisattvayogācāracaṭuḥśatakaṭīkā* (Tokyo: The Sankibo Press, 1994).

¹⁰⁶ PPMV 25.6: *Vigrahavyāvartanyā kurvatāpy ācāryeṇa*.

¹⁰⁷ In this connection, Lopez speaks in the context Candrakīrti’s interpretation of the Mahāyāna *sūtras* of the problem of a hermeneutical circle, as “preunderstanding operates in every act of understanding.” Lopez, “Interpretation of the Mahāyāna Sūtras,” 52.

‘no-self;’ [they] also taught that “there is neither any self nor any no self.”¹⁰⁸ From Candrakīrti’s time, it becomes customary for Mādhyamikas like himself to divide the *sūtras* into those that are definitive (*nītārtha*) and those that are interpretable (*neyārtha*).¹⁰⁹ Such hierarchical structures serve as a way of resolving the conflicts that are found in different *sūtras*, or sometimes even in the different parts of the same *sūtra*. They can also be resorted to when various Buddhist groups are involved in the controversies in which they use different *sūtras* to justify competing views.

3.4 Articulating the Transcendence of *Śāstra*

Although the *śāstras* of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva are not yet called *āgama*, they undoubtedly enjoy undisputed scriptural authority for Mādhyamikas such as Candrakīrti. One of the marks of this status is Candrakīrti’s prefixing of the word *ārya*, normally attached to the titles of Mahāyāna *sūtras*, to *Ratnāvalī*, thought to be the work of Nāgārjuna.¹¹⁰ One reason that the works of specific writers are elevated to such stature appears to be the existence of a correlation between the emergence of a religious institution and canonization, which we have observed in Chapter One. Thus, although Buddhism—especially the Mahāyāna variety—does not in general have a closed canon, a

¹⁰⁸ MMK XVIII 6. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 302: *ātmety api prajñāpitam anātmety api deśitam / buddhair nātmā na cānātmā kaścīd ity api deśitam //*. See the discussion in section 2.3.

¹⁰⁹ PPMV 43.4-44.5. Candrakīrti uses here a characterization of *neyārthasūtrānta* and *nītārthasūtrānta* as they are given in *Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra* and *Samādhīrājasūtra*. For a translation of the relevant passages from the two *sūtras*, which are frequently repeated in Madhyamaka exegesis, see Donald S. Lopez, Jr., “Interpretation of the Mahāyāna Sūtras,” 61, 62. In Madhyamaka thought, the subject matters of the *neyārthasūtrānta* and *nītārthasūtrānta* are respectively objects in the phenomenal world and emptiness. Thus, the classification of *neyārthasūtrānta* and *nītārthasūtrānta* can be coordinated with the two levels of teachings of scriptures that Nāgārjuna mentions in MMK XXIV 8. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 420: *dve satye samupāśritya buddhānāṃ dharmadeśanā/ lokasaṃvṛtisatyam ca satyam paramārthataḥ //*. “The *dharma* teaching of the Buddhas relies on the two truths: the conventional truth of the world and the truth from the point of view of the ultimate.”

subcanon may be formed when a school of Buddhist thought emerges. The process of secondary canonization¹¹¹ in Buddhist tradition might be indicated by such acts as: (1) the mention of a list of authoritative works, the examples of which include the formulation of the seven Abhidharma works in the Sarvāstivāda scholastic tradition and the mention of the eight commentaries on Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* in the colophon of the Tibetan translation of *Akutobhaya*,¹¹² (2) the writing of commentaries on a series of early texts, such as Candrakīrti's commentaries on the early Madhyamaka works; and (3) the communal recitation, copying, or printing of a collection of authoritative texts that are considered complete and having a clear boundary.

In Candrakīrti's own terms, however, Nāgārjuna's authority as an interpreter of scriptures is established by the prophecies found in the *sūtras* themselves. In *Madhyamakāvatāra* VI 3, Candrakīrti speaks of commencing a presentation of emptiness "according to the view (*lugs*)" and "in the system (*gzhung lugs*) of the noble Nāgārjuna."¹¹³ His own *bhāṣya* on the stanza provides two *sūtra* references that establish Nāgārjuna's trustworthiness.

[Interlocutor:] First of all, what kind [of proof] is there that this noble

Nāgārjuna correctly determines [the meaning of] *āgama*?

[Reply:] There is [proof] through *āgama* [itself], as the *ārya*

Laṅkāvatāra[*sūtra*] says:

¹¹⁰ E.g., PPMV 358.13: *uktaṃ cāryaratnāvalyāṃ*.

¹¹¹ On the emergence of subcanon or what he calls "virtual canonization," see Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, Commentary*, 83-4.

¹¹² D (To. 3829) Dbu ma, vol. *tsa*, 99a7; Ruegg, *Literature of Madhyamaka*, 49 n. 129.

¹¹³ MA 75, VI 3.

In the region of Vedālī in the South,¹¹⁴ the illustrious *bhikṣu* of great repute is called Nāga by name, the destroyer of the positions of existence and non-existence. Having expounded in the world my *yāna*, the supreme Mahāyāna, and having achieved the ground of joyful ([*pra*] *muditā bhūmi*), he will go to [the pure land] Sukhāvatī.

Moreover, the noble *Dvādaśasahasramahāmegha[sūtra]* also says:

Ānanda! This Licchavi youth, called Sarvalokapriyadarśana, will become a *bhikṣu* by the name of Nāga four hundred years after my *nirvāṇa*. Expounding my teachings extensively, gradually¹¹⁵ in the world called Prasannaprabha he will become the Tathāgata, Arhat, perfect Buddha named Jñānākaraprabha.

Therefore, it is proved that this [Nāgārjuna] determines [the meaning of] *āgama* correctly.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ LVP identifies the region spoken of in the passage as Vidarbha. “*Madhyamakāvatāra*: introduction au traité du milieu de l’*ācārya* Candrakīrti avec le commentaire de l’auteur traduit d’après la version tibétaine,” *Le Muséon* 10 (1910): 274.

¹¹⁵ *Mthar gyi sa* in LVP’s edition is to be amended to *mthar gyis* according to D (To. 3862) Dbu ma, vol. ‘a, 245a6. Consequently his rendering of the name of the world as *Suvisuddhaprabhābhūmi* is not reliable.

¹¹⁶ MABh ad VI 3, 76.10-77.5: *ci ste re zhig ‘phags pa klu sgrub de nyid la lung phyin ci ma log par nges pa ci ltar yod ce na/ lung las te/ ji skad du ‘phags pa lang kar gshegs pa las/ lho phyogs be ta’i yul du ni/ dge slong dpal ldan cher grags pa/ de ming klu zhes bod pa ste/ yod dang med pa’i phyogs ‘jig pa/ nga yi theg pa ‘jig rten du/ bla med theg chen rab bstan nas/ rab tu dga’ ba’i sa bsgrubs te/ bde ba can du de ‘gro’o/ zhes gsungs pa dang/ yang ‘phags pa pa sprin chen po stong phrag bcu gnyis las kyang/ kun dga’ bo li tsa byi gzhon du sems can thams cad kyis mthong na dga’ ba zhes bya ba ‘di ni nga mya ngan las ‘das nas lo bzhi lon pa na klu zhes bya ba’i dge slong du gyur nas nga’i bstan pa rgyas par rab tu bstan te/*

The first passage that Candrakīrti provides here is a citation of two stanzas from *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*.¹¹⁷ Apparently, the linking of the individual that these lines speak of with Nāgārjuna occurred before Candrakīrti, as two of the Chinese translations of this *sūtra* bearing the date of 513 and 700 simply rendered the word Nāga in the passage into the Chinese equivalent of Nāgārjuna—*longshu* 龍樹.¹¹⁸

Candrakīrti's second passage does not appear to be a direct quotation from *Mahāmeghasūtra*; rather, if we compare it with the relevant portion of the Chinese (T. 387) and Tibetan (To. 232) translations of this *sūtra*,¹¹⁹ it is an extraction of the key points from a more developed narrative contained in the *sūtra*, which tells the story of a few associated individuals, whose lives are all connected with the *sūtra* itself, over a series of four different lives.¹²⁰ What Candrakīrti mentions here is the three lives of the primary character of the narrative: his existence as a youth from Licchavi in the time of the Buddha, the prediction of his future life whom Candrakīrti identifies as Nāgārjuna, and his eventual enlightenment as the Buddha Jñānākaraprabha. What Candrakīrti does

mthar gyis rab tu dang ba'i 'od ces bya ba'i 'jig rten gyi kham su de bzhin gshegs pa dra bcom pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas ye shes 'byung gnas 'od ces bya bar 'gyur ro zhes gsungs so/ 'de'i phyir 'dis lung pyin ci ma log par nges par grub bo/.

¹¹⁷ X 165-166. Sanskrit in Vaidya, *Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtram*, 118: *dakṣiṇāpathavedalyāṃ bhikṣu śrīmān mahāyaśāḥ/ nāgāhvayaḥ sa nāmnā tu sadasatpakṣadārakaḥ// prakāśya loke madyānaṃ mahāyānaṃ uttaram/ āsādyā bhūmiṃ muditāṃ yāsyate 'sau sukhāvatīm//.*

¹¹⁸ The two stanzas that Candrakīrti cites are not found in the first Chinese translation of the *sūtra*, made in 443, but they appear in the last two of the three Chinese translations of this *sūtra*, at T. 671 XVI 569a24-27 and T. 672 XVI 627c19-22.

¹¹⁹ On the versions of *Mahāmeghasūtra* and its extractions that are extant, see Paul Demiéville, "Sur un passage du Mahāmegha-sūtra," Appendix II of "Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha," *Bulletin de l'école française d'extrême-orient* 24 (1924): 218-221; Antonino Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the Seventh Century: Inquiry into the Nature, Authors and Functions of the Tunhuang Document S. 6502 Followed by an Annotated Translation* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, Seminario di studi asiatici, 1976), 55-67.

¹²⁰ In the Chinese translation found in Taishō edition of *Dazangjing* (T. 387), made either at the end of the fourth century or in the beginning of the fifth century, the narrative is found in T. XII 1095a12-1101a22. A summary of this Chinese translation is found in Forte, *Political Propaganda*, 253-270, within which the

not mention is a previous life of the Licchavi youth eons past in which he was born as the king Mahāvīryanāgarāja. The prophecy in the story is so fantastic that it provides the fertile ground for the political imagination toward the end of the seventh century. In the *sūtra*, the figure of the queen of Mahāvīryanāgarāja appears at the time of Buddha Śākyamuni as a goddess (*devī*) and receives a prediction to become a future female *cakravartin*, and this portion of the prophesy provides the scriptural basis for the justification for the rule of Wu Zhao 武曌 as the Buddhist empress of China with the founding of her own Zhao 周 dynasty.¹²¹

Besides Bodhiruci's 513 Chinese translation of *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (T. 671), Candrakīrti's Mādhyamika predecessor Bhāviveka also speaks of the prophecies of Nāgārjuna in the scripture in his *Tarkajvālā*, although he does not mention his sources.¹²² In the colophon of the Tibetan translation of *Akutobhayā* (To. 3829), the Indian scholar Jñānagarbha and the Tibetan translator Klu'i rgyal mtshan provide a description of Nāgārjuna in the early ninth century that confirms their acquaintance with the same prophecies in the two Mahāyāna *sūtras* that Candrakīrti had referred to.¹²³ Thus, clearly there is an Indian Madhyamaka tradition that uses these *sūtra* passages to authenticate the

synopsis of the narrative in question is in pp. 256-266. Some passages from this narrative are also discussed in Demiéville, "Passage du Mahāmegha-sūtra," 225-8.

¹²¹ For a detailed examination of the literary documents relating to the incident, see Forte, *Political Propaganda*.

¹²² Bhāviveka mentions the predictions of Nāgārjuna in the comments surrounding his own *Madhyamakahrdaya* 4.36 and 5.1. See Malcolm David Eckel, *Bhāviveka and His Buddhist Opponents* (Cambridge, MA: Dept. of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University, 2008), 190, 214-5.

¹²³ D (To. 3829) Dbu ma, vol. *tsa*, 99a5: *de bzhin gshegs pa'i theg pa bla med pa'i tshul rab tu 'byed pa rab tu dga' ba'i sa bsgrubs nas/ bde ba can gyi zhing du gshegs pa 'jig rten gyi kham dang ba'i 'od ces bya bar/ de bzhin gshegs pa ye shes 'byung gnas 'od ces bya bar 'gyur ba*. "He distinguishes the way of the highest *yāna* of the Tathāgata. Having achieved the ground of joyful, he goes to the land of Sukhāvātī. And in the world called Prasannaprabha he will become the Tathāgata Jñānākaraprabha." In this formulation, Jñānagarbha and Klu'i rgyal mtshan apparently assign a sequence to the events prophesized in the two *sūtras*.

works of the school's founder. Later Indian and Tibetan writers also associate other passages from the *sūtra* and *tantra* sources with the figure of Nāgārjuna.¹²⁴

The Tibetan historian Bu ston, however, questions Candrakīrti's reference to *Mahāmeghasūtra* by pointing out that in the Tibetan translation of the *sūtra* the Buddha says that the Licchavi youth will be born in the life in question “with my name,” instead of bearing Nāga in his name as Candrakīrti has it.¹²⁵ In the Chinese translation, the future birth of Licchavi Yi-qie-zhong-sheng-le-jian (Sarvalokapriyadarśana) is said to be again assuming the name Zhong-sheng-le-jian (Lokapriyadarśana).¹²⁶ Although not attested by either of the extant versions, Candrakīrti's specific mention of the name Nāga—it is possible that one such version was circulated in a circle in which Candrakīrti was a part—and Bu ston's questioning of the use of this *sūtra* based on the evidence of its absence in the Tibetan translation suggest that the mention of the name Nāga is an important element in confirming the applicability of the prophecies to Nāgārjuna.¹²⁷

Perhaps more significant than how certain factors in the *sūtra* passages allow the tradition to link them to the figure of Nāgārjuna is the very necessity of this act of

¹²⁴ Ye shes thub bstan and Anne Christine Klein, *Path to the Middle: Oral Mādhyamika Philosophy in Tibet* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 153-5, 257-266 nn. 29-49; Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa, Ngawang Samten, Jay L. Garfield, and Nāgārjuna, *Ocean of Reasoning: A Great Commentary on Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 10-12; José Ignacio Cabezón, trans., *A Dose of Emptiness: An Annotated Translation of the sTong thun chen mo of mKhas grub dGe legs dpal bzang* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 24-5, 413 nn. 8-13; Elizabeth Napper, *Dependent-Arising and Emptiness: A Tibetan Buddhist Interpretation of Mādhyamika Philosophy Emphasizing the Compatibility of Emptiness and Conventional Phenomena* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1989), 250-253.

¹²⁵ Bu ston Rin chen grub, *The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*, Translated from Tibetan by Dr. E. Obermiller (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1986), 129-130. See also Ye shes thub bstan and Klein, *Path to the Middle*, 264-5 n. 46 for an alternative translation of Bu ston's passage and some Tibetan responses to it in defense of Candrakīrti's identification.

¹²⁶ T. 387 XII 1100a6-7: …有婆羅門產一童子。即是今之一切眾生樂見梨車。後時復名眾生樂見。 “... to a brahmin a boy will be born, who is no other than today's Licchavi Sarvalokapriyadarśana. In the future he will again be named Lokapriyadarśana.”

¹²⁷ Joseph Walser suggests that the fact that in the Chinese translation of the *sūtra* the Licchavi youth's future birth is associated with a Sātavāhana king, which appears to constitute a part of the tradition's

authorization. In fact, Henderson has shown that the phenomenon that he calls the apotheosis of commentaries is common to almost all major premodern religious traditions. The form that it takes vary from the description of certain Confucian masters in the same terms as Confucius himself, the characterization of certain Islamic commentaries as springing from the oral tradition that accompanied the revelation itself, the assumption of Vedic infallibility by Smṛti, the elevation of certain exegetes to the status of prophets and evangelists whose compositions were included in the biblical canon, to the vision of angels and the inspirations that the commentators received.¹²⁸ The elevated stature accorded to the interpreters, therefore, can be viewed as a sign of an age in which the commentaries are valorized, sometimes through a process of virtual canonization, and sometimes even surpassing the canonical texts to become the primary object of study and further commentary.¹²⁹

In the Buddhist case, the apotheosis of commentaries often takes the form of linking the interpretive authorities to the person of Buddha. In the previous chapter, we have seen a tendency to regard the authors of the early Abhidharma texts as the disciples of the Buddha or to have received the permission from the Buddha to compose the texts. In the legend of Kātyāyanīputra, a vow to compose *Jñānaprasthāna* was made in the presence of five hundred Buddhas in the past. The prophecies in Candrakīrti's two *sūtra* sources also perform the similar function of having Nāgārjuna's teaching activities sanctioned by the Buddha or simply placing his previous life in the presence of the Buddha as the prediction was made. Another form of associating Buddhist writers with the Buddha is to place them in an unbroken line of masters going back to the historical

knowledge of Nāgārjuna in Candrakīrti's time, has contributed to the confirmation. *Nāgārjuna in Context: Mahāyāna Buddhism and Early Indian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 73.

¹²⁸ Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary*, 83-8.

Buddha. Although this notion is not well attested in the Mahāyāna commentaries in Candrakīrti's time, it becomes very wide-spread in the later age. It is formally included in Tsong kha pa's *Lam rim chen mo* among one of the causes that allow one to "compose a work that elucidates the intention of the Buddha." Possessing any of three causes will make one eligible for the task: "(1) being skilled in the five branches of knowledge (*pañcavidyāsthāna*) regarding knowable subjects; (2) possessing the instructions passed down through an uninterrupted line of masters that began with the Buddha; and (3) receiving verbal permission from one's chosen tutelary divinity (*iṣṭadevatā*)."¹³⁰ Tsong kha pa's third cause also partially pertains to having the work authorized by an enlightened being.

In early Indian Buddhism, scripture is consistently conceived as the word of the Buddha (*buddhavacana*), as we discussed in the previous chapter. The same notion is also embedded in the concept of *āgama* in Candrakīrti's time. Linking writers of Buddhist *śāstras* and the commentaries to the Buddha, the source of Buddhist scripture, is therefore an important way of according scriptural status to their writings. Moreover, as a relationship between a transcendent author and the texts obtains between the Buddha and scripture, the same also characterize the relationship between a legitimized interpreter and his work. As a corollary, the discovery of an author's intention (*abhiprāya*) often dominates the rhetoric of Buddhist interpretive projects.

Besides various ways of linking the Buddhist authors with the Buddha, another frequent pattern that one finds in the legends surrounding these writers is their ability to

¹²⁹ Ibid., 84,

¹³⁰ LRChM 10: *de ltar thub pa'i dgongs pa gsal bar byed pa'i gzhung rtsom pa la'ang phun sum tshogs pa'i rgyu gsum yod de/ 'di ltar shes bya rig pa'i gnas lnga la mkhas pa dang / ...yang dag par rtsogs pa'i*

access supersensible objects. In the travelogue of Xuanzang, the famous Chinese pilgrim who visited India very likely in Candrakīrti's lifetime,¹³¹ the accounts of supernatural events are so commonplace that they apparently bear witness to the mentality of a contemporary culture. In one instance, Xuanzang reports a legend of Bhāviveka of the sixth century in which the Mādhyamika predecessor of Candrakīrti had visions of the celestial Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and a divinity. Through their help, Bhāviveka was able to enter an *asura*'s cave to wait in his human body for the coming of the future Buddha Maitreya.¹³²

We find the same two means of legitimation at work when Candrakīrti's works began to receive wide recognition a few hundred years after his death. The Indian scholar Dipaṃkaraśrījñāna (ca. 982-1054) links him directly with Nāgārjuna, stating "Candrakīrti is a disciple of Nāgārjuna, and by way of the instructions passed down from him, one will realize the truth, the nature of things."¹³³ On the other hand, the colophons of all Tibetan versions of *Madhyamakāvatāra* and its *bhāṣya*, preserve a legend concerning the author, in which Candrakīrti is described to have milked a cow depicted in a painting.¹³⁴ It should

sangs rgyas nas bzung ste dam pa bar ma chad pa las brgyud pa'i man ngag dang ldan pa dang / yid dam gyi lha'i zhal gzig nas gsung gi gnang ba thob pa'o.

¹³¹ Xuanzang left the Chinese capital Chang'an in 629 and returned in 645, and he spent most of his years of travel in India. The date of ca. 570-640 has been suggested for Candrakīrti.

¹³² T. 2087 LI 930c25-931b03. For a discussion of the legend, see Malcolm David Eckel, *To See the Buddha: A Philosopher's Quest for the Meaning of Emptiness* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 11-3.

¹³³ *Satyadvayāvatāra* 15d-16b. D (To. 3902) Dbu ma, vol. a, 72b4-5: *klu sgrub slob ma zla grags yin/ /de las brgyud pa'i man ngag gis/ /chos nyid bden pa rtogs par 'gyur/.*

¹³⁴ MABh 409: *ri mor bris pa'i ba drus ma las 'o ma bzhos pas*. "... who extracted milk from a cow which is painted." This characterization of Candrakīrti is found in the colophons of both *Madhyamakāvatāra* and its *bhāṣya* in Tibetan, which Pa tshab Ni ma grags (b. 1055) translated with Tilakakalaśa in Kashmir and revised after his return to Tibet (around the year 1100) with Kanakavarman on the basis of different manuscripts. See D (To. 3861) Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 219a4 and (To. 3862) Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 348a4. With the exception of the replacement of *pas* by *bas*, this same formulation is also found in the colophon of Nag tsho Tshul khriṃs rgyal ba's (b. 1011) earlier Tibetan translation, at P (5261) Dbu ma, vol. 'a, 244b8. The fact that the wording of the legend is nearly the same in both Pa tshab's and Nag tsho's versions suggests a possibility of influence—either it was inserted into Nag tsho's translation by Pa Tshab, who is known to have edited it, or Pa tshab could have simply copied Nag tsho's version in his own translation of MA and

be recalled that scripture is in part conceived as the speech of the trustworthy persons (*āpta*) who have knowledge of the objects that are beyond the senses, as this is one of the ways in which Candrakīrti describes *āgama*.¹³⁵ Therefore, the association of a Buddhist writer with the source of the tradition or the ascription of supersensible knowledge¹³⁶ is more often than not an indication that the writings of the author have achieved scriptural status.

While the authority of *śāstra* is thus conceived in part through its extraordinary author, its transcendence is also commonly articulated in terms of its soteriological value. In the *Prasannapadā*, one way in which Candrakīrti handles this topic is by simply following an Indian exegetical convention. Referring the text of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* as the *śāstra* to be commented on,¹³⁷ he asks near the beginning of his commentary, “what are its relation (*saṃbandha*), subject matter (*abhidheya*), and purpose (*prayojana*)?” It is a part of the formal structure of the Indian commentaries to address these questions, which also appear in Vinītadeva's and Dharmottara's commentaries on Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu* and Haribhadra's *Āloka* on *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* and *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*.¹³⁸ As it is customarily done, Candrakīrti addresses these questions in connection with Nāgārjuna's two-stanza prologue, which reads: “I salute that best of speakers, the perfect Buddha who

MABh. Alternatively, the phrase might have already enjoyed currency in certain Indian or Tibetan Buddhist circles.

¹³⁵ PPMV 75: *sākṣād atīndriyārthavidām āptānām yad vacanaṃ sa āgamaḥ*. See the description in Chapter Two, section 2.2.

¹³⁶ A variant form of this is to describe the writer of the texts to be well on the way to his own enlightenment. An example of this is found in both prophecies in *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* and *Mahāmeghasūtra*.

¹³⁷ PPMV 2.5: *na svato nāpi parato na dvābhyām / ityādi vakṣyamāṇaṃ śāstraṃ*. “Not from self, not from the other, not from both” and so on comprise the *śāstra* to be discussed. The first chapter of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* starts with the phrases *na svato nāpi parato na dvābhyām* ...

¹³⁸ For Vinītadeva's and Dharmottara's treatments of these questions, in extant Sanskrit text of the latter and in the Sanskrit reconstruction from the Tibetan of the former, see Śāstrī, *Nyāyabindu of Ācārya with*

demonstrated dependent origination, which is neither ceasing nor arising, neither annihilated nor permanent, neither singular nor multiple, neither coming nor departing, and which is the peace in which elaboration is pacified.”¹³⁹

Candrakīrti explains that the subject matter of the *śāstra* is dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), which is qualified by the eight characteristics of “not ceasing” and so on¹⁴⁰ that Nāgārjuna speaks of in these stanzas. The general Buddhist concept of dependent origination clarifies that the occurrence of events and things in the phenomenal world depends on causes and conditions.¹⁴¹ However, the ultimate nature of dependent origination, which consists of just conventional entities, is its emptiness, indicated here by its not having the eight characteristics of ceasing and so on.¹⁴² Candrakīrti indicates that Nāgārjuna’s entire *śāstra* is an endeavor to prove that things are free from such characteristics,¹⁴³ therefore the work rather involves itself with emptiness, the ultimate nature of things.

Candrakīrti explains that the purpose (*prayojana*) of the *śāstra* is nothing less than the achievement of *nirvāṇa*, characterized in Nāgārjuna’s prologue by the phrases of “pacification of elaboration” and “peace.”¹⁴⁴ In a similar scholastic exercise, Dharmottara’s *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* also discusses the three members of subject matter,

Commentaries, 4-9. For the Tibetan translation of the former, see D (To. 4230) Tshad ma, vol. we, 1a2-2b5. For Haribhadra’s discussion of this topic in *Āloka*, see Vaidya, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā*, 268 ff.

¹³⁹ Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 12: *anīrodham anutpādam anucchedam aśāsvataṃ / anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anīrgamaṃ // yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaṃ prapañcōpaśamaṃ śivaṃ / deśayāmāsa sambuddhas taṃ vande vadatāṃ varam //*. The prologue is called *maṅgalācaraṇa* in Sanskrit and *mchod (par) brjod (pa)* in Tibetan.

¹⁴⁰ PPMV 3.11-12: *atrānīrodhādya aṣṭaviśeṣaviśiṣṭaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śāstrābhīdheyārthaḥ /*

¹⁴¹ PPMV 10.11: *evaṃ hetupratyayāpekṣaṃ bhāvānām utpādaṃ paridīpayatā bhagavatā*. This brief summary of the meaning of *pratītyasamutpāda* comes after a lengthy discussion of its etymology in PPMV 5.1-10.10.

¹⁴² PPMV 10.13-11.2.

¹⁴³ PPMV 11.2-3: *yathā ca nirodhādayo na santi pratītyasamutpādasya tathā sakalena śāstreṇa pratipādayiṣyati*. See de Jong, “Textcritical Notes,” 29.

¹⁴⁴ PPMV 4.1: *sarvaprapañcōpaśamaśivalakṣaṇaṃ nirvāṇaṃ śāstrasya prayojanaṃ nirdiṣṭaṃ*.

purpose, and relation in Dharmakīrti's text that he comments on. However, in Vinītadeva's commentary, which bears the same title of *Nyāyabinduṭīkā*, and Haribhadra's *Āloka*, a fourth member of the final goal (*prayojanaprayojana*, also called *prayojananiṣṭhā*) is added. In the two commentaries on *Nyāyabindu*, both Vinītadeva and Dharmottara agree that the purpose (*prayojana*) of text being commented on is an investigation (*vyutpādana*) into the subject matter (*abhidheya*).¹⁴⁵ As Vinītadeva admits a fourth member, the investigation into the subject leads to a higher aim, which is the final goal.¹⁴⁶ Both scholars agree that these elements are found in Dharmakīrti's opening aphorism in the text: "The accomplishment of all human aims are preceded by correct knowledge, therefore that [correct knowledge] is investigated."¹⁴⁷ In the context of Dharmakīrti's epistemological work, correct knowledge (*samyagjñāna*) is the subject matter. The purpose of the work consists of an investigation into that subject that, according to Vinītadeva's glosses, has the nature of thorough understanding.¹⁴⁸ The achievement of all human aims through the investigation of correct knowledge is the final goal.¹⁴⁹ De Jong suggests that the absence of final goal in Candrakīrti's interpretation indicates that it is yet to be introduced by later scholars in this exegetical device.¹⁵⁰ According to this view, it appears that purpose in the three-member scheme is bifurcated into purpose and final goal, and what Candrakīrti identifies as the purpose—*nirvāṇa*—rather resembles the final goal in the later scheme.

¹⁴⁵ Śāstrī, *Nyāyabindu of Ācārya with Commentaries*, 6-7; D (To. 4230) Tshad ma, vol. we, 2a3.

¹⁴⁶ D (To. 4230) Tshad ma, vol. we, 2b2-3.

¹⁴⁷ Śāstrī, *Nyāyabindu of Ācārya with Commentaries*, 4: *samyagjñānapūrvikā sarvapuruṣārthasiddhir iti tad vyutpādyate*. Vinītadeva explains that *iti* indicates the reason, while "that" refers to "correct knowledge." D (To. 4230) Tshad ma, vol. we, 3a7: *yin pas na zhes bya ba'i sgra ni de'i phyir zhes bya ba'i don yin la*; 3b1: *de bstan to zhes bya ba la de zhes bya ba ni yang dag pa'i shes pa dang sbyar bar bya ste*.

¹⁴⁸ D (To. 4230) Tshad ma, vol. we, 2a4: *yang dag pa'i shes pa bstan pa de ni khong du chud par byed pa'i rang bzhin yin la*; 2b2: *yang dag pa'i shes pa yongs su shes pa*.

¹⁴⁹ For Vinītadeva's identification of the four elements, see D (To. 4230) Tshad ma, vol. we, 2a3-b3.

Writing later than Candrakīrti, Vinītadeva and Dharmottara are more explicit about the exact nature of relation (*saṃbandha*). According to them, a work (*prakaraṇa*) is composed as a means to achieve the purpose (*prayojana*), which is to investigate into or to thoroughly understand of the subject (*abhidheya*). Therefore, “the state of [a connection between] means (*upāya*) and end (*upeya*) that exists between the work and the purpose is their relation.”¹⁵¹ We find a similar pattern of linking the composition of a work with the understanding of the subject also underlying Candrakīrti’s description of the “relation of the *śāstra*.” This, he explains in *Prasannapadā*, consists of “the producing of the *śāstra* out of compassion on the part of master Nāgārjuna, who has correctly understood the way of perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitānīti*), for the sake of enlightening the others.”¹⁵²

In these Indian Buddhist commentaries, the “the relation of *śāstra*” appears to be formulated more restrictively as the connection between the composition of a *śāstra* and the knowledge of a subject being investigated. However, the commentators all endeavored to link the restricted purpose to a higher aim, be it the attainment of *nirvāṇa* or other more general forms of accomplishment.¹⁵³ In the later age, where the use of the four-membered scheme becomes the standard, the Tibetan commentators often identify relation (*‘brel ba*) in this device as the connection between the former to the latter

¹⁵⁰ De Jong, “Textcritical Notes,” 28.

¹⁵¹ Śāstrī, *Nyāyabindu of Ācārya with Commentaries*, 8: (u)pāyopeyabhāvaḥ prakaraṇaprayojanayoḥ saṃbandha iti. Vinītadeva agrees with this formulation. D (To. 4230) Tshad ma, vol. we, 2a4-5: rab tu byed pa dang/ dgos par thabs dang thabs kyis bsgrub par bya ba ‘i mtshan nyid kyis ‘brel ba yin te. The latter’s further comments are found in ibid., 2a4-b2.

¹⁵² PPMV 2.7-3.2: yāvad ācāryanāgārjunasya viditāvīparītaprajñāpāramitānīteḥ karūṇayā parāvabodhārtham śāstrapraṇayanam / ity eṣa tāvac chāstrasya saṃbandhaḥ. Candrakīrti speaks of conveying the understanding of the subject to the others in this context. Dharmottara also says in *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* that the investigation of the subject pertains to both the author and his audience. Śāstrī, *Nyāyabindu of Ācārya with Commentaries*, 7.

¹⁵³ In the two commentaries on *Nyāyabindu*, this is found in Śāstrī, *Nyāyabindu of Ācārya with Commentaries*, 8-9; The Tibetan of Vinītadeva is in D (To. 4230) Tshad ma, vol. we, 2b2-5.

members so that, as Cabezón writes, “in dependent on the content, the purpose is fulfilled and, in dependence on the purpose, the goal is fulfilled.”¹⁵⁴

These four members that Indian and Tibetan commentaries discuss in connection with the prologue of a worked being commented on are called *anubandha* in Sanskrit and *dgos sogs chos bzhi* in Tibetan. Their use is found in brahmanical commentaries such as *Ślokavārttika* and *Vedāntasāra* as well, therefore they form a part of the greater Indian exegetical convention.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, the discussion of the four members constitutes an essential element in the anatomy of commentary, while the prologue, that of the *śāstras*. The presence of the analysis of the four members in the texts also serves the function of marking themselves as belonging to the genre of commentary, just as Buddhist *sūtras* identify themselves as such with the phrase “thus have I heard” and an identification of the location and the audience of the discourse in the beginning and a concluding indication of the audience’s acceptance of the teachings at the end.¹⁵⁶ As the tradition makes this exegetical exercise an anatomic part of the commentary, the transcendental aim of *śāstra* is both presumed and reinforced, and it is articulated especially through the notion of “*śāstra*’s relation.”

3.5 What Is *Śāstra*: Placing the Buddhist *Śāstras* in the Larger Indian Context

¹⁵⁴ Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language*, 44.

¹⁵⁵ R. C. Dwivedi, “Concept of *Śāstra*,” *Indologica Taurinensia* 13 (1985-6): 57.

¹⁵⁶ Kōgen, *Buddhist Sutras*, 17-8; Eimer and Germano, *Many Canons*, 7. As Eimer says, the Tibetan translations of Buddhist scriptures introduce their own markers, such as the Tibetan transliteration of the Sanskrit titles (ibid., and n. 41). The use of the transliteration perhaps demonstrates that the “canonicity” of Tibetan Bka’ gyur and Bstan gyur are in part conceived in terms of their foreignness.

It is in this context of describing the relation of Nāgārjuna's *śāstra* that the extant Sanskrit text of *Prasannapadā* cites the following stanza, the earliest instance of which is found in Vasubandhu's *Vyākhyāyukti*, and it characterizes *śāstra* in the following manner:

That which rectifies (*śāsti*) the enemies—the defilements—without exception and protects (*saṃtrāyate*) from lower destiny and existence is *śāstra*, on account of the qualities of rectification and protection. These two [qualities] do not exist in other systems.¹⁵⁷

In *Vyākhyāyukti*, Vasubandhu gives this stanza to illustrate the *nirukti* (Tib. *nges pa'i tshig*), or conventional derivation that is not strictly grammatical, of the word *śāstra*. According to this derivation, *śāstra* comes from the roots *śās* and *trai*, which respectively mean “to rectify” and “to protect.”¹⁵⁸ This *nirukti* and the accompanying stanza that we find in *Vyākhyāyukti* affords a characterization of *śāstra* in terms of the higher religious goals for which it serves as an aid, viz., the eradication of mental defilements and the deliverance from lower rebirth and *saṃsāra*. According to Sanskrit grammar, the term *śāstra* is derived by adding the suffix *ṣṭrn* (*tra*), in the sense of instrument, to the root

¹⁵⁷ This stanza is missing in the Tibetan translation of *Prasannapadā*. PPMV 3.3-4: *yac chāsti ca kleśaripūn aśeṣān saṃtrāyate durgatito bhavāc ca / tac chāsanāt trāṇaguṇāc ca śāstraṃ etad dvayaṃ cānyamateṣu nāsti*. De Jong amends *vaḥ* to *ca* based on Sthiramati's citation of this stanza in *Madhyāntavibhāṅgatīkā*. “Textcritical notes,” 28. See Sylvain Lévi and Susumu Yamaguchi, ed., *Madhyāntavibhāṅgatīkā: exposition systématique du Yogācāravijñaptivāda* (Nagoya: Librairie Hajinkaku, 1934), 3. In the Tibetan translation of *Vyākhyāyukti*, the stanza is found in D (To. 4061) Sems tsam, vol. *shi*, 123a2-3: *nyon mongs dgra rnam ma lus 'chos pa dang / 'ngan 'gro srid las skyob pa gang yin te / 'chos skyob yon tan phyir na bstan bcos te / 'gnyis po 'di dag gzhan gyi lugs la med*.

¹⁵⁸ D (To. 4061) Sems tsam, vol. *shi*, 123a2: *nges pa'i tshig tu 'chos pa dang / skyob par byed pas / de'i phyir bstan bcos so*. A Sanskrit reconstruction might read: *niruktau śāsti saṃtrāyate ceti ataḥ śāstram*. Among many senses of the root *śās*, both the stanza from *Vyākhyāyukti* and the Tibetan form of '*chos pa* (for both *śāsti* and *śāsana*) prefer that of rectification, although the Tibetan equivalent of *śāstra*—*bstan bcos*—preserves both the senses of instruction and rectification.

śās.¹⁵⁹ In *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Vasubandhu follows the grammatical derivation to give the etymology, “it is called *śāstra* because of instructing disciples [by means of it].”¹⁶⁰ This formulation does not emphasize *śāstra*’s transcendence, but rather characterizes it as a form of pedagogical text. The use of scriptures and their commentaries in education in ancient societies is very common.¹⁶¹ In late Tibetan Buddhism, we indeed find the evidence for the use of a series of commentaries and subcommentaries, with a number Indian *śāstras* at their source, as the principal texts in the monastic curricula.¹⁶² The use of *śāstra* and *sūtra* as educational materials in Indian Buddhism remains an area to be investigated.

These two etymologies of *śāstra* in Candrakīrti’s and Vasubandhu’s texts are just two samples from very numerous Indian definitions and characterizations of *śāstra*—Buddhist and otherwise¹⁶³—as *śāstra* is a cultural form that is shared by both brahmanical and unorthodox traditions, despite their mutual denial of each other’s authoritative texts. The diverse descriptions of *śāstra* reflect the wide varieties of *śāstras* that are found in the traditional lists,¹⁶⁴ in addition to which there are also classifications of categories such as *vidyāsthāna* and *kalā*, which are synonymous with *śāstra*. *Śāstra* is so inclusive as a textual category that it has been observed that the only exception to *śāstra* is poetry (*kāvya*).¹⁶⁵ In the face of this wide diversity of texts and their claim on all

¹⁵⁹ Dwivedi, “Concept of *Śāstra*,” 43. See Pāṇini 3.2.181-3.

¹⁶⁰ AKBh ad I 1d, 1:9: *śiṣyaśāsanāc chāstram*. Cf. Dwivedi, “Concept of *Śāstra*,” 43 n. 1.

¹⁶¹ See, for instance, Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary*, 22 n. 3, 85, 86.

¹⁶² See, for instance, Dreyfus, *Sound of Hands Clapping*, 98-148.

¹⁶³ See, for instance, Dwivedi, “Concept of *Śāstra*,” 58-60; Sheldon Pollock, “The Theory of Practice and the Practice of Theory in Indian Intellectual History,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105, no. 3 (1985): 501.

¹⁶⁴ See, for instance, Pollock, “Theory of Practice,” 502; Pollock, “The Idea of *Śāstra* in Traditional India,” in *Shastric Traditions in Indian Arts*, Vol. 1, Texts, ed. Anna Libera Dallapoccola, Christine Walter-Mendy, and Stephanie Zingel-Avé Lallemand (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1989), 22; Dwivedi, “Concept of *Śāstra*,” 43.

¹⁶⁵ Dwivedi, “Concept of *Śāstra*,” 43.

forms of knowledge, an important classification, as formulated in Rājaśekhara's *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā*, envisions *śāstra* in the two classes based on whether the texts are of transcendental (*apauruṣeya*) or human origin (*pauruṣeya*). Pollock makes it clear that this classification is made in part to account for the fact the category of *śāstra* includes both books that govern cultural practices and the Veda, which in fact is the primary texts that the term *śāstra* signifies in the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta schools of Indian philosophy.¹⁶⁶ That *śāstra* encompasses in the larger Indian context both revelation and “verbal codification of rules” that governs “particular cultural practices,”¹⁶⁷ many of which deal with secular subjects, is significant for the comparative purpose.

As we have discussed above, in the Buddhist context *śāstra* mainly refers to the works that are written by persons other than the Buddha, therefore falling under the category of “texts of human origin.”¹⁶⁸ Exceptions to the rule do occur. In *Vyākhyāyukti*, Vasubandhu applies the appellation *śāstra* to “the Buddha’s speech,” based on the reason that Buddha’s speech contains the two qualities of rectification and protection, thus fulfilling the etymology of *śāstra*.¹⁶⁹ The Tibetan writer Rje btsun Chos kyi rgyal mtshan also follows Vasubandhu, extending the category of *śāstra* to the *sūtras* as well. This explanation, however, appears to be merely based on an etymology of *śāstra*, and the Tibetan Buddhist writers recognize that in the common usage of the word *śāstra*, as

¹⁶⁶ Pollock, “Theory of Practice,” 502.

¹⁶⁷ Pollock, “Theory of Practice,” 501; Pollock, “Idea of *Śāstra*,” 18.

¹⁶⁸ Strictly speaking, the word of the Buddha is also *pauruṣeya*, or works originating from a person. This is true from the perspectives of both the brahmanical and Buddhist traditions. However, the transcendence of the Buddha requires a separate category for the word of Buddha in the Buddhist tradition.

¹⁶⁹ D (To. 4061) Sems tsam, vol. *shi*, 123a2-4: *sangs rgyas kyi gsung bstan bcos kyi mtshan nyid du 'thad pa'i phyir ro/ nges pa'i tsig tu ... de lta bas na sangs rgyas kyi gsung kho na don dam par bstan bcos yin pas 'chos pa dang skyob pa'i yon tan gyi phyir*. “The speech of the Buddha fulfills the characteristics of *śāstra*. In the *nirukti* (the etymology and the stanza discussed above is given here) ... Therefore, the speech of the Buddha alone is *śāstra* ultimately. Thus, it has the qualities of rectifying and protecting.”

opposed to *sūtra*, rather signifies texts that interpret the word of the Buddha.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, the two terms of *sūtra* and *śāstra*, found in such expressions as *sarvanikāyaśāstrasūtreṣu* (PPMV 549.8), preserves, in general terms, the binary opposition between scripture and commentary in Buddhism. In the larger Indian context, on the other hand, *śāstra* is a more pervasive in scope. It obliterates the scripture-commentary distinction and subsumes *sūtra* as its sub-genre.¹⁷¹

This difference in the scope and signification of *śāstra* is also reflected in how the transcendence of *śāstra* is expressed by way of its origin. Whereas the transcendence of Buddhist *śāstras* is articulated generally by linking their authors to the Buddha; the brahmanical tradition, on the other hand, customarily ascribes divine authorship to the original versions of various types of *śāstras*, while the Veda maintains its transcendence by being authorless. In this manner, *śāstra* assumes the scriptural model. The derivative model, however, is not at all absent in the brahmanical concept of *śāstra*. Indeed, the orthodox tradition regards Veda to be the source of all the knowledge that is included in the various *śāstras*, which are its elaborations.¹⁷² Thus, the six *vedāṅga*, or limbs of the Veda, are the practical disciplines that are developed to treat primarily the complex linguistic phenomena of the Veda along with ritual and astrology. The concept of *upaveda* and the fifth Veda are rather means of legitimization, through assigning vedic

¹⁷⁰ Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language*, 45. Cabezón cites here an alternative definition of *śāstra* which characterizes it as “a work that explains the meaning of the Buddha’s word, is in accordance with the path for the attainment of emancipation, and is composed by someone with a nondistracted mind.”

¹⁷¹ Pollock, “Theory of Practice,” 500; Dwivedi, “Concept of *Śāstra*,” 43-4. The early Buddhist *sūtra* is based originally on the Indian genre of that name, which takes the form of a collection of aphoristic sayings in prose, as witnessed in the *sūtras* of Pāṇini and those of the philosophical schools. Kōgen Mizuno says that the concept of Buddhist *sūtra* has changed from its original sense of “teachings recorded in simple prose,” just one of the several original categories, to “all sermons of the Buddha,” including both the *Āgama sūtras* in the *Sūtrapiṭaka* and the *Mahāyāna sūtras*. *Buddhist Sutras*, 15-6. For a study of *sūtra* as a genre, see Louis Renou, “Sur le genre du *sūtra* dans la littérature sanskrite,” *Journal asiatique* (1963): 165-216.

¹⁷² Dwivedi, “Concept of *Śāstra*,” 44.

origin and connection or quasi-vedic authority, even to secular branches of knowledge such as medicine, archery, musicology, and dramaturgy.¹⁷³ Pollock further argues that the Veda provides a model for the *śāstras* to assume their authority in relation to the diverse cultural practices through the notion of knowledge's priority to practice¹⁷⁴ and the idea that, from the point of view of the Mīmāṃsā School, vedic injunctions concern themselves with dharma, which cannot be known through practical means.¹⁷⁵

The Buddhist notion of *śāstra* therefore participates mainly in the derivative model of the Indian *śāstra* discourse, in which a divine prototype evolves into works of human authorship either through a series of abridgment or a succession of teachers (*guruparamparā*) often in an unbroken line.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, to present a work as a commentary is itself a common way of investing it with legitimacy in the scholastic cultures. Among the works of Candrakīrti, more than half formulate themselves as explicit commentaries on other works,¹⁷⁷ and they bear the words *vr̥tti*, *ṭīkā*, and *bhāṣya* in their titles.¹⁷⁸ But even in *Madhyamakāvatāra*, his independent work and his own

¹⁷³ Ibid., 47-8.

¹⁷⁴ This is based in particular on the model of cosmic creation. Pollock, "Theory of Practice," 518-9.

¹⁷⁵ This argument is developed mainly in Sheldon Pollock, "Playing by the Rule," in *Shastric Traditions in Indian Arts*, Vol. 1, Texts, ed. by Anna Libera Dallapoccola, Christine Walter-Mendy, and Stephanie Zingel-Avé Lallemand (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1989): 301-312.

¹⁷⁶ Pollock, "Theory of Practice," 512-5. Besides the abridgment and genealogical models, note also his mention of sudden revelation (p. 514). All these derivative models are found in Buddhism.

¹⁷⁷ Candrakīrti's commentaries on the early Madhyamaka works are: (1) *Prasannapadā* (*Madhyamakavṛtti*), (2) *Śūnyatāsaptativṛtti*, (3) *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, and (4) *Catuḥśatakaṭīkā*. He also wrote *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, a commentary on his own independent work *Madhyamakāvatāra*. The ascription of *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa* to Candrakīrti, the Madhyamaka writer, has not been challenged. On Candrakīrti the Tantric writer and Candrakīrti, the author of *Madhyamakaprajñāvatāra*, see Ruegg, *Literature of Madhyamaka*, 81, 105; Vose, *Resurrecting Candrakīrti*, 27, 30, 182 n. 69, 185-6 n. 96. It has also been determined that *Triśaraṇasaptati* was written by someone other than the Madhyamaka writer, suggested either as authored by the Tantric Candrakīrti or a fourth Candrakīrti. See Ruegg, *Literature of Madhyamaka*, 105 n. 334; Vose, *Resurrecting Candrakīrti*, 31-32, 34, 185-6 n. 96, 186 n. 102.

¹⁷⁸ The compilers of *Mahāvīyutpatti* give the following terms as noteworthy Sanskrit words for commentary: *vivaraṇa* (no. 1450), *pañjikā* (1461), *vyākhyāna* (no. 1453), *vārtika* (no. 1454), *Paddhatih* (no. 1455), and *ṭīkāṭīkā* (no. 1458), in addition to *vr̥tti* (no. 1449), *bhāṣya* (no. 1452), and *ṭīkā* (no. 1457). See Sakaki, *Bon-Zō-Kan-Wa*, 1:111. Griffiths, who also mentions *upanibandhana*, discusses the commentary types that

bhāṣya, Candrakīrti also formulates his presentation around the earlier texts and admits that he “will speak according to the view that resides in the system of the noble Nāgārjuna” in the main portion of the work that deals with Madhyamaka thought. The later Tibetan writers therefore characterize his *Prasannapadā* as a commentary on the word (*tshig gi ‘grel pa*) of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, while his *Madhyamakāvatāra* is said to be a commentary on the meaning (*don gyi ‘grel pa*) of the latter. An independent *śāstra* enjoys freedom from the structural restrictions imposed by an earlier text, thus Candrakīrti is able to construct his *Madhyamakāvatāra* in a new organization, devoting, for instance, a lengthy section on the critique of the views of the Yogācāra school that emerged after the time of Nāgārjuna. However, Candrakīrti presents in *Prasannapadā* equally important critical assessments of Bhāviveka and Dignāga’s ideas in the form of lengthy digressions.¹⁷⁹ The expository method is the same, while the ideas are in agreement. The tradition recognizes the unity between independent *śāstras* and explicit commentaries in terms of their essential exegetical character and places them in the same category.

The designation of *śāstra* for the technical treatises that govern all domains of human activities, which is so prominent in India, is also found in Buddhism. Here the concept of *vidyāsthāna*, or field of knowledge, generally considered a synonym of *śāstra*, often provides the framework for incorporating both religious and secular disciplines under the same rubric. In contrast with the fourteen-fold and eighteen-fold divisions of

these different terms suggest as they are observed in Buddhist literature and described in Rājaśekhara’s *Kāvyamīmāṃsā. Religious Reading*, 111-3.

¹⁷⁹ PPMV 14.4-36.2 and 55.11-75.13. Both sections end with the expression *alam prasaṅgena*, “enough of elaboration,” perhaps with a slight sense of guilt for the digressions, although they are remarkably penetrative.

vidyāsthāna commonly found in the brahmanical texts,¹⁸⁰ Buddhist texts list five: (1) inner, or religious, science (*adhyātmavidyā*), (2) logic (*hetuvidyā*), (3) linguistics (*śabdavidyā*), (4) medical science (*cikitsāvidyā*), and (5) practical arts and crafts (*śilpakarmasthānavidyā*).¹⁸¹ In the theological works, the secular disciplines in the five branches of knowledge are often described as accessories that aid a Bodhisattva in a religious career.¹⁸² The Sde dge edition of the Bstan 'gyur preserves a wide variety of secular literature in Tibetan translation in the *jātaka*, logic, linguistics, medicine, practical arts and crafts, *sādhāraṇa nītiśāstra*, and miscellaneous sections,¹⁸³ bearing witness to the Buddhist participation in all forms of Indian learning.

The relationship between *śāstras* and various domains of human activities is a central question that occupies Pollock's work on Indian *śāstra* discourse, and he explores the permutations of that relationship that is formulated in general terms as one between theory and practice. To extend the idea of *śāstra*'s theoretical nature, as he formulates in the general Indian context, to the area of Buddhist theology, the following aspects of *śāstra* emerge as more prominent among its characteristics. (1) It relates to the earlier texts as a theory of such texts through clarification, reflection, generalization, and

¹⁸⁰ Pollock, "Theory of Practice," 502 and n. 17; *idem*, "Idea of *Śāstra*," 21-25; Dwivedi, "Concept of *Śāstra*," 49.

¹⁸¹ A comprehensive description of the five *vidyāsthānas* is found in *Yogācārabhūmi* at T. 1579 XXX 345a22-361b9.

¹⁸² See, for instance, *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* XI 60: *vidyāsthāne pañcavidhe yogam akṛtvā sarvajñatvaṃ naiti kathaṃcit paramāryaḥ/ ity anyeṣāṃ nigrahaṇānugrahaṇāya svājñārthaṃ vā tatra karoty eva sa yogam//*. "Without working on the five fields of knowledge, the supreme noble one does not reach at all the state of omniscience. Therefore, for the purpose of subjugating and caring for the others and for the sake of one's own knowledge, he applies himself to them." In a typical scholastic style, the commentary explains that the five *vidyāsthānas* are classified in this stanza on the basis of their purposes. According to this scheme, the study of logic and linguistics is pursued for the sake of engaging others in an antagonistic circumstance, medical science and arts and crafts are pursued to benefit those who share one's own aspirations, while the religious science is learned for the sake of one's own knowledge. All five, however, are pursued for the sake of omniscience. See S. Bagchi, ed., *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṅkāra of Asaṅga* (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute of Post-graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1999), 70.

systematization. (2) It assumes the role of normative discourse that governs the understanding of scriptures and religious ideas. (3) It extends its authority over religious practices by establishing orthopraxy and regulating these practices. Among these three aspects, the proper theoretical nature of *śāstra* manifests itself especially in its relation with the earlier texts, and it deepens when reflections on texts become the subject of further reflection in the chains of commentaries that we often find in the scholastic traditions.

Another generic characteristic that is clearly visible in the *śāstras* on religious subjects is the compartmentalization of knowledge into the discrete disciplines as it is typified in the secular sciences. This aspect of *śāstra* is found not just in the treatises of various schools of thought, each with its own set of doctrinal positions (*siddhānta*), lines of argument, primary scriptural sources, hermeneutical principles, and scholastic methods. It manifests also in the development of specific forms of inquiry in which members of different schools of thought participate collectively. The study of epistemology and logic, systematized by Dignāga and further developed by Dharmakīrti, is one such discipline. Candrakīrti's articulation and promotion of *prasaṅga* and his critique of Bhāviveka's use of *svatantrānumāna*, a clear influence of Dignāga on the Madhyamaka school, is a moment of meditation on the method of argumentation.¹⁸⁴ In the area of scriptural exegesis, Vasubandhu brings practice to the level of theory with his *Vyākhyāyukti*, which lays out a comprehensive treatment of the science of commentary.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Ui et al., *Catalogue of Canons*, 633-4, 643-686. Schaeffer, *Culture of Book*, 157-8. As Hayes points out, ancient Buddhists and modern scholars are divided on the question of whether logic is a secular science. "Question of Doctrinalism," 646-8.

¹⁸⁴ For an annotated translation of the portion of PPMV that deals with issue, see Ruegg, *Two Prolegomena*, 25-70.

¹⁸⁵ See Peter Skilling, "Vasubandhu and the *Vyākhyāyukti* Literature," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 23, no. 2 (2000): 297-350; Cabezón, "Vyākhyāyukti on the Authenticity;"

The present chapter makes an argument for the existence of a persistent hermeneutical character of Buddhist *śāstras*, on account of which we may describe them as texts on texts, as they always bring themselves into a relationship with other texts. Where these writings display their characters as theoretical texts or as books in the specialized disciplines, we can also speak of the development of human inquiry. Here, human reason takes a prominent place in these texts, constantly analytical and always demanding explanations for the language, structures, and positions taken in the texts. Two features of the Buddhist *śāstras* will serve the purpose of illustrating this inquisitiveness. First, *śāstras* are particularly self-conscious about order and structure. In the *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti displays this structural consciousness by explaining in most cases how each given chapter in Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* relates to the previous chapter in a logical sequence.¹⁸⁶ He also presumes that the order of the concepts that Nāgārjuna gives in a list is not random. He supplies an explanation, for instance, for the question as to why Nāgārjuna mentions "not ceasing" before "not ceasing," both as characteristics of dependent origination, in the prologue of the renowned work, although the first chapter proceeds with an argument for the empty nature of the arising of things.¹⁸⁷ *Śāstras*' preoccupation with sequence and structure is in stark contrast with the Buddhist *sūtra* literature. Thus, while in the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, for instance,

Richard F. Nance, *Speaking for Buddhas: Scriptural Commentary in Indian Buddhism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

¹⁸⁶ Ruegg, *Literature of Madhyamaka*, 12. Remarks on the general plan of MMK are also found in PPMV 58.10-14. Here, Candrakīrti says that MMK is laid out in such a way that the first chapter denies the superimposition of erroneous nature (*viparītasvarūpādhyāropapratipakṣa*), by showing that "things do not arise" (*anutpannā bhāvā ity*). In contrast with the general treatment found in the first chapter, the rest of the chapters of MMK are said to negate (*apākarāṇa*) "certain specific details that are superimposed" (*kaścid viśeṣo 'dhyāropitas*).

¹⁸⁷ Candrakīrti gives a conceptual explanation for the word order in question in PPMV 12.4-10. Reversing the order of *anirōdham* and *anutpādam*, the two words which stand at the very beginning of MMK, would not change the meter. Thus the unusual word order cannot be explained based on the reason of metrical necessity.

repetitiveness and structural ambiguity is pervasive, the commentaries on these texts take upon themselves the task of either showing the logic behind the transition between the sections and passages,¹⁸⁸ a pattern found in Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*, or discovering the overall underlying structure of the entire texts.¹⁸⁹ Sometimes *sūtras* play with the structure of themselves using literary techniques found in the narrative literature, but they do so suggestively. The *śāstras*, on the other hand, are more explicit about the questions of sequence, outline, and structure.

Another analytical feature of the *śāstras* relates themselves to rival positions. The authors of *śāstras* constantly expect opposition to their own positions, either raised by real opponents in life or presented in hypothetical scenarios, and consideration of objections is presupposed by the convention of the genre. In Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra*, its *bhāṣya*, and *Prasannapadā*, critical encounters with the views of the Yogācāra school, Bhāviveka, and Dignāga yield what the later tradition considers to be the most distinctive aspects of Candrakīrti's thought.¹⁹⁰ A concern for scripture and the established positions of one's own school is always present in such encounters, but the outcome is also influenced by the logic and dynamics of the dialectical process. The

¹⁸⁸ An example of the commentaries that discuss the structures of the *sūtras* in terms of logical transition between sections is Asaṅga's *Triśatikāyāḥ prajñāpāramitāyāḥ kārikāsaptati*, on *Vajracchedikā*, along with Vasubandhu's subcommentary, the latter of which is preserved in two Chinese translations (T. 1511 and 1713). For Asaṅga's commentary and analyses of this text and Vasubandhu's subcommentary, see Giuseppe Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts: Part I* (Rome: Is. M.E.O., 1956), 32-8, 51-128; Li Shenghai, "A Study of the Canonical Chinese Translations of *Vajracchedikā*," (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004), 53-62.

¹⁸⁹ The exegetical strategy that explains the hidden structures of texts is exemplified in Vasubandhu's *Saptapadārthaṭīkā*, a commentary on *Vajracchedikā*, and the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* literature on *Prajñāpāramitā*. On the former text, see Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts I*, 131-171; Li, "Chinese Translations of *Vajracchedikā*," 62-73.

¹⁹⁰ The scholars of the Dge lugs School of Tibetan Buddhism list and discuss what they call the eight unique features of the Thal 'gyur ba, a subschool of the Madhyamaka thought which is retroactively applied to a group of few Indian writers centered around Candrakīrti. On the eight unique positions, see Ruegg, *Two Prolegomena*, 137-280; Daniel Cozort, *Unique Tenets of the Middle Way Consequence School* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1998).

tradition admits the role of reason (*yukti*) by recognizing it as one of the tools that one relies on, along with scripture (*āgama*), to form judicious opinions.

3.6 Conclusion

The previous chapter concerned itself with the various connotations of *āgama* as a concept, establishing in particular its exclusive link with the texts that the Buddhist tradition regards as the word of the Buddha in Candrakīrti's time. The present chapter shifts the focus to the notion of *śāstra*, which is regarded broadly in the Buddhist context as signifying the texts which are composed by persons other than the Buddha(s). The radical distinction in the authorship as the tradition conceives it entails a bifurcation of the Buddhist texts into scriptures and commentaries. While a binary structure always seems to persist, the line that divides scripture from commentary shifts over time. Speaking of a similar circumstance in Confucianism, Henderson writes that, according a Chinese commentator, "the *Record of Rites* is a 'commentary' in relation to the *Rites of Chou*, but a 'classic' in relation to the *Tso Commentary*."¹⁹¹ The situation is indeed typical globally in scholastic cultures. Thus, in the cases that this chapter deals with, Candrakīrti's texts are authoritative for Tsong kha pa, while they are commentarial in relation to Nāgārjuna's. *Āgama*'s changing scope of referent especially in the later periods is an index of the greater role that commentaries play. From a comparative point of view, *āgama* in the history of Indian and Tibetan Buddhism is equivalent to *śāstra* in the general Indian context, in the sense that both terms combine scripture and commentary in a single category.

The rising authority of Buddhist *śāstras* can be attributed to the formation and development of a scholastic culture, which Cabezón characterizes as the age of commentary.¹⁹² Perhaps more characteristic of the advanced stage of scholasticism crossculturally is the phenomenon of chains of commentaries, which heightens a sense of self-reflexivity, when more recent texts subsume within their own framework the older texts that must appear now in the form of fragmentary references and citations. Cabezón includes a strong sense of tradition, a concern with the nature of language, a tendency to textual and analytical inclusivity, a belief in the completeness and compactness of the authoritative interpretations and the epistemological accessibility of the world, an emphasis on systematicity and rationality, and self reflexivity among the characteristics of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism.¹⁹³ All these cultural traits have textual manifestations in the Buddhist *śāstras*. The Buddhist exegetes self-reflexively summarize the scholastic methods most frequently in the principle of reliance on both scripture and reasoning. When *śāstra* writers negotiate their positions with these two instruments, rationality is seen as a constitutive quality of scripture while the two come into mutually restrictive and complementary relationships with each other. As a result of this close contact with reason, the transcendence of scripture, as suggested by its extraordinary author and high soteriological purpose, is also harmonized by its accessibility to the human mind.

¹⁹¹ Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary*, 64.

¹⁹² Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language*, 71.

¹⁹³ José Ignacio Cabezón, ed., *Scholasticism: Cross-cultural and Comparative Perspectives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 4-6. In outlining these features, perhaps Cabezón has followed the example of Masson-Oursel's attempt to reflect on the crosscultural characters of scholasticism. See Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language*, 15.

Chapter Four

Encompassing and Superseding: On the Uses of Nikāya Buddhist Scriptures in Madhyamaka Thought

The previous two chapters have concerned themselves with the evolution of the concept of *āgama*, emphasizing in particular its tendency to become an increasingly generalized term for scripture and its ability to encompass a larger scope of authoritative texts. What we have so far only briefly touched upon is the early stage in the develop of the concept of *āgama*, where it refers to four or five collections of texts called Āgama, which are found in the Sūtra division of the Tripiṭaka of Nikāya Buddhism. As we have attempted to demonstrate in the last chapter using the case of Mādhyamika *śāstras* and commentaries, with the expansion of the scriptural corpus and as Buddhists became more occupied with the newer generations of authoritative texts, the older texts represented by the Āgamas/Nikāyas naturally became marginalized as a corollary. The development of Mahāyāna Buddhism in the history of Indian Buddhism is another factor that contributed

to the less important place that Nikāya Buddhist texts occupy in the practical canons of the Mahāyāna Buddhists. Mahāyāna Buddhists obviously display greater affinity with the Mahāyāna *sūtras*. For them, the Tripiṭaka in general and the Āgamas in particular, which the followers of various schools of Nikāya Buddhism had been maintaining for centuries, do form a part of the scriptural corpus, but they attach less importance to these texts.

This situation bears similarity to the one which we find between the Christian and Jewish communities with the incorporation of the Jewish Bible as the Old Testament. A further related point of comparison is how the Islamic communities perceive the former two religious groups as the “peoples of the book”—that is, recognizing them by accepting their scriptures as originating from the same source. As Wilfred C. Smith puts it, the issue essentially has to do with “how a religious *Weltanschauung* can cope with another community that is historically prior to it in time, but may prove incapable of coping with one that arises subsequently.”¹ In both instances, the predecessor communities reject the authenticity of the successor communities’ scriptures, while the latter acknowledge the former’s scriptures. In the case of the Christianity, the Jewish Bible is accepted as a part of its own scripture in an act that Smith characterizes as both incorporation and supersession.² The relationship between the two associated communities that emerge in different points in time is thus defined in part by how they relate to each other’s scriptures.

The Nikāya and Mahāyāna Buddhists share much in common in terms of their doctrinal basis. They often live in the same monasteries, subject to regulation by the same legal-ethical principles encoded in Vinaya, while following the much-shared elements in

¹ Smith, “Study of Bible,” 23.

² Ibid.

ritual and contemplative practices. Despite their differences, they self-consciously identify themselves as belonging to the same community, as attested in Candrakīrti's and Bhāviveka's reference to their Nikāya Buddhist colleagues as *svayūthya*—"those who belong to one's own group."³ On other occasions, Mahāyāna Buddhists also describes Nikāya Buddhism as being encompassed by the designations *śrāvakayāna*, "the vehicle of the listeners" (of the Buddha), and *pratyekabuddhayāna*, the "vehicle of the lone enlightened ones." However, as two related subgroups, a pattern of dynamics between them that is similar to what we find among the Abrahamic religious traditions obtains with regard to their respective views on the scriptures that the two subgroups are most closely associated with. It was common for the Nikāya Buddhist communities, which appeared earlier in time, to deny the status of *buddhavacana* for the Mahāyāna *sūtras*. The arguments that Mahāyāna exponents such as Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Bhāviveka, and Śāntideva advance in favor of the authenticity of Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures⁴ evince that such controversies must have taken place with some frequency.

On the other hand, Mahāyāna Buddhists' approach to the Nikāya Buddhist scriptures is characterized by a similar logic of incorporation and supersession. In general

³ The term appears in PPMV 76.1 and 196.5. In the first instance, it refers to the opponents who objects to Nāgārjuna's refutation of the production of things in MMK I 1. Candrakīrti's predecessor Bhāviveka apparently also calls these opponents *svayūthya* at the same point in the latter's commentary on MMK. D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. *tsha*, 53b1-2: *da ni rang gi sde pa dag gis smras pa*. His commentator Avalokitavrata writes that the term refers to "all the Śrāvakas, the Sautrāntikas and Vaibhāṣikas, etc." See William L. Ames, "Bhāvaviveka's *Prajñāpradīpa*, A Translation of Chapter One: 'Examination of Causal Conditions' (pratyaya)" *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 22 (1994) 93 and 122 n. 1. In *Akutoḥbhayā*, they are described as those who know Abhidharma (*abhidharmajñā*). D (To. 3829) Dbu ma, vol. *tsa*, 33b5-6: *'dir chos mngon par shes pa dag gis smras pa*. See also PPMV 76 n. 1. In the second instance (PPMV 196.5), the term *svayūthya* refers to the proponents of personal self (*pudgalavādin*). At the beginning of this chapter, Candrakīrti identifies the opponents as Sāmmiṭṭiyas (PPMV 192.8), while Bhāviveka speaks of the Vātsīputrīya schools. D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. *tsha*, 125a3 and 126a5: *gnas ma'i bu sde pa dag*.

⁴ A summary of Vasubandhu's defense of the authenticity of Mahāyāna sūtras in *Vyākhyāyukti* is found in Cabezón, "Vasubandhu's *Vyākhyāyukti*." For references to Nāgārjuna, Bhāviveka, and Śāntideva's arguments, see *ibid.*, 223, 236-7 nn. 6-9. For a discussion of Asaṅga's and Śāntideva's arguments, see

terms, this means accepting the Tripiṭaka of Nikāya Buddhism as a part of the scriptural corpus—indeed there never seems to be a question that it could have been done otherwise, unlike in the Christian case⁵—while letting it be surpassed by the Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures. The principle of supersession is expressed in a wide variety of manners in the Mahāyāna *sūtras* and *śāstras*, ranging from depicting the Nikāya Buddhist scriptures as presenting the half-truth to characterizing their techniques as leading merely to a provisional state along the way to the full enlightenment. However, Mahāyāna Buddhists never discredit the utility of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures, which are seen as supplying a foundation on which the superstructure of Mahāyāna rests and offering a path to those who are inclined toward it.

From the perspective of intellectual history, some scholars of Buddhism speak of a doctrinal continuity between the two forms of Buddhism. According to these opinions, Mahāyāna concepts such as the transcendental bodies of the Buddha (*kāya*), great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*), and emptiness (*śūnyatā*) are extensions of the ideas that already existed in Nikāya Buddhist scriptures. In particular, the early Buddhist doctrine of the absence of the self (*anātman*), which has been a hallmark of Buddhism since its inception, is often considered a precursor to the Mahāyāna Buddhist concept of emptiness.⁶ In Mahāyāna Buddhist literature, the absence of self is often described as the absence of the self of persons (*pudgalanairātmya*), whereas the teaching of emptiness concerns itself with the absence of the self of all dharmas, such that all things (dharmas), regardless of whether they are persons or other entities, are shown to be without the self

Nalinaksha Dutt, *Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Its Relation to Hīnayāna* (London: Luzac & Co., 1930), 58-61.

⁵ Smith, “Study of Bible,” 23.

or essence (*svabhāva*). While refraining from making sweeping claims to the effect of Mahāyāna Buddhism's growth simply out of Nikāya Buddhism, the present and the following chapters will supply concrete examples of the uses of Nikāya Buddhist texts in the writings of early Mādhyamikas that often involve a strategy of supporting the central Mahāyāna doctrine of emptiness with an assortment of Nikāya Buddhist concepts and literary patterns. Our analyses will serve the purpose of illustrating the role of the shared scriptures in a group of Mahāyāna scholastics' articulation of their unique doctrine while they form a relationship with the more established religious communities.

Most cases of the Madhyamaka use of Nikāya scriptures that we will consider are first attested in the writings of Nāgārjuna, although we will trace how his early Indian commentators treat the scriptural citations in order to understand how scripture as a textual instrument is incorporated into and managed by an evolving tradition. By "early Indian Madhyamaka commentaries" we refer in this and the next chapters to the first five commentaries by Mādhyamikas⁷ on Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* that are still preserved in Sanskrit or in translation: (1) a commentary that was translated by the year 409 into Chinese (T. 1564), in which the author is known as Qingmu 青目;⁸ (2) *Akutobhayā*, a commentary preserved in Tibetan translation that appears to be of at least equal antiquity, if we judge from its style and the complexity of its exegetical techniques

⁶ Paul Williams, for instance, tells us that the view is "widely held." *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundation* (London: Routledge, 1989), 46.

⁷ Both Asaṅga's comments on MMK (To. 1565) and Sthiramati's commentary (T. 1567 and K. 1462) are excluded from our consideration, since they represent the perspectives from the Yogācāra School. Asaṅga's text, moreover, concerns only the prologue of MMK.

⁸ On this commentary, see Ruegg, *Literature of the Madhyamaka*, 48 and Brian Bocking, *Nāgārjuna in China: A Translation of the Middle Treatise* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), 1 and 395-405.

(To. 3829);⁹ (3) The commentary by Buddhapālita (ca. 470-540) preserved in its entirety in Tibetan translation (To. 3842) and partially in Sanskrit;¹⁰ (4) *Prajñāpradīpa* of Bhāviveka (ca. 500-570), which is preserved in both Tibetan (To. 3853) and Chinese (T. 1566) translations; and (5) Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*.

A. K. Warder has made a valid point regarding the need to distinguish between Nāgārjuna and his interpreters in the Madhyamaka School.¹¹ However, an attention to Nāgārjuna's uses of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures has led him to the conclusion that there is nothing in Nāgārjuna's writings to suggest that Nāgārjuna was a Mahāyānist. In reaching this position, Warder has to exclude, without good reasons, *Suhrillekha*, *Ratnāvalī*, and a number of *stotras*, which either refer the Mahāyāna by name or contain explicit Mahāyāna elements, from the authentic works of Nāgārjuna.¹² Warder further describes the criticism found in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* as being directed toward certain formulations in the Abhidharma, while holding that Nāgārjuna was faithful to the principles of early Buddhism as articulated in its scriptures. Through a careful examination of Nāgārjuna's Nikāya scriptural references, many of which Warder has mentioned in his article,¹³ we will demonstrate in the present and following chapters that Nāgārjuna was using such scriptural passages to argue for the Mahāyāna Buddhist concept of emptiness, which he explicitly mention in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*.

⁹ This work is attributed to Nāgārjuna, although Tibetan authors such as Tsong kha pa have expressed doubt about the ascription. On this issue and discussions of the text's author, see Ruegg, *Literature of the Madhyamaka*, 47-8 and Clair W. Huntington, "The *Akutoḥbhayā* and Early Indian Madhyamaka" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1986), 1:124-94.

¹⁰ About one ninth of this commentary survives in Sanskrit, which has been edited in Ye Shaoyong, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā and Buddhapālita's Commentary: A Philological Study on the Basis of Newly Identified Sanskrit Manuscripts* (Shanghai: Zhongxi shujū, 2001), 93-156.

¹¹ A. K. Warder, "In Nāgārjuna a Mahāyānist?" in *The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta*, ed. Mervyn Sprung (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1973), 78.

¹² Ibid., 78-9.

¹³ Ibid., 79-80.

Indeed, Nāgārjuna's critical examination of basic early Buddhist concepts, such as *nirvāṇa*, four noble truths, and three jewels, in this text cannot be understood adequately without taking into account the idea of emptiness that is so central to his project. Reading Nāgārjuna through the lens of his commentators is indeed not the reliable way to discover his own thought. However, the main object of our investigation is the relationship between the Madhyamaka writers as a Mahāyāna Buddhist community and Nikāya Buddhist scriptures.

The present chapter treats specific instances of the Madhyamaka writers' uses of Nikāya scriptural passages and general Buddhist concepts such as middle way (*madhyamā pratipad*), dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), and impermanence (*anitya*) in defense of the Mahāyāna doctrine of emptiness. Special attention will be paid to the polemical context of the Mādhyamika writings, in which texts whose authority is accepted by the Nikāya Buddhists are employed to serve the Mādhyamika interpretive purpose. The chapter will end with a consideration of Candrakīrti's reflection on Nāgārjuna's references to Nikāya Buddhist scriptures, which leads to his unique position that the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* of Nikāya Buddhist affiliation also possess the knowledge of emptiness. In Chapter Five, we will direct our attention to the incorporation of certain recurrent themes from the Nikāya Buddhist texts into the logical structures of some of the most enduring forms of Madhyamaka reasoning. By examining the roles of Nikāya Buddhist texts in the early literary tradition of the Madhyamaka School in India, Chapters Four and Five together illustrate the processes by which certain elements from the oldest Buddhist scriptures persist in the scholastic traditions of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Such selected elements from the Nikāya Buddhist texts are either maintained as a part of

the practical canon in their original form or integrated as an organic part of the Madhyamaka system in their transformed state.

4.1 On the Mādhyamika Transformation of Seminal Nikāya Buddhist Concepts:

Madhyamā pratipad, Pratītyasamutpāda, and the Instructions for Kātyāyana

In spite of its Mahāyāna affiliation, since its inception the Madhyamaka school has maintained its textual links with Nikāya Buddhist scriptures, although in the later periods traces of these links gradually faded away in memory. In the various chapters of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, the foundational text of the school, basic Buddhist concepts and terms such as causal condition (*pratyaya*), aggregate (*skandha*), sense organ (*indriya*), element (*dhātu*), conditioned entity (*saṃskṛta*), suffering (*duḥkha*), conditioned state (*saṃskāra*), bondage and liberation (*bandhana* and *mokṣa*), time (*kāla*), *tathāgata*, noble truth (*āryasatya*), and *nirvāṇa* are subject to critical examinations, which aims to demonstrate that they have no reality in the final analysis. One is left with the impression that the Mādhyamikas take upon themselves a project to demolish the most fundamental Buddhist concepts. However, the Mādhyamikas have also made certain key Buddhist notions significant elements of their own system, albeit in a transformed state. The concepts of middle way (*madhyamā pratipad*) and dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) are two cases in point.

Middle way is the general Buddhist concept that gives its name to the school called Madhyamaka, meaning the “middle.” The term Madhyamaka does not appear in the writings of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, but its Chinese and Tibetan equivalents are

found in the oldest Chinese translation of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, which is accompanied by the commentary of Qingmu (T. 1564), and in the Tibetan translations of Buddhapālita's and Bhāviveka's commentaries,¹⁴ suggesting that a school of thought bearing that name might have formed at least in the late fourth century. But the idea of middle way goes back to the enduring story of the life of the Buddha, where prince Siddhārtha's hedonist existence in the palace and his practice of asceticism comprise the two extremes. Thus, the Pāli text of the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, in the context of providing an account of the Buddha's first sermon, speaks of "pursuit of sensual happiness in sensual pleasures" and the "pursuit of self-mortification" as the "two extremes," having avoided which "the Tathāgata has awakened to the middle way."¹⁵ Perhaps a more common notion of middle way in Buddhism carries the meaning of avoiding the two extremes of perpetuation (*śāśvata*) and annihilation (*uccheda*), such that one believes neither in an eternal, unchanging soul nor in a terminal destruction of one's own continuation, which entails the dissipation of the fruits of one's own actions. La Vallée Poussin, who describes the second sense of middle way as moving from a personal moral discipline toward a philosophical view, points out that the second sense of middle way is already found in the the *suttas* of the Pāli Nikāyas.¹⁶

Various schools of Buddhist thought have also formed their own interpretations of the notion of middle way. For the Mādhyamikas, or persons following the Madhyamaka School of thought, treading the middle way has the primary connotation of avoiding the

¹⁴ Ruegg, *Literature of Madhyamaka*, 1 and n. 2.

¹⁵ Bodhi, trans., *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*, Translated from the Pāli (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2000), 1844. The Pāli is in Feer, *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, 5:421.

¹⁶ La Vallée Poussin, Louis de. "Madhyamaka." *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 2 (1932-1933): 10. Candrakīrti also refers to this common meaning of *śāśvata* and *uccheda* when he glosses the two terms that appear in the prologue of MMK. See PPMV 4.8-9.

two extremes of the reification of the unreal objects and nihilism, and it conveys none other than the idea of emptiness in the way that the school interprets it. In the writings of the Mādhyamikas the two extremes are also given the usual names of perpetuation and annihilation, as they are elsewhere in the Buddhist literature, while they are also referred to as the extremes of existence and non-existence. In *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XV 7, Nāgārjuna refers to a *sūtra* in the Āgama/Nikāya collection to convince his readers that his Madhyamaka presentation in that text is confirmed by a Nikāya Buddhist scriptural source.

In *Kātyāyanāvavāda*, both [the ideas that] “it exists” and “it does not exist” are denied by the Blessed One, who reveals existence and non-existence.¹⁷

Candrakīrti supplies in his commentary on the stanza the passage in question from the *Āryakātyāyanāvavādasūtra* in Sanskrit,¹⁸ and he also reports that “this *sūtra* is recited in all the schools of Nikāya Buddhism.”¹⁹ The Pāli version of this *sūtra* transmitted in the Theravāda school is the *Kaccāyanagotta Sutta*, which is a part of the *Samyuttanikāya*. The following are the three passages from this *sutta* that concerns the Mādhyamikas’ use of this source.

¹⁷ Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 238: *kātyāyanāvavāde cāstīti nāstīti cobhayaṃ/ pratiṣiddhaṃ bhagavatā bhāvābhāvavibhāvinā* //. The fifteenth chapter of MMK devotes itself to a critique of the notion of essence (*svabhāva*) as a means of demonstrating the essenceless or empty nature of things.

¹⁸ PPMV 269.7-10. See below.

¹⁹ PPMV 269.11: *idaṃ ca sūtraṃ sarvanikāyeṣu paṭhyate*.

(1) This world, Kaccāyana, for the most part depends upon two things, viz. existence (*atthitā*) and non-existence (*natthitā*).

(2) “Everything exists”: Kaccāyana, this is one extreme. “Everything does not exist”: this is the second extreme. Avoiding both extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the *dhamma* by way of the middle.

(3) Conditioned by ignorance, conditioned states (*saṅkhāra/saṃskāra*) [come to be]; conditioned by conditioned state, consciousness [comes to be] ... In this manner, this is the origin of this mass of complete suffering.²⁰

Kaccāyanagotta also has a Chinese counterpart (*jing* no. 301) in Guṇabhadra’s translation of *Samyuktāgama* (T. 99), where the corresponding passages are found.²¹ The entire *Kaccāyanagotta Sutta*, moreover, is also embedded in *Channa Sutta* in the Pāli *Samyuttanikāya* and in the corresponding *sūtra* (*jing* no. 262) in the Chinese version of *Samyuktāgama* in the form of Ānanda’s recollection of the Buddha’s instructions for Kātyāyana/Kaccāyana.²² The Pāli, Chinese, and Candrakīrti’s Sanskrit versions differ considerably in the details, but they all agree in the general outline. All of them contain a

²⁰ Feer, *Samyutta-nikāya*, 2:17: (1) *dvayanissito khvāyaṃ kaccāna loko yebhuyyena atthitaṃ ceva natthitaṃ ca*// (2) *sabbam atthīti kho kaccāyana ayam eko anto// sabbam natthīti ayam dutiyo anto// // ete te kaccāyana ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathāgato dhammam deseti*// (3) *avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā// saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇam// pe// evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti*//.

²¹ (1) T. 99 II 85c20-22: 佛告[跳-兆+散]陀迦旃延。世間有二種依。若有・若無。爲取所觸。取所觸故。或依有・或依無。(2) 85c26-28: 若世間無者不有。世間滅如實正知見。若世間有者無有。是名離於二邊說於中道。(3) 85c28-86a2: 所謂此有故彼有。此起故彼起。謂緣無明行。乃至純大苦聚集。無明滅故行滅。乃至純大苦聚滅。

²² The Pāli is in SN 22.90, Feer, *Samyutta-nikāya*, 3:134-5. The Chinese is in T. 99 II 66c25-67a8.

version of the three passages given here, with the exception that Candrakīrti's Sanskrit citation includes a version of only the first and the third passages.²³ A possible reason that Candrakīrti does not include the second passage in the citation is that the Madhyamaka commentarial tradition before him does not have a habit of giving all the relevant passages from this *sūtra*. The early Madhyamaka commentaries on Nāgārjuna's stanza in question show a pattern of giving increasingly more details of the *sūtra* as time passes by, but commentators before Candrakīrti mention nothing more than the first passage,²⁴ which apparently serves the purpose of showing the source that Nāgārjuna has in mind.²⁵

Kātyāyanāvavāda is the only text that Nāgārjuna mentions by title in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. As this very short *sūtra* is clearly important for him, and since all extant Pāli or Chinese versions includes a form of second passage, Nāgārjuna is most likely to be aware of it. We also have very good reasons to believe that this specific passage is also very significant for Nāgārjuna, as it closely resembles an expression of the idea of middle way in a Mahāyāna *sūtra* that is very familiar to him. Performing his exegetical duty, Candrakīrti's commentary on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XV 7 also gives the following citation from a Mahāyāna source:

²³ PPMV 269.7-10: *uktaṃ hi bhagavatā āryakātyāyanāvavādasūtre/ (1) yad bhūyasā kātyāyanāyaṃ loko 'sthitāṃ vābhiniṣṭo nāsthitāṃ ca / (3) tena na parimucyate / jātijarāvyādhimaraṇaśokaparidevaduḥkhadaurmanasyopāyāsebhyo na parimucyate/ pāñcagatikāt saṃsārācārakāgārabandhanān na parimucyate / māṭṭmarāṇasaṃtāpaduḥkhān na parimucyate / piṭṭmarāṇasaṃtāpaduḥkhād iti vistaraḥ //*

²⁴ *Akutobhayā* does not mention any details of the *sūtra*. See Clair W. Huntington, "The *Akutobhayā* and Early Indian Madhyamaka" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1986), 390. Qingmu's commentary appears to refer only to the first passage. T. 1564 XXX 20b3-4: 刪陀迦旃延經中。佛爲說正見義離有離無。Buddhapālita only refers to the phrases *astitā* and *nāstitā* in the first passage. See Saito Akira, "A Study of the Buddhapālita-mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtti," (Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, 1984), 2:203. Bhāviveka cites the text of the first passage. D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. *tsha*, 160a1: *kA t+yA ya na 'jig rten 'di ni gnyis la gnas te/ phal cher yod pa nyid dang/ med pa nyid la'o zhes bya ba la sogs pa dang /*

²⁵ We are still left without a clear answer as to why Candrakīrti cites the third passage but not the second. Perhaps it is not in the specific Sanskrit version that Candrakīrti uses, although he indicates his awareness of the existence of other versions.

“It exists”: Kāśyapa, this is one extreme; “it does not exist”: Kāśyapa, this is one extreme. That which is the middle between these two extremes—beyond examination, cannot be shown, without support, without appearance, not signifiable, and unrevealed—Kāśyapa, is the middle way (*madhyamā pratipad*), the examination of the reality of things.²⁶

This passage is extracted from the *Kāśyapaparivarta*,²⁷ which is one of the oldest Mahāyāna *sūtras*. Its earliest Chinese translation is produced by Loujiachen 婁迦識, who worked in China in the second century C.E. The antiquity of this translation is further established by Staël-Holstein based on its linguistic features.²⁸ Therefore, the presence of *Kāśyapaparivarta* in India at the time of Nāgārjuna is well-supported.²⁹

The citations given here show that the core of this passage from *Kāśyapaparivarta* clearly matches with the second passage from *Kaccāyanagotta*. In fact, the first Chinese translation of *Kāśyapaparivarta*, which is close to Nāgārjuna in time, and the extant Sanskrit version of the *sūtra* do not contain the elaborate phrases “beyond examination, cannot be shown, without support, without appearance, not signifiable, and unrevealed.”³⁰ Nor do they appear in Sthiramati’s citation of the passage in

²⁶ PPMV 270.7-9: *tathā / astīti kāśyapa ayam eko 'nto nāstīti kāśyapa ayam eko 'ntaḥ / yad enayor dvayor antayor madhyam tad arūpyam anidarśanam apratiṣṭham anābhāsam aniketam avijñaptikam iyam ucyate kāśyapa madhyamā pratipad dharmāṇām bhūtapratyavekṣeti //*.

²⁷ The Sanskrit, Tibetan, and four Chinese translations of this passage are found in Staël-Holstein, *Kāśyapaparivarta*, 90. The citation consists of chapter 60 of the *sūtra* according to the editor’s numbering.

²⁸ Ibid., XI-XII and XXIV n. 32.

²⁹ See Ruegg, *Literature of Madhyamaka*, 4-5 n. 11 on the dates of Nāgārjuna proposed by modern scholars, ranging between the end of the first century to the third century.

³⁰ Staël-Holstein, *Kāśyapaparivarta*, 90.

Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā.³¹ The passage from *Kāśyapaparivarta* belongs to a section of the *sūtra* where the idea of middle way is expressed in various manners in a series of passages,³² which is identified by Staël-Holstein as an outstanding feature of the text.³³ Nāgārjuna's acquaintance with this section of the *sūtra* is demonstrable by the fact that a stanza in his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is clearly based on a passage of the *sūtra* that comes immediately after the "middle way" section.³⁴ Nāgārjuna's explicit mention of *Kātyāyanāvavāda*, which is hardly more than a page in Pāli Text Society's edition, and his implicit incorporation of the materials from the passages nearby in *Kāśyapaparivarta* therefore support a strong likelihood of his attention to the similar expressions of middle way in the two *sūtras*. If he is indeed aware of their resemblance, he would also be impressed by the fact that in an immediately subsequent passage, *Kāśyapaparivarta* proceeds to produce the typical formulation of dependent origination, which appears partially in *Kātyāyanāvavāda*.

Moreover this is what I have declared to you, viz. conditioned by
ignorance, karmic formations come to be; conditioned by conditioned

³¹ Sthiramati, Sylvain Lévi, and Susumu Yamaguchi, *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā: exposition systématique du Yogācāravijñaptivāda* (Nagoya: Librairie Hajinkaku, 1934), 15. See below.

³² Staël-Holstein, *Kāśyapaparivarta*, 82-94. All but no. 61 of the twelve chapters (no. 52 to no. 63) in this section contain an expression of the idea of middle way.

³³ Ibid., V.

³⁴ Nāgārjuna's stanza in question is MMK XIII 8, found in Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 214: *śūnyatā sarvadṛṣṭināṃ proktā niḥsaraṇaṃ jinaiḥ/ yeṣāṃ tu śūnyatādrṣṭis tān asādhyaṇ babhāṣire //*. "The Victors (*jinaiḥ*) announced that emptiness is the remedy of all views. They pronounce those who have the view of [reifying] emptiness as incurable." Here, Nāgārjuna is referring to a passage in *Kāśyapaparivarta* (chap. 65). Staël-Holstein, *Kāśyapaparivarta*, 97: *bhagavān āha / evam eva kāśyapa sarvadṛṣṭigatānāṃ śūnyatā niḥsaraṇaṃ yasya khalu punaḥ kāśyapa śūnyatādrṣṭis tam aham acikitsyam iti vadāmi*. "The Blessed One spoke: in exactly the same way, Kāśyapa, emptiness is the remedy for those who [falsely] adhere to all the views. Moreover, I describe the one who has the view of emptiness as beyond medical treatment." The subsequent synoptic stanzas are fragmentary on this specific point in the Sanskrit, but see the Tibetan and Chinese versions of the second stanza and the parallel points in chap. 64 in *ibid.*, 98, 95-6. See also *ibid.*, V and XIV n. 2; Ruegg, *Literature of Madhyamaka*, 6-7.

states, consciousness; conditioned by consciousness, name and form; conditioned by name and form, the six sources; conditioned by the six sources, contact; conditioned by contact, feeling; conditioned by feeling, craving; conditioned by craving, appropriation; conditioned by appropriation, existence; conditioned by existence, birth; conditioned by birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, dejection, and irritation come to be. In this manner, this is the origin of this great mass of complete suffering.³⁵

This paragraph from *Kāśyapaparivarta* contains the standard statement of the twelve links (*nidāna*) of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) that are used to explain the mechanism of the cycle of life and death in the Buddhist teachings. As with the idea of middle way, the Buddhist tradition associates dependent origination with the life of the Buddha as well. As Lamotte shows, in many, although not the oldest, Buddhist narratives, the Buddha is said to have realized dependent origination along with its twelve links around the time of his enlightenment.³⁶ Echoing the statement of *pratītyasamutpāda* in *Kāśyapaparivarta*, all the Pāli and Chinese versions of *Kaccāyanagotta* also mentions the twelve links in an abbreviated format, which is indeed common in the Nikāyas

³⁵ Staël-Holstein, *Kāśyapaparivarta*, 91: *yad api kāśyapa yuṣmākaṃ mayākhyāta / yad uta avidyāpratītyayā saṃskārāḥ saṃskārapratītyayaṃ vijñānaṃ vijñānapratītyayan nāmarūpan nāmarūpapratītyayaṃ ṣaḍāyatanam ṣaḍāyatanapratītyaya sparśaḥ sparśapratītyayā vedanā vedanāpratītyayā tṛṣṇā tṛṣṇāpratītyayaṃ upādānam upādānapratītyayo bhavaḥ bhavapratītyayā jātiḥ jātipratītyayā*

{j}jarāmaraṇaśokaparidevaduḥkhadaurmanasyopāyāsāḥ saṃbhavaṃty evam asya kevalasya mahato duḥkhaskandhasya samudayo bhavati. This paragraph constitutes chap. 61 of the *sūtra*.

³⁶ Étienne Lamotte, “Conditioned Co-production and Supreme Enlightenment,” in *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula* (London: Geodon Fraser, 1980), 120-3.

collections.³⁷ A further parallel between *Kāśyapaparivarta* and *Kaccāyanagotta* is the fact that both include a formula of the twelve links in reverse order (*pratiloma*), “Due to ignorance’s cessation, conditioned states cease; due to conditioned states’ cessation, consciousness ceases ...”³⁸ The concurrence of the twelve links in the forward and reverse orders, however, is common in the Buddhist texts.

The connection between *Kātyāyanāvavāda* and *Kāśyapaparivarta* is therefore evident. Moreover, it is the Mahāyāna text of *Kāśyapaparivarta* that functions as a common reference point intertextually for the later Buddhist writers. Sthiramati, for instance, cites not *Kātyāyanāvavāda* but *Kāśyapaparivarta*’s formulation of the middle way principle in his *ṭīkā* on *Madhyāntavibhāga*,³⁹ a Yogācāra *śāstra* on the distinction between the middle and the extremes. Both Vasubandhu’s *bhāṣya* and Sthiramati’s *ṭīkā* on *Madhyāntavibhāga* refers to *Kāśyapaparivarta* as *Ratnakūṭa*, from which Sthiramati cites eleven passages⁴⁰ and wrote a separate commentary on the *sūtra*.⁴¹

³⁷ See, for instance, Maurice Walshe, trans., *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1987), 34-6. 89 (*Sutta* 1, 3.71), 543 n. 88.

³⁸ Chap. 62 in Staël-Holstein, *Kāśyapaparivarta*, 92: *avidyānirodhā* [sic.] *saṃskāranirodhaḥ* *saṃskāranirodhād vijñānanirodhaḥ* ... For the restoration of the lacunae in this chapter, see Pāsādika Bhikkhu, “The Dharma-Discourse of the Great Collection of Jewels, The Kāśyapa-Section, *Mahāratnakūṭadharmaparyāya - Kāśyapaparivarta*: English Translation and Restoration of the Missing Sanskrit Portions, (V),” *Linh-So’n publication d’études bouddhologiques* 5 (1978): 36 n. 15. In the Pāli and Chinese versions of *Kaccāyanagotta* the reserve-order formula is found respectively in Feer, *Samyutta-nikāya*, 2:17, 3:135 and T. 99 II 85c14, 67a7.

³⁹ Sthiramati, Sylvain Lévi, and Susumu Yamaguchi, *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā: exposition systématique du Yogācāravijñaptivāda* (Nagoya: Librairie Hajinkaku, 1934), 15: *Ratnakūṭādīmadhye ‘stīti kāśyapāyam eko ‘ntaḥ / nāstīti kāśyapa ayam dvitīyo ‘ntaḥ / yad enayor dvayor antayor madhyam iyam ucyate kāśyapa madhyamā pratipad dharmāṇāṃ bhūtapratyavekṣeti*.

⁴⁰ J. W. de Jong, “Review of Étienne Lamotte, *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*), Tome IV,” *T’oung Pao* 64 livr. 1-3: 170. See also de Jong’s comments on other Buddhist texts’ link to *Kāśyapaparivarta*. See also Bhikkhu Pāsādika, “Bibliographical Remarks Bearing on the *Kāśyapaparivarta*,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 8 (1991): 64-5. For Vasubandhu’s reference to *Kāśyapaparivarta*, see Gadgin M. Nagao, ed., *Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya: A Buddhist Philosophical Treatise Edited for the First Time from a Sanskrit Manuscript* (Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1964), 69.

⁴¹ Baron A. von Staël-Holstein, ed., *A Commentary to the Kāśyapaparivarta* (Peking: National Library of Peking and National Tsinghua University, 1933).

While *Kāśyapaparivarta* resembles *Kaccāyanagotta* textually in the discussion of middle way and *pratītyasamutpāda*, it also contains unique Mahāyāna elements in its “middle way” section, many of which concern the notion of emptiness. In this regard, a more explicit statement in the *sūtra* reads, “Moreover, Kāśyapa, as for the examination of the reality of things, it is not on account of emptiness that things (dharmas) are made empty. Things are simply empty.”⁴² In view of Nāgārjuna’s known familiarity with the *sūtra* and its significance as a very influential Mahāyāna texts, we may surmise that the association of middle way, dependent origination, and emptiness in *Kāśyapaparivarta* could very well serve as a scriptural source for Nāgārjuna’s characteristic statements of the identity of the three notions, especially the latter two, with one another.⁴³ A clear instance of these is the stanza with which Nāgārjuna closes his *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, “I bow down before that incomparable Buddha, who declares emptiness, dependent origination, and the middle way to be synonymous.”⁴⁴ Nāgārjuna clearly acknowledges here that his view has a scriptural source. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXIV 18, one of most well-known stanzas by which Nāgārjuna is remembered in the later centuries, also reiterate this idea: “We describe what is *pratītyasamutpāda* as emptiness; that is dependent designation; and that alone is the middle way.”⁴⁵

⁴² Chap. 63, in Staël-Holstein, *Kāśyapaparivarta*, 94: *na śūnyatāyā dharmā śūnyā karoti dharmā eva śūnyā*/.

⁴³ Besides the two stanzas mentioned immediately below, Nāgārjuna touches on the subject also in (1) MMK XXIV 19; (2) *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 22 and the author’s own commentary thereto, in Kamaleswar Bhattacharya, E. H. Johnston, and Arnold Kunst, eds., *The Dialectical Method of Nāgārjuna* (*Vigrahavyāvartanī*) (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978), 23-4; (3) *Śūnyatāsaptati* 68, in Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 64; (4) *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* 43-45, in *ibid.*, 114. The subject is also mentioned in stanza twenty-two of *Lokātītastava*, another work that has been ascribed to Nāgārjuna. See *ibid.*, 136.

⁴⁴ Kamaleswar Bhattacharya, E. H. Johnston, and Arnold Kunst, eds., *The Dialectical Method of Nāgārjuna* (*Vigrahavyāvartanī*) (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978), 53: *yaḥ śūnyatām pratītyasamutpādaṁ madhyamaṁ pratipadaṁ ca/ ekārthaṁ nijagāda prañamāmi tam apratimabuddham //*.

⁴⁵ Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 426: *yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatām tām pracakṣamahe / sā prajñaptir upādāya pratipat saiva madhyamā//*.

Thus, in the cases of both *pratītyasamutpāda* and middle way, which have been fundamental Buddhist concepts since the early history of Buddhism, the traditional connotations are maintained in the Mahāyāna *sūtras* such as *Kāśyapaparivarta* and in the writings of Nāgārjuna, while additional association—with the notion of emptiness—is formed, which in fact becomes the primary meanings of these concepts. The new association does not erase the established connotations, which still function on the conventional level and is even used as a reason to justify the new association. Indeed, Nāgārjuna and his Madhyamaka followers are especially in favor of using the idea of causal dependence embedded in the concept of *pratītyasamutpāda* to argue that things must be empty on the ultimate level on account of their having no independent nature of their own.⁴⁶

Among the previous scholars of Madhyamaka thought, David Kalupahana has contributed the most to highlight the significance of *Kaccāyanagotta*.⁴⁷ However, for him Nāgārjuna's explicit reference to this *sūtra* lends itself to an argument that Nāgārjuna's principal interest was to expound the teachings of the Buddha as represented in the Āgamas/Nikāyas and, more specifically, that his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is to “be considered a grand commentary on the *Discourse to Kātyāyana*.”⁴⁸ In so doing Kalupahana ignores the intervening layer of Mahāyāna *sūtras*,⁴⁹ to which Nāgārjuna's writings are linked textually and indebted conceptually, as we have demonstrated above.

⁴⁶ See the sources provided in the preceding paragraph and a previous note, especially MMK XXIV 19 and *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 22 and the commentary thereto.

⁴⁷ See David J. Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way; Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, Introduction, Sanskrit Text, English Translation, and Annotation (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 7-16. Cf. his entry “*Pratītya-samutpāda*,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, Eliade Mircea, and Charles J. Adams (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 7363-6, where a discussion of the *Discourse to Kātyāyana* and Nāgārjuna's link to the *sūtra* figure most prominently.

⁴⁸ Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna*, 5; Kalupahana, “*Pratītya-samutpāda*,” 7365.

Instead of regarding Nāgārjuna's texts as a simple extension of the Nikāya/Āgama literature, we would do well to recognize that in making emptiness the chief subject matter of his texts, Nāgārjuna's doctrinal allegiance lies with the Mahāyāna *sūtras*. Consequently, his readings of the Nikāya Buddhist scriptures are mediated by his interest in the Mahāyāna *sūtras*. Seen in this light, the parallels between *Kāśyapaparivarta* and *Kaccāyanagotta*, then, supply an instance of a pioneer Mahāyāna writer's own awareness of the intertextual connections between the Nikāya and Mahāyāna *sūtras*. Such parallels are very common—indeed a phenomenon that merits a separate investigation, although one which we cannot attempt at any length here. In this instance and a few others that we will consider below, we will focus rather on the Mahāyāna writers' own responses to the issue.

The historian of Buddhism will without doubt recognize in these parallels the borrowing of the Mahāyāna *sūtras* from the earlier Nikāya Buddhist texts. For the Mahāyāna Buddhists, however, the two groups of texts are not related to each other in terms of their temporal order of emergence or gradual evolution. In the specific case of *Kātyāyanāvavāda*, its significance for Nāgārjuna's rather appears to be its connection to the *Kāśyapaparivarta*, which enables Nāgārjuna to see in the former a shadow of the message found in the latter.

Indeed, the context of the use of *Kātyāyanāvavāda* in the fifteenth chapter of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is the demonstration of the Mahāyāna idea of emptiness in relation to four concepts: (1) the emptiness of an entity's own nature, literally its own-being (*svabhāva*); (2) the emptiness of the nature of other entities, or other-being

⁴⁹ For Kalupahana so insignificant is the Mahāyāna elements in Nāgārjuna's writings that he intends to "exorcize the terms Theravāda and Mahāyāna from our vocabulary." *Idem, Nāgārjuna*, 5-6.

(*parabhāva*); (3) the emptiness of existence or being (*bhāva*); (4) the emptiness of non-existence or non-being (*abhāva*). According to Candrakīrti's commentary, the opponents who accept shared Buddhist ideas oppose the Mahāyāna doctrine of emptiness in relation to each of these terms by arguing that each one of them is presupposed by the reality of the subsequent term. Thus, in the first five stanzas of the chapter arguments are employed to prove the emptiness of each of the terms in order.⁵⁰ Finally, *Kātyāyanāvavāda*'s denial of existence (*astitā*) and non-existence (*nāstitā*) is invoked as a scriptural authority in addition to the logical arguments used in the fourth and fifth stanzas to justify the emptiness of existence and non-existence.⁵¹ Candrakīrti adduces here specifically the fact that a version of *Kātyāyanāvavāda* is recited in all schools of Nikāya Buddhism (*idaṃ sūtram sarvanikāyeṣu paṭhyate*) to urge the acceptance of the Mādhyamika arguments.⁵²

Thus, *Kātyāyanāvavāda*—rather than *Kāśyapaparivarta*—is chosen here simply because the interlocutor in the conversation is a follower of Nikāya Buddhism, for whom a Mahāyāna *sūtra* cannot be used as an authority. Indeed, among the Nikāya Buddhist scriptures the elements that speak to Mahāyāna Buddhist writers are often those that echo Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures and views, in the same way that Nāgārjuna often attracts the attention of the modern writers who find in his works shadows of various aspects of modern thought.

4.2 The Polemical Context of Madhyamaka Argumentation and the Question of Scriptural Hermeneutics

⁵⁰ These arguments are presented in MMK XV 1-5, which are found along with Candrakīrti's commentary in PPMV 259.9-267.7.

The demonstration of the teaching of emptiness is the main focus of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, and his primary vehicle of persuasion is logical argument, which is used against many early Buddhist concepts to show that their ultimate nature is emptiness. It is natural to presume that as a pioneer Mahāyāna Buddhist exponent Nāgārjuna was living in a Buddhist community where the predominant religious culture was inherited from the past centuries of early Buddhism, where he worked assiduously to spread the Mahāyāna Buddhist messages. A significant proportion, if not the majority, of his readers and conversation partners would have been Nikāya Buddhists, to whom he spoke using their frames of reference. Indeed, the early Indian commentaries on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* very often begin each chapter with an objection from an opponent who adopts the general Nikāya Buddhist principles. This fact suggests that the Mādhyamikas in the early period often involve themselves with Nikāya Buddhists in conversation, sometimes in a hostile context, and that *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is seen as a text that speaks to the Nikāya Buddhists to a considerable extent.

In the *Prasannapadā*, the objections from the opponents in the beginning of the chapters are also supported in most cases by references to Nikāya Buddhist scriptures, which are used to discredit *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*'s message of emptiness. Such scriptural references, which initiate a chapter of commentary on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, appear occasionally in Buddhapālita's *vṛtti* and Bhāviveka's *Prajñāpradīpa*, are rare in *Akutoḥbhayā*, but are found with some frequency in Qingmu's commentary. In the

⁵¹ In Western philosophy, a distinction between being and existence is maintained. In contrast, both notions are encompassed by the Sanskrit nouns such as *bhāva* and *astitā*, which are derived from the roots *as* and *bhū*, which mean both "to be" and "to exist," among other things.

⁵² PPMV 269.11-270.2.

Prasannapadā, at the end of each chapter Mahāyāna scriptural citations are invariably used to lend their weight to the arguments that the chapter deploys to prove the emptiness of one or several concepts, entities, or processes that it takes up. The appeal to the Mahāyāna sūtras at the conclusion of a chapter is not unique to Candrakīrti; his Mādhyamika predecessor Bhāviveka has already done so regularly. In Candrakīrti's text, too, the Mahāyāna sūtra quotations mark not just the conclusions but frequently the salient points in the middle of a chapters as well. However, it is in *Prasannapadā* that one finds a predictable structure of the chapters. They usually begin with Nikāya scriptural sources justifying the counterargument at the beginning, which are generally contrasted with the Mahāyāna sūtra passages marking a triumphant end. Thus, this pattern structurally signifies the supersession of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures by their Mahāyāna counterparts.

This particular use of the Nikāya Buddhist texts—as the scriptural authorities that the opponents appeal to in support of their counterarguments—may indeed be their most visible function in the Madhyamaka commentaries. In the *Prasannapadā*, the first instance of this use occurs in the middle of the first chapter, after a lengthy commentary on the lack of production, or coming into being, of all things that Nāgārjuna argues for in the first stanza of the chapter. The first response from an opponent with a Nikāya Buddhist outlook, indeed the only critical response from that point of view at this point in the text, is to invoke the scriptural sources that clearly speaks of the opposite—that things are indeed produced and do really exist.

Here, [an opponent] says, “If dependent origination is established in this manner by you, respectable gentlemen, to be characterized by non-

production and so forth,⁵³ then, is [this position] not contradicted by [the following scriptural authorities]? [It is contradicted by] (1) [The statement that was spoken by the Blessed One, that ‘there is karmic formation that is caused by ignorance; there is the cessation of karmic formation on account of the cessation of ignorance;’ likewise, (2) ...”⁵⁴

The opponent goes on to cite five more such passages from the scriptures, which suggest that things do arise, sustain, come, and go.⁵⁵

The voice of the opponent at this point of the text may indeed typify a real Nikāya Buddhist rejoinder who contests the Mādhyamika positions, drawing his support from the early Buddhist scriptures. Alternatively, or additionally, it may also reflect the need on the part of the Mādhyamikas to account for the opposing positions expressed in scriptures in general, regardless of their *yāna* affiliation.⁵⁶ This challenge initiates in Candrakīrti’s

⁵³ In the prologue of MMK, Nāgārjuna uses eight phrases to characterize dependent origination, among which non-production (*anutpāda*) counts as one. The first stanza of MMK I argues specifically that things are not produced.

⁵⁴ PPMV 39.8-40.6: *atrāha yady evam anutpādādiviśiṣṭaḥ pratītyasamutpādo vyavasthāpito bhavadbhiḥ / yat tarhi bhagavatoktaṃ / avidyāpratyayāḥ saṃskārāḥ / avidyānirodhāt saṃskāranirodha iti / tathā ... sa kathaṃ na nirudhyata iti //*. De Jong emends *vyavasthito* to *vyavasthāpito*. See “Textcritical Notes,” 32. As LVP notes, the Tibetan translation (‘*gal ba*’) prefers the reading of *virudhyate* to *nirudhyate*, which is adopted in the translation provided here.

⁵⁵ PPMV 39.11-40.4. See also Ruegg, *Two Prolegomena*, 77-8.

⁵⁶ The first passage given at PPMV 39.8-9 and cited above (*avidyāpratyayāḥ saṃskārāḥ / avidyānirodhāt saṃskāranirodha iti*) is, as LVP notes, a common formula of dependent origination. It is also found in *Śālistambasūtra*, a Mahāyāna *sūtra*, which Candrakīrti and other Mahāyāna writers frequently refer to. See N. Ross Reat, *The Śālistamba Sūtra: Tibetan Original, Sanskrit Reconstruction, English Translation, Critical Notes (Including Pāli Parallels, Chinese Version and Ancient Tibetan Fragments)* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993), 28-9; Ruegg, *Two Prolegomena*, 77 n. 107. The third passage, cited in PPMV at 40.1, reads: *utpādād vā tathāgatānāṃ anutpādād vā tathāgatānāṃ sthitaivaiśā dharmāṇāṃ dharmatā*. “Whether the Tathāgatas arise [in the world] or they do not, this reality of things simply remains.” In Nikāya Buddhist texts, this expression appears in AN 1:286 and SN 2:25. It also appears in Mahāyāna *sūtras* such as *Śālistambasūtra* (Reat, *Śālistamba Sūtra*, 33) and *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, in P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Daśabhūmikasūtram* (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1967), 43. It is cited by Yaśomitra and Mahāyāna Buddhist authors such as Śāntideva and Prajñākaramati (see PPMV 40 n. 1). Candrakīrti also uses this passage positively in MABh 306.2-3. The fact that this third passage appears in such a wide range of texts, first of all, exemplifies a form of intertextuality that is the central concern of this dissertation. Secondly, expressions of this kind have been assimilated into the Mahāyāna Buddhist texts despite their earlier

commentary a discussion on scriptural hermeneutics. His basic principle is to classify Buddhist teachings (*deśanā*) into two categories: (1) those that contain definitive meaning (*nītārtha*) and (2) those that contain provisional meaning (*neyārtha*). The distinction is known to the Buddhist tradition in general, so is the diction appearing in *Akṣayamatisūtra* that Candrakīrti cites here, calling for “reliance on definitive *sūtras*, rather than reliance on provisional *sūtras*.”⁵⁷ Another way to describe these same two classes of teachings, and therefore the two classes of *sūtras* that contain them, is to distinguish between (1) the teachings whose meaning accords with reality (*deśanā tattvārthā*) and (2) the teachings that have unspoken intentions lying behind them (*deśanā ābhīprāyikī*). The teachings in the second category deliver contents that do not accord with reality, but they are given for pragmatic purposes.⁵⁸

What these hermeneutical categories attempt to resolve is the problem of scriptural inconsistency. In the specific case that Candrakīrti deals with here, the conflict occurs between the scriptural statements that accord metaphysical reality to things and their functions and the Mahāyāna *sūtra* passages that ascribes empty nature to the same entities.⁵⁹ For Candrakīrti, definitive *sūtras* are those whose explicit subject is emptiness, whereas provisional *sūtras* are those whose subject matters are not emptiness—this

provenance in the Nikāya Buddhist literature. Therefore, Candrakīrti’s reference to such passages, many of which are likely to have come to his attention through Mahāyāna sources, signifies an attention to the general problem of scriptural exegesis rather than the narrower concern with the Nikāya Buddhist expressions that are at variance with the Mahāyāna views.

⁵⁷ PPMV 43.8-9: *nītārthasūtrāntapratīśaraṇatā na neyārthasūtrāntapratīśaraṇatā*. On the issue of scriptural hermeneutics in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, see Lopez, “Interpretation of the Mahāyāna Sūtras,” which treats the case of Candrakīrti specifically; Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language*, 53-70. Cabezón discusses the *nītārtha/neyārtha* distinction in *ibid.*, 63-4.

⁵⁸ PPMV 42.5-6. Cabezón describes the *neyārtha* and *ābhīprāyikī* teachings as the ones that are only pragmatically true in light of their pragmatic purpose, rather than unconditionally true. *Buddhism and Language*, 62-4. For discussions of a Tibetan hermeneutical procedure that addresses the scriptures that have spoken intentions and pragmatic purposes, see *ibid.*, 65-8 and Lopez, “Interpretation of the Mahāyāna Sūtras,” 55-6.

distinction between the two classes of *sūtras* was formulated in his earlier work of *Madhyamakāvatāra*.⁶⁰

This specific manner of classifying definitive and provisional *sūtras*, favored also by many other Madhyamaka authors, rests on the authority of two *sūtra* passages found in *Akṣayamatisūtra* and *Samādhirājasūtra*, which Candrakīrti cites in the current context in the *Prasannapadā*.⁶¹ The distinction made in these two passages between the definitive and provisional *sūtras*, as Cabezón frames it, takes the form of a second-order theory that attempts to resolve inconsistencies between scriptures and simple exegesis of the first order.⁶² The invocation of sources of this kind is, therefore, to appeal to their power to arbitrate as “meta-scripture” in addition to their own scriptural authority.

However, the reliance on one set of scriptures to supply a principle for the interpretation of others is not without problem. In fact, the followers of the Yogācāra school relies on the hermeneutical principles articulated in the *Samādhinirmocanasūtra*, which offers a competing second-order discourse on definitive and provisional *sūtras* that

⁵⁹ Candrakīrti proceeds to produce such Mahāyāna *sūtra* passages in the ensuing pages. See PPMV 45.1-54.4; Ruegg, *Two Prolegomena*, 82-93.

⁶⁰ MA VI 97, 199: *de ltar lung gi lo rgyus shes byas nas/ mdo gang de nyid ma yin bshad don can/ drang don gsungs pa'ang rtogs nas drang bya zhing/ stong nyid don can nges don shes par gyis/*. “In this manner, having understood the tradition of scripture (*āgama*), recognizing that the *sūtras* whose subjects of explication are not reality (*tattva*) are provisional discourses, one should interpret them [accordingly]. Know that those having emptiness as their subject are definitive.”

⁶¹ PPMV 44.1-5: *tathā cāryasamādhirājasūtre / nītārthasūtrāntaviśeṣa jñānati yathopdiṣṭā sugatena śūnyatā / yasmin punaḥ pudgalasattvapūruṣā netārthato jñānati sarvadharmān //*. Cf. the alternative reading given in de Jong, “Textcritical Notes,” 32. “Similarly, it is [spoken] in the noble *Samādhirājasūtra*, ‘Inasmuch as the Sugata has taught emptiness, one recognizes the distinctive feature of the definitive *sūtra*; moreover, where individual, being, and person are taught (tib. *bstan*), one recognizes all such (tib. *de*) dharmas as provisional.’ PPMV 43.4-7: *uktaṃ cāryākṣayamatisūtre ... ye sūtrāntā mārgāvatārāya nirdiṣṭā ima ucyante neyārthāḥ ... yāvad ye sūtrāntāḥ śūnyatā ... nirdiṣṭāḥ / ta ucyante nītārthāḥ /*. “It is, moreover, spoken in the noble *Akṣayamatisūtra*, ‘The *sūtras* that are taught for the sake of entering the path ... are called provisional [*sūtras*] ... Those *sūtras* that teach emptiness ... are called definitive *sūtras* ...’” The stanza from *Samādhirājasūtra* appears in SR 36.1-4. The Tibetan and Chinese translation are found respectively in D 127 Mdo sde, vol. *da*, 20b3 and T. 639 XV 556a19-20. For the source of the passage from the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra*, see Jens Braarvig, ed. and trans., *Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra* (Oslo: Solum, 1993) 1:117-8 and 2:449-52. Chinese translations are in T. 397 XIII 205b10-24 and T. 403 XIII 604b3-21.

⁶² Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language*, 53-5, 57.

makes literal statements of emptiness—definitive teachings for the Mādhyamikas—provisional. Faced with the conflicting second-order theories, Indian and Tibetan Buddhist scholastics were engaged in the third-order, or even further-level, hermeneutical discussions.⁶³ These developments, taking place mostly in the later ages and involving the controversies between the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra schools, should not detain us here. Suffice it to say that for Tsong kha pa, whose treatise on the distinction between definitive and provisional scriptures remains a major voice on this very hermeneutical issue,⁶⁴ reliance on scriptural authority itself cannot put the problem of scriptural inconsistency to rest; in the final analysis, according to him, reason alone is the arbiter.⁶⁵

Reason always has its place next to scripture in Buddhist scholasticism. In *Prasannapadā*, faced with the opponent's use of scriptural passages against the doctrine of emptiness, one point that Candrakīrti also makes in the section of his commentary under discussion here is that Nāgārjuna's procedure in the work of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* was to employ both reason and scripture to remove doubts and misunderstandings concerning the distinction between definitive and provisional

⁶³ Ibid., 57.

⁶⁴ In *Drang ba dang nges pa'i don rnam par phye ba'i bstan bcos legs bshad snying po*, Tsong kha pa reviews the history of this debate and makes an attempt to settle the question in favor of the Madhyamaka School. See Tsong kha pa, *Drang nges legs bshad snying po: The Essence of Eloquent Speech on the Definitive and Interpretable*. (Mundgod, India: Soku Publication, 1991). Since the classification of definitive and provisional *sūtras* presented in the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* is based on the *trisvabhāva*, or “three-nature,” theory, Bhāviveka, Candrakīrti, and Kamalaśīla—who provide their own perspectives on this Yogācāra theory—are seen in Tsong kha pa's text as having taken part in this debate on scriptural hermeneutics. Ratnākaraśānti's *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* casts some doubt on the applicability of the Madhyamaka interpretation on the *Maitreyapariṣcchā* chapter of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (ibid., 83-4). Tsong kha pa devotes a section of his treatise to tackle this issue (ibid., 199-208), where he relies on Candrakīrti's response to the *trisvabhāva* theory in MABh 201-2 ad MA VI 97. On Bhāviveka's and Asvabhāva's discussions of *Maitreyapariṣcchā*, which Tsong kha pa does not address, see Shōtarō Iida, “*Āgama* (Scripture) and *Yukti* (Reason) in Bhāvaviveka,” in *Kanakura Hakushi koki kinen Indogaku Bukkyōgaku ronshū*, ed. Kanakura Hakushi Koki Kinen Ronbunshū Kankōkai, Enshō Kanakura, and Yukio Sakamoto (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1966), 79-96.

⁶⁵ Tsong kha pa, *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*, 3-4: *mthar gtugs na dri ma med pa'i rigs pa nyid kyes dbye dgos te/*.

teachings.⁶⁶ “Employment of both reason and scripture (*yuktyāgamābhyām*)” is by Candrakīrti’s time a stock phrase, one that is used self-reflexively to characterize the essential scholastic method in practice in both Abhidharma and Mahāyāna Buddhism.⁶⁷ The phrase itself suggests quite simply—as Candrakīrti does here as well—that scripture and reason are used as two instruments in the process of coming to conclusions on doctrinal points. But the process itself is dynamic; and the relationship that scripture and reason form in the scholastic exercises, complex.

The word *yukti* is derived from the verbal root *yuj* through applying the *kṛt* suffix *ktin* (*ti*) in the sense of verbal action,⁶⁸ thus strictly speaking it carries the sense of reasoning. It is related to the passive verbal forms *yujyate* and *yujyamānāyām* and the participial adjective *yukta* derived from the same root, which appear in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* and *Prasannapadā*.⁶⁹ All these forms appear to originate from the sense “to yoke” or “to connect” in the root *yuj*—hence the idea of relevance or coherence—and in the Madhyamaka texts they carry the two clusters of meaning, conveying either the sense of being fit, suitable, proper, and right or more specifically

⁶⁶ PPMV 42.7-8: (*ā*)cāryo yuktyāgamābhyām saṁśayamithyājñānayoḥ apakaraṇārtham idam ārabdhavān. See de Jong, “Textcritical Notes,” 32. “The master undertook this [work, i.e. *śāstra*] by using both reason and scripture in order to remove both doubts and misunderstandings.” Candrakīrti frames both doubts and misunderstandings in this context as those that pertain to the questions about definitive and provisional scriptures. See PPMV 42.5-6.

⁶⁷ On the use of scripture and reason in Abhidharma scholasticism, see Collett Cox, *Disputed Dharma: Early Buddhist Theories on Existence: An Annotated Translation of the Section on Factors Dissociated from Thought from Saṁghabhadra’s Nyāyānusāra* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1995), 13-6; Cox, “The Unbroken Treatise: Scripture and Argument in Early Buddhist Scholasticism,” in *Innovation in Religious Traditions: Essays in the Interpretation of Religious Change*, ed. Michael A. Williams, Collett Cox, and Martin S. Jaffee (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992), 143-89. On Bhāviveka’s view on the use of scripture and reason, see Iida, “*Āgama* (Scripture) and *Yukti* (Reason) in Bhāviveka,” 79-96.

⁶⁸ Pāṇini 3.3.94-7.

⁶⁹ The form *yujyate* is attested twenty-nine times in MMK, the form *yukta* occurs in both MMK and PPMV, while *yujyamānāyām* appears once in PPMV. See Yamaguchi Susumu, *Index to the Prasannapadā Madhyamaka-vṛtti* (Kyoto: Heirakuji-Shoten, 1974), 1:179.

being logically justified or proved.⁷⁰ Alongside the words that are derived from *yuj*, the Madhyamaka texts also employ the forms that are derived from the verbal root *pad* with the prefix *upa*, including *upapadyate*, *upapatti*, and *upapanna*,⁷¹ which share the same range of lexical meanings. Both groups of the terms, therefore, are associated with suitability or reasonability in general and logical proof and argument in particular.

Candrakīrti himself provides specific examples of the kinds of reason and scripture that Nāgārjuna uses, and he makes it clear that by *yukti* he is referring to the arguments that Nāgārjuna makes. As an instance of this form of *yukti*, Candrakīrti refers to the first stanza of the first chapter of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*,⁷² where the following argument is presented: "There do not exist any entities anywhere ever that are produced (1) from self; (2) from other; (3) from both [self and other]; or (4) causelessly."⁷³ According to Candrakīrti, this stanza argues for the lack of production or coming into being, and therefore the empty nature, of all entities by presenting four theses.⁷⁴ The argument contained in this stanza of Nāgārjuna has been a subject of enormous commentary and debate, and it occupies a very special place in the history of Madhyamaka thought. Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is above all a text that presents arguments of this kind. However, these arguments do not stand alone; rather,

⁷⁰ Monier Monier-Williams, Ernst Leumann, and Carl Cappeller, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages* (Oxford: The Clarendon press, 1899), s.v., *yuj*, *yukta*, *yukti*.

⁷¹ On the uses of these verbal and nominal forms in PPMV, see Yamaguchi, *Index to Prasannapadā*, 64. The form *upapadyate* is used widely in MMK.

⁷² PPMV 42.9: *tatra na svata ity ādinā yuktir upavarṇitā*.

⁷³ PPMV 12.13-14: *na svato nāpi parato na dvābhyāṃ nāpy ahetutaḥ/ utpannā jātu vidyante bhāvāḥ kvacana ke cana*//.

⁷⁴ PPMV 13.2-3: *naiva svata utpannā jātu vidyante bhāvāḥ kva cana ke cana/ evaṃ pratijñātrāyaṃ api yoḥyam*//. "There are not any entities anywhere ever that are produced from self. The [other] three theses are also to be formulated in this manner."

they are supported by the use of scripture as well. In the following section, we will address one form of this use of the scriptural sources.

4.3 Interpreting Nikāya Buddhist Texts in Support of Madhyamaka Positions

The instances of Nāgārjuna's employment of scripture (*āgama*) cited by Candrakīrti illustrate a second way in which Nikāya Buddhist scriptures function in Mādhyamika treatises and commentaries. Unlike the sort that the opponents cite at the start of most chapters of the *Prasannapadā* to argue against the Madhyamaka positions, Candrakīrti identifies three stanzas in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* where Nāgārjuna uses Nikāya Buddhist scriptures positively in support of the idea of emptiness: XIII 1, XI 1, and XV 7.⁷⁵ The last of these three instances is Nāgārjuna's reference to the *Kātyāyanāvavāda*, which we have discussed earlier in this chapter.

The first instance of Nāgārjuna's use of *āgama* identified in *Prasannapadā* is *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XIII 1, which reads:

The Blessed One said, “that which has deceptive property (*moṣadharmā*) is false (*mṛṣā*).” All conditioned states (*saṃskāra*) are possessed of deceptive property; therefore, they are false.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ PPMV 42.10-43.2.

⁷⁶ Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 210: *tan mṛṣā moṣadharmam yad bhagavān ity abhāṣata/ sarve ca moṣadharmāṇaḥ saṃskārās tena te mṛṣā*// At PPMV 42.10-11, Candrakīrti mentions this as one of the three instances of Nāgārjuna's use of scripture. The versions of the stanza given here and at PPMV 237.9-10 in LVP's edition differ slightly.

The scriptural source of this stanza is given in a few works of Candrakīrti.⁷⁷ A fuller version of the *sūtra* passage appears in chapter XIII of the *Prasannapadā* in the commentary on Nāgārjuna's stanza itself:

It is said in the *sūtra*, “that which is possessed of deceptive property, viz. this conditioned entity, is false. This, O *bhikṣus*, is indeed the ultimate truth, *nirvāṇa*, viz. that which is possessed of non-deceptive property. And all conditioned states are false and possessed of deceptive property.”⁷⁸

Apart from minor textual variation, all four extant Madhyamaka commentaries that predate Candrakīrti cite this passage at this point in the text.⁷⁹ Bhāviveka further identifies the source of the passage as a Nikāya Buddhist text.⁸⁰ While the phrases *mosadhamma* and *musā* (skt. *mṛṣā*) occurs many times,⁸¹ and even juxtaposed to each other,⁸² in the Pāli canon, the following passage from *Dhātuvibhangasutta* of *Majjhimanikāya* corresponds closely with Candrakīrti's citation.⁸³

⁷⁷ See the references given in Cristina Anna Scherrer-Schaub, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti: commentaire à la soixantaine sur le raisonnement, ou, Du vrai enseignement de la causalité* (Bruxelles: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1991), 122-3 n. 65.

⁷⁸ PPMV 237.11-12: *sūtra uktaṃ tanmṛṣā moṣadharmā yad idaṃ saṃskṛtaṃ etad dhi khalu bhikṣavaḥ paramaṃ satyaṃ yad idaṃ amoṣadharmā nirvāṇaṃ sarvasaṃskārāś ca mṛṣadharmāṇa iti/*.

⁷⁹ See Huntington, “*Akutobhayā*,” 372; T. 1564 XXX 17a29-b1; Saito, “Buddhapālita-mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtti,” 2.179; D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. *tsha*, 147b6.

⁸⁰ Bhāviveka describes the passage as coming from *śrāvakayāna*. D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. *tsha*, 147b5-6: *nyan thos kyi theg pa las kyang 'di lta ste/ 'dus byas gang yin pa de ni brdzun pa slu ba'i chos so/ /dge slong dag 'di lta ste/ mi slu ba'i chos mya ngan las 'das pa de ni bden pa'i mchog go/ 'dus byas de ni slu ba'i chos kyang yin/ de ni rab tu 'jig pa'i chos kyang yin no zhes kyang gsungs la/*.

⁸¹ See Pali Text Society, Rhys Davis, and Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary*, s.v. *musā*, *mosa*; Stanislaw Schayer, *Ausgewählte Kapitel aus der Prasannapadā* (v, xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi): *Einleitung, Übersetzung und Anmerkungen* (Warszawa: W Krakowie, 1931), 26-7 n. 20.

⁸² E.g., *Kāma hi bhante aniccā tucchā musā mosa dhammāti*, in Richard Morris, Edmund Hardy, Mabel Hunt, and Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids, eds., *The Aṅguttara-nikāya* (London: Published for the Pali Text Society by Luzac, 1955-1961), 5:84.

⁸³ V. Trenckner and Robert Chalmers, eds., *The Majjhima-nikāya* (London: Published for the Pali Text Society, by H. Frowde, 1888-1925), 3:245: *Taṃ hi, bhikkhu, musā yaṃ mosadhammaṃ, taṃ saccaṃ yaṃ*

O *bhikkhu*, that which has deceptive property is false; that which has non-deceptive property is *nibhāna*. Therefore, a *bhikkhu* thus endowed is endowed with this supreme foundation of truth. For this, O *bhikkhu*, is the supreme noble truth, namely, that which has the non-deceptive property—*nibbāna*.

The Chinese translation of *Madhyamāgama* also contains a corresponding, although shorter, version of the passage.⁸⁴ The reference to this scriptural passage illustrates a Mādhyamika exegetical strategy that reads a Nikāya Buddhist scripture from the school's own perspective. Candrakīrti explains:

Because of not being the nature of themselves, all conditioned states are false, on account of [their] deceptive property, just like water in the mirage. On the other hand, that which is true has non-deceptive property, viz. *nirvāṇa* alone. Therefore, by the proof (*upapatti*) provided and this scriptural passage (*āgama*), the lack of essence (*naiḥsvābhāvyā*) of all existents is established.⁸⁵

amosadhammaṃ nibbānaṃ; tasma evaṃ samannāgato bhikkhu iminā paramena saccādhīṭhānena samannāgato hoti. Etaṃ hi, bhikkhu, paramaṃ ariyasaccaṃ, yadidaṃ amosadhammaṃ nibbānaṃ.

⁸⁴ T. 26 II 692a14-15: 真諦者。謂如法也。妄言者。謂虛妄法。比丘。成就彼第一真諦處。

⁸⁵ PPMV 238.6-8: *ato [niḥ]svabhāvatvena mṛṣā sarvasaṃskārā moṣadharmakatvāt / marīcikādijalavat // yat tu satyaṃ na tan moṣadharmakaṃ / tad yathā nirvāṇam ekaṃ / tataś ca vihitayopapattyāsmāc cāgamāt siddhaṃ sarvabhāvānāṃ naiḥsvābhāvyam /*. De Jong notes that R reads *ataḥsvabhāvatvena*, although he recommends Tibetan reading of *de'i rang bzhin ma yin pa nyid kyis (atatsvabhāvatvena)*, which is adopted here. See de Jong, "Textcritical Notes," 55.

Here the Nikāya Buddhist passage is an *āgama*, and it is joined with *upapatti*, a formal logical proof that Candrakīrti supplies here. *Upapatti* is generally synonymous with *yukti* and signifies reason or argument. In this instance, both scripture and reason contribute to the justification of emptiness. More specifically, reason in this context is based on a scriptural passage, and it also supplies a specific way of reading the passage.

Bhāviveka is explicit about the employment of the specific passage as a way to appeal to the Nikāya Buddhists, although some of them will not find the reading offered here convincing. To be sure, in the *Prasannapadā*, the Mādhyamika interpretation of the passage prompts the opposition from a Nikāya Buddhist voice, and in response more arguments in favor of emptiness are put forth.⁸⁶

Apart from reading an old Buddhist passage in a different light, there is another point on which the invocation of scripture at *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XIII 1 resembles the reference to *Kātyāyanāvavāda* at XV 7: in both cases, there are Mahāyāna sources that are similar to the Nikāya Buddhist passage being cited. After citing a scriptural passage from the *śrāvakayāna*, Bhāviveka points out here that there is also a Mahāyāna Buddhist passage, apparently from a *sūtra*, that parallels it.

It is also said in the Mahāyāna, “O Subhūti, as long as it is a conditioned entity, it is false; as long as it is not a conditioned entity, it is not false.”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ The objection appears in PPMV 238.10-11. Later at MMK XIII 3ab, an opponent even interprets the concept of emptiness in light of the common Buddhist teaching of change and impermanence, as discussed earlier in Chapter Two.

⁸⁷ D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. *tsha*, 147b6-7: *theg pa chen po las kyang rab 'byor ci tsam du 'dus byas pa de tsam tu brdzun la/ ji tsam du 'dus ma byas pa de tsam mi brdzun no zhes gsungs so/*. Hypothetical Sanskrit reconstruction: *mahāyāne 'py uktaṃ subhūte yāvat saṃskṛtas tāvan mṛṣā yāvad asaṃskṛtas tāvad*

The specific source of Bhāviveka's Mahāyāna passage is uncertain, although some versions of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* contain passages in the context of conversations between the Buddha and Subhūti that are similar to a part of the Pāli passage from *Dhātuvibhaṅgasutta*.⁸⁸ Other Mahāyāna *sūtras* also contain passages—although we have found none that also involves Subhūti—that match with various parts of the Pāli passage.⁸⁹

Unlike the case of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XV 7, where Nāgārjuna's knowledge of *Kātyāyanāvavāda* and *Kāśyapaparivarta* is certain, at XIII 1 he only indicates a scriptural source without providing the title of the text. The identification of his specific Nikāya Buddhist source is only based on the commentarial tradition, while his attention to similar Mahāyāna sūtra passages is possible but cannot be established with any textual evidence. Only when we take the commentaries into account⁹⁰ can we form the opinion that the cases of XV 7 and XIII 1 taken together suggest that the Mādhyamikas' interest in certain elements of Nikāya Buddhist texts is conditioned by their perception of the intertextual link between Nikāya and Mahāyāna Buddhist literature.

Apart from the Mahāyāna *sūtras*, a few early *śāstras* translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva at the beginning of the fifth century—*Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* 大智度論,

amṛṣeti. The Chinese is found at T. 1566 XXX 90a29-b3: 聲聞法中作如是說。大乘經中亦作是說。諸有爲法皆是虛妄。諸無爲法皆非虛妄。此二阿含皆明諸行是虛妄法。此義得成。

⁸⁸ Three identical passages appear Xuanzang's translation of *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśūtra* in the three sections that correspond with *Śatasāhasrikā*, *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, and *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikā* *Prajñāpāramitā*. In the latter two sections, the passages appear toward the very end. T. 220 VI 1058c28, VII 425c23-24, and 761b6-7: 善現。不虛誑法即是涅槃。"O Subhūti, the dharma that is not false and deceptive is *nirvāṇa*." See also Kumārajīva's translation of *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* at T 223 VIII 345b11.

⁸⁹ See, for instance, *Ratnākūṭa*, at T. 310(33) 558a13-14, and *Avataṃsakasūtra*, at T. 278 IX 556a6.

⁹⁰ Bhāviveka says in his commentary on MMK XIII 1 that this is a case where there are scriptural passages accepted by both sides of the Mahāyāna-Nikāya divide (*phyogs gnyis la grags pa'i lung dag yod pa'i phyir*). The Tibetan phrase *lung dag* suggests the dual form *āgamau* (two scriptural passages). Candrakīrti gives here a Mahāyāna passage from *Adhyardhaśatikāprajñāpāramitāśūtra*, although it does not contain expressions parallel to the Nikāya Buddhist passage that he identified earlier.

Daśabhūmivibhāṣāśāstra 十住毘婆沙論, and *Satyasiddhiśāstra* 成實論—also cite passages that are related to the one that is referred to at *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XIII 1, either in the Nikāya or Mahāyāna form.⁹¹ The traditional ascription of the former two texts to Nāgārjuna has been questioned by modern scholars.⁹² However, the Madhyamaka affiliation of the author of *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* is clear, while the latter two texts also contain elements of Madhyamaka thought.⁹³ In the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, Candrakīrti also indicates his awareness that versions of the scriptural source that Nāgārjuna uses at *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XIII 1 appear repeatedly in multiple earlier texts that are most likely *śāstras*.⁹⁴ The textual evidence presented here suggests that it is the members of the Madhyamaka school, or others who are connected with it, who maintain versions of the specific scriptural passage under discussion here, both in the commentaries on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* and in other treatises, and make it a part of their literary tradition.

⁹¹ See *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* at T. 1509 XXV 102a28, 728c27-28, 730c14-15; *Daśabhūmivibhāṣāśāstra* at T. 1521 XXVI 25a25-26, 58b18; and *Satyasiddhiśāstra* at T. 1646 XXXII 333a29-b2, 363b2. The last two citations in *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* appear to be related to the passage in *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, on which it is a commentary. The two citations from *Daśabhūmivibhāṣāśāstra* (如經中說。佛告比丘。第一聖諦無有虛誑涅槃是也 and 佛告諸比丘。諸行如幻化誑惑愚人無有實事) show its Nikāya Buddhist provenance by indicating the *bhikṣu*(s) as the recipient of the Buddha's advice.

⁹² On the authorship of *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*, a massive commentary on *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, see the introduction in Étienne Lamotte, trans., *Le traité de la grande vertu de sagesse*, Tomes 3, (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université de Louvain, Institut orientaliste, 1970) and the response in J. W. de Jong, "Review of Étienne Lamotte, *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*), Tome III," *Asia Major* (17) 1972: 105-12. On the doubt about the ascription of *Daśabhūmivibhāṣāśāstra* to Nāgārjuna, see Nakamura Hajime, *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes* (Delhi Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), 240.

⁹³ On the mixture of Nikāya Buddhist doctrines with Madhyamaka thought in *Satyasiddhi*, see Fukuhara Ryōgen, *Jōjitsuron no kenkyū: Bukkyō shōha no gakusetsu hihan* (Kyōto-shi: Nagata Bunshōdō), 1969.

⁹⁴ Shortly after citing the passage that he also cites in PPMV 237.11-2 ad MMK XIII 1, Candrakīrti says in *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti* ad *kārikā* 2: "The Blessed One said [this]. Even while this is the case, subsequently and repeatedly this [statement] is spoken in not just one text." Scherrer-Schaub, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 27: *bcom ldan 'das kyi gsungs so // de ltar mod kyi de phyir zhing btud de gzhung gcig tu ma gsungs la/*. The phrase *de*

4.4 Incorporating a Scriptural Passage into an Argument

The ways in which Madhyamaka writers use Nikāya Buddhist scriptures to serve their own interpretive agenda are varied. In the second case of Nāgārjuna's use of scripture that Candrakīrti identifies, a Nikāya Buddhist source functions as a premise of a Madhyamaka argument for emptiness.⁹⁵ The stanza in question is *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XI 1, which reads as follows in light of Candrakīrti's interpretation:

“A prior limit is not known,” spoke the great sage, “*saṃsāra* is indeed without beginning and end.” It has neither a start nor a terminus.⁹⁶

Candrakīrti's commentary on the stanza identifies the following passage as the scriptural source of this stanza:

Without beginning and end, O *bhikṣus*, is indeed the *saṃsāra* of birth, aging, and death.⁹⁷

ltaṅ mod kyi (tathāpi) suggest that the other texts are not considered as the word of the Buddha. The Tibetan term *gzhung* (*Mahāvīyūtpatti: grantha*) is a general term for book.

⁹⁵ PPMV 42.12-13.

⁹⁶ Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 184: *pūrvā prajñāyate koṭir nety uvāca mahāmuniḥ/ saṃsāro anavarāgro hi nāsty ādir nāpi paścimam*// See also PPMV 219.2-3. Candrakīrti's phrase, *pūrvā koṭir na prajñāyate* (PPMV 218.6), supports the translation given here. The Tibetan translation and some commentators support the following rendering: “Does the prior limit exist?” “No,” spoke the great sage ... Nāgārjuna's stanza permits both readings. On the second reading, see *ibid.*, 184, 185.

⁹⁷ PPMV 218.4-5 and 219.5-6: *uktaṃ hi/ca bhagavatā anavarāgro hi bhikṣavo jātimaraṇasaṃsāra iti*.

Unlike the reference to Nikāya Buddhist scriptures in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XIII 1, which permits a Madhyamaka reading that yields the notion of emptiness from the scriptural source itself, the Nikāya Buddhist passage that Nāgārjuna refers to here in XI 1 simply states a common Buddhist belief that *saṃsāra* has a beginning and an end. The argument that the Mādhyamikas make here, therefore, operates by incorporating this scriptural passage into an argument.

The argument works in two ways. According to Candrakīrti's and Buddhapālita's commentaries, an argument is contained within the first stanza, and it goes as follows. If anything exists, it would have a beginning and an end, just like a pot does. The Buddha says that *saṃsāra* does not have a beginning and an end. Therefore, by that scriptural statement it is proved that *saṃsāra* does not exist in reality.⁹⁸ For Qingmu and the author of *Akutobhayā*,⁹⁹ scripture's statement that *saṃsāra* does not have a beginning and an end alluded to in the first stanza functions as a premise; the argument rather takes off in the second stanza, which states: "how could that which has neither a beginning nor an end have a middle?"¹⁰⁰ For Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti, this counts as a second argument, which is built upon the one that is stated in the first stanza. In both readings, the emptiness of *saṃsāra* is justified by incorporating the scriptural passage as a part of the arguments, and it functions as a starting point of a series of arguments that are put forth in the chapter.

At the beginning of this eleventh chapter, Candrakīrti's commentary provides another Sanskrit passage, which helps us trace the source of Nāgārjuna's scriptural

⁹⁸ PPMV 219.4-8. Candrakīrti's formulation of the argument paraphrased here agrees in general terms with Buddhapālita's. On the latter, see Saito, "Buddhapālita-mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtti," 2:160.

⁹⁹ See T. 1564 XXX 16a5-19 and Clair W. Huntington, "The *Akutobhayā* and Early Indian Madhyamaka," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1986), 358-9.

reference: “of the beings who are hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, bound by a bond of craving, roaming, and racing, a prior limit is not known.”¹⁰¹ The combination of two segments of the text that Candrakīrti refers to¹⁰² and Nāgārjuna’s stanza leads us to a specific Pāli passage, which appears numerous times in the *Anamataggasaṃyutta* section of *Samyuttanikāya*:

Without an imaginable beginning, O *bhikkhus*, is *saṃsāra*. Of the beings who are hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, roaming, and racing, a prior limit is not known.¹⁰³

This passage, sometimes in slight variation, is also found in other parts of the *Samyuttanikāya*¹⁰⁴ and in a wide array of later Pāli and Sanskrit texts.¹⁰⁵ In the two translations of *Samyuktāgama*, the Chinese versions of the passage appear mainly in the section of the text that corresponds with *Anamataggasaṃyutta* in the Pāli.¹⁰⁶ *Akutobhayā* and Qingmu’s commentary, two early extant works in the tradition of Madhyamaka commentaries, also support this attribution by respectively specifying the scriptural

¹⁰⁰ MMK XI 2ab. PPMV 220.15: *naivāgraṃ nāvaram tasya kuto bhavet*.

¹⁰¹ PPMV 218.5-6: *avidyānīvaraṇānaṃ sattvānaṃ tṛṣṇāsaṃyojanānaṃ tṛṣṇāgardūlabaddhānaṃ saṃsaratāṃ saṃdhāvatāṃ pūrvā koṭī na prajñāyata iti*. De Jong amends *gaṇḍura* to *gardūla*. “Textcritical Notes,” 52.

¹⁰² The other segment is given at PPMV 218.4-5 and 219.5-6, which has been cited above.

¹⁰³ SN 2:178-193. At SN 2.178, for instance, it reads: *anamataggāyaṃ bhikkhave saṃsāro pubhākoṭi na paññāyati avijjānīvaraṇānaṃ sattānaṃ taṇhāsaṃyojanānaṃ sandhāvatāṃ saṃsaratāṃ*//.

¹⁰⁴ See, for instance, SN 3.149, 3.151 (where the last word reads *saṃsaratāṃ* incorrectly), 5.226, and, in partial form, at 5.441.

¹⁰⁵ See the references given in Pali Text Society, Rhys Davis, and Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary*, s.v. *anamatagga*; Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit*, s.v. *anavarāgra*; LVP 218 n. 3.

¹⁰⁶ In the Chinese *Samyuktāgama* (*Za ahan jing* 雜阿含經), the versions of the passage appear thirty times between T. 99 II 240b21 and 243b30, corresponding with *Anamataggasaṃyutta*, and once at 69b5-7. Some versions of the passage are abbreviated. The full version appears, for instance, at 240b20-21: 眾生無始生死。無明所蓋。愛繫其頸。長夜生死輪轉。不知苦之本際。 In the alternative translation of

source as *Thog ma dang tha ma med pa'i mdo* (*anavarāgrasūtra*) and *Wu benji jing* 無本際經.¹⁰⁷

In *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XI 1, the expression *anavarāgra* is the Sanskritized version—said to be defective in this case—of the Pali counterpart *anamatāgga*.¹⁰⁸ Other than this minor difference, the language of the stanza, *pūrvā prajñāyate koṭi n(a) ... saṃsāro anavarāgro*,¹⁰⁹ shows that Nāgārjuna has most likely incorporated the exact phrases from a recurrent Nikāya *sūtra* passage (in Pāli: *anamataggāyaṃ bhikkhave saṃsāro pubhākoṭi na paññāyati*). Due to a syntactical ambiguity, the commentarial tradition is divided on how to parse the stanza exactly. The interpretations offered by Qingmu, Buddhapālita, and Candrakīrti¹¹⁰ permit the stanza to be seen as having imbedded within itself a straightforward restatement of the Nikāya scriptural passage identified here, yielding the following rendering of the first three *pādas*: “‘A prior limit is not known,’ spoke the great sage, ‘*saṃsāra* is indeed without beginning and end.’”¹¹¹

The second reading, favored by the author of *Akutobhayā* and Bhāviveka, breaks the first half-verse at the point where the caesura of the *anuṣṭubh* meter is and makes the

Samyuktāgama (*Bieyi zaahan jing* 別譯雜阿含經), the passage appears six times between T. 100 II 485c12 and 487a3.

¹⁰⁷ Huntington, “*Akutobhayā*,” 358; T 1564 XXX 16a5. In Kumārajīva’s translation equivalents, *Wu benji jing* is to be read as “*The Sūtra of No Prior Limit (pūrvā koṭi)*.” However, it is more likely a loose rendering of the likes of *Anāgrasūtra*, something that would correspond with *Anamataggasutta* in Pāli, or simply *Anavarāgrasūtra*.

¹⁰⁸ See Pali Text Society, Rhys Davis, and Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary*, s.v. *anamatagga*; Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit*, s.v. *anavarāgra*. Buddhaghosa analyzes the compound *anamatagga* into *anu* (then glossed as *ñānena anugantvā*) and *amatagga*, therefore the whole expression yields the sense of “unimaginable beginning when pursued with knowledge.” See Bodhi, trans., *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2000), 795 n. 254. The two Chinese translations of *Samyuktāgama* also renders the description of *saṃsāra* simply as “without beginning” (*wushi* 無始) or more vaguely as “without limit” (*wuyou bianji* 無有邊際). All this suggests that Nāgārjuna was using a Sanskrit version of the *sūtra*.

¹⁰⁹ MMK XI 1abc.

¹¹⁰ For these three commentators’ interpretation, see respectively T. 1564 XXX 16a5-14; Saito, “Buddhapālita-mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtti,” 2:159.22-160.2; and PPMV 218.4-219.6.

¹¹¹ MMK XI 1 abc: *pūrvā prajñāyate koṭi nety uvāca mahāmuniḥ / saṃsāro anavarāgro hi*.

first *pāda* a question, thus yielding: “[When asked] ‘Is a prior limit known?’ The great sage said, ‘no.’ ([*kiṃ*] *pūrvā koṭiḥ prajñāyate* [*prṣte sati*] *mahāmunir uvāca neti*) *Samśāra* is indeed without beginning and end.”¹¹² In spite of their different opinions in regard to the syntax of Nāgārjuna’s stanza, among the five early Indian Mādhyamika commentators only Bhāviveka seems to be content with working with *saṃsāra*’s lack of beginning and end as a general Buddhist teaching and does not concern himself with the specific scriptural source of Nāgārjuna’s stanza.¹¹³ The others all cite specific scriptural phrases, and among them Candrakīrti supplies most details. The two earlier commentaries—*Akutobhayā* and Qingmu’s—further give the title of the text and confirm the Nikāya Buddhist identity of the source being used.

The beginning of the eleventh chapter of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* formulates arguments for the emptiness nature of *saṃsāra* by incorporating into these arguments a scriptural passage of Nikāya Buddhist provenance. From the perspective of the early

¹¹² The Tibetan translation of these the first three *pādas* reads: *sngon mtha' mngon nam zhes zhus tshel / thub pa chen pos min zhes gsungs / 'khor ba thog ma tha med de/*. This translation follows the second reading of the stanza mentioned above. It is imbedded in the Tibetan translation of *Akutobhayā*, *Buddhapālita's vṛtti*, *Prajñāpradīpa*, and *Prasannapadā*, even though the differences of the commentators' opinions require different renderings of stanza. See Huntington, “*Akutobhayā*,” 358; Saito, “*Buddhapālita-mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtti*,” 2:159; D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. *tsha*, 139a2; and Jacques May, *Candrakīrti, Prasannapā madhyamakavṛtti: Douze chapitres traduits du sanscrit et du tibétain, accompagnés d'une introduction, de notes et d'une édition critique de la version tibétaine* (Paris: A. Maisonneuve, 1959), 390. Saito indicates that Jñānagarbha and the Tibetan translator Lu'i rgyal mtshan first translated Avalokitavrata's subcommentary on Bhāviveka's *Prajñāpradīpa* on MMK, in which the two later works are entirely imbedded. They then proceed to translate *Akutobhayā* and *Buddhapālita's vṛtti*, using in these two translations the same rendering of MMK that was based on the interpretations of Avalokitavrata and Bhāviveka, without adjusting Nāgārjuna's stanzas even when the interpretations in *Akutobhayā* and *Buddhapālita's vṛtti* differ. Although Nyi ma grags, the Tibetan translator of the *Prasannapadā*, has revised Lu'i rgyal mtshan's translation of MMK, at XI 1 he adopts Lu'i rgyal mtshan's translation of the stanza, which is at variance with Candrakīrti's reading. See Saito, “*Buddhapālita-mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtti*,” 1.xvii-xviii; 1:272-3 n. 4; Saito Akira, “Problems in Translating the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* as Cited in Its Commentaries,” in *Buddhist Translations: Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Doboom Tulku (New Delhi: Manohar, 1995), 87-96. Kumārajīva's and Prabhākaramitra's Chinese translations of MMK XI, however, adapt themselves to different readings of stanza given in the commentaries by Qingmu and Bhāviveka that the two translators also rendered. See T. 1564 XXX 16a8-9 and T. 1566 XXX 87a10-11.

¹¹³ For Bhāviveka's commentary on MMK XI 1, see the Tibetan translation in D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. *tsha*, 138b1-140a6 and the Chinese translation in T. 1566 XXX 87a12 ff.

Indian commentators, the employment of a Nikāya Buddhist scriptural source here is a means to persuade those who accept its authority. In the *Akutobhayā*, *Prasannapadā*, and Qingmu's commentary, the passage from *Anamataggasaṃyutta/Anavarāgrasūtra* is first invoked by an opponent to argue that *samsāra* is real and not empty, since the passage speaks about it.¹¹⁴ The Mādhyamika then begins to demonstrate that the same passage can be used to show that *samsāra* is empty. In Buddhapālita's *vṛtti*, the opponent uses another Nikāya Buddhist passage to argue against emptiness,¹¹⁵ to which the Mādhyamika responds with the passage from the *Anamataggasaṃyutta/Anavarāgrasūtra* to show that a scriptural source that the opponent accepts can be used in favor of the doctrine of emptiness. Thus, for the Madhyamaka commentators as a group, the arguments made in the beginning of Nāgārjuna's eleventh chapter on the basis the scriptural source functions as a deterrent to the attacks from the Nikāya Buddhists.

The tradition of early Madhyamaka commentaries generally sees the scriptural references in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XI 1, XIII 1, and XV 7—singled out by Candrakīrti in the *Prasannapadā*—as the instances where the Nikāya Buddhist passages, whose ultimate sources all go back to the Āgama/Nikāya collection of early Buddhism, can be used in the service of a Madhyamaka interpretive agenda. The polemical nature of such uses is evinced by the fact that the commentaries often place these references in the context of a debate between the Mādhyamikas and the Buddhists who accept the principles of early Buddhism. The Nikāya Buddhist identity of such passages are often made explicit, marked, in the case of Bhāviveka for instance, as belonging to the *śrāvakayāna*, or specified by Candrakīrti sometimes as extracted from “a

¹¹⁴ Huntington, “*Akutobhayā*,” 358; PPMV 218; T. 1564 XXX 16a5-7.

sūtra that is recited in all the schools of Nikāya Buddhism.”¹¹⁶ In other words, the success of the Mādhyamaka arguments where scriptures of this kind are employed depends in part on the Nikāya Buddhist interlocutors’ acknowledgment that the scriptures so used are authoritative. Candrakīrti explains that as a general rule a scripture can be used in an argument when its authority is acknowledged either by both parties or by the opponent alone.¹¹⁷ This may also explain why Nāgārjuna too explicitly indicates that his source is scriptural on all three occasions.¹¹⁸

4.5 A Reflection on the Uses of Nikāya Buddhist Texts in a Later Age

Although the specific cases of the use of Nikāya Buddhist texts we have considered in this chapter often appear in a polemical context, we do not need to doubt that there has been a genuine Mādhyamika interest in such scriptural passages. As we have shown earlier, these passages appeal to the Mādhyamikas in part because they resemble certain passages of the Mahāyāna literature in such a way that they open themselves up to the Mādhyamika interpretation. For the Mādhyamikas, the inclusion of

¹¹⁵ Saito, “Buddhapālita-mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtti,” 2:159. In Bhāviveka’s *Prajñāpradīpa*, the opponent also uses Nikāya Buddhist texts other than *Anamataggaṣaṃyutta/Anavarāgrasūtra*.

¹¹⁶ PPMV 269.11: *idaṃ sūtraṃ sarvanikāyeṣu paṭhyate*.

¹¹⁷ When the Mādhyamikas use Nikāya Buddhist texts to argue for the doctrine of emptiness, the authority of the texts are accepted both by themselves and their Nikāya Buddhist interlocutors. To emphasize the other-oriented nature of verbal communication, Candrakīrti makes a remark in another context that a scriptural source can be used in an argument when its authority is acknowledged by the opponent alone. PPMV 35.8: *nobhayaprasiddenaivāgamena āgamabādhā / kiṃ tarhi svaprasiddhenāpi*. LVP’s conjecture is confirmed by R. See de Jong, “Textcritical Notes,” 32. “The undermining [of an opponent’s position] by way of scripture occurs not just by using a scripture [or a scriptural passage] that is acknowledged by both parties. What is it then? It occurs also by using [a scripture or a scriptural passage that is] acknowledged by [the opponent] himself [alone].”

¹¹⁸ MMK XI 1b: *uvāca mahāmuniḥ*; MMK XIII 1b: *bhagavān ity abhāṣata*; MMK XV 7a and c: *kātyāyanāvavāde ... pratiśiddhaṃ bhagavatā*. Nāgārjuna indicates that his sources are scriptural elsewhere in MMK as well. For instance, at MMK XIII 8 he refers to *Kāśyapaparivarta*, as mentioned earlier, while indicating that the opinion he expresses is *proktā jinaiḥ*, “announced by the Victorious Ones.”

Nikāya Buddhist passages as a part of the texture of their *śāstras* and commentaries serves a broader purpose of illustrating a unified vision of the Mahāyāna teachings. In the case of Candrakīrti, a few metrical lines of Nikāya Buddhist provenance become his favorite scriptural source on the teaching of emptiness:

Ādityabandhu says, “Matter is like a lump of foam;
feeling is like a bubble; notion resembles a mirage;
Conditioned states are similar to a plantain tree; and Consciousness is like an
illusion.”¹¹⁹

The source of these lines is found in the *Pheṇa Sutta* from the Pāli *Samyuttanikāya* and its corresponding *sūtra* in the Chinese translation of *Samyuktāgama*,¹²⁰ and the passage appears to have come to Candrakīrti’s attention due to their popularity, as he reports that these “metrical lines are recited in the *śāstras* and *sūtras* of all the schools of Nikāya Buddhism.”¹²¹ His comment is confirmed by the fact that there are two independent Chinese translations of what is in Pāli the *Pheṇasutta*.¹²² This passage is not known to have been used by the earlier tradition of Madhyamaka commentators, and it was later widely cited by the Madhyamaka authors who accept

¹¹⁹ PPMV 41.9-11: *phenapiṇḍopamaṃ rūpaṃ vedanā budbudopamā / marīcisadrśī saṃjñā saṃskārāḥ kadalīnibhāḥ / māyopamaṃ ca vijñānam uktam ādityabandhunā //*. For the reading in Tucci’s manuscript, see de Jong, “Textcritical Notes,” 32. These lines are cited also at MABh 22.3-5 ad MA I 8 and PPMV 549.2-4. Ādityabandhu is an epithet of the Śākyamuni Buddha.

¹²⁰ SN 3.142 (*Pheṇa Sutta*): *Pheṇapiṇḍūpamaṃ rūpaṃ // vedanā bubbulūpamā // Marīcikūpamā sañña // saṅkhārā kadalūpamā // Māyūpamaṇ ca viññānaṃ // dīpitādiccabandhunā //*. *Samyuktāgama* in Chinese translation at T. 99 II 69a18-20: 觀色如聚沫，受如水上泡，想如春時燄，諸行如芭蕉，諸識法如幻，日種姓尊說。

¹²¹ PPMV 549.8: *etās ca gāthāḥ sarvanikāyaśāstrasūtreṣu paṭhyante*.

Candrakīrti as a major authority in the school. The case of this particular scriptural passage shows how an influential writer's attention of a Buddhist passage, in this case one that has been widely used in the Nikāya Buddhist circles, can lead to the addition of new materials to an active body of scriptural references of a Mahāyāna Buddhist school.

In the first chapter of the *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti adds the metrical lines cited here to the instances of Nikāya Buddhist scriptural passages that Nāgārjuna has used in the service of the doctrine of emptiness and his system of thought. Candrakīrti comments here that—from a Madhyamaka point of view—these lines show no less than “the absence of the self of all dharmas,”¹²³ rather than the mere absence of the self of person (*pudgalanairātmya*) that Nikāya Buddhist texts are known to propound. Apparently, in this passage the five aggregates are described as insubstantial, while the similes used in these lines appeal to a Mādhyamika because they are frequently used as analogies for emptiness in the Mahāyāna *sūtras* and *śāstras*.

As the examples presented in this chapter demonstrate, one approach that Nāgārjuna and the members of the Madhyamaka School adopt in order to promote the idea of emptiness is to employ exegetical means to demonstrate that certain Nikāya scriptural passages are already explicitly or implicitly conveying the idea of emptiness. A related idea that the Mādhyamikas—as well as other Mahāyāna Buddhist texts—have expressed in various manners is that knowledge of emptiness is necessary even for the achievement of Nikāya Buddhists' own soteriological goal. For their intended audience, such statements appear to serve the purpose of encouraging the acceptance of, or

¹²² See T. 105 II 501b18-20: 沫聚喻於色，痛如水中泡，想譬熱時炎，行爲若芭蕉，夫幻喻如識，諸佛說若此 and T. 106 II 502a26-28: 色如彼聚沫，痛如彼水泡，想如夏野馬，行如芭蕉樹，識如彼幻術，最勝之所說。

¹²³ PPMV 42.4: *nirātmakatvāc ca dharmāṇām*.

strengthening the conviction in, the Mahāyāna doctrine of emptiness. Eliciting an implication of these statements, Candrakīrti, however, takes these lines of argument and the kind of Nikāya Buddhist passages that the Mādhyamikas use in a very different direction and comes to a rather unique position.

Candrakīrti's contention is that the Nikāya Buddhists who have fulfilled their soteriological goals—the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*—already possess the knowledge of emptiness.¹²⁴ His basic argument appears to be twofold: (1) *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* are the primary audience of the Nikāya Buddhist scriptures, which already speak of emptiness, as Nāgārjuna has used Nikāya Buddhist passages to argue for the doctrine of emptiness; (2) since both Mahāyāna *sūtras* and Nāgārjuna maintain that the knowledge of emptiness is required for the achievement of the Nikāya Buddhists' own soteriological goal, and the existence of such achievement must be granted, those who fulfill these goal must have the knowledge of emptiness. Candrakīrti argues for this unique position mainly by invoking the authoritative texts. In his earlier work of *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* (ad I 8d), Candrakīrti does so by adducing six passages from *sūtras*, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, and *Ratnāvalī*, the latter of which he regards as the work of Nāgārjunas.¹²⁵ The basic points that he makes in regard to each of the citations are summarized in the following paragraph.

(1) The *Daśabhūmikasūtra* says that a bodhisattva surpasses the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* by the power of his intelligence only when he reaches the seventh

¹²⁴ See, i.e., MABh 19.18-19 ad MA I 8d: *nyan thos dang rang sangs rgyas rnams la yang chos thams cad rang bzhin med par shes pa yang yod do*. "Even the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* also have the knowledge of the absence of the essence of all dharmas."

¹²⁵ The next chapter will come back to the authorship of *Ratnāvalī*, which Candrakīrti and other Mādhyamikas from the middle of the first millennium onward consider as the work of Nāgārjuna. Candrakīrti prefaces a citation of a stanza from this text—given immediately below as the fifth passage—with the phrase *slob dpon gyi zhal snga nas kyis*, "it is spoken by venerable *ācārya* [Nāgārjuna] that ..."

bodhisattva's stage or *bhūmi*. If the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* do not have the knowledge of emptiness, the bodhisattva would have surpassed them by his intelligence when he reaches the first bodhisattva's *bhūmi*.¹²⁶ (2) A passage from the *Ratnāvalī* says that “as long as there is the grasping of the aggregates (*skandha*), there is also the [conception] of ‘I.’” This passage expresses the idea that realizing the absence of the self of a person depends on removing the conceptions of real entities other than a person, such as the conception of a real form.¹²⁷ (3) Another passage from the *Ratnāvalī* speaks about the emptiness of the entities ranging from form, consciousness, feeling, notion to conditioned states. The passage is spoken from the point of view of the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, because it is followed by a stanza that starts to discuss the case of a bodhisattva, marked with the phrase “a bodhisattva as well (*bodhisattvo 'pi*).”¹²⁸ (4) The passage from the *Phena Sutta* that we have seen earlier—and this point applies to other “*sūtras* showing the path of the *śrāvakas*,” although Candrakīrti does not give more examples—“examines conditioned states by way of similes.”¹²⁹ (5) Another stanza in the *Ratnāvalī* makes the same point, where the ideas of non-production and emptiness taught in the Mahāyāna are urged to be accepted as having the same meaning as the teaching of eradication (*kṣaya*) in Nikāya Buddhism.¹³⁰ (6) In *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XV 7,

¹²⁶ MABh 19.2-20.3. The source of Candrakīrti's citation from the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* (MABh 19.2-13) is in Vaidya, *Daśabhūmikasūtram*, 39. This and the remaining five citations all appear in the commentary on MA I 8d.

¹²⁷ MABh 20.3-15. The stanzas cited (MABh 20.9-14) are *Ratnāvalī* I 35-37, see Hahn, *Nāgārjuna's Ratnāvalī*, 14-7. *Ratnāvalī* I 35ab: *skandhagrāho yāvad asti tāvad evāham ity api*.

¹²⁸ MABh 20.15-22.1. The stanzas cited from the *Ratnāvalī* (MABh 20.16-21.13 and 21.19-20) are IV 57-66. See Hahn, *Nāgārjuna's Ratnāvalī*, 114-9.

¹²⁹ MABh 22.1-8. The same three hemistiches cited here (MABh 22.3-5) are also cited at PPMV 41.9-11 and 549.2-4, and they have been discussed at the beginning of this section.

¹³⁰ MABh 22.10-11. The stanza from *Ratnāvalī* (MABh 22.10-11) is IV 86. Hahn, *Nāgārjuna's Ratnāvalī*, 126: *anutpādo mahāyāne pareṣāṃ śūnyatā kṣayaḥ/ kṣayānutpādayoś caikyam arthataḥ kṣamyatām yataḥ*/. “There is non-production in Mahāyāna; for others it is eradication. Since eradication and non-production are the same, emptiness is to be accepted.” The term “for others” apparently refers to Buddhists who are not affiliated with the Mahāyāna movement.

Nāgārjuna refers to the Nikāya Buddhist *sūtra Kātyāyanāvavāda* to argue in favor of the teaching of emptiness.¹³¹

In his interpretation of the first and third passages, Candrakīrti exhibits his close attention to the minute details of the texts to elicit their implications. In most cases, Candrakīrti relies upon the authority of the citations that he has given here. The passages are either used to show that emptiness has been taught in the Nikāya Buddhist scriptures (passages 3, 4, 5, and 6) or simply state that the knowledge of emptiness is required for *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* of Nikāya Buddhist affiliation to reach their goals (passage 2). When Candrakīrti formulates his position in *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, his point of textual reference is primarily the earlier writings of the Madhyamaka school (2, 3, 5, and 6). The fourth passage that he cites from the Sanskrit equivalent of the Pāli *Pheṇa Sutta* independently also follows the manner in which Nāgārjuna uses Nikāya Buddhist texts in support of the doctrine of emptiness, which is represented in the sixth passage.

At a later point in his career, Candrakīrti returns in the *Prasannapadā* to the same position that he argued for earlier. After referring his readers to his earlier discussion at *Madhyamakāvatāra* I 8d,¹³² Candrakīrti affirms his view by mentioning two more passages from Mahāyāna literary sources. He notes that (7) the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* states that those desiring the forms of enlightenment achieved by the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, in addition to those on the Mahāyāna path, should be trained in the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*);¹³³ (8) a stanza from the *Ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā*, the versified summary of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*,

¹³¹ MABh 22.12-15. MMK XV 7 cited here has been discussed in an earlier section (4.1) of this chapter.

¹³² PPMV (ad MMK XVIII 5) 352.7-353.2.

also makes the same point, iterating the necessity of the understanding of emptiness on the part of the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*.¹³⁴

The addition of these two passages to the earlier list given in the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* indicates that *Prasannapadā* was written not just after *Madhyamakāvatāra*¹³⁵ but subsequent to Candrakīrti's own *bhāṣya* on the later as well. It appears that in the interval between his work on *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* and *Prasannapadā*, certain passages in the general Mahāyāna literature came to Candrakīrti's attention as additional scriptural sources that can be used to support the position that he had held. Moreover, as he points out here, the use of the argument that the knowledge of emptiness is necessary for the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* is used more widely in the Mahāyāna literature and not confined to the early Madhyamaka literature alone.

Candrakīrti's attention to the two forms of argument found in the Mahāyāna literature in general and the early Madhyamaka texts in particular has led to his conclusion that *śrāvakas* and the *pratyekabuddhas* also have the knowledge of emptiness. His rather unique position differs from a more widely acknowledged distinction between Nikāya and Mahāyāna Buddhism with regard to their respective teachings of the absence of the self of person (*pudgalanairātmya*) and emptiness or the absence of the self of all dharmas (*dharmanairātmya*). In the *Prasannapadā*, Candrakīrti takes Bhāviveka to task for maintaining the more common view. He faults his Madhyamaka predecessor for making the statements that “the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* do not have the

¹³³ PPMV 353.3-6. Candrakīrti refers to the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* as *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Bhagavatī* here. For the relevant sources of the citation, see Vaidya, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, 3-4; D (To. 12) Shes phyin, vol. ka, 3b2-5, 156b1-2; T. 220 VII 764a1-5 and 866a24-26.

¹³⁴ PPMV 353.7-354.2. For the source of the passage in question, see Vaidya, *Mahāyānasūtrasaṃgraha Part I*, 356; D (To. 13) Shes phyin, vol. ka, 3b4-5; T. 229 VIII 677c1-2.

understanding of the realization of emptiness” and that the “*ārya śrāvakas* observe the absence of the self and mine in the conditioned states,” whereas “the great bodhisattvas” are those who “see the conditioned states that are non-produced.”¹³⁶

What Bhāviveka has articulated is apparently a position that was often maintained by Mahāyāna Buddhist scholastics and in the Mahāyāna literature, one that even Nikāya Buddhists may happily accept. When Candrakīrti became a central figure later in Tibetan Buddhism, Madhyamaka exponents such as Tsong kha pa also acknowledged that the position that *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* have the knowledge of emptiness is unique to Candrakīrti and the Thal ‘gyur ba school of thought that they retroactively associate with Candrakīrti and a few Indian authors.¹³⁷ In his critique of Bhāviveka on this issue, Candrakīrti faults his predecessor more specifically for deviating as a Mādhyamika from Nāgārjuna’s system,¹³⁸ which again suggests that Candrakīrti derives his own position primary from the specific points that Nāgārjuna has made concerning Nikāya Buddhist texts and the relevance of emptiness to the Nikāya Buddhists.

Candrakīrti’s contention that *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* have the knowledge of emptiness was put forward at a time when Mahāyāna Buddhism was already well established in the Indian Buddhist scene. From the point of view of the larger history of

¹³⁵ It has been noted previously that the citations of the stanzas from his own *Madhyamakāvatāra* in the *Prasannapadā* and *Catuhśatakaṭīkā* indicate that the former work was composed prior to the latter two. See Lang, *Four Illusions*, 13.

¹³⁶ PPMV 351.15-352.5: *ācāryabhāvavivekas* [sic] *tu ... śrāvakapratyekabuddhānām yathoditaśūnyatādhigamam apratipadyamāna ... saṃskāra ... a[nātmā]nātmīyam avalokayata āryaśrāvakasya[a] ... [a]jātasamskāradarśinām mahābodhisattvānām*. This Sanskrit citation in the *Prasannapadā* is abstracted from Bhāviveka’s *Prajñāpradīpa*. Bhāviveka’s statements are found at D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. *tsha*, 183b4-7 in the Tibetan translation and at T. 1566 XXX 106a8-15 in the Chinese translation of the *Prajñāpradīpa*.

¹³⁷ For examples of Tibetan interpretations of the view that the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* have the understanding that things are without essence (*niḥsvabhāva*), see Ruegg, *Two Prolegomena*, 227-33; Cozort, *Unique Tenets*, 258-9, 315-22, 459-61.

¹³⁸ PPMV 352.7: *ayam ācārya ... [e]vaṃvidhe viṣaye nācāryapādamatānuvartī*. “This *ācārya* [Bhāviveka] does not follow the thought of the venerable *ācārya* [Nāgārjuna] in such a topic.” Candrakīrti then refers his readers to the evidence that he discusses in MABh ad MA I 8d (PPMV 352.7-353.2).

Buddhist thought, Candrakīrti's position can be viewed as an acknowledgement of the pioneer Mahāyāna Buddhists' uses of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures in the service of the doctrine of emptiness. The argument that enlightened *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* have the knowledge of emptiness is potentially a means of persuasion to be directed at those who might challenge the Mahāyāna teachings. However, in the case of Candrakīrti it is used rather to contrast with a common view held by the Mahāyāna scholastics who assign the Nikāya Buddhist teaching of the absence of the self of person to a lower level in relation to the Mahāyāna doctrine of emptiness. When Candrakīrti became a central figure later in Tibetan Buddhism, his position was maintained as one of his unique tenets by the Mahāyāna Buddhists in an environment where there was no religious tradition that identified itself as Nikāya Buddhist. In such an exclusive Mahāyāna Buddhist community, when the view that *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, alongside the Bodhisattvas, have the knowledge of emptiness is firmly established as a *Thal 'gyur ba tenet*, it has the practical function of softening the Mahāyāna rhetoric of superiority in relation to the Nikāya Buddhists.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presents evidence of the uses of the early Buddhist scriptures in the scholastic practices of a Mahāyāna Buddhist community, represented here by Nāgārjuna and his early commentators, in the context of a delicate relationship that it forms with the Nikāya Buddhists. The Madhyamaka readings of Nikāya Buddhist texts indicate both a tension during a process when a new religious community attempts to establish itself and a sense of consanguinity represented in the search for a textual heritage it shares in

common with the mainstream community. This chapter highlights a form of interpretive practice that Mādhyamikas employ to demonstrate that the central Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine of emptiness is already conveyed in early Buddhist scriptures in the teachings of middle way (*madhyamā pratipad*), dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), and impermanence (*anitya*).¹³⁹ The manner in which the early Indian Mādhyamikas use Nikāya Buddhist texts is symptomatic of a Mahāyāna Buddhist community's relationship with the mainstream community, and it embodies the logic of both encompassing and supersession.

The scriptural references in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* and its early Indian commentaries demonstrate in particular a process by which Nikāya scriptural passages that Nāgārjuna and other Madhyamaka writers use enter the Madhyamaka textual tradition. The contents of the *sūtras* are selected and maintained by the *śāstras* and commentaries due to a number of factors. The examples we have examined so far show that Madhyamaka writers cite scriptural sources often to support a specific position presented in a *śāstra* by demonstrating that there are parallel passages in the scriptures. Sometimes they do so to perform the service of a commentary by locating the scriptural sources of a passage being commented on. At other times, they gather from earlier texts relevant points on a specific topic in an independent work or in an excursus within a commentary. Most importantly, the writers are compelled by a need to maintain a tradition by retaining the scriptural passages that their predecessors have already used. The last factor is particularly important for the sustaining of a practical canon within a

¹³⁹ Reading *Dhātuvibhaṅgasutta*, one naturally gets the impression that the discussion of the conditioned entities as deceptive and false conveys the idea of permanence. In his *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, Candrakīrti cites the following phrase next to the passage that he also cites in PPMV ad MMK XIII 1: “Alas! Conditioned states

scholastic community. In this way, the scholastic texts become a carrier of selected contents of earlier authoritative texts, which they maintain along with logical arguments, similes, and illustrative narratives.

The interpretation of early Buddhist concepts in the light of the Mahāyāna teaching of emptiness is a significant aspect of the textual practices of the Madhyamaka school. However, the uses of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures that we have discussed in this chapter tend to constitute relatively isolated elements in the work of Nāgārjuna and his commentators, being incorporated as a step into a larger Madhyamaka argument occasionally or supplying an additional point here and there. In the following chapter, we will examine another form of the use of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures initiated by Nāgārjuna, one in which the scriptural sources lend themselves to the general structures of certain logical arguments that are considered as the hallmark of Madhyamaka reasoning. In this second form of the use of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures, while the textual elements are integrated more organically into the system of Madhyamaka thought, their scriptural association and Nikāya Buddhist origin appear to have gradually faded away to give way to the articulation of reason.

are impermanent.” Scherrer-Schaub, *Yuktiśaṣṭikāvr̥tti*, 27: *kye ma ‘du byed rnams mi rtag*. Thus, for Candrakīrti, emptiness is the underlying meaning of teaching of impermanence.

Chapter Five

The Role of Scripture in the Formulation of Madhyamaka Arguments and the Articulation of Reason

In the previous chapter, we examined Nāgārjuna's and early Madhyamaka commentators' uses of Nikāya Buddhist texts where the scriptural identity of these texts is clearly marked. While such instances of citations of, and explicit references to, scriptures enrich the fabric of *śāstras* and commentaries and lend support to the ideas presented therein, the passages referred to in this manner often contribute less significantly to the formation of the Madhyamaka thought. Scriptures contribute materially to a school of thought when the members of the school incorporate aspects of scriptures to develop ideas and approaches that could not have been developed without depending on such scriptural sources. This specific kind of use of scripture is exemplified by Dignāga's uses of Abhidharma in the construction of epistemological categories that we examined in the second chapter of this dissertation. The current chapter takes up Nikāya Buddhist scriptures' material contribution to the development of certain forms of reasoning that were devised by Nāgārjuna and later, due to Candrakīrti's emphasis of these forms, became the principle means of Madhyamaka argumentation. The manner in

which reason, in its manifestation as arguments, comes into a relationship with scripture in the Madhyamaka *śāstras* and commentaries will therefore constitute the chief concern of this chapter.

The most significant cluster of modern scholarship on Buddhist *śāstras* is the kind that chooses to study them as philosophical texts. We may argue, as Andrew Tuck has shown in a survey of modern interpretations of Nāgārjuna, that the tendencies to find shadows of various forms of Western philosophy in the writings of the founder of the Madhyamaka school, for instance, reflect the changing assumptions and preoccupations on the part of the modern researchers.¹ However, the study of Indian *śāstras* as philosophical texts is justified on a more fundamental level. Mark Siderits recently pointed out in an introduction to the study of Buddhism as a form of philosophy that both the philosophical tradition started by the Greeks and its Indian counterparts “tackle the same basic questions in ethics, metaphysics and epistemology. And they employ the same basic techniques of analysis and argumentation. (This is why it is appropriate to call them both ‘philosophy’.) Sometimes individual philosophers in the two traditions even reach strikingly similar conclusions.”² For Siderits, the fact that Indian Buddhist thinkers and European philosophers sometimes hold similar views is less important. Perhaps one of the most significant reasons to justify the study of Buddhism as philosophy lies in the fact that Buddhist thinkers “thought that their most important claims should be subjected to rational scrutiny” and have employed analyses and arguments to support these claims in a manner that is fundamentally philosophical.³ Since it is the Buddhist *śāstras* in which the

¹ Andrew, P. Tuck, *Comparative Philosophy and the Philosophy of Scholarship: On the Western Interpretation of Nāgārjuna* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

² Mark Siderits, *Buddhism As Philosophy: An Introduction* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007), 6.

³ Ibid., 10-12.

most highly developed and refined arguments are found and where human reason celebrated, they naturally became the favorite subject for the study of Buddhist philosophy.

It is not my intention to question here the legitimacy of philosophical study of Indian Buddhist *śāstras*; philosophy is indeed a modern academic discipline that offers one of the best angles of vision for the interpretation of these texts. Nor should the fact that there are many facets of *śāstras* that are not related to philosophy or the consideration that many other tools—from the disciplines of religious studies, literary criticism, cultural theories, hermeneutics, sociology of education, to name a few that easily come to mind—can be brought to bear on the study of *śāstras* cause us to reevaluate the philosophical approach.

However, it is my contention that there is a certain orientation in the philosophical approach that has so far obscured the role of scripture and the dependent nature of the Buddhist *śāstras* that, as noted in the third chapter, constitutes an important aspect of their identity. Indeed, Siderits himself has alluded to the question whether authority or the word of a trustworthy person should be considered as a source of knowledge,⁴ an epistemological issue with which many classical Indian writers were concerned, but he comes to the decision that the Buddhist authors' invocation of scripture cannot be considered as relevant arguments in the philosophical study of Buddhism.⁵ Apparently, this is a case in which the emphasis on reason in philosophy as a modern discipline precludes the consideration of a persistent question and a common procedure in the Indian *śāstra* tradition.

⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁵ Ibid., 13.

Siderits' assumption is shared, and perhaps spelled out more fully, in an essay written by Richard Hayes. Hayes' work investigates the role of doctrinalism in the writings of the Indian Buddhist epistemologists, and it is in fact a notable contribution to our knowledge of the mature Indian Buddhist views on scripture, as it has traced some major Indian Buddhist writers' explicit statements about scripture. However, Hayes makes clear that his purpose was "to examine the stances taken by some of them on the question of the authority of Buddhist scriptures (*āgama*)" in order to discover "whether these epistemologists regarded the body of Buddhist canonical writings as sources of knowledge," and finally to come to a decision as to "whether the Buddhist epistemologists should be characterized primarily as champions of reason or rather as champions of dogma."⁶ At the end of his investigation, Hayes concludes that among the Buddhist writers surveyed only Dignāga displays a genuine interest in the purely epistemological questions whereas the others all have an overwhelming concern to use epistemology as a tool for the justification of the Buddhist dogmas found in the scriptures.⁷

In so far as the relationship between scripture and reason is concerned, Hayes and Siderits apparently share a similar view that the two are antithetical to each other, although Hayes seems to have gone further by saying that he finds in India "the quiet voice of reason sometimes had a difficult time being heard above the general background noise of doctrinal enthusiasm."⁸ In any case, the general position that the two scholars have taken contrast very sharply with the shared opinion expressed by the majority of the

⁶ Richard P. Hayes, "The Question of Doctrinalism in the Buddhist Epistemologists," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 52, no. 4 (1984): 645-6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 665-6.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 666.

authors of Indian Buddhist *śāstras* who regard scripture and reason to be in harmony with each other. To be sure, “there was no dearth of very fine philosophical thinking” in classical India,⁹ but what both Siderits and Hayes have assumed is the autonomy of reason, an expectation that makes the intrusion of scripture in the *śāstras* an uncomfortable fact.

Such assumption may impose the norms of our own time on the subject of our study. We would do well to acknowledge that a crucial aspect of Buddhist *śāstras* is indeed hermeneutical and therefore it makes better sense to characterize these writings as the textual manifestation of a scholastic culture that emphasizes both tradition and reason. Indeed, it will be demonstrated below that making arguments through the use of both scripture and reason may be considered the most essential method of what Cabezón calls Buddhist scholasticism. Because scripture and reason associate with each other so closely in the minds of the Buddhist scholastics, for them being rational is a constitutive character of Buddhist scriptures. Indeed, not only is reason seen as in harmony with scripture in *śāstra* practices, Candrakīrti presents a notion of reason that precisely denies its autonomy, as we will see later in this chapter.

5.1 Nikāya Buddhist Scriptures as a Possible Source of Madhyamaka Thought

In a significant contribution on the continuity between Nikāya Buddhist texts and Madhyamaka thought, Luis Gómez has demonstrated that there are substantial elements in the book of *Suttanipāta* in the Pāli canon that resemble certain aspects of Madhyamaka

⁹ Ibid.

thought.¹⁰ Gómez gathers textual materials from the *Aṭṭhakavagga* and *Pārāyanavagga* sections of *Suttanipāta*, both reckoned as belonging to the oldest portions of the Pāli canon, that show an early evidence of an apophatic tendency. Such tendency is also found in a range of other Buddhist texts and schools, and among its later manifestations Gómez mentions the Mahāyāna *sūtras*, such as those found in the *Prajñāpāramitā* class, the Madhyamaka thought especially in the form that Candrakīrti has interpreted it, and various lines of Chan Buddhism.¹¹ His article compares specifically the parallel points between the Mādhyamika and Pāli canonical texts.

In stark contrast with the more pragmatic tone characteristic of much of the Pāli canon, where right view and proper moral conduct, for instance, are emphasized, certain portions of the *Suttanipāta* speak of holding no view, regardless of whether they are right or wrong, on the level of theory, and practicing no dharma in the domain of practice. The idea that these passages convey is one of nondualism. Here one finds the recommendation of abandoning the “mooring in views” and notions (Pāli: *saññā*; Skt. *saṃjñā*), such that one takes no sides and does not grasp the equal, low, or high.¹² Gómez also goes to considerable lengths to chart the idea of silence and adopts it as a larger comparative framework of his article. In the Pāli texts being examined, the limitation of language is considered. In general terms, two forms of silence are delineated: either as an ascetic discipline on the path, where one is detached from talk (*virato kathāhi*), or when the goal is achieved, where one is “beyond the province of language and conception.”¹³ The ideas found in these Pāli passages have tantalizingly similar counterparts in the

¹⁰ Luis O Gómez, “Proto-Mādhyamika in the Pāli Canon,” *Philosophy East and West* 26, no. 2 (1976): 137-65.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 140 and *passim*.

Madhyamaka texts, which also speak of relinquishing all views and freeing the “mind of its harborage and hankering.” The Madhyamaka School, too, rigorously maintains a theory of silence, embodied in the stipulations that, for instance, “a Mādhyamika does not have a philosophical thesis” and expressed in the idea that “the Buddhas have never taught anything.”¹⁴

Another intriguing aspect of the correspondance between Madhyamaka thought and Pāli texts is where both describe the causal sequence of the mental states that lead to delusion and suffering and how the process can be brought to an end by refraining from grasping objects, thereby breaking certain important members in the chain of events. In *Suttanipāta*, one passage speaks of notion (*saññā*) as the cause of conception and mental and verbal proliferation (Pāli: *papañca*, Skt. *prapañca*). Other Pāli passages also make notion (*saññā*) the cause of delusion, clinging, and suffering and, therefore, a vital link to be broken in order to be released from suffering. In the *Dīghanikāya*, desire (*chanda*) is said to depend on speculation (*vitakka*), which in turn depends on mental and verbal proliferation.¹⁵ Proliferation, on the other hand, has also occupied the attention of Nāgārjuna, as in the well-known prologue of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* he equates *pratītyasamutpāda* with eight characteristics, along with peace (*śiva*), and the pacification of proliferation (*prapañcopaśama*). In the eighteenth chapter, Nāgārjuna also occupies himself with the the question of how to bring the process of *samsāra* to an end. In the fifth stanza of the chapter, his description comes very close to the terms in which the Pāli texts describes the procedure: “There is emancipation through the elimination of karma

¹² The description of these unexpected elements in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* and *Pārāyanavagga* are found in *ibid.*, 139-49.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 149-51.

and delusion. Karma and delusion spring from conceptualizations; they from proliferation. Proliferation ceases in emptiness.”¹⁶

In spite of such striking similarities, Gómez finds no circumstantial or conclusive textual evidence to establish that Nāgārjuna took his cue from Nikāya Buddhist texts directly. The analyses in the previous chapter suggest that the Madhyamaka writers, including Nāgārjuna himself, appear to be attracted to certain aspects of the Nikāya scriptural corpus in part because they echo parallel elements in the Mahāyāna texts. If Nāgārjuna’s direct sources were a set of intermediary texts, the best candidates may very well be the Mahāyāna sūtras, where sustained expressions of silence and the advice on not holding on to anything, including dharma, abound. Gómez avoids what is indefensible and leaves the similarities simply as shared tendencies, and he cautiously describes their early manifestation in the Nikāya Buddhist texts as an anticipation of the later developments.

In this exercise of caution, Gómez has highlighted the question of the manner of transmission of ideas from the early Buddhist texts to the works of Madhyamaka author, which is useful for us to keep in mind as we turn to the area of argumentation in the Madhyamaka writings, which Gómez does not treat in his article. We will gather what looks like a preponderant amount of evidence to suggest Nāgārjuna’s direct indebtedness to the Nikāya Buddhist texts in the design of certain arguments that he repeatedly employs. The materials presented here will contribute to a more nuanced understanding

¹⁵ Ibid., 142-5.

¹⁶ PPMV 349.15 and 350.4-5: *karmakleśakṣayān mokṣaḥ karmakleśā vikalpataḥ / te prapañcāt prapañcas tu śūnyatāyāṃ nirudhyate* /. Candrakīrti comments on this stanza elaborately (PPMV 350.6 ff.), and he shows great interest in the issue in the beginning of chapter XVIII. In stanza four of the chapter, Nāgārjuna also speak of stopping the thought of “I” and “mine” as a cause that will finally lead the end of birth. The Pāli texts also discuss these two notions in the context of a causal series, as one would expect. See Gómez, “Proto-Mādhyamika in Pāli,” 142 and *passim*.

of the career of this pioneer Mahāyāna Buddhist author, who was more rooted in the study of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures than many of his Madhyamaka successors. We will also consider the interpretations of Nāgārjuna's arguments by his early Indian commentators, again with an attention to the question of the transmission of these forms of reasoning. While the materials that have come down to us do not allow us to argue for a linear progression of the development, as there is no evidence that Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka, and Candrakīrti had the knowledge of the two earliest extant Madhyamaka commentaries,¹⁷ it will nevertheless contribute to an understanding how arguments are associated with scriptural sources in successive ages.

5.2 The *Catuṣkoṭi* as a Device of Madhyamaka Argumentation and the Question of the Source of Its Logical Structure

The Mādhyamikas are critical of any form of adhering to the intrinsic nature or essence (*svabhāva*). They regard adherence to essence as the source of afflictive mental states (*kleśa*) and actions (*karman*), which bind living beings in the repeated births (*saṃsāra*) in an unenlightened state. For them, a primary means of resisting the adherence to the essence is to use logical arguments to prove its absence in relation to all objects, in a process in which the Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine of emptiness is established on the ground of reason. Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is above all a book of such arguments, which are used against the essence that is presumed to exist in relation to various objects. These arguments first presume that the essence of a specific object is real.

¹⁷ Of these three Madhyamaka writers, however, we do possess the evidence that each knew to the work of his predecessor(s).

They then typically enumerate a number of permutations, often thought to be logically exhaustive alternatives that can be imagined, that are linked with the possibility that essence of the object is real. The permutations are then critically examined to demonstrate that none of them is viable logically, which allows one to conclude that the essence is not real. When we go through these logical devices, we find that a number of arguments in Nāgārjuna's work have logical structures that also appear in the Āgama/Nikāya texts.

Among Madhyamaka arguments, the form that has especially attracted the scholarly attention is known as *catuṣkoṭi*, or the four alternative positions.¹⁸ The basic pattern of this argument considers the four alternatives that involve an object (X) in four different permutations or modes: (1) X, (2) non-X, (3) both X and non-X, and (4) neither X nor non-X. In most cases, the Madhyamakas use the *catuṣkoṭi* to argue for the emptiness or the lack of essence of an object by demonstrating that none of the four alternatives, where the essence of the object (X) is involved, is possible logically. In *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, Nāgārjuna applies the *catuṣkoṭi* argument to a wide range of objects, including causation, suffering, Tathāgata, emptiness, and *nirvāṇa*, to demonstrate the lack of essence of these entities.¹⁹ Āryadeva, another early Madhyamaka author, also employs *catuṣkoṭi* in a number of stanzas in his *Catuhśataka*.²⁰

¹⁸ For surveys of scholarship on *catuṣkoṭi* and Nāgārjuna's logic, which is immense, see Richard H. Robinson, "Some Logical Aspects of Nāgārjuna's System," *Philosophy East and West* 6, no. 4 (1957): 291-308; D. Seyfort Rugg, "The Uses of the Four Positions of the *Catuṣkoṭi* and the Problem of the Description of Reality in Mahāyāna Buddhism," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 5 (1977): 39-55. This argument is often called "tetralemma," and Rugg notes that the term *catuṣkoṭi* is used by the Madhyamaka commentator Prajñākaramati, although it does not appear in Nāgārjuna's MMK, Āryadeva's *Catuhśataka*, or Candrakīrti's PPMV. Ibid., 3 and 59 n. 6.

¹⁹ For a review of some important cases of Nāgārjuna's use of *catuṣkoṭi*, see ibid., 3-16. Nāgārjuna also uses the patterns of some or all four permutations to discuss the alternatives in a way that, according to the commentaries, does not involve a refutation of all of them in order to establish the doctrine of emptiness. See ibid., 5-9, 37-9 (appendix II).

²⁰ *Catuhśataka* 8.20, 14.21, 16.25.

Contemporary scholars generally consider Nāgārjuna's four-positioned arguments to be based on a set of fourteen or ten questions that are often asked of the Buddha,²¹ and which are widely recorded in the Āgama/Nikāya collections. The answers to these questions are said to be “not explained” (*avyākṛta*) by the Buddha, and the set of fourteen questions is broken down into three series of four alternatives along with an additional set of two questions. From the list of the questions given below, the structural correspondence between the four-positioned *catuṣkoṭi* argument and the series in the unanswered questions that consist of four alternatives is clear.

Is the world eternal? Is the world not eternal? Is the world both eternal and not eternal? Is the world neither eternal nor not eternal?

Is the world finite? Is the world infinite? Is the world both finite and infinite? Is the world neither finite nor infinite?

Does the Tathāgata exist after death? Does the Tathāgata not exist after death? Does the Tathāgata both exist and not exist after death? Does the Tathāgata neither exist nor not exist after death?

Is the soul the same as the body? Is the soul different from the body?²²

²¹ See, for instance, Ruegg, “Uses of *Catuṣkoṭi*,” 1-2; Thomas E. Wood, *Nāgārjunian Disputations: A Philosophical Journey through an Indian Looking-Glass* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 15 ff.

²² The fourteen *avyākṛtas* questions appear, for instance, in the Chinese *Samyuktāgama* at T. 99 II 245b28-c8: 瞿曇。云何瞿曇作如是見・如是說。世間常。此是真實。餘則虛妄耶。佛告婆蹉種出家。我不作如是見・如是說。世間常。是則真實。餘則虛妄。云何瞿曇作如是見・如是說。世間無常・常無常・非常非無常。有邊・無邊・邊無邊・非邊非無邊。命即是身・命異身異。如來有後死・無後死・有無後死・非有非無後死。佛告婆蹉種出家。我不作如是見・如是說。乃至非有非無後死。 The corresponding *Aggivacchagotta Sutta* is in MN I 483-9. As Jayatilleke notes, the form of unanswered questions known to the Pāli Nikāyas has ten alternatives. *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), 288. In the Pāli version, only the series concerning the Tathāgata contains all four alternatives, while the other sets of questions only have the first two alternatives. The traditions of the ten and fourteen unanswered questions, as Jayatilleke notes, appear to be maintained by different schools of Nikāya Buddhism. See Wood, *Nāgārjunian Disputations*, 15-6 and some Pāli canonical

The Mādhyamikas themselves are also quite explicit about the connection. In the case of Nāgārjuna, in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXII 11 the originator of the Madhyamaka system applies an analysis of the four alternatives to the notion of emptiness itself, arguing that “‘empty’ is not to be spoken, nor should ‘not empty,’ nor ‘both,’ nor ‘neither.’”²³ In the next few lines, he relates the four alternative positions in the stanza to three series of unanswered questions, mentioning “the set of four” alternatives of “permanence, not permanence, and so on,” “the set of four” alternatives of “finite, infinite, and so on,” and the one who “is conceptualizing that even a ceased Tathāgata ‘exists’ or ‘does not exist.’”²⁴ In his commentary on these lines, Candrakīrti also provides a list of all fourteen permutations of the unanswered questions.²⁵

While the structure of *catuṣkoṭi* is common to both the unanswered questions in the Āgama/Nikāya literature and Madhyamaka dialectics, there are notable differences in the functions of the four alternatives in the two contexts. In Mādhyamika thought, the four alternative positions are negated in the service of demonstrating that things have no essence, and for this purpose the alternatives are meant to be examined analytically to show that they are not viable logically.²⁶ Although there is some textual evidence for the

references given in 326 n. 1. The unanswered questions known to Vasubandhu, the *Mahāsāṅghikās*, the Chinese Āgama *sūtras* (such as the one cited here), and Candrakīrti are fourteen in number. See AKBh 2.626, 629; PPMV 446 ad MMK 22.12; MABh 250-1 ad VI 129.

²³ MMK XXII 11abc. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 376: *śūnyam ity apy avaktavyam aśūnyam iti vā bhavet/ ubhayam nobhayam ceti*.

²⁴ MMK XXII 12. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 376: *śāśvatāśāśvatādy ... catuṣṭayam/ antānantādi ... catuṣṭayam*. MMK XXII 13: *[a]stīti tathāgataḥ/ nāstīti vā vikalpayan nirvṛtasyāpi*. See *ibid*.

²⁵ PPMV 446.9-14, ad MMK XXII 12.

²⁶ Nāgārjuna’s own terse, and frequently vague, stanzas often list the four alternatives and simply state that they are not true. The analysis is then taken up by the commentaries, which provide reasons for denying each alternative.

Buddha's occasional negative answer to the alternatives presented to him,²⁷ the questions are generally said to be ignored or unexplained by him.

The four alternative positions in fact have a life in Indian philosophy outside Buddhism. Raju has argued in an article that the four-positioned argument was used by an Indian thinker named Sañjaya who lived at least a century prior to the time of the Buddha and that it was dealt with in various forms also by the Jains, the Naiyāyikas, and the great brahmanical thinker Śaṃkara.²⁸ In some Pāli *suttas*, the Buddha is said to have declined to answer the questions based on the pragmatic consideration that a preoccupation with such speculative views does not conduce to the religious life and the pursuit of higher goals. In the *Cūḷamālunkya Sutta*, this point is illustrated by the well-known parable of a man wounded by an arrow smeared with poison, who refuses to seek treatment before he knows the details about the offender and the arrow.²⁹

The scholastics of the Nikāya schools also discuss the unanswered questions, who include them among a class of questions that are “to be set aside” (Skt: *sthāpya*, Pāli: *thapanīya*). Four classes of such questions have already been introduced in Āgama *sūtras* and Pāli Nikāyas already.³⁰ According to the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the Mahāśāṅghikas, following one such *sūtra*, name the fourteen unanswered questions as illustrations of the class of questions that are to be set aside.³¹ In the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Vasubandhu

²⁷ See Wood, *Nāgārjunian Disputation*, 17 ff., where he responds to the view of Jayatilleke.

²⁸ P. T. Raju, “The Principle of Four-Cornered Negation in Indian Philosophy,” *Review of Metaphysics* 7 (1954): 694-713.

²⁹ MN I 426-32. See also Wood, *Nāgārjunian disputation*, 18-9.

³⁰ AKBh 2.627-30 ad V 22. See also Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 281-8; Wood, *Nāgārjunian Disputation*, 28-30. The classification of the questions appears to be based on the criterion of their different degrees of vagueness and unanswerability.

³¹ AKBh 2.629-30 ad V 22. In AKBh, this follows immediately a description of the Ābhidharmikas' interpretation of the four classes of questions.

provides the following explanation of the questions that are to be set aside, the answer to which is said to be not answering:

“Is a living being (*sattva*) different from the aggregates (*skandha*)? Or, is it not different?” This is a question to be set aside, because the substance of a living being does not exist, just like [a question about whether] the son of a barren woman is black or white.³²

Vasubandhu’s illustration is a slight variation of the series in the fourteen *avyākṛta* questions that contains the two alternatives, “whether the soul is the same as or different from the body.” According his comments, the two *avyākṛta* questions’ framework presupposes the substance of a living being, and therefore a real soul (*jīva*) or a self (*ātman*), and this makes the questions themselves ill-conceived and non-communicative from a Buddhist perspective. His interpretation of not answering as a way of answering seems to suggest that silence has a therapeutic effect. In any case, according to this reading, the difference between questioning and not answering highlights the contrast between the assumption of a theory of self on the part of the questioner, on the one hand, and the Buddhist notion of the absence of self (*anātman*), on the other.

Although the difference in form is substantial between what is said to be Buddha’s not answering and the Mādhyamikas’ analysis and negation,³³ if we consider

³² AKBh 2.627 ad V 22: *kim anyañ skandhebhyaḥ sattvo ‘nanyaḥ iti sthāpanīyaḥ sattvadravyasyābhāvāt vandhyāputraśyāmagauratādivat/*. An interlocutor asks at this point, “How is this an act of answering?” Vasubandhu explains, “this is unanswered, for answering is done in this manner.” Ibid.: *katham etad vyākaraṇaṁ bhavati avyākṛtaṁ etad iti evaṁ vyākaraṇāt/*.

³³ Note that Candrakīrti does not cite the fourteen alternatives as questions, but as positions. In MABh ad VI 129 he also reports the injunction in the text(s) of the Pūrvaśaila school that those holding such views should be banished. PPMV 446 ad MMK 22.12; MABh 250-1 ad VI 129.

the interpretation provided by Vasubandhu,³⁴ the two distinctive responses nevertheless share something in common in their function: both are ways of combating false assumptions. For the Mādhyamikas, the four alternative positions of *catuṣkoṭi* presuppose a false assumption of the essence, and their explicit negation is a means to demonstrate emptiness. In *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXII 12-14, Nāgārjuna offers his own reading of the unanswered questions, where he frames the holding of the alternative positions as conceptualization and grasping that are based on the assumption of essence (*svabhāva*). Here the alternatives are not viable in peace, where the essence is empty.

How can there be a set of four [alternatives] of permanence, impermanence, and so on in this peace? How can there be a set of four [alternatives] of finite, infinite, and so on in this peace?

He who maintains a strong grasping would conceptualize, supposing that “a ceased Tathāgata exists” or that “he does not exist.”³⁵

In this empti[ness] of essence, the thought, “the Buddha exists after cessation” or “he does not exist,” is surely not appropriate.³⁶

³⁴ Based on a reading of the *Aggīvacchagotta Sutta* (MN i 483-9), Wood also holds the view that the Buddha’s refusal to answer the *avyākata* questions is a response to the questioner’s speculative view and belief in the self, although this is not explicitly stated in the sutta. *Nāgārjunian Disputations*, 30 ff.

³⁵ Here I adopt the reading of MMK XXII 13 based on the understanding of the stanza as represented in the Tibetan translation of MMK that is used in *Akutoḥbhayā*, Buddhapālita’s *vṛtti*, and *Prajñāpradīpa*. This reading of the stanza differs from that found in the stand-alone Tibetan translation of MMK (To. 3824), which is also imbedded in the Tibetan translation of PPMV. The former reads: *gang gi ‘dzin stug bzung gyur pa// de ni mya ngan ‘das pa la// de bzhin gshegs pa yod ce ‘am// med ces rnam rtog rtog par byed//*. See Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 376.

³⁶ MMK XXII 12-14. See Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 376, 378: *śāśvatāśśvatādy atra kutaḥ śānte catuṣṭayam / antānantādi cāpy atra kutaḥ śānte catuṣṭayam// ghanagrāho grhītas tu yenāstīti tathāgataḥ / nāstīti vā vikalpayan sa nirvṛtasya kalpayet// svabhāvataś ca śūnye ‘smiṃś cintā naivopapadyate / param nirodhād bhavati buddho na bhavatīti vā//*.

The Mahāyānist character of Nāgārjuna's handling of the unanswered questions here is unmistakable. Although we may not decide with certainty whether Nāgārjuna's four-positioned argument is modeled on the unanswered questions on the basis of structural similarity and the fact that the two are in close associated the twenty-second chapter of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, there is no doubt that Nāgārjuna is consciously dealing with a well-known subject in Nikāya Buddhism. Unlike the elements in *Suttanipāta* that Gómez has focused on, which may be relatively obscure, the questions that the Buddha declined to answer recur in many parts of the Āgama/Nikāya collection, and they continue to be discussed by the scholastics of Nikāya Buddhism. Candrakīrti also reports that “the fourteen unexplained topics are recited by all the Nikāya schools” when he refer to them in *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*.³⁷ Clearly, Nāgārjuna could not have written the three stanzas in the twenty-second chapter discussed here without his knowledge that the mention of the subject is likely to provoke some response from the Nikāya Buddhists.

5.3 The Argument against the Four Alternative Modes of Causation

For the purpose of establishing the doctrine of emptiness, Nāgārjuna employs in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* a very large number of arguments, which are further interpreted and sometimes developed by his commentators. In *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*, Tsong kha pa observes that Nāgārjuna's major predecessors—Bhāviveka, Śāntarakṣita, Kalamaśīla, Jñānagarbha, and Candrakīrti—have come to prefer their respective “primary

³⁷ MABh 250 ad VI 129: *di ni lung du ma bsta pa'i dngos po bcu bzhi ni sde pa thams cad kyis 'don pa yin te/*.

arguments” (*rigs pa gtso bo*) that they use to negate fictitious entities that are presumed to be “ultimately existent” (*don dam par yod pa*).³⁸ The development of an argument in the hands of successive Madhyamaka writers shows a gradual evolution of Buddhist thought, and the study of the interpretive choices that the Madhyamaka authors make can often inform us of the changes that occurred in the Buddhist scholastic cultures.³⁹

Because of the pivotal position that he occupies, the arguments that Candrakīrti has chosen to emphasize have come to exert a special influence on Madhyamaka thought later in Tibetan Buddhism. Among the Madhyamaka arguments that Candrakīrti has used or interpreted, Tsong kha pa identifies three as the former’s primary arguments for emptiness: (1) the argument that negates the four alternative modes of production (*mtha’ bzhi’i skye ba ‘gog pa*); (2) the seven-fold analysis that negates a personal self; and (3) dependent origination.⁴⁰ Tsong kha pa’s observation is supported by the fact that all three arguments are presented in Candrakīrti’s independent work *Madhyamakāvatāra* and his own *bhāṣya*. “The argument of dependent origination” is only briefly mentioned in *Madhyamakāvatāra*,⁴¹ while Candrakīrti devotes large sections of this independent work

³⁸ For Tsong kha pa’s identification of the primary arguments used by these Mādhyamika exponents, see *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*, 112-3, 130-1, 208-11.

³⁹ The “neither one nor many” argument, which is favored by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla and used by other Indian and Tibetan writers as well, is studied, among others, by Tom Tillemans. See Tom J. F. Tillemans, “The ‘Neither One nor Many’ Argument for Śūnyatā and its Tibetan Interpretations: Background Information and Source Materials,” *Études de lettres*, University of Lausanne 3 (July-September 1982): 103-28; Tillemans, “The ‘Neither One nor Many’ Argument for Śūnyatā and Its Tibetan Interpretations,” in *Contributions on Tibetan and Buddhist Religion and Philosophy, Proceedings of the Csoma de Körös Symposium*, ed. Ernst Steinkellner and Helmut Krasser (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1983), 305-20; Tillemans, “Two Tibetan Texts on the ‘Neither One nor Many’ Argument for Śūnyatā,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 12: 357-88.

⁴⁰ Tsong kha pa, *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*, 208-11. Tsong kha pa devotes lengthy sections of his *Lam rim chen mo* to unpack these three arguments. See LRChM 753.13-758.15, 719.18-753.12, and 758.15-763.7 respectively.

⁴¹ In MA VI 115c, Candrakīrti explicitly uses the term *rten ‘byung rigs pa*, “the *pratītyasamutpāda* argument.” The treatment of this argument appears in MA VI 114-5 and MABh thereto (pp. 226-9). As we have discussed above, the connection between *pratītyasamutpāda* and emptiness is an important topic for the Mādhyamikas. For Tsong kha pa’s interpretation of the argument of dependent origination and its sources, see LRChM 758.15-763.7.

and his *bhāṣya* on the first two arguments, and he also uses them as larger frameworks under which he discusses and critically examines alternative Buddhist and non-Buddhist theories.⁴² The argument that negates the four alternative modes of production and the seven-fold analysis therefore deserve our special attention, and the remainder of this chapter will mainly concern itself with their gradual evolution up until the time of Candrakīrti.

What Tsong kha pa calls “the argument that negates the four alternative modes of production” is used by Nāgārjuna in the first stanza of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, which we have already had an occasion to comment on.⁴³ The argument critiques a falsely assumed reality of production by examining and negating four alternative modes of production: that an entity is produced (1) from a cause that is identical with itself; (2) from a cause that is other than itself; (3) from both self and other; or (4) causelessly.⁴⁴ Since both Candrakīrti and Bhāviveka have commented that other (*para*) may be conceived as the opposite of self (*sva*),⁴⁵ the argument can be seen a subtype of *catuṣkoṭi*, whose pattern of (1) X, (2) non-X, (3) both X and non-X, and (4) neither X nor non-X is applied in this context to the case of production, where the relationship between the cause and effect is considered. Ruegg, for instance, regards the argument presented in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* I 1 as an instance of the *catuṣkoṭi* argument.

In the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, we also find some variant forms of the argument that negates the four alternative modes of production, which do not figure prominently in

⁴² MABh 80-227 ad MA VI 8-114 and 223-290 ad MA VI 120-167.

⁴³ See section 4.2.

⁴⁴ Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 12: *na svato nāpi parato na dvābhyāṃ nāpy ahetutaḥ/ utpannā jātu vidyante bhāvāḥ kvacana ke cana//*.

⁴⁵ See PPMV 13.4-6 and 15.1, but note the manner in which the two types of negation bear on this. See Ruegg, “Uses of *Catuṣkoṭi*,” 4-5.

Candrakīrti's writings. Stanza XVIII 10, for example, presents an instance where only the first two permutations of the four modes of production are considered:

That [effect] which exists in dependence upon [a cause] is, first of all, not the [cause] itself; nor is it other than that [cause]. Therefore, the [cause] is neither annihilated nor eternal.⁴⁶

Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* describes dependence as depicted in the stanza as a form of causal relationship, which he illustrates with the instance of the causal relationship between a seed and a sprout.⁴⁷ His citation of this stanza in the commentary on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* I 1⁴⁸ also indicates his recognition that the two arguments are related.

Another form of the argument appears in the twelfth chapter of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, where Nāgārjuna engages in a critical examination of suffering by negating the four alternative modes in which it is created. The first stanza of the chapter lays out the following four permutations, which the remainder of the chapter proceeds to negate.

⁴⁶ MMK XVIII 10. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 306: *pratītya yad yad bhavati na hi tāvat tad eva tat/ na cānyad api tat tasmān nocchinnaṃ nāpi śāśvatam //*.

⁴⁷ PPMV 376.1-12.

⁴⁸ PPMV 26.10-12.

Some people assert that suffering is (1) created by self, (2) created by other, (3) created by both, [or] (4) causeless. However, that [suffering] is not appropriate as an effect.⁴⁹

The stanzas of the twelfth chapter, moreover, give us an instance in which Nāgārjuna himself produces a line of argument against the four alternatives in some details. The critique of a falsely assumed reality of suffering's creation can be viewed to some extent as a subtype of the argument against four alternative modes of production, as the four alternatives of production are applied to the specific case of suffering, although the two forms of argument are differentiated by the distinctive actions that are represented by the verb "to arise" or "to be produced" (*ut + √ pad*), in the former, and the verb "to create" or "to make" (*√ kr*), in the latter.

No-production (*anupāda/anutpatti*) is an alternative way of expressing the Mahāyāna Buddhist idea of emptiness. The theme of no-production appears regularly in the Mahāyāna *sūtras*,⁵⁰ and the later Mādhyamikas also wrote about it frequently.⁵¹ It is quite natural that Nāgārjuna should have designed some arguments for it. Curiously, however, La Vallée Poussin has identified a passage from the *Samyuttanikāya*, which comes very close to the Mādhyamika argument that negates the four alternative modes of

⁴⁹ MMK XII 1. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 194: *svayaṃ kṛtaṃ parakṛtaṃ dvābhyāṃ kṛtaṃ ahetukam/duḥkham ity eka icchanti tac ca kāryaṃ na yujyate //*. See Candrakīrti's commentary on the stanza at PPMV 227.10-12. For the remaining stanzas of MMK XII, see Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 194-9.

⁵⁰ See, for instance, the appearance of the term "no-production" along with no-stopping in *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* as listed in Conze's topic index of the *sūtra*. See Edward Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines & Its Verse Summary* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1973), 304.

⁵¹ See, for instance, Ichigō Masamichi, ed., *Madhyamakālaṃkāra of Śāntarakṣita with His Own Commentary or Vṛtti and with the Subcommentary or Pañjikā of Kamalaśīla* (Kyoto: Kyoto Sangyo University, 1985), LXXXV-XCVI.

production.⁵² The passage is found in the *sutta* entitled *Nalakalapiyaṃ*, where Sāriputta, when questioned by Mahākoṭṭhita as to whether the causal links of the Buddhist formula of dependent origination are created by itself, other, both, or without a cause,⁵³ denied all four alternatives. La Vallée Poussin mentions specifically the discussion about the link of birth (*jāti*)—a form of production—to show that it resembles *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* I 1.⁵⁴

Friend Koṭṭhita, birth surely is not created by the self, nor is birth created by the other, nor is birth created [both] by the self and by the other, nor is birth arisen without a cause, created neither by the self nor by the other. Rather, birth [comes to be] with existence (*bhava*) as a condition.

In all four alternatives, the verb used is *kata* (skt. *kṛta*), “created,” instead of *utpanna*, “produced” or “arisen,” which Nāgārjuna used in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* I 1. An even closer parallel obtains between the Mādhyamika critique of the four modes of suffering’s creation and a passage in the *Acela Sutta* in the *Saṃyuttanikāya*. In the Pāli *sutta*, the questions concerning the four alternatives are posed by the naked (*acela*)

⁵² “Madhyamaka,” *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 2 (1932-1933): 11.

⁵³ Here as usual the member of old age and death is said to come into being through the condition of birth, and birth through existence (*bhava*), and so on. After describing six sense spheres (*saḷāyatana*) as dependent on name and form (*nāmarūpa*), however, name and form and consciousness (*viññāna*) are said here to be mutually dependent on each other. On this less common formulation of the links of dependent origination, see Bodhi, *Connected Discourses*, 781 n. 195.

⁵⁴ SN 2:113: *Na kho āvuso Koṭṭhita sayamkatā jāti nā [sic] paramkatā jāti na sayamkatā ca paramkatā ca jāti nāpi asayamkatā aparamkatā adhiccasamuppannā jāti apica bhavapaccyā jātīti* //. The corresponding sūtra in the Chinese translation of *Samyuktāgama* agrees with the Pāli version in substance, although it makes Sāriputra the questioner and Mahe Gouzhiluo 摩訶拘絺羅 the one who answers the questions. T. 99 II 81a18-26: 復問。云何。老死自作耶。爲他作耶。爲自他作耶。爲非自非他無因作耶。答言。尊者舍利弗。老死非自作。非他作。非自他作。亦非非自他作無因作。然彼生緣故有老死。如是生。

ascetic Kassapa (skt. Kāśyapa), who initially belonged to a non-Buddhist sect, but was converted after the Buddha's sermon.

“Venerable Gotama, is suffering indeed created by the self?”

The Blessed One said, “It is not so, Kassapa.”

“Venerable Gotama, is suffering created by the other then?”

The Blessed One said, “It is not so, Kassapa.”

“Venerable Gotama, is suffering indeed both created by the self and created by the other?”

The Blessed One said, “It is not so, Kassapa.”

“Venerable Gotama, is suffering arisen without a cause then, neither created by the self nor created by the other?”

The Blessed One said, “It is not so, Kassapa.”⁵⁵

The corresponding *sūtra* in the *Samyuktāgama* in Chinese translation preserves the same conversation. The only notable difference is that the Chinese has the Buddha respond to Kāśyapa's questions by saying that each is “unexplained” (*wuji* 無記, skt. *avyākṛta*).⁵⁶

有・取・愛・受・觸・六入處・名色。爲自作・爲他作・爲自他作・爲非自他無因作。答言。尊者舍利弗。名色非自作・非他作・非自他作・非非自他作無因作。然彼名色緣識生。

⁵⁵ SN 2:19-20: *Kim nu kho bho Gotama sayamkataṃ dukkhanti// Mā hevaṃ Kassapāti Bhagavā avoca// Kim pana bho Gotama paramkataṃ dukkhanti// Mā hevaṃ Kassapāti Bhagavā avoca// Kim nu kho bho Gotama sayamkatañca paramkatañca dukkhanti// Mā hevaṃ Kassapāti Bhagavā avoca// Kim pana bho Gotama sayam-kāram aparaṃ-kāram adhicca samuppannaṃ dukkhanti// Mā hevaṃ Kassapāti Bhagavā avoca//*

⁵⁶ T. 99 II 86a13-20: 阿支羅迦葉白佛言。云何。瞿曇。苦自作耶。佛告迦葉。苦自作者。此是無記。迦葉復問。云何。瞿曇。苦他作耶。佛告迦葉。苦他作者。此亦無記。迦葉復問。苦自他作耶。佛告迦葉。苦自他作。此亦無記。迦葉復問。云何。瞿曇。苦非自非他無因作耶。佛告迦葉。苦非自非他。此亦無記。The narratives in the SN and *Samyuktāgama*, however, differ significantly on the fate of inquirer of the *sūtra/sutta*. In SN, Kassapa received higher ordination and became an arhat. In the account found in *Samyuktāgama*, Kāśyapa was killed by a cow, although there too he was announced by

The *Samyuktāgama* therefore recognizes the questions concerning the four alternative modes of suffering's creation as a related form of the fourteen unanswered questions.

Searching through the Āgama collection in Chinese translation, we have located seven additional *sūtras* in the *Samyuktāgama* that record conversations about four, or occasionally two,⁵⁷ alternative modes of causation. The most significant pattern of the discussions concerns the four modes of causation, and quite consistently⁵⁸ the questions of whether suffering and pleasure are created by the self, the other, both, or causeless are asked of the Buddha or a disciple by someone who either follows a different religious order or is reporting such a view heard from the brahmins and ascetics.⁵⁹

When the four alternatives are denied or set aside, the response that the Buddha or his disciples give is often the teaching of dependent origination. In the *Acela Sutta*, for instance, the Buddha, speaking from his own perspective, says, “With ignorance as a condition, karmic formation [comes to be]; with karmic formation as a condition, consciousness ... Such is the origin of this entire mess of suffering.”⁶⁰ In a few *sūtras*, where suffering and pleasure are being discussed, the two are identified as feeling (*vedanā*), one of the links of dependent origination, and they are described as being

the Buddha to have achieved *nirvāṇa*. A stand-alone Chinese translation of this *sūtra* that differs very slightly from the version in *Samyuktāgama* is T. 499.

⁵⁷ When the two modes are mentioned, the questions discussed include the alternatives between (1) creation of the dharma of dependent origination by the Buddha himself or the others; (2) creation by the self or the other and awakening by the self or the other; (3) living beings' self-creation or other-creation. See (1) T. 99 II 85b21-c2; (2) T. 99 II 85c3-16; (3) T. 99 II 117c2-22. The last *sūtra* follows a different pattern. It corresponds with AN iii 337-8, where the Buddha persuades a brahmin to abandon his view that there is neither self-agency nor self-agency.

⁵⁸ In T. 99 II 45b15-25, the unusual questions of whether (1) the self of the world 世間我 and (2) the suffering of the self of the world 世間我苦 are each produced from one of the four alternative modes are asked.

⁵⁹ See (1) T. 99 II 61b29-62b21; (2) T. 99 II 86b24-c15, The corresponding Pāli passage is in *Timbaruka Sutta* in SN 2:22-3; (3) T. 99 II 93b25-94b1, the corresponding Pāli passage is in *Bhūmija Sutta* in SN 2:37-41, and the following *Upavāṇa Sutta* in SN 2:41-2 is on the same theme.

conditioned by contact (*sparśa*), the prior link in the causal chain, rather than being created through any of the four alternatives.⁶¹ Thus, in such Nikāya Buddhist texts, what appears to be a pre-Buddhist four-cornered examination of the objects such as suffering and pleasure is contrasted with the Buddhist notion of dependent origination.

Moreover, some of the Āgama/Nikāya texts discussed here also speak of the middle way that is free from the extremes in this context.⁶² We have seen earlier that Madhyamaka thought has inherited the early Buddhist ideas of middle way and dependent origination. The association of these two ideas with the denial of four alternatives in the Nikāya sūtras appears to have had an impact on the interconnection of these three central elements in the Mādhyamika system.⁶³ Having negated the four alternative modes, where essence is presumed, the Mādhyamikas would maintain that causation in the form of dependent origination is left intact on the conventional level.⁶⁴

Besides the conceptual continuity outlined here, some texts attributed to Nāgārjuna also seem to exhibit intimate knowledge of the Āgama/Nikāya texts that we discussed above. A stanza from *Lokātītastava*, a hymn to the Buddha, is able to encapsulate the basic content of the *Acela Sutta*, including the information on the questioner and the substance of the Buddha's reply in the exchange that is narrated in the *sutta*:

⁶⁰ SN 2:20: *Avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā// saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ// pe// Evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti//*. T. 99 II 86 a29-b2: 離此諸邊。說其中道。如來說法。此有故彼有。此起故彼起。謂緣無明行。乃至純大苦聚集。

⁶¹ See T. 99 II 62a23-b13; SN ii 23; T. 99 II 94a1-5 and 94a22-29; SN ii 39-42.

⁶² T. 99 II 86a29, SN ii 20, SN ii 23.

⁶³ MMK XVIII 10, for instance, associates the fact that cause and effect are neither identical nor distinct with falling neither in the extreme of eternalism nor in the extreme of annihilation.

⁶⁴ See, for instance, Candrakīrti's MA VI 114 (p. 226): *gang phyir rgyu med dang dbang phyug gi/ /rgyu la sogs dang bdag gzhan gnyi ga las/ /dngos rnams skye bar 'gyur ba ma yin pa/ /de phyir rten nas rab tu skye bar 'gyur/*. "Because things are not produced without a cause, from the cause of God (īśvara) and so on, from the self, the other, or both, therefore they are produced dependently."

The speculative logicians (*tārikair*) assert that suffering is created by self, created by other, created by both, or causeless. You, however, state that [it is] produced dependently.⁶⁵

Lindtner has argued for Nāgārjuna's authorship of *Lokāitastava* based on the reasons of its doctrinal and, to some extent, stylistic similarity with more established works of Nāgārjuna and its citation by a number of Indian authors including Candrakīrti.⁶⁶

The Chinese Buddhist tradition ascribes to Nāgārjuna a text dealing with Madhyamaka thought in twelve topics, entitled *Shi'er meng lun* 十二門論 (**Dvādaśadvāśāstra* or **Dvādaśamukhaśāstra*), which was translated by Kumārajīva in 408 or 409 CE.⁶⁷ The tenth topic of the text examines the creation of suffering in the four alternative modes much like the twelfth chapter of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. The prose portion of the work refers to a version of the *Acela Sutta*, where the naked [ascetic] Kāśyapa 裸形迦葉 asks the Buddha whether suffering is created by the self, the other, or causelessly, to which the Buddha gives no response.⁶⁸ The negation of the four alternative modes in the section is largely built around Kāśyapa's four questions. The Chinese tradition seems to have attributed both the versified and prose portions of *Shi'er*

⁶⁵ Stanza 21. Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 134: *svayamkṛtaṃ parakṛtaṃ dvābhyāṃ kṛtaṃ ahetukaṃ/ tārikair iṣyate duḥkhaṃ tvayā tūktaṃ pratītyajam*//. Candrakīrti cites this stanza in PPMV 55.3-4 and 234.8-9.

⁶⁶ Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana*, 121-3, 125-6.

⁶⁷ On this text, see Ruegg, *Literature of the Madhyamaka School*, 27-8; Richard H. Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 32-3. For an English translation, see Cheng Hsueh-li, *Nāgārjuna's Twelve Gate Treatise: Translated, with Introductory Essays, Comments, and Notes* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1982).

⁶⁸ T. 1568 XXX 165c29-166a5: 如經說。裸形迦葉問佛。苦自作耶。佛默然不答。世尊。若苦不自作者。是他作耶。佛亦不答。世尊若爾者。苦自作他作耶。佛亦不答。世尊。若爾者。苦無因無緣作耶。佛亦不答。如是四問。佛皆不答者。當知苦則是空。Here, the Buddha is said to "give no answer,"

meng lun to Nāgārjuna,⁶⁹ but the traditional attribution has also been questioned.⁷⁰ At the very least, however, the evidence from *Lokāitastava* and *Shi'er men lun* suggests that for the early Mādhyamika authors the argument against the four alternative modes of creation is primarily linked with the texts in Āgama/Nikāya collection, especially the *Acela Sutta*.

Writing about two hundred years or more after the composition of the commentary on the *Shi'er men lun*, Bhāviveka also cites what appears to be the same dialogue from a different version of the *Acela Sutta* to support Nāgārjuna's negation of the four alternatives modes of suffering's creation in the twelfth chapter of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*.⁷¹ But this reference comes only after two citations from Mahāyāna *sūtras*,⁷² which, however, do not relate to structure of Nāgārjuna's arguments in the chapter. Bhāviveka prefaces the third citation with the phrase “in the *śrāvakayāna* as well” (*śrāvakayāne 'pi*). He apparently feels that his mention of a Nikāya Buddhist passage could *also* add weight to Nāgārjuna's arguments—this is especially so for the Nikāya Buddhists among his audience. However, for him the Nikāya Buddhist source is simply one of the scriptural passages that confirm Nāgārjuna's idea.

rather than saying that “this is unexplained,” as he is represented in the Chinese translation of *Samyuktāgama*. Thus, not answering is enacted here, rather than verbalized.

⁶⁹ Cheng, *Twelve Gate Treatise*, 108.

⁷⁰ Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism*, 238 n. 19.

⁷¹ D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. *tsha*, 147a7-b1: *nyan thos kyi theg par yang bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal te/ kye gau ta ma sdug bsngal bdag gis byas sam/ tshe dang ldan pa ma yin no/ gzhan gyis byas sam/ tshe dang ldan pa ma yin no/ gnyi gas byas sam/ tshe dang ldan pa ma yin no/ bdag gis kyang ma byas/ gzhan gyis kyang ma byas pas byas sam/ tshe dang ldan pa ma yin no zhes bya ba la sogs brgya cher gsungs pa de dag grub pa yin no*. “In the *śrāvakayāna* as well, the Blessed One spoke: “Gautama, is suffering created by the self?” “Reverend (āyusmat), it is not.” “Is it created by the other?” “Reverend, it is not.” “Is it created by both?” “Reverend, it is not.” “Is it created in such a way that it is created neither by the self nor by the other?” “Reverend, it is not” ...” The source text is likely to be in Sanskrit, as the clan name of the Buddha is given as Gautama. The Chinese translation of *Prajñāpradīpa* (T. 1566 XXX 90a14-17) also indicates that the Buddha's interlocutor in the *sūtra* is a *bhikṣu*, as suggested by the Tibetan term *tshe dang ldan pa*.

⁷² D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. *tsha*, 147a5-7; T. 1566 XXX 90a9-14.

Bhāviveka is the only author among the early commentators of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* to have associated any *sūtra* from Āgama/Nikāya collection with the structure of Nāgārjuna's arguments against the alternative modes of causation. The Nikāya Buddhist connection appears to have been gradually forgotten, for which one possible explanation is that it had become rarer for the Buddhist scholastics to use the relevant parts in the Āgamas/Nikāyas. Another possible reason is that the Mādhyamikas generally regarded the arguments against the alternative modes of causation as tools for establishing decidedly Mahāyāna doctrines of no-production and emptiness, and consequently they were less likely to associate the arguments with Nikāya Buddhist texts. In the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, Candrakīrti chooses the negation of the four alternative modes of production as the main argument for the demonstration of the absence of the self of all dharmas (*dharmanairātmya*) and no-production, and for him the argument is associated with Mahāyāna *sūtras*.⁷³

Among the scriptural sources that are cited in the early Madhyamaka commentaries on the arguments against the alternative modes of causation presented in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* I 1, XII, and XVIII 10 and at the end of these chapters, two other passages explicitly deal with the structure of Nāgārjuna's arguments. One is a

⁷³ The importance that the early Madhyamaka tradition attaches to this argument, which is presented in the first stanza of MMK, is a significant factor. However, Candrakīrti's decision to discuss an argument that deals with no-production is also influenced by his reliance on the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* in the composition of MA. This important Mahāyāna *sūtra* lays out the ten stages (*bhūmi*) of Bodhisattva's progression on the path, on which is based the ten chapters of MA. The sixth stage, where a Bodhisattva "sees the reality of dependent origination" and "abides in wisdom" (MA 73 VI 1), is dealt with in the sixth chapter of MA, which is the Madhyamaka, and the largest, portion of the work. According to the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, when a person enters the sixth stage (*ṣaṣṭhī bhūmi*) of a Bodhisattva's noble path, he does so by realizing "the ten types of equality," among which is the "equality of no-production" (*anutpādasamatā*) (P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Daśabhūmikasūtram* (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1967), 31). Candrakīrti says that the negation of the four alternative modes of production is presented in MMK I 1 in order to demonstrate the "equality of no-production," as a way of easily leading to the understanding of the remaining forms of equality. See MABh 80-1 ad VI 7.

stanza from the *Lalitavistarasūtra*, which Candrakīrti cites in his commentary both on I 1 and XVIII 10:

For instance, there is sprout when there is seed. That which is seed is not itself the sprout. Neither is it other than that, nor is it that itself. Thus, the reality (*dharmatā*) is not annihilated and not eternal.⁷⁴

This *sūtra*, which “exhibits all the characteristics of a Mahāyāna *sūtra*,”⁷⁵ shows affinity with Nāgārjuna’s XVIII 10 on both the denial of the two alternatives and the mention of the two extremes of annihilation and eternalism.

A second source, also cited by Candrakīrti in his commentary on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* I 1, is a passage from the *Śālistambhasūtra*:

This sprout, whose cause is a seed and which is produced, is not created by the self, not created by other, not created by both, nor arisen without a cause, nor arisen from God (*īśvara*), time (*kāla*), atoms (*aṇu*), nature (*prakṛti*), or self-being (*svabhāva*).⁷⁶

⁷⁴ *Lalitavistara* 13.103. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Lalita-Vistara*, second edition edited by Dr. Shridhar Tripathi (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute of Post-graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1987), 141. Citation in PPMV at 26.8-9 and 377.1-2 reads: *bījasya sato yathāṅkuro na ca yo bīju sa caiva aṅkuro/ na ca anyu tato na caiva tad evam anuccheda aśāśvata dharmatā //*.

⁷⁵ Vaidya, *Lalita-Vistara*, xi.

⁷⁶ PPMV 26.5-6: *sa cāyaṃ bījahetuko 'ṅkura utpadyamāno na svayaṃkṛto na parakṛto nobhayakṛto nāpy aketusamutpanno neśvarakālāṇuprakṛtisvabhāvasambhūta iti*. For the Sanskrit reconstruction and other parallel versions, see N. Ross Reat, *The Śālistamba Sūtra: Tibetan Original, Sanskrit Reconstruction, English Translation, Critical Notes (Including Pāli Parallels, Chinese Version and Ancient Tibetan Fragments)* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993), 38. Ruegg translates *svabhāva* in the list as “innate necessity.” *Two Prolegomena*, 45. On these additional theories of causation, see the references given in *ibid.*, 45 n. 46 and Scherrer-Schaub, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 108-9 n. 18.

The *Śālistambha* is a *sūtra* that primarily deals with the theme of dependent origination, consolidating much of the materials on the subject, such as those “found scattered throughout the Pāli *suttas*.”⁷⁷ Considered to be “the most quoted *sūtra* in Mahāyāna literature on the subject of *pratītyasamutpāda*,”⁷⁸ the *Śālistambhasūtra* has also become a medium that carries the relevant materials from the Nikāyas/Āgamas, among which is the topic of the four alternative modes of causation. The *sūtra*’s mention of the additional causes beyond the four alternatives may have influenced some Mādhyamika commentators to consider these positions.⁷⁹ In their commentaries on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, Qingmu, Bhāviveka, and Candrakīrti have mentioned or discussed these additional causes of production,⁸⁰ which are attributed to non-Buddhist Indian schools of thought. Bhāviveka and Candrakīrti subsume the other modes of

⁷⁷ Ibid., 2-4, 21-2. The Pāli parallels are given throughout Reat’s Sanskrit reconstruction and the Tibetan edition of the *sūtra*.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1. Some references to this *sūtra* in the Mahāyāna Buddhist literature are given in Schoening, *Śālistamba Sūtra*, 9-10. Candrakīrti cites from this *sūtra* frequently. A very lengthy quotation is found in PPMV 560.3-570.2.

⁷⁹ The earliest Chinese translation of the *sūtra*, T. 709, is produced in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420 C.E.). This translation already mentions the additional positions concerning the cause of production, including production from *īśvara*, *kāla*, *diś*, *prakṛti*, *svabhāva*. See T. 709 XVI 817b13-15 and 818a29-b3. The related *sūtra*, *Liao ben shengsi jing* (T. 708), which was translated between 222-229 C.E., mentions only the four alternatives. See T. 708 XVI 816b29-c1 (cf. also 815b24). The parallels in the Pāli *suttas* that Reat gives on this subject also mention only four alternative modes of causation. *Śālistamba Sūtra*, 39 and 61. It is certainly tempting to hypothesize that Nāgārjuna’s negation of four alternative modes of causation was influenced by the Āgama/Nikāya *sūtras/suttas*, while the later Mādhyamikas were influenced by the versions of *Śālistamba Sūtra* that took shape from the late third century onward, which mention additional theories of causation. Such a hypothesis, however, may underestimate the complexity of intertextuality involved here.

⁸⁰ Qingmu briefly mentions *īśvara*, *prakṛti* (世性 or *svabhāva* ?), and *aṇu* in his comments on the opening stanzas of MMK at T. 1564 XXX 2a7. Bhāviveka, who is known for his active engagements with non-Buddhist schools of thought in *Tarkajvālā*, discusses at length the theories of causation from *svabhāva*, *īśvara*, *puruṣa*, *prakṛti*, *kāla*, and Nārāyaṇa in *Prajñāpradīpa* ad MMK I 1. See William L. Ames, “Bhāvaviveka’s *Prajñāpradīpa*, A Translation of Chapter One: ‘Examination of Causal Conditions’ (*pratyaya*),” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 21 (1993) 227-34. Candrakīrti also mentions the theories concerning *īśvara*, *kāla*, *aṇu*, *prakṛti*, *svabhāva*, *puruṣa*, and Nārāyaṇa (PPMV 159.7 ad MMK 7.15, MABh 226 ad MA VI 114, and *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvr̥tti* ad *kārikā* 0 in Scherrer-Schaub, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvr̥tti*, 21), without discussing them in detail. For further references, see Rungg, *Two Prolegomena*, 45-6 n. 46; Scherrer-Schaub, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvr̥tti*, 108-9 n. 18; Jacques May, *Candrakīrti, Prasannapā madhyamakavṛtti: Douze chapitres traduits du sanscrit et du tibétain, accompagnés d’une introduction, de notes et d’une édition critique de la version tibétaine* (A. Maisonneuve, 1959), 122-3 n. 320.

production under the rubric of the four alternatives that Nāgārjuna has dealt with, so that the traditional Madhyamaka interpretation is seen as conceptually exhaustive.⁸¹

In short, the memory of the encounters with a pre-Buddhist way of examining causation has been kept alive in many Buddhist textual traditions. Besides the Mahāyāna *sūtras*, in which references to the four modes of causation are many,⁸² the Abhidharma⁸³ and Yogācāra⁸⁴ texts also speak about the production of suffering and pleasure in the four alternatives. Mahāyāna authors such as Candrakīrti were aware of these contents in the Mahāyāna *sūtras*; so could Nāgārjuna a few centuries earlier.⁸⁵ Although Nāgārjuna's influence does not have to be singular, there is strong evidence that the early Mādhyamikas' frame of textual reference was primarily the Āgama/Nikāya texts such as the *Acela Sutta*. A few centuries later, when the Madhyamaka thought thrived in the hands of great writers such as Bhāviveka and Candrakīrti, the argument against the four alternative modes of causation,⁸⁶ which they fashioned with intellectual acumen and insight, gradually lost its association with the early Nikāya Buddhist texts, which are its original root.

⁸¹ Bhāviveka regards the additional theories as cases of production from a "bad cause" (*kuhetu*) and associates them with production from no cause (*ahetu*), which is the last of the four modes of production. See Ames, "Prajñāpradīpa, Chapter One," 227. Candrakīrti considers them to be encompassed by the three alternative modes of production from self, other, and both. See MABh 214-5 ad VI 103 and PPMV 39.5-6.

⁸² Besides *Lalitavistarasūtra* and *Śālistambasūtra* mentioned above, other examples of Mahāyāna *sūtras* that touch on the topic include *Avatamsakasūtra* (T. 278 IX 464b5 and 477c17), *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (T. 375 XII 651c23, 831c1-2), and *Brahmaviśeṣacintīparipṛcchā* (T. 586 XV 49c12).

⁸³ *Jñānaprasthāna*: T. 1544 XXVI 1028a28 ff.; *Mahāvibhāṣā*: T. 1545 XXVII 993c8 ff.

⁸⁴ *Yogācārabhūmi*: T. 1579 XXX 386a17-8, 477b21, 691a18, 815b29, and 834a21; *Xianyang shengjiao lun* 顯揚聖教論: T. 1602 XXXI 496c17-18 and 563a29-b1.

⁸⁵ Besides the Mahāyāna *sūtras*, Nāgārjuna is very likely to be aware of the discussion of the topic in the Abhidharma texts such as *Jñānaprasthāna*.

⁸⁶ As mentioned above, the argument against the four alternative modes of production in MMK I 1 and the argument against the four alternative modes of creation in MMK XII are similar in form, although they are represented respectively by the verb *ut* + √ *pad*, "to produce," and the verb √ *kr*, "to create" or "to make." Their relatedness is apparently recognized by Candrakīrti, who in his commentary on MMK I 1 (which negates the four modes of production) cites *Lokātītastava* 21 and the passage from *Śālistambasūtra*, both of which use the verb *kṛta*, "created." See PPMV 26.5-9. Candrakīrti also cites *Lokātītastava* 21 in his

5.4 The Sources and Development of the Argument that Negates a Personal Self

As Tsong kha pa has pointed out, besides the negation of four alternative modes of production, another argument that occupies an important place in Candrakīrti's Madhyamaka system is the analysis that negates a personal self in seven parts. The present section will examine the connection between the early form of this argument and Nikāya Buddhist scriptures.

5.4.1 Candrakīrti's Sevenfold Analysis and Nāgārjuna's Fivefold Argument

As is the case with many other forms of Mādhyamika reasoning, the sevenfold analysis considers several possible situations in connection with an entity that is presumed to be real—in this case, what an individual presumes to be his or her own self (*ātman*). The sevenfold analysis argues that the presumed entity is false and unreal by demonstrating that none of the possible situations examined are viable logically. The situations that Candrakīrti's argument examines place the self in various relationships with the five aggregates (*skandha*)— form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), notion (*saṃjñā*), conditioned states (*saṃskāra*), and consciousness (*viññāna*)—the five groups of physical and mental factors that are naturally or theoretically associated with, or even identified as, a living being. The argument refutes the self by negating the following seven permutations: (1) the self is the aggregations; (2) the self is different from the aggregations;

commentary on the twelfth chapter of MMK. See PPMV 234.8-9. Both verbal forms relate to the concept of causation in the Madhyamaka context.

(3) the self is in the aggregates; (4) the aggregates are in the self; (5) the self is possessed of the aggregates; (6) the self is the collection of the aggregates; (7) the self is the shape [of the aggregate of form and so forth].⁸⁷

Candrakīrti's sevenfold argument is generally recognized to be derived from Nāgārjuna's fivefold argument that negates falsely presumed entities through examining the first five of Candrakīrti's seven permutations.⁸⁸ In the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, Nāgārjuna employs the fivefold argument on three separate occasions. In the twenty-second chapter, the analysis is applied to the relationship between the Tathāgata and his aggregates:

(1) [He] is not the aggregates; (2) [he] is not other than the aggregates; (3) the aggregates are not in him; (4) in them he is not; (5) the Tathāgata is not possessed of the aggregates. What indeed is the Tathāgata?⁸⁹

By his own citation of this stanza in the explanation of the argument against a personal self in *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, Candrakīrti indicates that his own sevenfold analysis is based on Nāgārjuna's fivefold argument.

⁸⁷ These seven situations are discussed in MA VI in stanzas (1) 126-133, 137-141; (2) 121-125; (3) 142; (4) 142; (5) 143; (6) 134-135; and (7) 136. See MABh 235-266 ad MA VI 121-43.

⁸⁸ See, for example, Tom J. F. Tillemans, "Two Tibetan Texts on the 'Neither One nor Many' Argument for *Śūnyatā*," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 12 (1984): 369 n. 2; Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1983), 178-9.

⁸⁹ MMK XXII 1. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 370: *skandhā na nānyaḥ skandhebhyo nāsmiṃ skandhā na teṣu saḥ/ tathāgataḥ skandhavān na katamo nu tathāgataḥ*//. Again at MMK XXII 8, the five-fold analysis is briefly mentioned. Ibid., 374: *tattvānyatvena yo nāsti mṛgyamāṇaś ca pañcadhā/ upādānena sa katham prajñāpyeta tathāgataḥ* //. "How can the Tathāgata, who, being sought in five manners, does not exist either by way of identity [with] or difference [from the aggregates], be imputed through the [aggregates that are] appropriated?"

The relationship between the aggregates and the self, represented in this stanza by the Tathāgata, can in one sense be characterized as that between a signified and a signifier, as the latter is simply imputed (*prajñāpyate*) onto the former.⁹⁰ This relationship between the two associated entities is acknowledged in Buddhist texts by the appellations of the “appropriated” (*upādāna*) and the “appropriator” (*upādātṛ*). In *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XVI 2, it is even clearer that the fivefold argument can be applied precisely to this type of relationship—that between a person (*pudgala*), another name for self, on the one hand, and aggregates, sense spheres, and elements, or the bases for the designation of the former, on the other:

If [an opponent asserts that] a person transmigrates, [we answer:] being searched in five manners among the aggregates, sense spheres, and elements, it does not exist. Who will transmigrate?⁹¹

Here, in addition to the aggregates, a person is examined also in his or her relationship with the twelve sense spheres (*āyatana*) and eighteen elements (*dhātu*),⁹² which are also lists of physical and mental components with which an individual is associated. Nāgārjuna’s stanza does not describe the five parts of the analysis, but his

⁹⁰ See MA VI 135, 257-8 and MA VI 138-9, 262.

⁹¹ MMK XVI 2. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 250: *pudgala saṃsarati cet skandhāyatanadhātuṣu / pañcadhā mṛgyamāṇo ‘sau nāsti kaḥ saṃsariṣyati//*.

⁹² The twelve sense spheres are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, form, sound, smell, taste, tactile object, and dharma (object of mental consciousness). The eighteen elements include, in addition to these twelve, visual consciousness, auditory consciousness, olfactory consciousness, gustatory consciousness, tactile consciousness, and mental consciousness. See AKBh ad AK I 14ab 15cd, 16, in pp. 36, 40-1, 41.

commentators explain that it is the same fivefold argument that is used in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXII 1.⁹³

Nāgārjuna further indicates that the fivefold analysis can also be applied to other binary relationships and function as an argument for emptiness. In *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* X 14, he extends the analysis to the two associated phenomena of fire and fuel:

Moreover, (1) the fuel is not the fire; (2) nor is the fire elsewhere apart from the fuel; (3) the fire is not possessed of the fuel; (4) the fuels are not in the fire; (5) in them it is not.⁹⁴

5.4.2 The Scriptural Source of Nāgārjuna's Fivefold Argument

Early Madhyamaka commentators before Candrakīrti do not place specific emphasis on the fivefold argument, but its repeated employment just in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* alone shows Nāgārjuna's own considerable interest in it. The extant Indian Buddhist literature has also left ample traces for us to determine the source of this Madhyamaka logical device. As far as I am aware, the structure of Nāgārjuna's fivefold argument finds its closest and most numerous parallels in the Nikāya/Āgama collections. The passages that contain similar patterns of analysis appear in the largest number in the *Samyuttanikāya/Samyuktāgama*, especially in the third *Khandhavagga* in

⁹³ Candrakīrti's commentary on the stanza, for instance, describes the same five permutations between the self and the aggregates, sense spheres, and elements that are examined, and he also cites MMK X 14 and 15ab here, which will be discussed immediately. See PPMV 284.4-11.

Pāli and its corresponding parts in the *Samyuktāgama*. In *Majjhimanikāya* these passages are quite numerous in the third *Uparipaṇṇāsapāli*, but it seems to have appeared only a couple of times in the *Anguttaranikāya/Ekottarāgama*.

The relevant passages in this literature describe a form of analysis that examines the various ways that two entities relate to each other. The related entities that are examined with any frequency in these texts are the pair of the self and aggregates, and in the Pāli versions of Theravāda school, the general pattern is to examine the self in the four different ways in which it forms a relationship with the aggregates. As the self is thus considered in four ways in relation to each of five aggregates, a total of twenty permutations are enumerated. An example from the *Nadī Sutta* in the *Samyuttanikāya* reads as follows:

Bhikkhus! An ordinary being who lacks learning ... sees form as the self,
the self as possessed of form, form as in the self, self as in the form.⁹⁵

The following four paragraphs repeat the same formula that places the self in relation with feeling (*vedanā*), notion (*saññā*), conditioned states (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*).⁹⁶ In the four alternative modes examined such Pāli passages, the permutation of viewing the self as different from the aggregates found in Nāgārjuna's fivefold analysis is missing. However, placing the self in these four alternative relations with each of the five aggregates is apparently the patterns that many Buddhist traditions have

⁹⁴ MMK X 14. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 370: *indhanam punar agnir na nāgnir anyatra cendhanāt/ nāgnir indhanavān nāgnāv indhanāni na teṣu saḥ*//.

⁹⁵ SN 3:138: *bhikkhave assutavā puttujjano ... rūpam attato samanupassati// rūpavantam vā attānam attani vā rūpam rūpasmim vā attānaṃ*//.

remembered. These are known as the twenty views of real personality (Pāli: *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, Skt. *satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*) both to the Theravāda school⁹⁷ and the scholastic tradition of the Vaibhāṣika branch of the Sarvāstivāda school. Two Abhidharma texts of the Vaibhāṣika school, *Jñānaprasthāna*⁹⁸ and *Mahāvibhāṣā*,⁹⁹ choose to examine these twenty views, and the topic continues to be discussed in the *śāstras* of the Yogācāra school, in a manner that is similar to the Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma.¹⁰⁰

In the Chinese translation of the *Samyuktāgama*, which is generally believed to belong to the Sarvāstivāda School,¹⁰¹ similar strings of phrases are also used, albeit in a slightly different arrangement. In a representative passage from *sūtra* no. 34, having described form (*rūpa*) in other ways, the Buddha spoke to the five *bhikṣus* at the Deer Park near Vārāṇasī:

“In regard to it, does a learned noble disciple see it as the self, different from the self, or one being in the other?”

The *bhikṣus* spoke to the Buddha: “no, Blessed One.”

⁹⁶ SN 3:138: *Vedanam//Saññam// Saṅkhāre// Viññānam attato samanupassati// viññānavantaṃ vā attānam attani vā viññānam viññānasmiṃ vā attānam//*.

⁹⁷ Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu and Bodhi Bhikkhu, trans. and eds., *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 1241 n. 462. The term *sakkāyadiṭṭhi/satkāyadr̥ṣṭi* has been discussed frequently in the Āgamas/Nikāyas themselves already. See, e.g., MN 1:300, SN 3:102, and T. 99 II 151a22.

⁹⁸ T. 1544 XXVI 919a9-13.

⁹⁹ The most elaborate discussion appears in T. 1545 XXVII 36a10-37a15, in the commentary on the passage from *Jñānaprasthāna* cited in the previous note.

¹⁰⁰ In *Yogācārabhūmi* at T. 1579 XXX 623c17-18, 799b25-26, 799c26-27; *Abhidharmasamuccaya* at T. 1605 XXXI 664c23-29.

¹⁰¹ See Mayeda Egaku, “Japanese Studies on the Schools of the Chinese Āgamas,” in *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur*, ed. Heinz Bechert (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1985-1987), 99-101; Ernst Waldschmidt, “Central Asian Sūtra Fragments and Their Relation to the Chinese Āgamas,” in *Die Sprache der ältesten buddhistischen Überlieferung: The Language of the Earliest Buddhist Tradition*, ed. Heinz Bechert (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 136-7 and n. 3. Lü Cheng, however, assigns the Chinese translation of *Samyuktāgama* to the Mūlasarvāstivāda School. See *ibid.*, 137 n. 3.

[The Buddha:] “Feeling, notion, conditioned states, and consciousness are also like this.”¹⁰²

Phrases of this kind occur well over a hundred times in this text. Comparing the fivefold analysis used in the *Mūladhyamakakārikā* with the recurrent phrases in the Pāli Nikāyas and the Chinese translation of the *Samyuktāgama*, we find that the Pāli passages do not have the mode of self being different from the aggregates, while in the general form that such phrases take in the Chinese *Samyukta* the mode of self being in possession of the aggregates is absent.¹⁰³ Therefore, the link between Nāgārjuna’s fivefold argument and the Nikāya Buddhist scriptures is evident.

5.4.3 The Evidence from the *Ratnāvalī* and *Suḥrillekha*

It is relevant to mention here that the two patterns that we find in the Nikāyas and Āgamas are for the most part paralleled by two stanzas from *Ratnāvalī* and *Suḥrillekha*, both attributed by the Chinese and Tibetan traditions to Nāgārjuna. Both stanzas describe a similar exercise examining the relationship between the self and the aggregates. The four modes of the Chinese *Samyuktāgama* appear to be included in *Ratnāvalī* I 82, which, with the help of Ajitamitra’s *ṭīkā*, reads:

¹⁰² T. 99 II 7c22-24: 多聞聖弟子寧於中見是我・異我・相在不。比丘白佛。不也。世尊。受・想・行・識亦復如是。

¹⁰³ Yamaguchi Susumu has mentioned this difference between the Pāli Nikāyas and the Chinese *Samyuktāgama* as well as the discussion of the twenty forms of *satkāyadr̥ṣṭi* in *Jñānaprasthāna* in a note to his translation of MMK X 15. *Gesshō zō Chūron shaku* (Tokyo: Shimizu Kōbundō Shobō, 1968), 2:198-9 n. 1.

(1) The aggregates are not the self; (2) those [aggregates] are not in that [self]; (3) the [self] is not in those [aggregates]; (4) without these [aggregates] it does not exist; (5) the aggregates and the self are not merged like fire and firewood. Therefore, how can the self exist?¹⁰⁴

Taking up the expression “without these it does not exist,” which can possibly represent the mode of the self being different from the aggregates, Ajitamitra says this means that “without the aggregates, [the self] cannot be properly observed.”¹⁰⁵ However, his commentary does not mention any possible scriptural source for the stanza.

Moreover, stanza forty-nine of *Suḥṛllekha* contains the four permutations that match those found in the Pāli Nikāyas, although its description of the aggregates as empty exhibits broadly Mahāyānist character.

(1) It has been spoken that “the form is not the self;” (2) the self is not possessed of the form; (3) in the form the self does not abide; (4) in the self the form does not abide. Likewise, the remaining four aggregates are to be realized as empty.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Hahn, Nāgārjuna’s *Ratnāvalī*, 1:34: *phung po bdag min der de min/ /de la de min de med min/ /phung bdag me shing ltar ‘dres min/ /de phyir bdag ni ji ltar yod/*. For Ajitamitra’s commentary, see Yukihiro Okada, *Nāgārjuna’s Ratnāvalī 2, Die Ratnāvalīṭīkā des Ajitamitra* (Bonn: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1990), 65-6.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 65: *de med par te phung po de med par yang rigs pa’i sgo nas dmigs pa ma yin no*. The last situation examined in the stanza—that aggregates and the self are not merged like fire and firewood—resembles MMK X 14, but it is not represented in the Āgamas/Nikāyas.

¹⁰⁶ D (To. 4182) Spring yig, vol. nge, 43a2: *gzugs ni bdag min zhes gsungs te bdag /gzugs dang mi ldan gzugs la bdag gnas min/ /bdag la gzugs mi gnas te de bzhin du/ /phung po lhag ma bzhi yang stong rtogs bgyi/*.

As mentioned earlier, the knowledge of the four permutations of relationship between the self and the aggregates as they appear in the Pāli Nikāyas and in this stanza is maintained by the Buddhist scholastic tradition. Thus, in a *ṭīkā* on *Suḥṛllekha* preserved in the Tibetan Bstan 'gyur in translation, Blo gros chen po's (Mahāmāti?) commentary on the stanza says that the permutations and their denial have their source in the *āgama* (Tib. *lung*)¹⁰⁷ and that applying the four modes to the five aggregates are called the twenty views of real personality.¹⁰⁸ Candrakīrti reports that these twenty views are presented in the *sūtras*.¹⁰⁹ A citation that he provides in *Prasannapadā* without any indication as to its source might supply an example of what such a *sūtra* passage looks like in Sanskrit.¹¹⁰

5.4.4 A Question Concerning the Form of the Madhyamaka Arguments and the Variation in Nikāya Literary Sources

If Nāgārjuna indeed was the author of *Ratnāvalī* and *Suḥṛllekha*, which recent scholarship is more inclined to accept,¹¹¹ a pertinent question to ask is why in these two texts he uses slightly different patterns of analysis than he does in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Without making our discussion dependent on the ascription of *Ratnāvalī* and *Suḥṛllekha* to Nāgārjuna, we might simply ask whether the three different

¹⁰⁷ D (To. 4190) Spring yig, vol. nge, 91a1: *gzugs ni bdag ma yin gsungs la/ rnam par shes pa'i bar yang bdag ma yin zhes gsungs te/ re zhig 'di ni lung gi bdag gzugs la sogs pa'i ngo bo nyid yin pa bkag pa yin no/*. Ibid., 91a3: *... go rims bzhin du bdag gzugs dang ldan min zhes bya ba la sogs pa smos te/ re zhig 'di ni lung yin no/*.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 91b2-3: *de ltar na phung po lnga po re re la rnam pa bzhi bzhi yin pas 'jig tshogs la lta ba rnam pa nyi shur bshad pa yin te/*.

¹⁰⁹ MABh 267 ad MA VI 144: *'jig tshogs la lta ba'i cha de dag ni mdo sde las rnam par bzhas la*.

¹¹⁰ PPMV 355.5-6: *tathā hi /rūpaṃ nātmā rūpavān nāpi cātmā rūpe nātmā nātmani rūpaṃ/ evaṃ yāvat vijñānaṃ ātmā vijñānavān nātmā vijñāne nātmā nātmani vijñānam iti*.

¹¹¹ Joseph Walser presented the most recent arguments for Nāgārjuna's authorship of *Ratnāvalī* in his *Nāgārjuna in Context: Mahāyāna Buddhism and Early Indian Culture* (New York: Columbia

patterns of analysis found in the three texts may turn out to be based on different versions of the Nikāya scriptures that are available to their author(s). We have so far only noted the difference between the Pāli Nikāyas and the Chinese translation of the *Samyuktāgama*. There are in fact other versions of these phrases in Buddhist literature, and the variations appear to have much to do with the affiliation of the texts with the schools of Nikāya Buddhism. The following table gives the various patterns of the phrases that I have identified in the texts. I have listed the self and the form/aggregates as the two objects being examined, although in the texts such as *Mūlamadhhyamakakārikā* the relationships between other objects are also analyzed.

Table One

Abbreviations: M1 = the self is form/aggregates; M2 = the self is possessed of form/aggregates; M3 = the self is in form/aggregations; M4= form/aggregates are in the self; M5 = the self is other than form/aggregates

Texts and school affiliation	Locations	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	Other modes or points discussed
Pāli Nikāyas, Theravāda	SN, MN, and AN, e.g. SN 3:138	X	X	X	X		
<i>Samyuktāgama</i> , (Mūla)sarvāstivāda	e.g. T. 99 II 7c22-24	X		X	X	X	
<i>Ekottarāgama</i> , Mahāsaṃghika ¹¹²	T. 125 II 573b10-12 and 573b20-22	X	X	X	X		(5) the self belongs to form; (6) the self and form are mixed together, etc. ¹¹³
Vinaya,	e.g. T. 1451 XXIV	X	X	X	X		

University Press, 2005), 271-8. Lindtner includes both *Ratnāvalī* and *Suḥṛllekha* among the authentic works of Nāgārjuna based on both external and internal criteria. See his *Nāgārjuniana*, 10-11, 163-4, 218.

¹¹² Waldschmidt, "Central Asian Sūtra," 136-7. But cf. the divergent opinions that Japanese scholars have expressed, in Mayeda, "Schools of Chinese Āgama," 102-3.

¹¹³ T. 125 II 573b10-12: 彼計色爲我。色是我所。我是色所。色中有我。我中有色。彼色・我色合會一處。彼色・我色以集一處。

Mūlasarvāstivāda	259c10-11						
Vinaya, Mahāsaṃghika	T. 1425 XXII 364b22-23, 364b26-27	X	X	X	X		
Jñānaprasthāna, Vaibhāṣika	T. 1544 XXVI 919a9-13	X	X	X	X		20 forms of <i>satkāyadr̥ṣṭi</i> discussed
Mahāvibhāṣā, Vaibhāṣika	T. 1545 XXVII 36a26-29	X	X	X	X		20 forms of <i>satkāyadr̥ṣṭi</i> discussed
Mūlamadhyamaka- kārikā, Nāgārjuna	X 14, XVI 2, XXII 1, XXII 8	X	X	X	X	X	
Ratnāvalī, ascribed to Nāgārjuna	I 82	X		X	X	X	(5) aggregates and self are not merged like fire and firewood ¹¹⁴
Suḥr̥llekha, ascribed to Nāgārjuna	stanza 49	X	X	X	X		
Yogācārabhūmi, Yogācāra	T. 1579 XXX 799c26-27						20 forms of <i>satkāyadr̥ṣṭi</i> discussed
Abhidharma- samuccaya, Yogācāra	T. 1605 XXXI 664c24-26	X	X	X	X		20 forms of <i>satkāyadr̥ṣṭi</i> discussed
Madhyamakāvatāra and bhāṣya, Madhyamaka	MABh ad MA VI 144, pp. 266-7	X	X	X	X	X	20 forms of <i>satkāyadr̥ṣṭi</i> discussed. Distinction between four- and five-fold analyses explained.
Prasannapadā, Madhyamaka	ad MMK X 14 and 15, XVI 2, XVIII 1, XXII 1 and 8	X	X	X	X	X	citation at 335.5-6 ad XVIII 5 gives only the first four modes
Suḥr̥llekhaṭīkā	D (To. 4190) Spring yig, vol. nge, 91a1, 91a3, 91b2-3	X	X	X	X	X	20 forms of <i>satkāyadr̥ṣṭi</i> discussed. M5, not found in <i>Suḥr̥llekha</i> , is said to include M2, M3, and

¹¹⁴ Note that this is similar to the sixth mode found in the *Ekottarāgama*.

							M4.
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Since the four modes of analysis in the *Suḥṛllekha* are consistent with the texts in all three divisions of the Tripiṭaka of the various schools, we can safely assume that its author is relying on a previously existing pattern. In the case of the analyses found in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* and *Ratnāvalī*, it is possible that combinations of previously existing patterns, even those from the different texts, could have been relied upon—it should also be kept in mind that some Chinese translations may not correspond strictly with the original Indic or Central Asian version.¹¹⁵ However, such a hypothesis would be highly speculative.

As Nāgārjuna's fivefold analysis in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* became a norm in the Madhyamaka School, the Indian commentators themselves have offered explanations as to why it differs from the fourfold pattern that they knew from the scriptures. The tool that they rely on is exegetical, and they seek to explain the difference from either a conceptual or a doctrinal point of view. According to *Suḥṛllekhaṭīkā*, when the self is assumed to exist, it either has the same nature as form or is different from it. If the self is different from form and other aggregates, it is either possessed of them, resides in them, or else the aggregates reside in it.¹¹⁶ In this manner, one of Nāgārjuna's five modes that is not found in the scriptures becomes a larger category to subsume three other modes. The manner in which the *Suḥṛllekhaṭīkā* places the three modes under the category of

¹¹⁵ There are also Chinese translations of these phrases that remain in a more confused state. See, for instance, the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya at T. 1421 XXII 105a19-20: 若苦爲我爲非我。答言非我。受想行識亦如是; Dharmaguptaka Vinaya at T. 1428 XXII 789a21-22: 色是我是彼是彼所是我所不。對曰非也。受想行識亦復如是。

¹¹⁶ D (To. 4190) Spring yig, vol. nge, 90b7: *bdag gcig yod na gzugs la sogs pa'i ngo bo nyid gcig yin pa'am/ de las gzhan pa zhig yin par 'grub grang /*. 91a2: *on te gzugs la sogs pa las gzhan pa zhig yin no zhe na/ de la rnam pa gsum ste/*.

otherness is in agreement with the grouping of the five modes as it is explained in the two earliest commentaries on the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*—the *Akutobhayā* and Qingmu’s commentary—as well as in Bhāviveka’s *Prajñāpradīpa*.¹¹⁷

For Candrakīrti too, Nāgārjuna’s five modes can be grouped under the two permutations of (1) identity (2) otherness. However, on how identity and otherness encompass the other three modes of analysis, he differs from *Akutobhayā*, Qingmu, Bhāviveka, and *Suḥrillekhaṭikā* and follows Buddhapālita’s interpretation. He explains that the other three modes fall in the two categories of identity and otherness,¹¹⁸ rather than in the latter alone, as does Buddhapālita.¹¹⁹ In addition, Candrakīrti offers an explanation as to why the mode of otherness in Nāgārjuna’s fivefold analysis is not found in the widely circulated version of the fourfold analysis as they are known from the *sūtras*. He says the *sūtras* exclude the modes of self and aggregates being different, because “without the apprehension of the aggregates, one is not able to grasp [the notion] of self.”¹²⁰ In the case of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, “the fifth permutation of otherness

¹¹⁷ (1) For the comments in *Akutobhayā*, see Huntington, “Akutobhaya,” 356 ad MMK X 14: *med bud shing dang ldan pa yang ma yin me la yang bud shing med bud shing la yang me med de gzhan nyid kyi skyon du ‘gyur ba’i phyir ro*. “Fire is not possessed of the fuel, nor is the fuel in the fire, nor is the fire in the fuel, because the fault of otherness would be entailed.” The idea is elaborated ad MMK XXII 1 in *ibid.*, 486-7. (2) Qingmu is in agreement with *Akutobhayā*—see T. 1564 XXX 15c13-14 (ad MMK X 14), 15c21-22 (ad MMK X 15), and 29c22-30a2 (ad MMK XXII 1). (3) Bhāviveka (ad MMK X 14) follows the early Madhyamaka tradition represented by *Akutobhayā* and Qingmu, rather than Buddhapālita. See D (To. 3853) Dbu ma, vol. *tsha*, 135b5-6.

¹¹⁸ See MABh 265-6 ad MA VI 142-3; PPMV 212.6-14 ad MMK X 14; PPMV 341.1 ad MMK XVIII 1; and PPMV 434.12-435.4 ad MMK XXII 1. To be specific, the mode that (3) A is in B and the mode that (4) B is in A fall under the permutation of A and B being different, while the mode that (5) A is in possession of B can belong to either the permutation of identity or otherness.

¹¹⁹ Saito, “Buddhapālita-Mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtti,” 2:152-3 ad MMK X 14. In his commentary on MMK XXII 1, however, Buddhapālita appears to assert that the three other modes all come under the permutation of identity. See *ibid.*, 2:309.

¹²⁰ See MABh 266.19-267.12 ad MA VI 144, in particular 267.7-9: *...mdo sde las rnam par bzhag la des kyang phung po rnam ma bzung bar bdag tu mngon par zhen par mi nus pas rnam pa bzhi bzhi’i sgo nas phung po rnam la dmigs shing ‘jug go*.

is spoken in the *śāstra* to refute the view of the non-Buddhists,”¹²¹ who hold that the self is different from the aggregates.

In short, the major Madhyamaka commentators we have considered so far all consider Nāgārjuna’s fivefold analysis as a more elaborate form of an analysis that examines two related objects in the two permutations of their identity and difference, although they may differ on how to place the five modes under the two permutations. Evidently, Nāgārjuna formulates the various modes of the fivefold argument largely to accommodate the patterns of analysis that are already found in the textual tradition. Given that he also uses the twofold argument on a number of occasions¹²² and even links the fivefold argument to it,¹²³ it is possible that the mode of otherness is added to the well known fourfold analysis as a way of associating the two forms of analysis. Having associated the two forms, the fivefold argument now includes the two logically exhaustive permutations of identity and otherness, and it can be used to critically examine various binary structures to which the twofold analysis—itsself also used widely in the Buddhist texts—is applicable.¹²⁴

5.4.5 The Lesser Known Passages in the Āgamas and Nikāyas

¹²¹ MABh 267.12-14 ad MA VI 144: *bstan bcos las lnga pa gzhan pa nyid kyi phyogs gsungs pa ni mu stegs pa'i lugs dgag pa'i phyir ro zhes bya bar shes par bya'o.*

¹²² See, e.g., MMK X 1, MMK XVIII 1, and *Nirupamastava* 13, which is cited at PPMV 215.5-6. In MMK XVIII 1, Nāgārjuna says (Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 300): *ātmā skandhā yadi bhaved udayavyayabhāg bhavet/ skandhebhyo 'nyo yadi bhaved bhaved askandhalakṣaṇaḥ* //. “Should the self be the aggregates, it would have [the characteristics of] arising and decay. Should it be other than the aggregates, it would be devoid the properties of the aggregates.” Candrakīrti says that the twofold argument, a brief form of the fivefold argument, is presented here to avoid redundancy. See PPMV 341.5-7.

¹²³ MMK XXII 8 in Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 374: *tattvānyatvena yo nāsti mṛgyamāṇas ca pañcadhā/ upādānena sa katham prajñāpyeta tathāgataḥ* //. “How can the Tathāgata, who, being sought in five manners, does not exist either by way of identity [with] or difference [from the aggregates], be imputed through the [aggregates that are] appropriated?” See also MMK X 16.

In addition to the logical structure of the fivefold argument, the types of binary structures that the argument is used to examine also reveal Nāgārjuna's indebtedness to the Āgamas/Nikāyas specifically. As we said earlier, a fourfold—or its variant forms of—analysis is applied frequently to the binary relationship between the self and five aggregates in the Sūtra, Vinaya, and Abhidharma divisions of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures. The examination of these two objects by means of the peculiar patterns discussed here is widely known to the Buddhist scholastics. In the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, having used the fivefold argument to examine the relationship between fire and fuel, Nāgārjuna also states that “by way of fire and fuel the [fivefold] procedure of [examining] the self and the appropriated [five aggregates] is also explained,”¹²⁵ before he extends this form of analysis to other binary structures.

In the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* the fivefold argument is also applied to the following specific binary relations, in addition to that which obtains between the self and the aggregates: (1) the relationship between the self/person, on the one hand, and the sense spheres (*āyatana*), and elements (*dhātu*), on the other (MMK XVI 2); and (2) the relationship between the Tathāgata and his aggregates (MMK XXII 1 and 8). The use of a similar type of analysis on these specific pairs is attested in certain versions of the *Samyuktāgama*, although the specific passages in question are scarce and appear to be virtually unknown in the scholastic literature. In the Chinese translation of the

¹²⁴ Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka, and Candrakīrti (PPMV 213.15-16 ad MMK X 15) mentions the following types of binary oppositions to which the fivefold analysis can be applied: cause and effect, part and whole, quality and its possessor, definition and definiendum.

¹²⁵ MMK X 15ab. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 176: *agnīndhanābhyām vyākhyāta ātmopādānayoḥ kramāḥ*/. See the interpretation in PPMV 212.18-213.12. The word *upādāna*, or “appropriation,” is glossed as (*u*)*pādīyat(e)*, “what is appropriated,” and *pañcopādānaskandhāḥ*, “the five aggregates that are

Samyuktāgama, the examination between the self, on the one hand, and some or all of the twelve sense spheres (*āyatana*) or the eighteen elements (*dhātu*), on the other, occurs in a number of passages in the specific patterns known to that text: whether (1) the sense spheres or elements are the self, (2) they are other than the self, or (3 and 4) the self and the sense spheres and elements mutually reside in each other.¹²⁶

The *Samyuttanikāya* of the Theravāda school also has related passages, but there the usual fourfold analysis is not found. Instead, an alternative pattern of analysis known to the school is applied, examining, in relation to one of the sense spheres and elements, whether (1) this is mine, (2) I am this, or (3) this is my self.¹²⁷ In the comments on *Jñānaprasthāna*'s twenty views of real personality, the *Vibhāṣā* compendia of the Sarvāstivādins in Kaśmīra, applying the four permutations to the twelve sense spheres and eighteen elements, say that the views of real personality can also be enumerated to have forty eight or seventy two varieties,¹²⁸ where the self is related to the sense spheres and the elements in the fourfold pattern. But one explanation that the texts provide as to why *Jñānaprasthāna* mentions only twenty is that “the author of the *śāstra* writes on the basis the *sūtras*, and the Buddha speaks of only twenty types of views of real personality from the point of view of the aggregates,” rather than in relation to the sense spheres and elements.¹²⁹ This explanation appears to indicate that the authors of the *Vibhāṣā*

appropriated [by the self].” As mentioned above, the self and aggregates are also examined in MMK XVIII 1 by way of their identity and otherness, said by Candrakīrti to be the short form of the fivefold argument.

¹²⁶ See T. 99 II 52c25-53a6, 59c7-17, 72c23-25, 74a25-c24, and 347c9-22.

¹²⁷ See SN 4:43-5 and 4:58-9. E.g., SN 4:58.2-3: *Cakkum āvuso Channa cakkuviññāṇaṃ cakkuviññāṇaviññātabbe dhamme Etam mama eso ham asmi eso me attāti samanupassasi*. “Friend Channa, do you see the eye, the visual consciousness, and the things recognizable by the visual consciousness in the following terms: ‘This is mine, I am this, this is my self?’” In this *sutta*, other senses—such as the ear and mind—and their corresponding consciousnesses and objects are also questioned following this pattern.

¹²⁸ Two of the three Chinese translations of somewhat different versions of the *Vibhāṣā* contain this discussion, at T. 1545 XXVII 36b21-25, 36c1-5 and T. 1546 XXVIII 26b10-17.

¹²⁹ T. 1545 XXVII 36c27: 以作論者依經造論。佛於經中但依蘊說薩迦耶見有二十句。See also T. 1546 XXVIII 26c9-10.

compendia were unaware of the Āgama/Nikāya passages in which the self is examined in relation to the sense spheres and elements following the well-known pattern.¹³⁰ In any case, if Nāgārjuna was referring to scriptural passages in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XVI 2, which is very likely, the evidence from the *Samyuttanikāya* in Pāli and the *Vibhāṣā* compendia from Kaśmīra would suggest that such passages are rather very obscure.

We have mentioned earlier that in the *Ratnāvalī*, most likely authored by Nāgārjuna as well, an examination of the relationship between the self and aggregates is conducted following the pattern that is very similar to the fivefold argument. Just two stanzas earlier (at I 80), another verse examines the self and the six elements: “The person is neither earth nor water, it is not fire, wind, or space, and it is not consciousness. Since it is not all [of them], what is a person other than these?”¹³¹ At the beginning of this section, the author admits that the subject is presented “in accordance with scripture (Tib. *lung*, Skt. *āgama*).”¹³² Ajitamitra’s commentary on this text provides no help on the scripture(s) that the author has in mind. A likely candidate of the scriptural sources that *Ratnāvalī* I 80 refers to is a number of lesser known passages again in *Samyuktāgama* and *Madhyamāgama/Majjhimanikāya*, where the self is examined in relation to the six elements.¹³³ This textual link adds more weight to our argument that Nāgārjuna bases his discussion on more specific passages in the Āgama/Nikāya collection. It should also be

¹³⁰ It is quite likely that the relevant Āgama *sūtras* known to the Sarvāstivādins of Kaśmīra follow a different pattern in their discussions of the relationship between the self and the sense spheres and elements, as do the *suttas* of the Theravāda school. The authors of the *Vibhāṣā* compendia could also be unaware of such passages in the *sūtras*, although the likelihood is small given the methodical nature of these massive compendia.

¹³¹ Stanza I.80. See Hahn, *Nāgārjuna’s Ratnāvalī*, 1:33. The six elements differ from the eighteen elements, which are described earlier, although both are called *dhātus*.

¹³² See *ibid.*, stanza 1.78.

¹³³ In the *Samyuktāgama* at T. 99 II 119a02-4; in *Madhyamāgama* at T. 26 I 548b13-17, 596b12 ff., 645a21-28, 733a2-6; and in MN 3:31 (and Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *Middle Length Discourses*, 1321 n. 1059), 3:240 ff.

noted that, since *Ratnāvalī* I 80 does not use a more elaborate pattern of analysis,¹³⁴ the author could be referring to other—even Mahāyāna¹³⁵—Buddhist texts.

Finally, in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXII 1 and 8, Nāgārjuna examines Tathāgata and his aggregates by way of the fivefold analysis. We have located two *sūtras* from the Chinese translation of *Samyuktāgama* and two Pāli *suttas* from *Samyuttanikāya*, which are the likely sources of Nāgārjuna's treatment of the topic.¹³⁶ One of the two Chinese *sūtras*, for instance, contains a conversation between the Buddha and the non-Buddhist mendicant named Xianni 仙尼, who was converted after the Buddha's preaching.

(1) [The Buddha] asks again: “Xianni, is form the Tathāgata?” [Xianni] answers: “No, Blessed One.” “Are feeling, notion, conditioned states, and consciousness the Tathāgata?” [Xianni] answers: “No, Blessed One.” (2) [The Buddha] asks again: “Xianni, is there a Tathāgata other than form? Is there a Tathāgata other than feeling, notion, conditioned states, or consciousness?” [Xianni] answers: “No, Blessed.” (3) [The Buddha] again asks: “Xianni, does the Tathāgata exist in form? Does the Tathāgata exist in feeling, notion, conditioned states, and consciousness?” [Xianni] answers: “No, Blessed One.” (4) [The Buddha] again asks: “Xianni, does form exist in the Tathāgata? Do feeling, notion, conditioned states, and

¹³⁴ The patterns of analysis that are found in the Āgama/Nikāya passages, referenced in the previous note, are varied.

¹³⁵ Passage where the six element are described as not the self are found, for instance, in (1) *Prajñāpāramitā* at T. 220 V 407a23; (2) *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* in the *Ratnakūṭa* collection at T. 310 XI 199b20-23; (3) Mahāyāna versions of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* at T. 374 XII 434b1-2 and T. 375 XII 675c15. On the two Chinese versions of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* mentioned here, which are thought to postdate Nāgārjuna, see Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism*, 212.

¹³⁶ *Samyuktāgama* nos. 104 and 105; the *Yamaka Sutta* in SN 3:109-16; and *Anurādha Sutta* in SN 3:116-9. *Samyuktāgama* no. 104 and the *Yamaka Sutta* are the counterparts in the two collections.

consciousness exist in the Tathāgata?” [Xianni] answers: “No, Blessed One.” (5) [The Buddha] again asks: “Xianni, is there a Tathāgata having no form and having no feeling, notion, conditioned states, and consciousness?” [Xianni] answers: “No, Blessed One.”¹³⁷

When it comes to the examination of the Tathāgata and the aggregates, the Chinese translation of *Samyuktāgama* slightly alters the regular pattern that it otherwise uses for the analysis between the self and aggregates, sense spheres, and elements, adding in this case the fifth permutation that is not found in the treatment of the other binary relations.

In the *Samyuttanikāya* of the Theravāda school, the analysis of the Tathāgata in relation to his aggregates follows yet another set of five permutations. There, in regard to the individual aggregates, form and so forth, the Pāli version asks (1) whether each in its turn is the Tathāgata, (2) whether the Tathāgata is in each one of the aggregates, (3) whether the Tathāgata is apart from each one of them; then, with all the aggregates taken together, the text asks (4) whether form, feeling, notion, conditioned states, and consciousness are the Tathāgata, and (5) whether the Tathāgata is the one who is without form, without feeling, without notion, without conditioned states, and without consciousness.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Sūtra no. 105. T. 99 II 32a27-b6: 復問。云何。仙尼。色是如來耶。答言。不也。世尊。受。想。行。識是如來耶。答言。不也。世尊。復問。仙尼。異色有如來耶。異受。想。行。識有如來耶。答言。不也。世尊。復問。仙尼。色中有如來耶。受。想。行。識中有如來耶。答言。不也。世尊。復問。仙尼。如來中有色耶。如來中有受。想。行。識耶。答言。不也。世尊。復問。仙尼。非色。非受。想。行。識有如來耶。答言。不也。世尊。A passage containing the same pattern of analysis is found in the preceding *sūtra* no. 104, at 31a21-b1. Cf. also T. 100 II 445b25-26.

¹³⁸ SN 3:111-2 (*Yamaka Sutta*): (1) *Taṃ kiṃ maññasi āvuso Yamaka rūpaṃ tathāgato ti samanupassasīti* // *No hetam avuso* // *Vedanaṃ* // *pe* // ... (2) *rūpasmiṃ tathāgato ti samanupassasīti* ... (3) *Aññatra rūpā tathāgato ti samanupassasīti* ... (4) *rūpā vedanā saññā saṅkhārā viññāṇaṃ tathāgato ti samanupassasīti* ... (5) *ayaṃ so arūpī avedano asaṅñī asaṅkhāro aviññāṇo tathāgato ti samanupassasīti* // *No hetam avuso* // See also SN 3:118 of PTS, where the fourth permutation is absent.

The application of the fivefold argument on the binary relations between the self and sense spheres and elements and that between the Tathāgata and his aggregates in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* points to a connection between Nāgārjuna's work and the obscure parts of the Āgama/Nikāya corpus. Our examination of the extant versions of the minor Nikāya Buddhist passages links Nāgārjuna more specifically to the *Samyuktāgama* of the Sarvāstivāda School as represented by the Chinese translation. The evidence further suggests that Nāgārjuna was a pioneer Mahāyāna Buddhist who was acquainted with and attentive to the fine details of the Āgamas/Nikāyas, often constructing his Mahāyāna arguments based on the themes of these texts.

A specific case illustrating Nāgārjuna's close attention to the Nikāya Buddhist sources is *The Examination of Tathāgata*, the twenty-second chapter of his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Tathāgata is a subject on which a series of the unanswered questions and the analysis of the Tathāgata in relation to his aggregates in five permutations converge in the texts of the Āgamas/Nikāyas.¹³⁹ In his analysis of the notion of Tathāgata, Nāgārjuna recognizes this point of thematic intersection and takes advantage of it. He employs the fivefold analysis on the Tathāgata and the aggregates thereof in stanzas 1 and 8 and paraphrases the unanswered questions concerning the existence of the Tathāgata after death in stanzas 10 and 11. Using both forms of analysis, which are derived from the Nikāya Buddhist texts,¹⁴⁰ Nāgārjuna makes arguments in the

¹³⁹ It should be recalled that questions concerning the existence of the Tathāgata after death appear in both the Chinese Āgamas and the Pāli Nikāyas.

¹⁴⁰ The *Anurādha Sutta* in *Samyuttanikāya* is a text where the unanswered questions concerning the Tathāgata and the analysis of the Tathāgata and his aggregates intersect. See SN 3:116-9. However, the arguments of MMK XXII only need to build on the fact that the two themes converge in the subject of the Tathāgata, and they do not presuppose that Nāgārjuna bases his arguments on a specific *sūtra* where the two themes converge.

chapter that are framed in the Mahāyāna phraseology of the empty nature of the Tathāgata.

5.4.6 From the Literary Passages of Nikāya Buddhist Texts to Madhyamaka Reasoning

Earlier in this chapter (section 5.4.4) we have examined a shared theme that analyzes several possible ways in which the self forms a relationships with aggregates, which is found in the scriptural corpora of a number of schools of Nikāya Buddhism. The literary evidence we have gathered demonstrates the development of parallel but slightly varied textual traditions in these schools. Further consideration of the similar patterns employed in the analysis of pairs of related objects in the Chinese Āgamas and Pāli Nikāyas suggests that a single school of Nikāya Buddhism may develop several analytic patterns, each reserved for the analysis of one or few pairs. Along with such developments in the textual traditions in their effort to maintain the received texts, the scholastic traditions of Nikāya Buddhism also leave their own footprints on the handling of the literary patterns in question. They either clarify and supply structures to the passages in the commentaries on the texts, as does Buddhaghosa,¹⁴¹ or treat the topic in their independent scholastic treatises. In the Abhidharma texts of *Jñānaprasthāna* and *Mahāvibhāṣā* compendia composed by the Sarvāstivādins of Kaśmīra, the recurrent

¹⁴¹ See, for instance, Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *Middle Length Discourses*, 1241 n. 462; Bodhi, *Connected Discourses*, 1079 nn. 152-3.

literary theme provides an occasion for a scholastic discussion of a psychology of the views of “self” and “mine.”¹⁴²

It is against the backdrop of these text preserving and scholastic activities of Nikāya Buddhist traditions that Nāgārjuna turns to these peculiar literary patterns of the Nikāya Buddhist texts as a source for Madhyamaka reasoning, putting the passages to a very different kind of use. In the Chinese Āgamas and Pāli Nikāyas, the analyses of the relationship between the self, on the one hand, and the aggregates, sense spheres, and elements, on the other, are used as techniques for the demonstration of the absence of a reified personal self, elaborated sometimes as having the twenty varied forms of the view of real personality (*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*). When similar analysis are employed against the Tathāgata and his aggregates, Buddhaghosa also indicates that the Tathāgata is examined here as “a being (*satta*).”¹⁴³ In short, from the perspective of the Nikāya Buddhists the intended purpose of the literary patterns in question is always to contribute to the understanding of the principle of the absence of the personal self. However, the logical arguments that Nāgārjuna develops apparently on the basis on the same passages in the Nikāya Buddhist texts extend the analyses to other objects as well.

In the twenty-second chapter on the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, for instance, we find a series of arguments that Nāgārjuna advances, included among which are the fivefold analysis and a statement of *catuṣkoṭi* based on the unanswered questions concerning the Tathāgata. At the conclusion, Nāgārjuna states the following to indicate the applicability of the same analyses to the world: “Of what nature is the Tathāgata, of

¹⁴² See especially T. 1544 XXVI 919a9-13 and T. 1545 XXVII 36a26-29.

¹⁴³ Bodhi, *Connected Discourses*, 1079 n. 152.

that nature is this world. The Tathāgata is without essence; this world is without essence.”¹⁴⁴

As discussed earlier (in section 5.3), Nāgārjuna’s argument against the four alternative modes of production, itself can be seen as a subtype of the *catuṣkoṭi* argument, appears to be formulated on the basis of a series of passages in the Āgamas/Nikāyas. More specifically, a close link exists between the *Acela Sutta* and the *Examination of Suffering*, the twelfth chapter of *Mūlamadhyamaka*. After critically examining suffering’s production from the self, the other, both, and neither, the four permutations mentioned in the *Acela Sutta*, Nāgārjuna concludes the chapter too with a statement of the general applicability of the logic device: “Surely, not only do four manners of suffering[’s production] not exist, the four manners of the external things also do not exist.”¹⁴⁵ Here, Nāgārjuna indicates that the four-cornered logical argument used to critically examine internal objects is applicable to the reified external objects as well.

Unlike the *catuṣkoṭi* argument, the fivefold argument must operate on a pair of closely related entities when it is employed to demolish the reified essence, following its literary precedence in the Nikāya Buddhist texts, where the self—or the person of the Tathāgata—is considered alongside aggregates, sense spheres, or elements that are thought to be its constituents. In the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, Nāgārjuna first employs the fivefold argument in the *Examination of Fire and Fuel* (*agnīdhanaparīkṣā*), the tenth chapter of the treatise. After laying out and denying the five permutations of fire’s

¹⁴⁴ MMK XXII 16. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 378: *tathāgato yatsvabhāvas tatsvabhāvam idaṃ jagat/ tathāgato niḥsvabhāvo niḥsvabhāvam idaṃ jagat//*.

¹⁴⁵ MMK XII 9. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 198: *ha kevalaṃ hi duḥkhasya cāturvidhyaṃ na vidyate/ bāhyānāṃ api bhāvānāṃ cāturvidhyaṃ na vidyate//*.

relation with fuel,¹⁴⁶ he says that “by way of fire and fuel the entire [fivefold] procedure of [examining] the self and the appropriated [five aggregates] is explained without excluding any details, along with pot, cloth, and so forth.”¹⁴⁷ In this specific stanza, the analysis of the self and its constituent aggregates are said to be interpreted according to the fivefold analysis of the relationship between fire and fuel, quite the opposite of our argument that the examination of the former pair is rather the source of that of the latter. More importantly, however, Nāgārjuna indicates here as well that the procedure can be applied to other objects such as a pot or a piece of cloth. Both Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti explain at this point that the fivefold argument can be used for the analysis of these objects in such a way that each is examined along with a closely associated object, with which it forms such binary relationships as those between cause and effect, part and whole, quality and qualified, or characteristic and substratum.¹⁴⁸

In a section of the *Ratnāvalī* that deals with the subject of Madhyamaka, the procedures of examining a personal self that is derived from Nikāya Buddhist texts is very clearly applied to other objects. The section of the text is said to be “based on scripture” (I 78d).¹⁴⁹ It critically examines the notion of a reified self by (1) considering the relationship between the self and six elements (stanza I 80) and (2) analyzing the relationship between the self and the aggregates (stanza I 82) in a manner that is very similar to the fivefold analysis used in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*.¹⁵⁰ As discussed earlier (in sections 5.4.5 and 5.4.3), the analyses formulated in the two stanzas are derived from

¹⁴⁶ MMK X 14. See above.

¹⁴⁷ MMK X 15. Ye, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, 176: *agnīndhanābhyām vyākhyāta ātmopādānayoḥ kramah/ sarvo niravaśeṣeṇa sārddham ghaṭapaṭādībhiḥ*. For a detailed interpretation of this stanza, see PPMV 212.18-214.2.

¹⁴⁸ Saito, “Buddhapālita-Mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtti,” 2:154-5; PPMV 213.15-214.2.

¹⁴⁹ Hahn, *Nāgārjuna’s Ratnāvalī*, 33: *ji bzhin lung gi dbang gis bshad*.

¹⁵⁰ For *Ratnāvalī* I 80 and 82, see *ibid.*, 33, 34.

Nikāya Buddhist texts. The process is then extended from the self to the elements themselves. Applying the former procedure, stanza I 81 says: “Just as a person is not real, due to being a composite of six elements, the element each on its own is likewise not real, because of being a composite” (I 81).¹⁵¹ Following the latter procedure, the author creates a binary relation between the earth element and other three elements of water, fire, and wind as a group, so that a similar analysis between the self and aggregates can be applied: “The three elements are not the earth, [they are] not in it, it is not in them, without them [it is] not, each one [of the remaining three] is like that [earth]. Therefore, the elements are false, like the self.”¹⁵²

It has often been argued that the Mahāyāna doctrine of emptiness—the teaching that all entities are devoid of substantial reality or essence (*svabhāva*), often termed as the absence of the self of dharma (*dharmanairātmya*)—is an extension of the early Buddhist teaching of the absence of self (*anātman*). It has been observed that the Mahāyānist in general and Mādhyamikas in particular apply “many of the destructive arguments that early Buddhism had directed against the soul-doctrine” to “any putative entity *whatever*,” so that an “attack on the notion of substances, essences, entities, ontologies, etc. would have subjected these putative dharmas to the same kind of criticism that the early Buddhists had applied to the notion of the self.”¹⁵³ What we have presented in this chapter are specific instances of this process, where Nāgārjuna and the early

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 34: *skyes bu khams drug ‘dus pa’i phyir/ /yang dag ma yin ji lta ba/ /de bzhin khams ni re re la’ang/ /‘dus phyir yang dag nyid du min/ /*.

¹⁵² Ibid.: *‘byung gsum sa min ‘di la min/ /de la ‘di min de med min/ /re re’ang de bzhin de yi phyir/ /‘byung ba rnams kyang bdag bzhin brdzun/ /*. See Ajitamitra’s commentary in Yukihiro, *Ratnāvalīṭikā des Ajitamitra*, 66, on which the words inserted in the brackets are based. All of the four elements (*mahābhūta*) are also members of the group of six elements (*dhātu*, note that the Sanskrit and Tibetan terms are different). Each of the four elements must coexist along with the other three, and the four are regarded as mutually dependent on each other.

¹⁵³ See, for instance, the observations presented in Wood, *Nāgārjunian Disputations*, 42-5.

Mādhyamikas formulate arguments critical of the essence or substantial reality of all dharmas on the basis of the analyses or literary passages originating from Nikāya Buddhist texts. Clearly, an analytic procedure is not bound by its textual provenance—the *yāna* affiliation of its origin does not determine its appropriation nor does it restrict its general applicability. That Nāgārjuna should have turned to Nikāya Buddhist texts for logical structures in the construction of the Madhyamaka system may also be explained by the fact that sustained argumentation is not one of the notable features of Mahāyāna *sūtras*,¹⁵⁴ which often destabilize language and discursive thinking altogether.

5.5 On the Relationship between Scripture and Reason

The analytic procedures that we have considered here are frequently referred to by the Buddhist scholastics as *yukti*, generally translated as “reason.” Such procedures often function practically as arguments in the text, but they also involve interpretation and other aspects of scholastic practices. The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that *yukti* in actual practice may involve very substantial hermeneutical elements, quite in contrast with a romanticized notion of Buddhist rationalism that some modern interpreters prefer to promote. In Buddhist scholastics’ own reflection on the issue, a specific instance that presents the case that *yukti* can be scripturally derived is found in Candrakīrti’s *ṛtti* on Nāgārjuna’s *Yuktiśaṣṭikā*, or *Sixty Stanzas on Reason*. Here, commenting on the *yukti*, or analytic procedures, that Nāgārjuna is about to present in the

¹⁵⁴ See a similar observation made in Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 45-6.

work,¹⁵⁵ Candrakīrti explains that what Nāgārjuna means by *yukti* is “what is collected from scriptures, in whatever scriptures of the king of the sages [the Buddha] it has been spoken, being summarized here in this treatise.”¹⁵⁶

Alongside the impression from Candrakīrti’s statement that *yukti* may simply be something that is extracted from the scriptures, Blo gros chen po’s commentary on *Suḥr̥llekha* conveys a slightly different understanding. According to him, the simple denial of the four permutations of relationship that the self forms with the aggregates stated in stanza forty-nine of *Suḥr̥llekha* are based on the statements in the scripture (*āgama/lung*).¹⁵⁷ After he has identified the elements of scripture, Blo gros chen po also feels compelled to state the *yukti*,¹⁵⁸ which provides justifications as to why each of the permutations are denied. Thus, with regard to the permutation in which the self is equated with form or other aggregates, the denial that “the self is of the essence of form and so forth” is supported by the reason that “it would entail that [the self] would have the nature of impermanence, just like form and so forth.”¹⁵⁹ According to Blo gros chen po’s formulation, *yukti* constitutes additional justification and reason, which contributes to the understanding and appreciation of scripture. In an article on the notions of scripture and

¹⁵⁵ Candrakīrti’s comments is made in the context of explaining Nāgārjuna’s *Yuktiśaṣṭikā* 2cd, which states: *rigs pa gang gis yod pa yang// bzlog par bya ba mnyam par gyis//*. “One should listen to the *yukti*, by which [the view] of existence is to be removed.” See Scherrer-Schaub, *Yuktiśaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 27, 28.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 28: *thub pa ’i dbang po ’i gsung rab de dang de dag las bshad pa ’i gsung rab las btus te/ rab tu byed pa ’dir bsdu pa nyid kyis rigs pa ...*

¹⁵⁷ D (To. 4190) Spring yig, vol. nge, 91a1: *gzugs ni bdag ma yin gsungs la, rnam par shes pa ’i bar yang bdag ma yin zhes gsungs te/ re zhig ’di ni lung gi bdag gzugs la sogs pa ’i ngo bo nyid yin pa bkag pa yin no/*. Concerning the last three permutations, the same text says at 91a4. *’di ’i lan go rims bzhin du bdag gzugs dang ldan min zhes bya ba la sogs pa smos te, re zhig ’di ni lung yin no/*. The four permutations are (1) form and so forth are not the self; (2) the self is not possessed of form and so forth; (3) the self is not in the form and so forth; (4) form and so forth do not abide in the self. These permutations are identified here as having been stated in the scripture or *āgama*.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 91a1-2: *’di la rigs pa gang yin zhe na/*. 91a4: *rigs pa brjod par bya ste/*.

¹⁵⁹ D (To. 4190) Spring yig, vol. nge, 91a1-2: *’di la rigs pa gang yin zhe na, bdag ni gzugs la sogs pa ’i ngo bo nyid ma yin te/ gzugs la sogs pa dang ’dra ba kho nar mi rtag pa nyid du thal bar ’gyur ba ’i phyir ro//*. For the *yukti* given to support the denial of the other three permutations, see *ibid.*, 91a4 ff.

reason in the writings of Bhāviveka, Iida describes *yukti* as a way of interpreting scripture.¹⁶⁰ To frame Iida's interpretation in a slightly different language, *yukti* can simply be said to be a form of informed reading of scripture.

Based on both Iida's reading of Bhāviveka and Blo gros chen po's comments, we may formulate one sense of *yukti*, especially in so far as its relation with scripture is concerned, as Buddhist virtuosos' judicious and cultivated manners of handling scriptural passages, in such acts as reading, interpreting, and reasoning with scripture. Focusing on the logical structures of certain Madhyamaka arguments that Nāgārjuna repeatedly deploys, we have attempted to identify in this chapter a procedure that was used for developing arguments, a form of *yukti* or reason, on the basis of recurrent themes of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures. What should be clear by now is that in the minds of Buddhist scholastics, reason is not divorced from scripture. Valorizing reason above everything else would be a form of reification that is to be avoided.

Being persistent critics of any essentializing tendencies, the early Mādhyamikas are in fact exemplary in their careful avoidance of the reification of this kind. Nāgārjuna goes so far as to claim that he refrains from presenting any thesis whatsoever, lest that the making of an assertion entails the acceptance of essence. When Bhāviveka introduces the systematic use of syllogism in Madhyamaka argumentation based on Dignāga's logic, Candrakīrti's response to Bhāviveka's insistence on *svatantrānumāna*, or independent logic statement, can be characterized as a critique of the reification of reason. Thus, in response to the question posed by an interlocution as to whether the sages utter a

¹⁶⁰ See Iida, "*Āgama* (Scripture) and *Yukti* (Reason) in Bhāvaviveka."

statement that employs reason (*upapatti*),¹⁶¹ Candrakīrti states, “For the sake of enlightening the others, the sages admit whatever reason that is accepted simply from the perspective of the world, and [they] enlighten the world by means of that [reason] alone.”¹⁶² This characterization of reason as simply what others regard as reasonable—neither from the perspective of one’s own nor through reason’s intrinsic rationality—is Candrakīrti’s way of avoiding the reification of reason while still making a logical argument.

Here, the speech of the Buddha as described in the scriptures serves as a paradigm for this Other-oriented reason. At the conclusion of his lengthy critiques both of Bhāviveka’s introduction of independent logical statement into Madhyamaka reasoning (PPMV 14.1-36.2) and Dignāga’s epistemology (PPMV 55.11-75.13), Candrakīrti confirms that he derives the principles of reasoning from the mode of the Buddha’s teaching, rather than dwelling on the “articulation of the characteristics of speculative reason.”¹⁶³ On the former occasion, Candrakīrti states that “the Buddhas benefit disciples who are ignorant of the reality by way of the reason that is acknowledged by [the disciples them]selves.”¹⁶⁴ On the latter occasion, he ends his critical examination of Dignāga’s epistemology with the statement: “Having remained in the view relevant to the

¹⁶¹ PPMV 57.9: *yadi hy āryā upapattiṃ na varṇayanti kena khalv idānīṃ paramārthaṃ lokaṃ bodhayiṣyanti*/. “If the sages indeed do not speak of reason, by which means will they enlighten the world [in the matter of] the ultimate?”

¹⁶² PPMV 57.10-11: *lokata eva yā prasiddhopapattis tāṃ parāvabodhārthaṃ abhyupetya tayaiva lokaṃ bodhayanti*/.

¹⁶³ PPMV 36.1: *tarkalakṣaṇābhīdhānaṃ*. This phrase appears at the end of Candrakīrti’s critique of Bhāviveka’s use of *svatantrānumāna*.

¹⁶⁴ PPMV 36.1-2: *buddhais tadanabhijñāvineyajanānugrahāt*/. LVP notes that the Tibetan translation of *de kho na mi shes pa* presupposes the original Sanskrit of *atattvajñā*, although the phrase *tadanabhijñā* is found in the manuscripts. The reading of the Tibetan translation is adopted here in translation, as the word *tad* or “that” in the phrase *tadanabhijñāvineyajana*, “disciples who are ignorant of that,” is not explained in the context.

world alone, the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, [deliver] the teaching of dharma.”¹⁶⁵ In the Mahāyāna *sūtras* and *śāstras* in circulation at Candrakīrti’s time, the Buddhas are often depicted as teaching in conformity with the thoughts as well as in the languages of the individual members in his audience. In his own *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, Candrakīrti provides a description of the manner in which the Buddhas preach, such that they function with neither conceptual thinking nor effort, and they simply respond through the force of their own previous prayers and in accordance with the receptivity of their listeners.¹⁶⁶

With Candrakīrti’s articulation of an Other-oriented reason, we have an instance where the contents of scriptures contribute conceptually to a notion of reason, rather than furnishing the syntax of the logical arguments. In short, in Buddhist scholastic practices scripture and reason come into various forms of relationship with each other. Although Buddhist themselves recognize both as primary vehicles of scholastic composition, it remains a desideratum for students of Buddhist intellectual history to elucidate the complex ways that scripture and reason relate to each other in practice. We have argued that relying on the scriptures for the articulation of reason is one common procedure. The case of Candrakīrti further illustrates that the early Mādhyamikas were careful not to reify scripture’s rationality in the course of doing so, as for Candrakīrti the sages do not adhere to any intrinsic form of reason; rather, the sages accept what is rational simply from the point of view of the Other. This opinion offers an interesting commentary on the

¹⁶⁵ PPMV 75.12-13: *laukika eva darśane sthitvā buddhānāṃ bhagavatāṃ dharmadeśanā*//.

¹⁶⁶ MABh 360.19-361.8 ad MA XII 6-7: *sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das 'di dag da ltar de ltar rnam par rtog pa mi mnga' zhing' yid bzhin gyi nor bu dang dpag bsam gyi shing dang 'dra bar ji ltar 'tsham par sems can gyi don sgrub pa lhur mdzad cing ... byang chub sems dpas sngar smon lam gang btab pa'i smon lam de'i shugs dang' gdul ba rnams kyi rnam pa de lta bu'i chos nyan par 'gyur ba'i las yongs su smin pa las bya ba'i phyir de 'dra ba dag mngon pa yin no/ de ltar na da ltar skyes pa'i 'bad rtsol med par de kho na nyid nye bar ston pa dang ...*

historical origin of *catuskoṭi* in general and the critique of four alternative modes of production in particular as forms of Madhyamaka reasoning, in light of the evidence presented in this chapter. If our contention is valid, Nāgārjuna was relying on the early Buddhist scriptures in the design of these logical devices, while the source of these forms of analysis dates back to a pre-Buddhist period. The patterns of these analyses were apparently frequently used by the brahmins and ascetics around the early period of Buddhist history, and they were recorded in the Buddhist scriptures as the Buddhists interacted with the intellectuals in the Indian society.

5.6 Reflections

Using the literature of the Madhyamaka school of thought in India as an example, the previous and the present chapters aimed to elucidate the processes through which the Buddhist *śāstras* become the vehicles that carry, along with themselves, the materials of the earlier Buddhist texts in the formation of a new tradition. Chapter Four treated how the treatises' and commentaries' citation practices, often serving the purpose of justifying specific interpretive agenda, lead to the conglomeration of a body of passages from the *āgama*, being selected and weaved into the fabric of the scholastic texts. The present chapter examined how certain elements of the earlier scriptures contribute to the logical structures of Madhyamaka reasoning.

In light of the evidence considered thus far, Nāgārjuna's reliance on the elements of scripture in the design of certain Madhyamaka arguments bears resemblance to Dignāga's use of Abhidharma in the construction of a Buddhist epistemology discussed in Chapter Two. While the originator of the Madhyamaka system searched the

Āgama/Nikāya literature for syntax of argumentation, Dignāga turned to the resources in the Abhidharma texts for the elucidation of the natures of perception and inference, which are epistemological categories that had been used in the pan-Indian *pramāṇa* theory. In both cases, as the elements of the authoritative texts are transformed and organically incorporated into the philosophical systems, the derived forms' ancestral affiliation tends to be forgotten. In the case of the Madhyamaka school, the *śāstras* and commentaries are generally reticent on the source of *catuskoṭi* and the analysis of four alternative modes of production. The Madhyamaka commentators before Candrakīrti were also silent on the scriptural basis of Nāgārjuna's fivefold argument. It appears that *yukti* tends to assume a life of its own.

Candrakīrti appears to be the first Madhyamaka author who explicitly writes about the connection between Nāgārjuna's fivefold argument and Nikāya Buddhist scriptures. He links the five permutations of the argument with the twenty views of real personality, which uses four of the five permutations in relation to each of the five aggregates.¹⁶⁷ He recognizes that the twenty views, which are analyzed in the Abhidharma texts, have been presented in the *sūtras*,¹⁶⁸ which is apparently a reference to the *sūtras* in Āgama/Nikāya collection. His further mention of an imagery of destroying the twenty views of real personality with the diamond of wisdom betrays his awareness of the passages concerning the twenty views in the Vinaya texts.¹⁶⁹ Candrakīrti's

¹⁶⁷ See MABh 266-6 ad MA VI 144, where Candrakīrti comments on the relationship between Nāgārjuna's five permutations and the four permutations of the twenty views of real personality.

¹⁶⁸ MABh 267.6-7 ad MA VI 144: 'jig tshogs la lta ba'i cha de dag ni mdo sde las rnam par bzhag la.

¹⁶⁹ See MABh 267-8 ad MA VI 145. At MABh 267.14-16, Candrakīrti says that the imagery is used in *āgama*: 'jig tshogs la lta ba'i ri'i rse mo nyi shu mtho ba yes shes kyi rdo rjes bcom nas rgyun tu zhugs pa'i 'bras bu mngon du byas so zhes gang lung las gsungs pa ni. As discussed in Chapter Two, the term *āgama* can refer to the Vinaya texts. For the use of this imagery in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* Vinaya, see T. 1442 XXIII 753a22-23, 813c12-13, 836c6-7, 875a18-19, 895a10-11; T. 1447 XXIII 1052a9-10, T. 1448 XXIV 14b29-c1, 14c15-16, 16b15, 27a27-28, 44b16-20; T. 1450 XXIV 141b1-2, 192b11-12, 192b18; T. 1451 XXIV 225a21-22, 243a23, 303c5-6, 331c16-17; T. 1452 XXIV 440c4-5.

recognition of Nāgārjuna's indebtedness to the Nikāya Buddhist scriptures in their major divisions in the formulation of the fivefold argument leads to his somewhat innovative decision from the Madhyamaka standpoint. He reserves the argument mainly for the demonstration of the early Buddhist theme of the absence of a personal self, which does not have a significant role to play in Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. A large section of *Madhyamakāvatāra* and his own *bhāṣya* are devoted to the treatment of the absence of self,¹⁷⁰ an unusual presence in a Madhyamaka treatise.

In his presentation of the argument against a personal self, Candrakīrti adds two more permutations—(6) the self is the collection of the aggregates, (7) the self is the shape [of the aggregate of form and so forth]—to the five modes of Nāgārjuna's argument. As he later became a central figure in Tibetan Buddhism, the sevenfold argument as he had formulated came to occupy a prominent place in Madhyamaka reasoning, along with the examination of the four modes of production that he uses to argue for the absence of the self of all dharmas. As the present chapter demonstrates, these two enduring forms of Madhyamaka argument originate from the specific literary patterns of early Buddhist texts, while both exist in a transformed state in the final forms that they assume.

Our study of how these arguments developed historically shows that the Mādhyamikas have a concern for logic, as they often attempted to exhaust all the possible permutations when they examine the presumed essences of entities. However, in the design of their arguments, they accommodate preexisting forms by incorporating patterns of scriptural passages and analogies, while also responding to the views held by their

¹⁷⁰ The discussion of the absence of personal self occupies MABh 233.14-288.9 ad MA VI 120-165. The extension of the argument to the analysis of other entities occurs only in MA VI 166-167 and MABh

opponents or interlocutors. Given the intimate relationship that exists between *āgama* and *yukti*, reason in the context of Buddhist scholastic practices should by no means be seen as autonomous. Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* and Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* are among the most innovative writings in Buddhist literature. Even in these exemplary works of Buddhist philosophy, there is a place for scriptural exegesis, by means of which the aspects of the older texts open themselves up to accommodate the purposes and the natures of the new projects. Scriptural exegesis imbedded in religious innovation does not depend upon the closure of a canon. Indeed, in all the cases examined in this dissertation, the uses of scripture are without exception selective. It is the nature of the acts of ingenuity to extend what existed before.¹⁷¹

thereupon (pp. 288-9).

¹⁷¹ See Jonathan Z. Smith's formulation of the relationship between canon and exegesis in his "Sacred Persistence." Although I would suggest to replace "canon" with "scripture" in the Mahāyāna Buddhist context, this dissertation is largely a form of investigation that he has conceived in his influential essay.

Conclusion

This dissertation is a study of both the concept and uses of scripture in the scholastic Buddhist traditions, and it focuses primarily on the writings of Candrakīrti, a pivotal figure in the history of Buddhist thought, and a group of Buddhist thinkers who are connected with him. As a study that concerns itself with the use of scripture, our investigations often bring us to a situation where a scholastic text relates itself to a group of other texts, which it accepts as the scriptural authority. Our analyses, however, have consistently dismantled a supposition of a stable binary relationship between scripture and commentary that involves a fixed boundary. Our study began an examination of Buddhist notions of scripture through an exploration of the term of *āgama*. A close examination has shown that this Buddhist term for scripture has continuously been used to designate new categories of authoritative texts throughout the Buddhist history. We demonstrated this tendency by showing, in particular, how Abhidharma texts in Nikāya Buddhism and later scholastic treatises of Mahāyāna received the designation of *āgama* or its Tibetan equivalent *lung*. Such a process essentially brings texts of exegetical and

derivative nature under the rubric of scripture, and it concurs with the development and intensification of scholastic Buddhist cultures, where scholastic texts play an especially important role, sometimes even surpassing that of earlier scriptures.

We then turned to scholastic texts, which take the form of *śāstra*, the literary media of Buddhist scholastic practices, or simply that of commentary. Among its characteristic features, our analyses have highlighted *śāstra*'s derivative and hermeneutical aspect, which manifest in a tendency to develop its text and ideas in dependence upon earlier authoritative texts. Wilfred C. Smith has developed his idea of scripture as a relational concept primarily in the context of scripture's relationship with religious communities. The exploration of *āgama* and *śāstra*, however, allows us to see scripture as a relational entity also in its interconnection with commentary especially in the scholastic traditions. In this context, the reading of scripture is often mediated by the interpretive models provided by *śāstras*. At times, *śāstras* may function virtually as scripture in relation to the subsequent interpretive traditions that are developed from it or form a secondary scriptural canon. Moreover, *śāstras*' selective use of the contents from the vast scriptural sources may determine for a Buddhist community a portion of scriptures in active use. In such situations, the manners in which commentary relates to scripture show that scripture is constituted by its own reception.

Buddhist traditions routinely describe both scripture and reason as the basic instruments of the scholastic endeavors. Modern scholars of Buddhist have often been hesitant about the use of scripture in the scholastic texts, being conscious of a cultural otherness that they perceive in the practice, while preferring to emphasize the role of reason. Much has been said about reason already. This dissertation makes a general

argument that the nature of Buddhist scholastic enterprise cannot be fully comprehended without taking into account the multifaceted roles that scripture performs, which can be studied by examining the instances of the use of scripture that manifest in the scholastic texts. In support of this argument, the dissertation explores two forms of evidence in these texts: scriptural citation and the incorporation of scriptural elements into the philosophical systems. The specific instances of the use of scripture preserve for us a range of textual strategies, demonstrate the liveliness of Buddhist intellectual cultures, and reveal the fundamental hermeneutical character of the scholastic inquiry.

Scriptural citation is one specific sense of the term *āgama*, which embodies the selectivity in the use of scripture, in a context where the Buddhist scholastics engages with a particular segment of scripture. One form of the scriptural citation practice involves the use of scriptural passages in an argument to supports the views held by a Buddhist community. The examples that we have considered demonstrate a range of routine processes including reasoning with scripture, formulating an argument on the basis of a scriptural passage, and managing the structure of the scriptural corpus in correlation with one's own philosophical system. The Madhyamaka writers' uses of Nikāya Buddhist scriptures, examined in Chapter Four, further show that the exchange that took place between a Mahāyāna group and the mainstream Buddhist community often centered on the question of scriptural interpretation. How the two Buddhist groups viewed each other's primary scriptures, therefore, define to a considerable extent the relationship between the two groups.

Buddhist writers' frequent use of scriptural citations indicates that engagement with scripture constitutes an important aspect of their thought processes and literary

activities. But not all the scriptural sources that they cite come to their attention through their independent study of these texts. C. W. Huntington and Ulrich Timme Kragh have already made the observation that Madhyamaka writers often repeat the scriptural passages that have been used by their predecessors who are close to them in time. Our study also demonstrated that many scriptural sources used by the Indian Mādhyamika Candrakīrti passed unto the Tibetan writer Tsong kha pa eight centuries later. The circulation of scriptural passage, similes, and narrative speaks for a strong dependent nature of *śāstra* composition. The shared scriptural quotations constitute a significant component of a practical canon. The understanding of the maintenance and gradual change of such a body of scriptural passages in a scholastic tradition is important for the understanding of how scripture is used.

A second form of the use of scripture is found in the evidence of the inclusion of scriptural elements in the development of Buddhist philosophical thought. In this area, we have examined the links between the Dignāga's work on epistemology and earlier Abhidharma texts and the traces of Nikāya/Āgama passages in Nāgārjuna's metaphysical arguments. In the former case, we have demonstrated that Dignāga's epistemological categories of perception and inference are transformations of two groups of consciousness delineated in the older Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts. In the area of Madhyamaka argumentation, we discovered that the designs of a group of logical statements follow closely the literary patterns of certain Nikāya/Āgama passages. In these areas of Buddhist thought, Buddhist writers such as Dignāga and Nāgārjuna undoubtedly displayed novelty in their engagements in the new forms of inquiry, often in response to the need of new religious and cultural contexts. However, such ingenuity functions

alongside an exegetical component of their work, as they searched for existing categories, patterns, and structures that they can work with. In the writings of these major writers of classical Indian Buddhism, hermeneutics cannot be separated from other areas of Buddhist philosophy.

The aim of these investigations is not to show that philosophy in the innovative Buddhist writings is diluted by religious concerns. Rather, the recognition of the necessity of hermeneutics indicates an awareness of the contingent nature of reason. Indeed, Mahāyāna writers such as Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti were particularly conscious of the problems of reifying reason and granting autonomy upon it. Our study of the history of some of the most enduring arguments in Madhyamaka thought has shown that reason in its form as philosophical argumentation contains within itself such disparate elements as logic, culturally embedded expressions, preexisting literary patterns from scriptures, the use of analogy, and the response to the views held by the opponents. The use of scripture in the novel philosophical projects indicates Buddhist writers acknowledgement of reason's contingency upon tradition and language, rather than conceiving reason as an autonomous entity. With this heightened awareness of the hermeneutical aspects of Buddhist *śāstras*, we suggest that the history of Buddhist thought be viewed in part as a process of unfolding of texts, with in terms of their contents and literary patterns.

The aim of our study is to become aware of the hermeneutical component of the acts of ingenuity, to understand the complex roles that tradition plays, to appreciate the thoughtfulness in the reflections on scripture, and to charter the rule-governed exegetical enterprise in Buddhist scholastic practices. In this dissertation, we have examined two

groups of texts: “independent” Buddhist *śāstras* and the texts that explicitly formulate themselves as commentaries on these *śāstras*, with emphasis placed on both explicit scriptural citations and implicit incorporation of the contents of earlier scriptures. Apart from these two literary forms, there are other Indian Buddhist genres that are particularly valuable for the study of the use of scripture. For instance, *sūtra* commentaries, for which both Chinese and Tibetan scriptural catalogs have reserved a separate category,¹ are the texts that contain a treasure trove of information on how scriptural exegesis is practiced. Another textual category is scriptural anthology, represented by such texts as *Sūtrasamuccaya*,² *Śikṣāsamuccaya*,³ and *Mahāsūtrasamuccaya*.⁴ These texts are the sources for learning how Buddhist writers anthologize elements from scriptures and organizing them based on specific principles. Moreover, the tantric Buddhist texts can supply information especially on the ritual uses of scripture. Future studies will need to take up these various literary genres and examine both the range and types of the texts that are used by specific Buddhist communities and the textual strategies that have been employed to use them.

The Buddhist *śāstras* and commentaries have preserved for us the most substantial amount of literary remains for the study of Buddhist *āgama* in India, providing a vantage point of the acts of using and handlings scripture. As we gradually collate various types of evidence, a comprehensive understanding of the formation and maintenance of shared and group-specific practical canons will begin to emerge. In the matter of textual practices, this study has emphasized the use of scripture in

¹ T. 1505-1535 and To. 3981-4019.

² To. 3934 and T. 1635. The Tibetan translation is edited in Pāsādika Bhikkhu ed., *Nāgārjuna's Sūtrasamuccaya: a critical edition of the mDo kun las btus pa* (København: Akademisk forlag, 1991).

argumentation. However, the actual ways of using scripture are very diverse. Even in Candrakīrti's writings, the instances of scriptural citation are often not concerned with the probative aspect of his work. On many occasions, the Mahāyāna *sūtra* passages that he cites corroborate the points that he makes by literary means, which may take the form, for instance, of enacting an idea with a narrative. Sometimes, a discussion may trigger roughly related stanzas familiar to Candrakīrti or his tradition to be recalled from the memory. These instances of scripture's use open a window to the textual practices of a scholastic culture.

³ To. 3940 and T. 1636. Sanskrit edited in Cecil Bendall, ed., *Śikṣāsamuccaya: A Compendium of Buddhist Teaching* (St. Pétersbourg: Commissionnaires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1902).

⁴ To. 3961.

Abbreviations

AK	<i>Abhidharmakośa</i> . See Śāstrī (1998).
AKBh	<i>Abhidharmakośabhāṣya</i> . See Śāstrī (1998)
AN	<i>Aṅguttaranikāya</i> . See Morris et al. (1955-1961)
D	The Sde dge edition of the Tibetan Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur
L	The Lhasa edition of the Tibetan Bka' 'gyur
LRChM	<i>Lam rim chen mo</i> . See Tsong kha pa (1985)
LVP	Louis de La Vallée Poussin
MA	<i>Madhyamakāvatāra</i> . See La Vallée Poussin (1907-1912)
MABh	<i>Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya</i> . See La Vallée Poussin (1907-1912)
MMK	<i>Mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i> . See Ye (2011)
MN	<i>Majjhimanikāya</i> . See V. Trenckner and Robert Chalmers (1888-1925)
P	The Peking edition of the Tibetan Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur
PPMV	<i>Prasannapadā</i> . See La Vallée Poussin (1903-13)
PS	<i>Pramāṇasamuccaya</i> . See Hattori (1968) and Steinkellner (2005) on Chapter One
PSV	<i>Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti</i> . See Hattori (1968) and Steinkellner (2005) on Chapter One
PTS	Pali Text Society
R	Tucci's manuscript of the <i>Prasannapadā</i> , designed as R in de Jong (1978)
SĀ	The Chinese translation of <i>Samyuktāgama</i> . T. 99

- SR *Samādhirājasūtra*. See Vaidya (1961)
- SN *Samyuttanikāya*. See Feer (1984-1904)
- T. The Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist scriptural collection. See
Takakusu Junjirō and Kaigyoku Watanabe (1924-1932)
- Tib. Tibetan
- To. The text numbers of the Sde dge edition of the Tibetan Bka' 'gyur and
Bstan 'gyur as assigned in Ui Hakuju et al. (1934)

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