The Origins of Om Manipadme Hūṃ
A Study of the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra
Alexander Studholme

Om Manipadme Hūṃ, perhaps the most well-known of all Buddhist mantras, lies at the heart of the Tibetan system and is cherished by both layman and lama alike. This book documents the origins of the mantra, presents a new interpretation of its meaning, and includes a detailed, annotated précis of the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra, opening up this important Mahāyāna Buddhist work to a wider audience.

The Kāraṇḍavyūha—the earliest textual source for Om Manjusri Hūṃ—describes both the compassionate activity of Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva whose power the mantra invokes, and the mythical tale of the search for and discovery of the mantra. Through a detailed analysis of this sūtra, Studholme explores the historical and doctrinal forces behind the appearance of Om Manjusri Hūṃ in India at around the middle of the first millennium C.E. He argues that the Kāraṇḍavyūha has close affinities to non-Buddhist purāṇic literature, and that the conception of Avalokiteśvara and his six-syllable mantra is informed by the conception of the Hindu deity Śiva and his five-syllable mantra Nāmōḥ Śūdyā. The sūtra reflects an historical situation in which the Buddhist monastic establishment was coming into contact with Buddhist tantric practitioners, themselves influenced by Śaiva practitioners.

"This book provides a very good example of the phenomenon of religious integration, and clearly shows how Buddhism managed to integrate ideas and practices from another spiritual tradition."
—Francis Braudel, author of The Concept of Bodhicitta in Śāntideva’s Bodhicaryāvalīśāra

"It was fascinating to read the author’s brilliant insights into the synchronic construction of early tantric Mahāyāna Buddhist materials like the Kāraṇḍavyūha."
—John J. Makransky, author of Buddhism Embodied:
Sources of Controversy in India and Tibet

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ix

INTRODUCTION
The Importance of Om Manipadme Haim 1

CHAPTER 1
Background to the Kriyanjanya Sutra 9

CHAPTER 2
Paracetic Influence on the Kriyanjanya Sutra 19

CHAPTER 3
Avalokitesvara as the Buddhist Tanara 37

CHAPTER 4
Om Manipadme Haim and Namah Satiya 61

CHAPTER 5
Om Manipadme Haim and the Mahayana 77

CHAPTER 6
The Meaning of Om Manipadme Haim 105

CONCLUSION
The Original Six-Syllable Formula? 119

APPENDIX
Annotated Precis of the Kriyanjanya Sutra 121

Notes 155
Bibliography 205
Index 215
Index to Appendix 221
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INTRODUCTION

The Importance of Om Mani Padme Häm

The six-syllable Buddhist formula Om Mani Padme Häm needs little introduction. Its form and meaning have long been discussed, though seldom, it must be said, with great accuracy, by European travelers to Tibet and its surrounding regions. In 1254, in what would appear to be the earliest such reference to the formula, the Franciscan friar William of Rubruck remarked of the Mongolians of Karakorum: ‘‘Wherever they go they have in their hands a string of one or two hundred beads, like our rosaries, and they always repeat these words, om mani padme hum, which is ‘‘God, thou knowest, ‘‘ as one of them interpreted it to me, and they expect as many rewards from God as they remember God in saying this.’’

At the end of the twentieth century, following the Tibetan diaspora of the last forty years, the influence of Om Mani Padme Häm is no longer confined to the outer reaches of Central Asia. Just as the single syllable Om has become almost universally understood as a symbol of things both Indian and religious, so too has Om Mani Padme Häm begun to establish a place for itself in the popular consciousness of the West. That is to say, it is familiar not merely to Western Buddhists. Increasingly, as the formula appears in a wider and wider variety of different contexts, people with no obvious allegiance to Buddhism will admit to some sense of recognition at the sound or sight of the syllables Om Mani Padme Häm.

In Tibetan Buddhist culture, of course, the formula is ubiquitous: it is the most important mantra associated with the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the Buddhist equivalent of the patron deity of Tibet. Om Mani Padme Häm is, to begin with, a prominent visual feature of the landscape, carved and painted onto the rocks that line a road or a path, written in huge letters high up on a hillside, or present in monumental form in the so-called mani-walls (in Tibetan, mani gong). The glorified dry-stone walls that are constructed entirely out of rocks each inscribed with a sacred formula, which, as the name of these edifices would suggest, is most often Om Mani Padme Häm. Om Mani Padme Häm is also (with few exceptions) the formula that, in printed form, fills the “prayer wheels” (mani chos ‘khor) of the Tibetan religious
The Origins of Om Mani Padme Hum

World. These are the cylinders or drums—sometimes large and sometimes small—which line the outside walls of monasteries and temples, waiting to be spun around by visitors, as well as the personal, hand-held contraptions, kept revolving by a gentle flicking of the wrist. Prayer wheels are also found, in different shapes and sizes, harnessed to the power of mountain streams, to the currents of hot air rising from butter lamps, and even, in modern times, to the flow of electric currents.1

The simple recitation of Om Mani Padme Hum, usually accompanied, as William of Rubruck observed, by the bowing of prayer beads, is also the most popular religious practice of the Tibetan Buddhist system. The formula, it would be true to say, constitutes an essential part of the texture of Tibetan life. Its sound can be heard at any time of the day and in any kind of situation.2 It is almost as if, as the following rather lyrical passage by the German Lama Govinda suggests, the Tibetan world is constantly humming with the subtle vibration of Avalokitesvara’s six-syllable mantra. Govinda writes:

“The deep devotion with which this hopeful message was accepted and taken to heart by the people of Tibet is demonstrated by the innumerable rock-inscriptions and votive-stones on which the sacred formula of Avalokitesvara is millionfold engraved. It is on the lips of all pilgrims, it is the last prayer of the dying and the hope of the living. It is the eternal melody of Tibet, which the faithful hears in the murmuring of brooks, in the thundering of waterfalls and in the howling of storms, just as it greets him from rocks and mani-stones, which accompany him everywhere, on wild caravan tracks and on lofty passes.”3

As well as being an essential component of the exoteric side of Tibetan religious life, Om Mani Padme Hum is also an important constituent of the more private or esoteric part of Tibetan religious practice. It would be practically impossible, for instance, to count every occasion on which the formula is used, incidentally, in the course of all the many different rites and rituals of Tibetan Buddhism.4 In general, however, the use of Om Mani Padme Hum is regarded not as an adjunct to other, more vital forms of religious procedure, but as a powerful means of spiritual development in its own right. It is a basic, foundational practice taught to children and beginners.5 Yet it is also a practice that not even the most advanced practitioner would ever wish to leave behind.6 Its recitation is one of the central pillars of the Tibetan religious system.7

In order to give a particular focus to this recitation, a large number of sadhana texts—step-by-step invocations of supernormal beings—connected to the formula were composed, each culminating in a concentrated session of the repetition of Om Mani Padme Hum in conjunction with the visualization of a particular form of Avalokitesvara. The Tibetan brtan gyur contains a number of sadakyas (or padakcrets) —six-syllable—sadhana.8 These works continued to be composed in Tibet long after the definitive creation of a fixed Tibetan Buddhist canon in the first part of the fourteenth century.9 But, possibly the most extraordinary and most mysterious application of Om Mani Padme Hum is its use in the so-called Black Hat (obsa nag) ceremony of the Karma blo gsum school of Tibetan Buddhism, during which the Karmapa, the lama who sits at the head of that particular sect, is believed to manifest as a form of Avalokitesvara while slowly reciting the six-syllable formula and while wearing a special black crown, given to the fifth Karmapa by the Chinese emperor at the beginning of the fifteenth century.10

Finally, Om Mani Padme Hum plays another important role in Tibetan life as a mode of collective religious practice. On particular occasions and over the course of several days, people will gather together to recite the formula as many times as they are able. Again, though this is a form of practice which may be performed with regard to a variety of different mantras, the one most often used in this respect is, undoubtedly, Om Mani Padme Hum. I myself saw this activity going on while staying at the Tibetan refugee settlement at Clement Town in North India during the winter of 1992–93, when, at the time of the Tibetan New Year, everyone in the colony was encouraged to recite Om Mani Padme Hum. A large tent was set up in the forecourt of one of the three monasteries of the settlement precisely for this purpose and each person engaged in the practice was asked to keep a record of the number of recitations he or she had achieved, so that, at the end of the week, a grand total might be calculated and this number conveyed to Dharamsala, the seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile, where the blessings accumulated in the process might be dedicated to the well-being of the Dalai Lama. During this time, I would be woken, early each morning, by the sound of my landlord and his two young children busily muttering the formula. Later that year, in the course of a trip into Tibet itself, I discovered a group of people, mainly elderly, gathered in the courtyard of a temple in Lhassa occupied in precisely the same way, reciting Om Mani Padme Hum in order that the accumulated number of recitations might be sent to the Dalai Lama.11

Given the great importance of Om Mani Padme Hum in Tibetan Buddhism, an academic study devoted entirely to the history of the formula did not seem unwarranted. To this end, my original intention had been to trace the complete historical trajectory of the formula, from its original inception in India to its establishment as one of the linchpins of the Tibetan Buddhist system. Some preliminary research was, therefore, conducted into the avenues by which the formula reached Tibet from India and into the means by which it was subsequently promoted by the Tibetans themselves. However, it soon became apparent that the Kramanjangtsha Sutra, the earliest textual source for
any mention of Om Mani padme Hūṃ and a text that has, hitherto, been largely overlooked by Western scholarship, does not just mention the formula in passing, but may, in fact, be seen as a work whose central concern is the dissemination of the formula. It seemed justifiable, then, to devote all my energies to an analysis of this stūtra, in order to see what this might reveal about the place of Om Mani padme Hūṃ within the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism. What findings I managed to make on the later history of the formula are, occasionally, used in the support of this more modest project. Meanwhile, a complete history of Om Mani padme Hūṃ must remain a thing of the future, involving as it would, the mastery of a wide range of Tibetan literary sources.

The first chapter of this book, then, introduces the reader to the Kārṇaṇḍaṅgha Sūtra, discussing both the internal and external evidence for its likely date and place of origin and providing a brief survey of its treatment, to date, in Buddhist academic studies. A detailed, annotated précis of the stūtra, made from the Sanskrit edition of the text produced by P. L. Vaidya and published as part of the Mahāyāna Sūtra Samgraha by the Mithila Institute of Dharbhanga in 1961,15 with reference, also, to the Tibetan version of the text found in the Peking edition of the bka’i rgyur,16 forms an appendix to the thesis. The making of this précis was, naturally, essential to my own analysis of the stūtra. It is, I believe, worthy of inclusion here not only because, without it, my own presentation and argument might seem a little obscure to a reader unfamiliar with the text, but also, because I hope it will be of some interest and use to scholars working in this field. No definitive Sanskrit edition of the Kārṇaṇḍaṅgha has yet been produced—the language of the work is difficult and the text exists in a number of subtly different versions—putting a proper English translation of the stūtra beyond the scope of the present, historical study.17

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are intended to show that, from an historical point of view, the six-syllable formula Om Mani padme Hūṃ represents a Buddhist adaptation of the five-syllable Saivite formula Namah Śiva. Chapter 2 establishes, initially, that there is a strong connection between the Kārṇaṇḍaṅgha Sūtra and the non-Buddhist puruṣārtha tradition. The discussion dwells principally on an analysis of different versions of the etamana-anatāta—the story of Viṣṇu’s incarnation as a dwarf—found both in the stūtra and in various different puruṣārthas. The Kārṇaṇḍaṅgha, the chapter concludes, seems to have been written in a religious milieu in which Śiva was the dominant god, complemented harmoniously by the other great puruṣārtha deity Viṣṇu. More specifically, it is argued, the evidence suggests that there may be a particular relationship between the stūtra and the Saivite Śkanda Purāṇa.

Chapter 3 shows that, in the Kārṇaṇḍaṅgha, Avalokiteśvara appears as an ātivar (lord) and puruṣa (cosmic man or person) in the mold of the two great puruṣārtha deities. In keeping with the findings of the previous chapter, though, certain details of this conception of the bodhisattva betray a distinctively Saivite, rather than Viṣṇu, influence. We discuss the way in which this presentation of the bodhisattva is tailored to the demands of accepted Buddhist doctrine and integrated with the roles and attributes of Avalokiteśvara already established in earlier Mahāyāna stūtras. The chapter ends by tracing the evolution of the bodhisattva, from his first appearance under the original name of Avalokiteśvara as an attendant of the Bodhisattva Amithābbha and Śākyamuni, to his emergence as the supreme Buddhist tārā.

Chapter 4 examines the similarities—and differences—between the treatment of Om Mani padme Hūṃ in the Kārṇaṇḍaṅgha Sūtra and the treatment of Namah Śiva in Saivite texts (principally the Śkanda Purāṇa and Śīva Purāṇa). Both the five- and the six-syllable formulae are presented as the hyāga, or “heart,” of their respective tārās. Both are said to be sui generis methods of attaining liberation. Both are promoted as forms of practice that are available to everyone, regardless of social or religious status. At the same time, both are shown to be somewhat secret and difficult to obtain. Furthermore, just as Namah Śiva is explicitly presented as a developed form of the Vedic prapana Om, so too is Om Mani padme Hūṃ described in terms that indicate that it, too, is to be regarded as a kind of prapana. The presentation of Namah Śiva, however, is illustrated in the puruṣārtha by a story about the marriage between a king and queen, presupposing, I suggest, an understanding of the Śivaite formula in terms of the doctrine of lakti, the energetic, female dimension of the male deity. Such a story is noticeably absent in the stūtra.

Chapter 5 argues that the treatment of Om Mani padme Hūṃ in the Kārṇaṇḍaṅgha represents the reconfiguration, by the Mahāyāna monastic establishment, of a practice first propagated by lay Buddhist tārā practitioners. The stūtra is clearly written from the monastic point of view. Instead of a story about an (eventually) happy marriage, the stūtra’s long section on Om Mani padme Hūṃ is prefaced by a story about the shipwreck of the seafaring king Sīmabala and his subsequent escape from the clutches of a band of rakṣasas, man-eating demons, who are disguised as beautiful women—a tale more obviously in tune with the monastic temperament. More conclusively, the end of the stūtra also includes a teaching on monastic discipline, laying heavy emphasis on the importance of preventing non-celibate practitioners from making their homes in the monastery. Yet, the preceptor who grants initiation into the use of Om Mani padme Hūṃ is said to be married. The characteristics of this man are those of an antimoniam, free-living tārā practitioner. This reading is supported by an association made, in the stūtra, between Om Mani padme Hūṃ and the idea of the vidyādhara, the “holder of knowledge,” a figure almost synonymous with the mahāsiddha, the archetypal tārā practitioner.
The presentation of *Om Mani padme Hum* in the *Kāraṇḍaṅgāyāha*, it seems, describes the adaptation of a practice that originated in tantric circles to the doctrinal and ethical framework of Mahāyāna monasticism.

Doctrinally, then, the *sūtra* is the result of a process of creative religious synthesis. Significantly, for example, *Om Mani padme Hum* is presented in a number of different ways as analogous to the Perfection of Wisdom and, finally, as greater than the Perfection of Wisdom. This would appear to express the idea that *Om Mani padme Hum*, as a form of the *prajñā*, supersedes the Perfection of Wisdom as the supreme principle of the Mahāyāna. Thus, certain aspects of the tantric-style origins of the formula are preserved. Initiation into the use of *Om Mani padme Hum*, for instance, is said to be dependent on the use of a tantric-style mantra. However, the central figure of this mantra is not Avalokiteśvara, but the Buddha Amitābha. This is symbolic of the fact that the concise formula of Avalokiteśvara is now placed within a Mahāyāna doctrinal system in which rebirth in Sukhāvatī, the pure land of Amitābha, is the overarching religious goal and, also, of the fact that the use of the formula is now to be understood as one of the many Mahāyāna practices that are believed to lead to this goal. Recitation of *Om Mani padme Hum* is no longer presented as a means of engagement with the *sakti* of the *sūtra*, but is reconfigured as a form of the traditional Mahāyāna practice of the nāmanmanḍūrya, or "bringing to mind the name," of Avalokiteśvara, commonly associated with the goal of Sukhāvatī.

The *sūtra* manages to avoid, almost entirely, any allusion to the conception of the concise formula as *sakti*. This, I suggest, is deliberate. With its sexual connotations, the characteristically tantric doctrine of *sakti* is perhaps not best suited to the training of monastic practitioners. Instead, the *Kāraṇḍaṅgāyāha* roots the use of *Om Mani padme Hum* in a scheme borrowed from the bhūtikā, or "devotional," side of the purūṣā sacrific. Recitation of the formula is said to lead to rebirth in worlds contained within the hair pores of Avalokiteśvara's body. This is a reworking, I suggest, of a doctrine classically expressed in chapter eleven of the *Bhagavadgītā*. There, Arjuna "sees" (pañjitu) a cosmic form of the *īśvara* Kṛṣṇa that contains the whole universe and is then taught the doctrine of *bhūtikā* as a means of making this experience his own.

By the time the *Kāraṇḍaṅgāyāha Sūtra* was constructed, of course, the theology of the Bhagavadgītā was common to both the Vaiṣṇavite and the Śaivite traditions alike. The so-called *Īśavasī śūtra*, for instance, presents a Śaivite version of the teaching.

In the *sūtra*, the cosmic form of the Buddhist *īśvara* is expressed anew in Mahāyāna terms. The amazing attributes of Avalokiteśvara's body mimic those of Samantabhadra, the great bodhisattva of the *Avatāraśaka Sūtra*, a debt that the *Kāraṇḍaṅgāyāha* explicitly acknowledges by alluding several times to Samantabhadra and even, at one point, describing a kind of duel—a *śamādhi*

context (samādhisūtra)—between the two bodhisattvas, which Avalokiteśvara, naturally, wins. Just as the Bhagavadgītā promotes bhūtikā, through the use of the Vedic *prajñā* *Om*, as a means of entering the vision of the Vaiṣṇavite *Īśvara*, so the *Kāraṇḍaṅgāyāha* promotes the nāmanmanḍūrya of the Buddhist *prajñā* *Om* Mani *padme Hum* as a means of entering the vision of the Buddhist *īśvara*. The vision of the cosmic Avalokiteśvara is itself assimilated with the central Mahāyāna doctrine of Sukhāvatī, when this manifestation of the bodhisattva is said, in the *sūtra*, to lead beings to Amitābha's pure land: the purūṣā sacrific doctrine of "seeing" (prajñā) the *īśvara* is syncretized with the Mahāyāna doctrine of rebirth in the Buddha's pure land.

Finally, chapter 6 turns to the vexed issue of the meaning of the six-syllable formula. The true meaning of *Om Mani padme Hum*, it is argued, reflects this syncretism. The middle four syllables of the mantra, "*mani padme hum*," are not, as has been variously suggested, to be translated as the (grammatically unfeasible) "jewel (mani) in the lotus (padme)" or even as the vocative ("O thou") with the jewel and lotus, but as the locative compound "in the jewel-lotus," or "in the lotus made of jewels." Variations of the same brief phrase are used, throughout the Mahāyāna, to describe the manner in which a person is said to appear in Sukhāvatī or in the pure lands in general. The image given in the *sūtra* is that of a practitioner seated cross-legged in the calyx of a lotus flower made of jewels, which then unfolds its petals to reveal the splendour of one or other of the pure lands. The formula, therefore, the *ājñāpa* or "heart," of Avalokiteśvara, the Buddhist *īśvara*, is also an expression of the aspiration to be reborn in Sukhāvatī.

In conclusion, then, the question remains open as to whether *Om Mani padme Hum* was, in fact, the original six-syllable formula of Avalokiteśvara or whether this particular form, which meshes so well with the overall design of the Mahāyāna *sūtras*, replaced an earlier mantra, used in the period before the incorporation of this doctrine into the Mahāyāna system, which has now been forgotten. The possible identity of such a mantra is considered.
CHAPTER 1

Background to the Kārangavyāha Sūtra

There are two separate and quite distinct versions of the Kārangavyāha Sūtra, one in prose and another in verse. With respect to editions kept, respectively, at the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Société Asiatique in Paris, the one is a text of sixty-seven leaves, or one hundred and thirty-four pages, comprising two sections (prāryāha) of sixteen and twelve chapters (prakārama), while the other is a very much longer work of one hundred and eighty-five leaves or three hundred and ninety pages, containing about four thousand five hundred verses (loka), composed mainly in the thirty-two-syllable anuṣṭubh meter, in a total of eighteen chapters.

Neither version should be confused with a work by the name of the Ratnakāraṇḍa that appears in the Tibetan canon, translated by a certain Rinchen 'Tshos bsgyur. This is an entirely different text, consisting mainly of a discussion of moral and doctrinal matters in connection with the bodhisattva Maitreya. This work, the Ratnakāraṇḍa, or a very similar one, whose title is translated as Ratnakārangavyāha, is also to be found in the Chinese canon, translated once in 270 C.E. by Dharmarakṣa and again, sometime between 435 and 468 C.E., by Guṇabhadra.2

The Kārangavyāha Sūtra, which is the concern of this thesis, is almost wholly devoted to the glorification of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, as is made clear by the full title sometimes given to the work: Avalokiteśvara-vyāha-kārangavyāha.3 This might provisionally be translated as "The Magnificent Array, (Contained in a) Casket of the Qualities of Avalokitesvara." A discussion of this translation of the title of the sūtra follows.

In a recent English translation of the two Sūtrasvyāha Sūtras, Luis Gomez renders the term vyāha as the "magnificent display" of the wondrous qualities of the land of Sukhāvatī.4 This meaning might easily be attached to the use of the term in the titles of other Mahāyāna works.5 Vyāha, though, is also used in the Vaiṣṇava tradition to signify both the "successive emanations" of Viṣṇu, as well as part of the "essential nature" of the god.6 In actual fact, the Kārangavyāha Sūtra does, as we shall see, share many of the characteristics of the Saivite and Vaiṣṇavite purāṇas and does describe a succession
of different appearances by Avalokitesvara (as an asura, as a brahmin, as a bee and as a flying horse) comparable to the different manifestations of Vajrapani. It seems possible, therefore, that the rgyud of the stūra is also being used with the Vajrabhairava in mind. "Magnificent array," then, is perhaps better than "magnificent display."

The term karaṇḍa, in this particular context, has usually been translated as "basket." It might, though, be better to choose a word that conveys a sense of greater solidity and gravitas. Monier Monier-Williams also offers "covered box of bamboo wicker work." 69 P. C. Majumder suggests "casket." 70 The latter translation certainly belittles the way in which the related term karanda is employed in the Prajñāpāramitā literature. In his Materials for a Dictionary of the Prajñāpāramitā Literature, Edward Conze also translates this term as "basket" (he makes no mention of karaṇḍa). However, the passages in which the word occurs indicate that it describes a container used for keeping relics, an object that it seems more natural to call a "casket." In the Aṣṭasāhasrikā, for instance, the effect of placing a wishing-jewel (cintāmanī) in a karanda is compared to the way in which the Prajñāpāramitā pervades the relics of the Tathāgata. The karanda, in this context, is said to be "an object of supreme longing," which "emits radiance" and which "should be paid homage to." 71

The Tibetan rendering of karanaṇḍayāya is La ma tog bsdus pa'i wu, where za ma tog also seems to refer to a kind of casket. The term appears, for instance, in the Thögyal gsum gnad du brde e rdo, or "The Three Statements That Strike the Essential Points," a gter ma, or "discovered" text of the rnying ma, or "Old," school of Tibetan Buddhism, dating from the late thirteenth or early-fourteenth century. The text is said to be the last testament of the early rdo rje Chos mtnas rdo rje, comprising an oral commentary on the rdo rje'i thig gsum, or "three sūtra verses." The three verses themselves, we read, were written in metal lapis lazuli on gold, fell from the sky into the palm of dKa' rdo rje's disciple Matruljatrimitra and were then put into a tiny thumbnail-sized vessel, which itself was then "placed within a casket," or za ma tog, "of precious crystal" (tri po che shil yig za ma tog sen pangs ba cig snyon du babs bzhis). 72 There is no such thing, surely, as a "basket" made of crystal.

The Karanandayāya Sūtra, then, is a "casket" containing the "magnificent array" of the manifestations and works of Avalokitesvara. The implication of this title is that the stūra is comparable, in its function, to a relic casket, which may then be made an object of homage. This is consistent with the fact that the stūra, in the manner of the earlier Prajñāpāramitā sūtras and other Mahāyāna works, refers to itself as something to be set up and worshipped. At the end of a passage in which Avalokitesvara is said to teach the Karanandayāya to the asuras, the stūra is compared to a wish-fulfilling jewel (cintāmanī). The asuras are then said to turn with happiness towards it, to listen to it, to develop faith towards it, to understand it, to write it, to have it written, to memorize it and to recite it, to worship it (paśiṣṭiyāt), to reflect on it (cintāpyāt), to explain it in full to others (pābṛgyāt ca nireṇayā samprathāyāt), to meditate on it (bhāavyāt) and to bow to it (namaskarapāti) with great joy, respect and devotion. 73

The longer verse Karanandayāya is later than the prose version, probably by as much as a thousand years. In the opinion of Giuseppe Tucci, this verse text is representative of the worst kind of Mahāyāna stūra. It adds little of note to the prose, he writes, and exemplifies the somewhat banal tendency within Mahāyāna Buddhism to rejoice in the simple virtue of the prolixity of a work, not exactly for its own sake, but for the sake of the increased amount of merit earned by those who wrote, read, or recited it. 74 The greater part of this padding out process is achieved by the addition of certain passages from the Sūktasamuccaya and of almost half of the Bodhicaryavatāra. These are both works that have been attributed to the Indian master Śāntideva, who is said to have lived in the eighth century. 75 This, as we shall see, would be enough to show that the verse Karanandayāya is the later text, as the earliest known manuscripts of the prose stūra have been dated to a time no later than the early part of the seventh century C.E.

The most significant evidence supporting the much later date of the verse stūra, however, is the number of striking similarities between it and a Nepalese work, the Saṃyogabuddha, which scholars agree was composed around the middle of the second millennium. The most obvious of these similarities, as Tucci points out, is the fact that both works are framed by similar extended prologues and epilogues. These consist of dialogues between, first, a Buddhist sage named Jāyaśri and a king named Jinaśri, and, second, between the great Buddhist emperor Asoka and his Buddhist preceptor Upagupta. Both this prologue and this epilogue are entirely absent from the prose stūra. 76

The Saṃyogabuddha survives today in several different recensions. This, as Tucci remarks, compounds the difficulty of deciding whether the debt of influence is owed by it to the verse Karanandayāya or vice versa, or even if the two works have borrowed from a third, unknown source. 77 Both works are popular in Nepal. Despite the usual association of the purāṇas with the non-Buddhist religious traditions, the Saṃyogabuddha is, in fact, a Buddhist work. There is some reason to believe that it was originally referred to as an uddhata, or "teaching," a word more commonly associated with Buddhist texts. 78 The content of the work, though, is actually more akin to that of a mahābhārata, an a sort of guide for pilgrims, describing the holiness of certain important shrines and temples, in this instance, chiefly, the Saṃyabhūti, or "self-existent," temple in the Kathmandu Valley.

At one point, however, the verse Karanandayāya elaborates on a section in the prose stūra, in which various gods are said to be produced from different
parts of the body of Avalokiteśvara. The term sūtra adds, is an emanation of the Adhātha, or “primordial buddha,” a term that is explicitly seen to be synonymous with Svāṃbhūra and Adīnātha, “primordial lord.” It seems reasonable to suggest, then, that the verse Kāraṇḍasyājñā was composed as an adjunct to the Svāṃbhūraprīṣṭa, as part of a process synthesizing the cult of Avalokiteśvara with the cult of the Svāṃbhūra. The sūtra, therefore, seems likely to be the later of the two works.

The oldest surviving manuscript of the Svāṃbhūraprīṣṭa is considered to have been created in 1557 or 1558. The present scholarly consensus, however, is that the very first version of the text was composed in the fourteenth century. David Gellner writes that it probably dates from the period of king Jayasimhavimala, the ruler of the Kathmandu Valley between 1382–1395. John K. Locke concludes, too, that the text belongs to the late Malla period. Allowing a certain interval, then, between the creation of the Svāṃbhūraprīṣṭa and that of the verse Kāraṇḍasyājñā, we may perhaps conclude that the latter was composed not long after the beginning of the fifteenth century. Siegfried Lienhard suggests that it was written in the sixteenth century.

The fact that the verse sūtra is later than the prose is also supported by the linguistic character of the two texts. The Sanskrit of the verse text, despite the inclusion of some peculiarly Buddhist vocabulary, is written in almost pure classical Sanskrit, a considerable stylistic refinement of the prose text. The prose sūtra is written in a form of hybrid Sanskrit. F. Edgerton, for instance, includes the prose text in his third class of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.

The earliest existent copies of the prose Kāraṇḍasyājñā Sūtra belong to the collection of Buddhist texts unearthed during the 1940s, in a stūpa, situated three miles outside the town of Gilgit in northern Kashmir. Fragments of two different manuscripts of the sūtra have been identified amongst this find.

The dating of these texts, too, is a matter of informed guesswork. Snellgrove, for instance, implies that the Matuvāṃśalakāya was written in the fifth century. N. Dutt (suggesting that the text postdates the Kāraṇḍasyājñā) the sixth century and Yukie Matsunaga, in a more recent study, the seventh century. The Kāraṇḍasyājñā is probably earlier than this. Coser suggests a fourth century date for the Hṛdaya and Śvāmśakarā. Meaning a more definite note, R. E. Emmerick reports that, while the earliest surviving Sanskrit manuscript of the Svāṃbhūraprīṣṭa can be no earlier than the middle of the fifth century, a more primitive version of the text seems to have been used by its first Chinese translator Dharmakīrya, a figure who arrived in China in 414 C.E. In the company of such texts, a late
fourth century or, perhaps, early-fifteenth century date for the Kāraṇḍāyāthā Sūtra, does not, then, seem unreasonable.

This dating, furthermore, be consistent with the traditional account of the earliest appearance of the Kāraṇḍāyāthā Sūtra in Tibet. The text is said to have been one of the first two Buddhist works ever to have reached the Land of Snows during the reign of Lha tho tho ri, arriving either (depending on which account you read) in a basket which fell from the sky onto the roof of the king’s palace, or in the hands of missionaries from the country of Li, modern day Khotan.19 King Lha tho tho ri, said to have been born five generations before the first of the three great Tibetan religious monarchs, Songtsen Gampo, who died in 650 C.E., is deemed to have lived some time between the end of the fourth and the end of the fifth century.20

This putative connection with missionaries from Khotan would also fit in with the most likely place of origin of the Kāraṇḍāyāthā. The text makes one mention of the Indian province of Magadha, where Avalokiteśvara is said to bring an end to a twenty year famine.21 It also refers several times to the city of Vārānasi, itself situated on the borders of that province, where Avalokiteśvara is said to manifest in the form of a bee,22 where the preceptor, who grants initiation into the practice of Ōṃ Mani Padme Ūṃ, is said to live,23 and where those who abuse the customs of the Sungha are said to be reborn as the lowest creatures living on earth.24 I do not think, however, that we can conclude from these references that the sūtra was composed in the region of either Magadha or of Vārānasi. Much of the Kāraṇḍāyāthā reflects a close interaction between Buddhism and Saivism. The use of Vārānasi, the great Śaivite city, as the backdrop to the drama of the sūtra, may simply be seen simply as a symbolic means of acknowledging the confluence of the two traditions. Similarly, the use of Magadha as a location for the action of the sūtra may merely be a way of linking the activity of Avalokiteśvara to the holy land of northeast India.

It seems more likely that the sūtra originated in Kashmir. The evidence for this, I must admit, is rather slim and highly circumstantial. First, the earliest manuscripts of the sūtra were found, at Gilgit, in Kashmir. Second, Kashmir is strongly associated with the development of Saivite tantra and the influences of both Saivism and of tantric-style practice are, it will be argued, strongly apparent in the sūtra. Third, as we shall see, the sūtra gives Avalokiteśvara some of the characteristics of Samantabhadra,25 the great bodhisattva of the Anantamukha Sūtra, a work whose origins are associated with the Central Asian regions bordering Kashmir.26 Finally, it is not very far from Kashmir to Khotan, from whence the Kāraṇḍāyāthā Sūtra may first have reached Tibet.27

Scholars working in the first part of this century would have been resistant to the idea of a late fourth or early-fifth century date for the sūtra. They would, similarly, have been surprised to learn that the Gilgit manuscripts of the text were attributed to a period no later than the beginning of the seventh century. Their preconceptions would even have been disturbed by an examination of various editions of the Tibetan canon, where the prose Kāraṇḍāyāthā is clearly shown to have been one of the many texts found in the Land of Snows during the first great period of Buddhist transmission, that is, at the end of the eighth century. In the colophons of the Derge and Lhasa editions of the Bka’ ‘gyur, the translators of the work are named as Jinamitra, Danasita, and Ye shes sde, all of whom are well-known figures from that time.28 A third colophon lists different translators.29 Sakya gabra and Ratnakirti, who may also have been working at that time: one Sakya gabra is said, in Taranatha’s early seventeenth-century History of Buddhism in India, to be a contemporary of Danasita’s.30 The prose Kāraṇḍāyāthā is also listed in a Tibetan catalog of translated Buddhist texts, the Tsong THANG DUN dKAR, or “White Check of the Empty Plain,” which was probably compiled in 812 C.E.31

For up until the 1940s, western Buddhistic scholars had consigned the Kāraṇḍāyāthā Sūtra to an imaginary corpus of late, “corrupted” Mahāyāna literature, belonging to the ninth or tenth century.32 Linguistically, according to Raghenv, there were good reasons for thinking that the work was written towards the end of the first millennium C.E.33 Also, the only known manuscripts were of Nepalese origin, the earliest of which came from the twelfth century. On top of that, the Chinese translation of the sūtra, by T’ien Si T’ai, did not take place until as late as 983 C.E.34 (The verse sūtra is not found in Chinese translation, a fact which is quite in accord with the probability that it was not written until the fifteenth or sixteenth century. It is, likewise, not found in Tibetan translation, having, almost certainly, yet to have come into existence by the time the Tibetan Bka’ ‘gyur was first compiled by Bu ston in 1322.)

Another factor taken to support a late ninth or tenth century date for the sūtra was the absence of any copy of the work and, it seemed, of any mention of Ōṃ Mani Padme Ūṃ, from among the hands of manuscripts collected from the Silk Road oasis town of Tun Huang, whose libraries were sealed up in the tenth century.35 In 1979, however, Yoshio Imada announced that the formula (slightly altered as Om ma ni pad me hum mgil tra sva ha, Om ma ni pad me hum mge, and Om ma ni pad me hum mgil) did, in fact, appear in three different Tun Huang manuscripts. These are all versions of the same text, a treatise known as the Duy guen ‘ul ba Sovietic of the Three Poisons,” which describes how a dead person may be prevented from taking an unavailing rebirth by the practice, performed by relatives on his or her behalf, of purifying (‘ul ba) the three poisons (duy guen) of greed, hatred, and delusion. Ōṃ Mani Padme Ūṃ (or its approximation) is associated in this text with the activity of Avalokiteśvara and is said to purify the third poison of delusion.36 It remains a mystery, however, as to why the six-
syllable formula is only found in these semicorrupted and elaborated forms and why no copy of the Kārṇḍaṇyaṭāha has been found in the hoard of sūtras and tantras discovered at Tūn Hsuan. The caves, after all, contain a painting (executed in 836 C.E.) of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, an iconographic form that is, as we shall see, central to the dogmatic purpose of the Kārṇḍaṇyaṭāha Sūtra.

Nonetheless, this mistaken assumption that the Kārṇḍaṇyaṭāha was such a very late and, by implication, such a very heterodox Mahāyāna sūtra was probably the principal cause of a distinct lack of scholarly interest in the text. The number of academic articles on the sūtra remains small; there are four by Régamey, three on linguistic peculiarities and one on the Vaiṣṇavite and Saivite influences discernible in the sūtra; one by Tucci, editing short passages from the verse sūtra and pointing out its connection to the Śaivaśāstra; one by Majumder on the verse sūtra that does little more than give a short précis of its contents; one by Jeremiah P. Losty on a twelfth-century Indian manuscript of the sūtra; and, lastly, a piece by Siegfried Lienhard focusing on an obscure lexicological detail. More recently, Adelheid Mette has published her edition of the Gilgit fragments (including a brief introduction to the text) and another short article on the history of the text and that, apart from the cursory treatment given to the sūtra in the early literary surveys of Eugène Burnouf and Maurice Winternitz, is that.

No critical edition has been made of either the prose or the verse version of the Sanskrit text. Tucci seemed to have abandoned his ambition to edit the verse sūtra as soon as he had discovered it added little of value to the shorter prose version. The lack of a critical edition of the prose text is also explained, to some extent, by the difficulty and obscurity of much of the language and the many inconsistencies found between the different manuscripts. The sheer volume of these documents attests to the great popularity of the Kārṇḍaṇyaṭāha Sūtra in Nepal. Scholars have long been familiar with Nepalese manuscripts in the libraries of Calcutta, Cambridge, London, Munich, Oxford, Paris, and Tokyo. But, as Mette adds, a team of German scholars has recently photographed more than one hundred and twenty additional Nepalese manuscripts, “some of them very early.” Jean Prayulski began, but never managed to complete, an edition of the Sanskrit prose version, using three manuscripts available to him in Paris at the time. Similarly, Régamey was prevented by illness from producing editions of the prose and verse versions of the sūtra.

A complete edition of the Tibetan text was, however, completed by Lalou, who consulted a number of different recensions of the Bka’ ’gyur, as well as the Chinese tradition. This remains unpublished.

The most well-known edition of the Kārṇḍaṇyaṭāha, that of Satyavrata Sūmāvatī, first published for the Hindu Commentator in Calcutta in 1873 and based on a late-twelfth-century Nepalese manuscript, cannot be regarded as “critical.” Reproduced by the Mithila Institute at Darbhanga in 1961, it is described by its editor P. L. Vaidya as “very corrupt.” Régamey pronounces it “noncritical” and “very peculiar”: its readings differ in almost every line from the majority of manuscripts. Moreover, Régamey writes, it is impossible to know to what degree these readings are based on a particular (and obviously very corrupt) manuscript or whether they represent Vaidya’s own emendations. This is also Mette’s view: “It seems that Vaidya too has altered the text, but without consulting any further manuscripts.”

This, however, for convenience’s sake, is the edition which I have used in order to produce a précis of the Kārṇḍaṇyaṭāha Sūtra. I have also referred to the Tibetan translation of the text found in the Peking Bka’ ’gyur. There exists no published translation of the sūtra in any modern European language.

I have, though, been able to consult a handwritten French translation of the sūtra, made by Eugène Burnouf in 1837. I cannot pretend, however, to have made any more than the occasional, fairly rudimentary comparison between the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions of the text. Nor have I referred in any great detail to the recent edition of the Gilgit fragments prepared by Mette. The first Gilgit text, Mette remarks, shows some slight differences between the later Nepalese versions, but corresponds “on the whole,” as regards content and length. Fortunately, for present purposes, these fragments do include parts of the section of the sūtra devoted to the subject of the six-syllable formula, where the mantra’s form is unambiguously confirmed as “Om Manipadme Hum.”
moral precepts (ṣīla śvāsanavājuhā avatattvairbhāvikāni śīlāniṃ śīkṣāpadāni maug prajñaptiśāle dharatātmanī). Misconduct should never be indulged in. That which relates to the community (śāṃkībhīṣayastau) is like a vase of fire (uṣṇihūshīnapa), a poison (uṣṇapam), a rope (uṣṇiresa), a burden (bhārāpaṃ). It is possible to make an antidote to poison, but it is not possible to make an antidote to misuse of that which relates to the community (ṣīlaṃ śīkṣāpratikīram prakhīrāṃ kārtum śākyate, na tu śīgībhīṣayam vacananāḥ prakhīrāṃ kārtum śākyate). Ananda then tells Śākyamuni that those mendicants who uphold the moral precepts (ṣīlaśāntiḥ ṛṣiṇaśāntiḥ śīkṣāpadāniḥ) will arrive at forbearance and liberation (pratimokṣaśāmāṇya-sūtraḥ), be inclined towards the śīla (uṣṇa-viṃśhīṃkāraḥ bhavanti / kalabhāmukāḥ bhavanti), and be prosperous and accomplished (uṣṇa-puṣk̄alāḥ bhavanti / jarā ca bhāgavatāḥ śīkṣāpadāni bhavanti). Then Ananda prostrates himself before Śākyamuni. The great śrīnukṣas go to their respective buddhafieldeś and all the gods, nāgaś, yaśiras, pandhārās, aṣṭas, garudas, kīṃnas, and men disappear. All the assembly rejoices in what Śākyamuni has said. This is said to conclude the Mahāvīra, the display of the dharmatā, the jewel-king of Mahāvīra sūtraś, the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sāstra (raṇaśīlāpaḥ dharatanjāyaḥ mahāvīraḥ samāptaḥ). 119

NOTES


For a recent survey of the various Western treatments of Ont Maṇipadmap Hāṃ see the chapter entitled "The Spell," in Prisoners of Shangri La, Tibetan Buddhism and the West, by Donald S. Lopez (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

2. Robert Ekvall has described the various uses of Ont Maṇipadmap Hāṃ in Tibetan society in the course of a discussion of chos idam, or "express verbalized religion." He writes, at one point: "When a Tibetan takes a vow of silence for a period of time, the only utterance permitted is the verbalization of religion; therefore, in theory he is bound to the utterance of prayers alone. In such a case, the mantra Ont Maṇipadmap Hāṃ may serve many conversational needs. The tenet wise who is bound by a vow of silence for the day may shout it in your ear to call attention to the fact that she waits to fill your tea bowl, and I have seen many a trespassing dog rise and depart with speed when told Ont Maṇipadmap Hāṃ." See Robert Ekvall, Religious Observances in Tibet: Pattern and Function (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 98–149.


5. For instance, Ont Maṇipadmap Hāṃ is used as a means of preliminary purification in the practice, often performed early in the morning, of making an offering of song, or incense.

6. A text attributed to the late-eleventh- and early-twelfth-century Tibetan teacher Ma cig Lab sgre Shog ma says: "...tutors learn to recite the six-syllable (mantra) at the very same time that they are beginning to speak... " Karma Chag med, Thugs rje chen po, translated in Matthew Kapstein, "Remarks on the Maṇi Kāla' born and the Cult of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet," in Tibetan Buddhism, Reason and Revelation, Steven D. Goodman and Ronald M. Davidson eds. (Albany: State University of New York, 1992), p. 85.

Thang stong rgyal po, the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Tibetan yogin who was highly influential in the propagation of the use of Ont Maṇipadmap Hāṃ by his countrymen, is said, as a youth, to have taught a group of traders to recite the mantra

7. This point is particularly well illustrated in a story about the thirteenth-century rtags ma guru Cho kyi dbang phyug, who, when asked by a disciple whether he had achieved siddhi, or supernatural power, through his meditations, replied: “I have reached the real point of their practical application, but because I devote myself to reciting the mantra Om Mani Padme Hūm I have no leisure to practice them.” The guru, though capable of performing magic, considered it more important to recite the six-syllable mantra. See Dudjom (Mdtsh ’duns Rinpoche, The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism (Boston: Wisdom, 1991), p. 767.

8. In the ’Drod ba zang mo, a play depicting the struggle to establish Buddhism within the Tibetan cultural realm that is performed at the Mągh Rīm Daus festival held at Tengboche monastery in Nepal. Om Mani Padme Hūm is treated as if it is the essence of Buddhist practice. For instance: “The basis of religion is reciting the six-syllable prayer.” Regions which have not been converted to Buddhism are described as follows: “They did not know how to pronounce the magic formula of six syllables.” Luther G. Jerstad, trans., Mągh Rīm Daus: Sherpa Dance Drama (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1969), pp. 22 and 24.

9. I have counted ten of these sādhanā texts listed in the index of the Peking bstan ’spa’i spyur.


12. See the chapter entitled “The Great Festival of the Mągi Prayer” (mąga snying blong), in Journey Among the Tibetan Nomads, by Namkhai Norbu (Oahausala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1997), for an account of this collective practice as performed by Tibetan nomad communities.

13. Hereafter, referred to simply as “Vāsūyā,” together with the page and line number of each reference.

14. Hereafter, referred to simply as “Peking,” with the number of the Tibetan page and line number (rather than the number of the page) of the bound photocopy edition published by the Suzuki Research Foundation, Tokyo, 1962.

15. Vāsūyā’s edition cannot be regarded as “definitive.” See the discussion of this issue in chapter 1.

Chapter 1: Background to the Kāraṇḍāyana Sāstra


2. The prose version in Vāsūyā’s edition is divided up into two sections of sixteen and eight chapters.


4. Nanju 168 and 169, or Tainbo 461 and 462, respectively.

5. Vāsūyā, p. 258, l. 1. I. Majumder “The Kāraṇḍāyana,” p. 294 also gives Ájñ̄yāśāntakāraṇḍāyana as the full title of the verse text.


7. That is, the Sarvatathāgatagotraśāstra, or Adhyātaśāstra, in Pāñcaratānaramaśāstra and the Matyāraṇībhūsanaśāstra.


13. See E. Conze, trans., The Perfections of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and Its Verse Summary (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1973), for translations of these passages (Ājñ̄yāśāntakāraṇḍāyana, 98 and 9, iv. 3).


personal kit container in which he kept his ritual implements, sacred relics, medicine, and the like.


17. See, for instance, Agnivesh, 57 ff. (Conant, The Perfection of Wisdom, p. 10fd.) for an example of the way in which the Prajñāpāramitā (implicitly, in book form) is said to be copied and worshipped in the same way.


18. As Vaidya points out, although the verse sūtra contains four hundred and fifteen of the nine hundred and thirty verses of the Brahmajānapāramitā, it contains no trace of the tenth chapter, an omission which would support the hypothesis that this chapter was not actually written by Śrīdeva and was a later addition. See Vaidya, “La Redazione,” p. 616.


20. Vaidya, ibid., p. 609.


22. Maurice Winternitz writes that the work “is not really a Purāṇa, but a Mahābhārata.” See Maurice Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature (Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1933), II, 375f.


24. I am relying here, on Burnouf’s summary of the verse sūtra. See Burnouf, L’Introduzione, p. 198.


26. This supersedes Winternitz’s judgment that the date of these sixteenth-century manuscripts also represents the time of the work’s original creation. See Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature, II, 376.

27. See Gellner, Monk, Householder and Tantric Priest, p. 21.


30. See F. Edgerton, Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953) I: xiv. The third class is one in which Middle-Indic or Prakrit forms have almost all been transposed into Sanskrit, leaving a residue of Prakrit grammatical peculiarities, as well as a distinctly Prakrit vocabulary. Other texts in this category include: Mahāparinirvānasaṅghāsaṃyuktānī, Devaparpadeva, Aksobhya Sūtaka, Pratītiṃkārśaṇa of the Sārmatādīnās, Urga Mahāvimśatikā, Brhadāvatāsthānā, Aksobhya Sūtaka Prājñāpāramitā Sūtra, Sāvatīkārī Prājñāpāramitā Sūtra, Māhāvīrya, Dīkṣṭhakaraḥ, Mahāmāyā, Mahīśāsakaravacā, Mahākāśyapī, Mahākāśyapī, Vajracchedikā, Vajracchedikā, Vajracchedikā.


32. The second of these two sets of fragments was identified by O. von Hinüber, in 1981, among the manuscripts from the Gilgit find as belonging to the Sanghāyānī. See O. von Hinüber, Die Erforschung der Gilgit-Handschriften—Neue Ergebnisse (Wiesbaden: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 131, 1981), p. 11.

33. See N. Dutt, Gilgit Manuscript (Calcutta: Calcutta Oriental Press, 1939) I: 42. “The script used in the manuscripts is mostly Upright Gupta of a date little later than those used in the manuscript remains found in Eastern Turkistan and similar to the script found in the Bower manuscript. The script of the Bower manuscript is assigned to the sixth century A.D., and so the Gilgit manuscript may also be dated in the sixth or at the latest in the seventh century A.D.”


35. Adelheid Mette, Die Gilgitfragmente des Kāraṇḍavyūha (Swissl-Tibetan: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1997).


39. He also writes that it seems reasonable that the Sansāra-prajñāpāramitā should belong to the tantras. He presents the Mahāprajñāpāramitā as “the chief tantra of the Master of the Family,” and the Sansāratattvata-samgraha as “the fundamental one of all the Yoga Tantras.” See F. D. Lessing and A. Wayman, māhā-prajñā-pāramitā’s Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras (The Hague/Paris: Mouton, 1978), pp. 107ff and p. 215.

Buddhica, Occasional Paper Series III, 1979, pp. 15 ff. The text may, however, as we shall show in the course of this thesis, be linked to some of the works that seem to have been most widely represented at Khotan: for instance, the Saddharmapunarpitaka Sutra, the Saddharmanipitaka Sutras and the Prajnaparamitā sūtras. Also, in the retelling of the jātaka story of Shinbalu and the man-eating rakṣasas, the Kāraṇḍavyūha displays one of the characteristics of the Khotanese literature, "a continuing interest in the quasi-historical life of Śākyamuni Buddha and the stories of his previous rebirths."

See Snellgrove, Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, p. 336 f.

54. See, for instance, Snellgrove, ibid., p. 439f.


57. For the dating of this catalog, see Giuseppe Tucci, Minor Buddhist Texts, II (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1900), p. 48. For a full presentation of the contents of the catalogue, see Marcelle Lalou, "Les textes bouddhiques au temps du roi Xhiri Song-i-febrin," in Journal Asiatique (1953): 313-353.


59. Régamey, "Motifs Vichnouvites," p. 418f.: "Ces caractéristiques du contenu, de même que l’état corrompu de la langue dont certaines tournures syntaxiques font encore penser aux structures néo-indiennes, étaient des raisons valables pour assigner à ce texte une date tardive, au moins celle du 8e siècle."

60. Taicho 1050 and Nanjio 782. "Tien Si Tsai was a Kashmiri who led the great Buddhist university of Nālandā for China in 980. The precise date of the translation of the sūtra in question is given in a catalogue of Buddhist texts translated into Chinese between 982 c.e. and 1011 c.e. See Y. Imada, "Note Préliminaire sur la Formule Om Mani Padme Hūṃ dans les Manuscrits Tibetains de Touen-Houang," in Contributions aux Études sur Touen-Houang (Genève-Paris: Librairie Droz, 1979), p. 71.

61. See M. Lalou, "A Tun-huang Prelude," p. 409. Lalou refers to P. Pelliot, Tun-huang, vol. 20, 1934, p. 174 and a reference in Bibliographie Bouddhique, 6, no. 273, whose judgment about the late date of the formula is probably based on the date of the Chinese translation of the Kāraṇḍavyūha. Lalou’s article concerns a Tun Huang
text called the "goshin lam bstan bs.," or "Teaching on the Path of the Dead," which, like the text discussed by Imaeda, describes how a dead person may be prevented from taking an unfortunate rebirth. One of the striking features of this text is that Avalokiteshvara, who is said to be able to save the dead person from a great hell, is invoked not by the formula Om Mani padme hum ma pri pa sa ha. The text also includes a shortened version of the Bala bhagavatika, a longer version of which is also found in the Kāraṇḍavyuha, leading Lalos, on the basis of her belief in the late date of the sutra, to dub the "goshin lam bstan bs.," "A Twentieth Prelude to the Kāraṇḍavyuha."

62. See Imaeda, "Note Préluminaire sur la Formule."


64. I am grateful to Burkhard Quessel, Curator of the Tibetan Collections at the British Library, for drawing my attention to this article.

65. See bibliography for detailed references to these books and articles.


67. See Régamey, "Motifs Vīchrautika," p. 418. "La composition du Kāraṇḍavyuha est très incohérente, même dans la rédaction des détails. La langue dans laquelle ce texte est rédigé, sans être ce qu'on appelle le sanskrit hybrid est extrêmement incorrect, dépassant par ses incongruences grammaticales et syntaxiques même la langue des Avadana."

Alas, Burmood, L'Introduction à l'Histoire, p. 197: "D'ailleurs, le manuscrit du Kāraṇḍavyuha en proie est si incorrect, qu'il aurait été beaucoup plus difficile d'en donner un extrait parfaitement exact, qu'il ne serait de traduire intégralement le poème."


69. Ibid., p. 511.

70. Ibid., p. 511.

71. Ibid., p. 511.


73. See Régamey, "Lexicological Gleanings," p. 1. Régamey was preparing a critical edition of the text based on Nepalese manuscripts dated from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries.


75. Régamey gave this translation high praise. See Régamey, "Le Pseudo-Hapass ratikara et la Lampe qui Rit de la 'Sitra des Ogres' Bouddhique," Études

Notes 163


76. Mette, "Remarks on the Tradition of the Kāraṇḍavyuha," p. 514. Régamey remarks that the first Gilgit text is the most fantastic and incoherent of any manuscript known to him and that it is extremely carelessly edited with regard to grammar and spelling. See Régamey, "Motifs Vīchrautika," p. 418 and Régamey, "Le Pseudo-Hapass," p. 183.

77. See Adelheid Mette, Die Gilgirtfragmento, p. 87.

Chapter 2: Purānic Influence on the Kāraṇḍavyuha

1. A fuller discussion of the place of this couplet in the Skanda Purāṇa occurs later in this chapter.

2. Vaidya, p. 265, l. 6.


5. See ibid., p. 432: "Il probe que pour les textes dans le genre du Kāraṇḍavyuha ces sources sont à chercher avant tout dans la vaste littérature des Purāṇa."


7. Ibid., p. 90.

8. Ibid., p. 90.

9. Ibid., p. 90.

10. Ibid., p. 91.


