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The Meaning of *Yulanpen* 盂蘭盆 — "Rice Bowl" on *Pravāraṇā* Day*

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(1) *Yulanpen* 盂蘭盆, *Yulanpen jing* 盂蘭盆經 and *Yulan jing* 盂蘭經

Yulanpen 盂蘭盆 is the name of a widely-celebrated Buddhist Ghost Festival in East Asia, which takes place at the end of the rainy season retreat of the Buddhist community, namely on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month. The spirits of the deceased are believed to return home on that day and the living pay homage to them, by placing food before their family altars, burning incense, asking monks to chant sutras and so on. The name of this festival is based on the *Yulanpen jing* 盂蘭盆經 (T. 16, no. 685), translated allegedly by Dharmarakṣa (fl. 265?~311 C.E.). The *Baoen Fengpen jing* 報恩奉盆經 (T. 16, no. 686), by an anonymous "translator", is clearly an adaptation of the previous text¹. The ascription to Dharmarakṣa as the translator of the *Yulanpen jing*, however, is in doubt as this text is categorised as an anonymous translation in an old catalogue, namely the *Chusanjangji ji* 出三藏記集, which was compiled in the Liang Tianlan Period (502~519 C.E.)². The *Lidai Sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記 (597 C.E.) was the first to ascribe this text to Dharmarakṣa³. Yutaka Iwamoto doubted both the ascription to him and the plausibility of its being a translation from an Indian text, because "strange" expressions such as *daoyan* 道眼, *xiaoshun* 孝順, *wenrushi* 聞如是 occur in it.⁴ However, these old expressions themselves, which are, in fact, found in pre-Kumārajīva translations⁵, demonstrate that this text was translated (or composed) in the third or fourth century. The usage of *wu* 吾 as the first person pronoun, found in this text, also agrees with Dharmarakṣa's preference for *wu* 吾 over *wo* 我.⁶

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¹ English translations of these texts are found in Teiser 1988: 49f.

² T. 55, 28c2. 盂蘭經一卷.

³ T. 49, 64a28. 盂蘭經一卷.

⁴ Iwamoto 1979: 9f.

⁵ The word *daoyan* 道眼 occurs nearly a hundred times in early Chinese translations from the Eastern Han Period. Dharmarakṣa also used this word in his translation of the Lotus Sutra: cf. Krsh(1998) 92. The word *xiaoshun* 孝順 is found more than two hundred times in pre-Kumārajīva translations. Also, most of pre-Kumārajīva translations begin with *wenrushi* 聞如是 instead of *wowenrushi* 我聞如是. Thus, Iwamoto's doubts concerning this sutra are groundless.

⁶ See Seishi Karashima "A Study of the Language of Early Chinese Buddhist Translations: A Comparison between the Translations by Lokakṣema and Zhi Qian", § 1.4, in this volume.

From the sixth century onwards, various references to this text and the festival began to appear. Quotes from the former were used first in the *Jinglü Yixiang* 經律異相, a collection of Buddhist writings, which was compiled by the monks, Baochang 寶唱, Sengmin 僧旻 and others in 516 C.E.⁷ The festival itself is also mentioned in the *Yanshi Jiaxun* 顏氏家訓, written by the Northern Wei-period scholar, Yan Zhitui 顏之推 (531~591)⁸. A portion of this text is quoted as well in Du Gongzhan (杜公瞻; fl. 600~?)’s commentary on Zong Lin (宗慄)’s *Jingchu Suishi ji* 荆楚歲時記 (A Record of the Seasonal Activities in the Jing-Chu Region; ca. 561 C.E.)⁹. According to Zhipan’s *Fozu Tongji* 佛祖統紀 (compiled between 1258~1269), Emperor Wu of Liang (梁武帝) visited Tongtaisi Temple (同泰寺), which was constructed upon his orders, and held the Yulanpen (盂蘭盆齋) ceremony there in 538 C.E.¹⁰ These demonstrate the apparent popularity of the text and the festival on both sides of the Yangtze River from the sixth century onwards at the latest.

Based on the older catalogues and the *Jinglü Yixiang* 經律異相, the text appears to have been originally entitled *Yulan jing* 盂蘭經¹¹. The title *Yulanpen jing* 盂蘭盆經 appears only in relatively later catalogues¹² and texts¹³.

(2) English Translation of the *Yulanpen jing* 盂蘭盆經

The following English translation of this scripture is nothing other than my adaptation of those by Teiser (1988: 49f.) and Venerable Dr. Sri Dhammanand (<http://www.buddhismtoday.com/english/texts/mahayana/006-Ullambana%20Sutra.htm>):

The Sutra of *Yulan* Bowls

Translated by Zhu Fahu (竺法護 Dharmarakṣa) in the Western Jin Period, the (master of) the Three *Piṭakas* from Yuezhi (月氏)

Thus have I heard¹⁴. Once upon a time, the Buddha was staying in the garden of the Benefactor-of-Orphans-and-the-Lonely (*Anāthapiṇḍada*) in the *Jetavana* Park in the country of *Śrāvastī*.

Mahāmaudgalyāyana (大目乾連) had just obtained the six penetrations and wanted to save his parents in order to repay their kindness in raising him. He, then, surveyed the world with his divine eyes¹⁵ and found his deceased mother being born amongst hungry ghosts. Finding neither food nor drink, she was but skin and bones.

⁷ T. 53, no. 2121, 73c21~74a5.

⁸ 《顏氏家訓·終制篇》“有時齋供，及七月半盂蘭盆，望於汝。”

⁹ An English translation is found in Teiser 1988: 56f.

¹⁰ T.49, no. 2035, 351a26.

¹¹ The *Chusanrangji ji* 出三藏記集 (502~519 C.E.), T. 55, 28c2. 盂蘭經一卷; the *Lidai Sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記 (597 C.E.), T. 49, 64a28. *do.*; the *Datang Neidianlu* 大唐內典錄 (664 C.E.), T. 55, no. 2149, 235a17. *do.* (= 242c15); the *Gujin Yijing Tuji* 古今譯經圖記 (664 + C.E.), T. 55, no. 2151, 354a13f. *do.*; *Jinglü Yixiang* 經律異相 T. 53, no. 2121, 74a5. 出盂蘭經 (“From *Yulan jing*”).

¹² The *Dazhou Kanding zhongjing Mulu* 大周刊定衆經目錄 (695 C.E.), T. 55, no. 2153, 431c5. 盂蘭盆經一卷 (= 469b24); the *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (730 C.E.), T. 55, no. 2154, 494c2. 盂蘭盆經一卷亦云盂蘭經 (“*Yulanpen jing*, one *juan*”, also entitled “*Yulan jing*”) (= 685a23, 707b15); the *Zhenyuan Xinding Shijiao Mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (800 C.E.), T. 55, no. 2157, 791c31. 盂蘭盆經一卷亦直云盂蘭經 (“*Yulanpen jing*, one *juan*”, also entitled just “*Yulan jing*”) (= 928a15).

¹³ For example, the *Foshuo Yulanpen jing shu* 佛說盂蘭盆經疏 (A Commentary on the *Foshuo Yulanpen jing*) by Zongmi 宗密 (780~841 C.E.), T. 39, no. 1792.

¹⁴ 聞如是：Many of the pre-Kumārajīva translators, incl. Dharmarakṣa, used this phrase.

¹⁵ 道眼：This expression occurs often in pre-Kumārajīva translations, incl. Dharmarakṣa’s; cf. Krsh(1998) 92.

Maudgalyāyana (目連) became very sad and went to (往) her so as to give (餉) her his rice-filled bowl. Having received the bowl of rice, his mother gathered the rice up with her right hand, while shielding it with her left hand. However, before it could enter her mouth, the rice turned into burning coals and hence, she could not eat it. Maudgalyāyana shouted and cried in sorrow and returned to the Buddha to tell him what had happened.

The Buddha said: “As your mother’s transgressions are deep and firmly rooted, to save her is beyond your capacity. Although you are filial, and your voice moves heaven and earth, (even) the spirits of heaven and earth, Evil *Māra* (邪魔¹⁶), heretics and ascetics¹⁷ or the Four Heavenly God-kings can do nothing to help her. You should resort to the supernatural power of the assemblage of the monks of the ten directions and then, she will be liberated. I shall tell you now, how to save her so that all her difficulties may leave her and her worries and sufferings may be eradicated.”

The Buddha said to Maudgalyāyana: “When the assemblage of the monks of the ten directions attends the *Pravāraṇā* (自恣) on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (i.e., the end of the rainy season retreat), one should, — for the sake of their ancestors of seven generations and their present parents, who are in difficulties, — prepare rice, food of a hundred flavours, five kinds of fruit, vessels (盆器) for drawing and pouring water, incense, oil, lamps, candles, mattresses and bedding; place the tastiest food in the world in bowls (盆); and offer these to the assemblage of the monks of the ten directions. On that day, all the saints, — those who meditate in the mountains; those who have attained the fruits of the four stages (of sainthood); those who walk up and down under trees; those who edify voice-hearers (聲聞) and those who awaken to causation (緣覺) by means of the six penetrations and sovereign power; those who are (in fact) *bodhisattvas*-cum-great men (大人 *mahāsattva*) of the tenth stage but manifest themselves provisionally as *bhikṣus* — receive, all with one mind, the *Pravāraṇā* food (鉢和羅飯) in the assembly. They hold the pure precepts and the way of the saints fully; their virtues are vast. If one makes offerings to these monks who attend the *Pravāraṇā*, their present parents and ancestors of seven generations, as well as the six kinds of relatives, will be able to escape from the sufferings in the three paths, be liberated immediately and will be clothed and fed spontaneously. If one’s parents are still alive, they will be happy and joyful for one hundred years. If they are already deceased, (they as well as) the ancestors of seven generations will be born in heaven. They are reborn as they like and enter the light of celestial flowers and receive limitless bliss.”

Then the Buddha ordered the assemblage of the monks of the ten directions to chant prayers (呪願 *dakṣiṇā*) at first for the parents of seven generations for the sake

¹⁶ 邪魔：A rendering of *Māra~pāpīyas~*. Zhi Qian (fl. ca. 220~257 C.E.) constantly rendered *Māra~pāpīyas~* as 邪, 弊邪; cf. Kṛsh(2010) 37f. s.v. 弊魔; *ib.* 757. Dharmarakṣa used the word 邪魔 in another of his translations: T. 15, no. 598, 154a20.

¹⁷ 道士：This word was used frequently as renderings for *brāhmaṇa*, *śramaṇa*, *tāpasa* etc. in pre-Kumārajīva translations. Dharmarakṣa used this word many times as well, e.g. T. 14, no. 425, 30b24. 如號名聞梵志、道士大祠祀施。

of the donor's family, practise *dhyāna*-concentration and then, receive the food. After receiving the bowls (盆; *v.l.* 食 “food”), they should first place them in front of the Buddha's *stūpa*. When the assemblage of the monks finishes chanting the prayers, each of them may then receive the food.

At that time, the *bhikṣu* Maudgalyāyana and the assembly of great Bodhisattvas all greatly rejoiced and the sound of Maudgalyāyana's lamenting and crying utterly ceased. At that time, on that very day, Maudgalyāyana's mother attained liberation from one *kalpa* of sufferings as a hungry ghost.

Then Maudgalyāyana said to the Buddha again: “My parents were able to receive the power of the merit of the Three Jewels, thanks to the imposing, supernatural power of the assemblage of the monks. In the future, all disciples of the Buddha, who (wish to) practise filial piety, should also offer *yulan* bowls (to the assemblage of monks) (應奉盂蘭盆)¹⁸ in order to save their parents and the ancestors up to seven generations. Isn't that thus possible?”

The Buddha replied: “Excellent! You have raised a very good question. You asked me about what I was just going to tell you. O good man, if *bhikṣus*, *bhikṣuṅīs*, kings, crown princes, princes, ministers, prime ministers, three ducal ministers, officials of all ranks, common and ordinary people wish to practise filial respect (孝慈)¹⁹, they should all, for the sake of their present parents who bore them²⁰ (所生現在父母) as well as for the sake of their ancestors of seven generations, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, (namely) the day on which the Buddha rejoices, the day of the Community's *Pravāraṇā* (自恣), place food and drink of a hundred flavours in *yulan* bowls (以百味飲食安盂蘭盆中) and offer them to the monks, who are participating in the *Pravāraṇā*, wishing that their present parents will live for a hundred years without illness, without suffering from any affliction; that their ancestors of seven generations will leave the sufferings of hungry ghosts, be born amongst men and gods and be happy and joyful without limit.”

The Buddha said²¹: “Good men and good women are disciples of the Buddha. If they (wish to) practise filial piety, they should, in thought after thought, think constantly of their present parents and their ancestors up to²² seven generations. Every year, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, they should²³, out of filial respect²⁴,

¹⁸ 應奉盂蘭盆: The *Koryō* (or Korean) Canon and the Taishō Edition have 應奉此盂蘭盆 instead, while the other editions read 應奉盂蘭盆. 此 is superfluous.

¹⁹ 孝慈, in which 慈 means “respect”, is a very archaic expression (cf. Seishi Karashima “A Study of the Language of Early Chinese Buddhist Translations: A Comparison between the Translations by Lokakṣema and Zhi Qian”, § 2.5.2, in this volume). This usage also indicates that this scripture was translated (or composed) in the pre-Kumārajīva period.

²⁰ 所生現在父母 is also an archaic expression; cf. Krsh(1998) 437, s.v. 所生母.

²¹ 告 means “said” here without defining the person to whom the Buddha was speaking. From the context, however, it is clear that the Buddha was speaking to Maudgalyāyana and the other disciples. This usage of 告 is often found in other Buddhist translations, e.g.: T. 8, no. 225 (the *Damingdu jing* 大明度經 by Zhi Qian 支謙), 488b1f. 善業問: “謗誹斷經者, 凡用幾事。” 佛告: “斯士、女無戒。為邪所中故。不樂深經。以斯二事斷明度矣。…… 是為四事。” 善業白佛言: “不觀深歸少有信者。”

²² 乃至: The *Koryō* (or Korean) Canon and the Taishō Edition have 乃至供養 instead, while the other editions read 乃至. 供養 is superfluous.

²³ 當 (←常): 當, 常 as well as 嘗 interchange with one another through their common simplified form 尚.

think of their parents who bore them (所生父母) and their ancestors up to seven generations and, for their sakes, prepare yulan bowls and offer them to the Buddha and the Community (作盂蘭盆施佛及僧) and thus repay the loving kindness of their parents, who raised and nourished them. All the disciples of the Buddha should respectfully follow this teaching (法).”

At that time, upon hearing what the Buddha had preached, the *bhikṣu* Maudgalyāyana and the fourfold assembly of disciples²⁵ rejoiced and practised it respectfully.

The Sutra of *Yulan* Bowls

(3) The *Pravāraṇā* Ceremony and offerings by the laity

What the Buddha taught in this sutra is that people, who wish to practise filial piety and save their parents and ancestors up to seven generations from sufferings, should on the day of the Community’s *Pravāraṇā* (自恣), namely on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (i.e., the end of the rainy season retreat), offer delicious food, placed in bowls, to the assemblage of monks of the ten directions who come to participate in the *Pravāraṇā*. Such food is termed *Pravāraṇā* food (鉢和羅飯). In addition, as this food is placed in *yulan* bowls (以百味飲食安盂蘭盆中), the food itself is also called “*yulan* bowls” (盂蘭盆).

Pravāraṇā (Pāli *Pavāraṇā*), *zizi* 自恣 and *suiyi* 隨意 in Chinese, is a ceremony held at the end of the three-month rainy season retreat by Buddhist monks. In Theravada Buddhism and in Nepal, it was and is still held on the full moon day of the seventh or eighth month, i.e. *Āśvina* (September-October) or *Kārttika* (October-November) respectively — the year begins in *Caitra* (March-April) in India and South Asian countries. In East Asia, the ceremony is held on the fifteenth day of the seventh or eighth month of the Chinese lunar calendar, where the new year begins in January or February. On this day, each monk comes before the assemblage of monks and atones for any offence, which he might have committed during the rainy season retreat and seeks absolution.²⁶ Proceedings of the *Pravāraṇā* day are prescribed in various Vinaya texts.²⁷

The Pāli *Vinaya Piṭaka* states that, on the *Pavāraṇā* day, local people came to a dwelling place of monks and gave gifts until the night was almost ended.²⁸

²⁴ 孝順慈：Some editions have 孝慈. Both 孝順慈 and 孝慈 may mean “filial respect for one’s parents”; see note 19.

²⁵ 四輩弟子：This expression, which occurs in Dharmarakṣa’s translation, is of pre-Kumārajīva usage; cf. Krsh(1998) 425f., s.vv. 四輩, 四輩弟子; cf. also Krsh(2001) 422, s.v. 四輩弟子. Kumārajīva used 四眾 or 四部眾 instead; cf. Krsh(2001) 253, s.v. 四部眾.

²⁶ Cf. Upasak 1975: 147f.; Chung 1998; Kieffer-Pülz 2006.

²⁷ Vin I 157~178; T. 22, no. 1421 (the Vinaya of the Mahīśāsakas), 130c~133c; T. 22, no.1425 (the Vinaya of the Mahāsāṃghikas), 451a~452a; T. 22, no.1428 (the Vinaya of the Dharmaguptaka), 835c~843b; T. 23, no. 1435 (the Vinaya of the Sarvāstivādins), 165a~173a; the *Pravāraṇāvastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins, of which the Sanskrit fragments, the Tibetan translation and the Chinese one by Yijing (T. 24, no. 1446) have been edited in Chung 1998.

²⁸ Vin I 168.26f. *tena kho pana samayena aññatarasmim āvāse tadahu pavāraṇāya manussehi dānaṃ dentehi yebhuyyena ratti khepitā hoti.*

The Tibetan and Chinese translations²⁹ of the Mūlasarvāstivādins' *Pravāraṇā-vastu* also say the following, concerning the laity who visit the Community with various offerings on that day:

Also, on the very day of the fifteenth, i.e. the *Pravāraṇā* day, the king, the queen, prince(s), minister(s), commander(s), city people and village people altogether come to the monastery (*ārāma*). Then, the king also donates a great many robes and worldly things (*zang zing gi rnyed pa* = *āmiṣa-lābha*; 諸飲食 “food and drink”) to the Community, so do the queen, prince(s), minister(s), commander(s), city people and village people, donate a great many robes and worldly things to the Community. The monk, who preaches, also exhausts himself by preaching the whole night.³⁰

Also, the Vinaya of the Mahāsāṃghikas says:

If monks, who have spent the rainy season retreat in a village, hear that, in a city, various offerings are given and the preaching of Dharma is given the whole night long on the *Pravāraṇā* day, and all want to go (to the city), they should perform the *Pravāraṇā* on the fourteenth day and after that go there.³¹

Also, the famous Chinese pilgrim Yijing 義淨 (635~713 C.E.), who travelled to and studied in India nearly at the end of the 7th century C.E. for 25 years and later returned in China, translated many Vinaya texts as well as sutras, described the *Pravāraṇā* ceremony, which he witnessed, in detail in his *Nanhai Jigui Neifa zhuang* 南海寄歸內法傳 (A Record of the Buddhism sent Home from the Southern Sea; 691 C.E.). Takakusu translated it as follows³²:

³³Chapter XV Concerning the pravāraṇa-day.

The day on which the summer-retreat ends and the season (lit. the year) closes should be the Sui-i³⁴ (lit. ‘according to one’s wish’ or ‘indulgence;’ *Pravāraṇa*), i.e. pointing out the faults of others, as one likes, according to the three points (i. e.

²⁹ No Sanskrit fragment of this portion is found.

³⁰ Chung 1998: 196f. ‘*di litar yang dgag dbye bco lnga pa de nyid la rgyal po dang / btsun mo dang / gzhon nu dang / blon po dang / khrom gyi ru ba dang / grong mi dang / yul mi dag dang thabs cig tu kun dga’ ra bar lhags la / der rgyal pos kyang dge ’dun la gos dang zang zing gi rnyed pa mang du phul / btsun mo dang / gzhon nu dang / blon po dang / khrom gyi ru ba dang / grong mi dang / yul mi dag gis kyang dge ’dun la gos dang zang zing gi rnyed pa mang du phul la sgrogs par byed pa’i dge slong gis kyang bsgrags pas nam ring zhig zad par gyur pa la* (= Tib[P], no. 1030, 214b3f.; Tib[D], no. 1, ka 228a1f.). A German translation is found in *ib.* 241. T. 24, no. 1446, 1046b23f. 為隨意事。若於住處，或有王來，并諸眷屬。或有大臣、官屬、城內外人亦皆來集，將諸飲食及衣物等，奉施苾芻僧伽，令其呪願。苾芻竟夜呪願，極大辛苦。

³¹ T. 22, no.1425, 451b16f. 若比丘聚落中安居，聞城中自恣日種種供養，竟夜說法，眾欲往者，應十四日自恣已，得去。

³² Takakusu 1896: 86~88.

³³ T. 54, no. 2125, 217b19~c10: 十五隨意成規。凡夏罷歲終之時，此日應名隨意，即是隨他於三事之中，任意舉發，說罪除愆之義。舊云自恣者，是義翻也。必須於十四日夜，請一經師，昇高座，誦佛經。于時俗士雲奔，法徒霧集，燃燈續明，香花供養。明朝總出，旋繞村城，各並虔心，禮詣制底。棚車輿像，鼓樂張天，幡蓋縈羅，飄揚蔽日，名為三摩近離，譯為和集。凡大齋日，悉皆如是，即是神州行城法也。禺中始還入寺；日午方為大齋。過午咸集，各取鮮茅可一把許。手執足蹈，作隨意事。先乃苾芻，後方尼衆，次下三衆。若其衆大，恐延時者，應差多人，分受隨意。被他舉罪，則准法說除。當此時也，或俗人行施，或衆僧自為，所有施物將至衆前。其五德應問上坐云：“此物得與衆僧為隨意物不？”上坐答云：“得。”所有衣服、刀子、針錐之流，受已均分。斯其教也。此日所以奉刀針者，意求聰明利智也。隨意既訖，任各東西。即是坐夏已周，無勞更經一宿。廣如餘處。此不詳言。

³⁴ 隨意。

what one has seen, what one has heard, and what one has suspected). Then follows confession and atoning for faults. A former translation of *Pravâraṇa* was *Sse-sse*³⁵, i.e. ‘self-indulgence’ according to its sense.

On the night of the fourteenth day (the fifteenth day is the last day of the retreat), the assembly should invite a preceptor to mount a high seat and recite a Buddhist *Sûtra*, when lay devotees as well as priests throng together like clouds or mist. They light lamps continually, and offer incense and flowers. The following morning they all go out round villages or towns and worship all the *Kaityas* with sincere mind.

They bring storied carriages, images in sedan-chairs, drums, and other music resounding in the sky, banners and canopies hoisted high in regular order (lit. entwined and arranged), flattering and covering the sun; this is called *Sa-ma-kin-li* (*Sâmagrî*), which is translated as ‘concord’ or ‘thronging together.’ All great *Upavasatha*-days are like this day. This is what we call in China ‘Ceremony of going around a city.’ At the beginning of the forenoon (9 to 11 a.m.) they come back to the monastery, at noon they keep the great *Upavasatha*-ceremony, and in the afternoon all gather together, each taking in his hand a tuft of fresh rushes. Handling it with their hands or treading on it with their feet they do what they like, first *Bhikshus*, next *Bhikshunîs*; then the three lower classes of the members. If it be feared that the time should be too long owing to the largeness of the number, the *Saṅgha* should order several members to go together and receive the *Pravâraṇa*-ceremony. When any offence has been pointed out by another, one should confess and atone for it according to the Law.

At this time, either the laymen present gifts, or the *Saṅgha* itself distributes them, and all sorts of gifts are brought out before the assembly. The five venerable persons (one each from the five *Parishads* (?)) should then ask the heads of the assembly (i.e. *Sthaviras*) : ‘Can these things be given to the members of the *Saṅgha* and made their own possession, or not?’ The heads of the assembly reply : ‘Yes, they can.’ Then all garments, knives, needles, awls, &c., are received and equally distributed. Such is the teaching (of the Buddha). The reason why they present knives and awls on this day is that they wish the recipients to obtain (sharp) intelligence and keen wisdom. When thus the *Prâvaraṇa* ends, all go their ways (lit. to east or west). If they have fully kept their residence in the summer there is no need of passing a night there; this is fully explained elsewhere, and I shall not state it here in detail.

Thus, it is clear that in India, people made offerings on the *Pravâraṇā* day, as it is said in the *Yulanpen jing*.

In Theravāda Buddhism, the *Pravâraṇā* (Pāli *Pavâraṇā*) is still celebrated till this day. It is called *Wan Ok Phansa* (literally “the day of leaving the rainy season retreat”; *phansa* < Pāli *vassa* < Skt. *varṣa* “the rainy season retreat”) in Thai and *Boun Awk Phansa* in Lao. It is also referred to as *Mahāpavâraṇā*. This day falls on the day of the full moon on the eleventh lunar moon (October). At dawn or later in the morning, the laity visits temples to offer food or other requisites to the community of monks in order to make merit, and the

³⁵ 自恣.

monks, in turn, reciprocate such offerings by delivering sermons on the Buddhist teachings. In the evening, either candlelight processions are held around the temples or people float small lit 'boats' made of banana stems or leaves, decorated with candles and flowers, down the rivers and streams.³⁶

(4) Filial Piety, Rescue of Deceased Parents and Ancestors

The *Yulanpen jing* is often regarded as apocryphal. One of the reasons for this is that filial piety (孝順) is emphasised in this sutra. The idea that filial piety is characteristically Chinese traditional thought and alien to Buddhism is often found in books and articles on Buddhism. This, however, is not true.³⁷ For example, the *Siṅgālovāda-suttanta* in the *Dīghanikāya* of Theravāda, which has its counterparts in Sanskrit and Chinese of various schools³⁸, prescribes the laity's duties towards its parents as follows:

In five ways a child should tend his parents as the eastern quarter: — (The child should think:) “Once supported by them, I shall now support them; I shall perform my duties towards them; I shall maintain the family lineage; I shall regulate (properly) the inheritance; I shall give offerings to them when they are dead (*petānaṃ kālakatānaṃ dakkhiṇaṃ anuppadaṣṣāmi*). (DN III 189.5~9)

Also, we find some Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions from India and Pakistan which state that a monastery or statues were offered to the Buddhist Community on behalf of deceased parents.³⁹ For example, a Kharoṣṭhī inscription, which is written on the pedestal of a Bodhisatva statue allegedly from Landi Kotal (a small town at the top of the Khyber Pass) in Pakistan, reads as follows:

A donation of the Communities (of the four directions). May it be an act of *pūjā* for (our) deceased, dead parents! May it be an act of *pūjā* for the deceased master Saṃghārāma!⁴⁰

Rescuing deceased parents in the world of *pretas* has been sometimes regarded as alien to Indian Buddhism. However, as Takashi Irisawa (1990: 154) and Akira Fujimoto (2003) have pointed out, there are stories in Pāli and Sanskrit literature which describe that the Buddha's disciples rescued *pretas*.

³⁶ A similar festival can be found also at various places in Japan at the end of *Yulanpen*, i.e. on the fifteenth or sixteenth of August. Having held memorial services for the spirits of the deceased, people float paper lanterns and other offerings down in a river or on the sea, which is called *Tōrō Nagashi* (灯籠流し) or *Shōryō Nagashi* (精霊流し).

³⁷ Some Buddhist scholars have already pointed out that filial piety has been important in Indian Buddhism since very early times; cf. Schopen 1984 = 1997: 56~71 (I thank Dr. James Apple for reminding me of this article); Guang Xing 2005 (with further references).

³⁸ E.g. T. 1, no. 1, the *Shansheng jing* 善生經 (Dharmaguptakas); various Sanskrit fragments from Central Asia belonging to the Sarvāstivādins; T. 1, no. 26, the *Shansheng jing* 善生經 of the same school; T. 1, no.16, the *Shijialuoyue liufangli jing* 尸迦羅越六方禮經 of an unknown school affiliation, allegedly translated by An Shigao; T. 1, no.17, *Shanshengzi jing* 善生子經 of unknown school affiliation, translated by Shi Fadu; two fragments of a folio from Afghanistan, which presumably belong to the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins. Cf. Hartmann/Wille 2006: 3.

³⁹ Cf. Schopen 1984: 115f. = 1997: 62f.; Irisawa 1989: 4f.; IBInsc I 961f. (Gandhāra I), 1006f. (Taxila 1).

⁴⁰ *saghana danamukhe madapidara[n]a adhvadi<da>na kalagadana puyae bhava(tu) uajayasa sagharamasa adhvadida[saj] puyae] bhavatu (= *saṃghānāṃ dānamukhe mātāpitr̥ṇāṃ adhvātītānāṃ kālagatānāṃ pūjāyai bhavatu! upādhyāyasya saṃghārāṃsya adhvātītasya pūjāyai bhavatu!)*. See Seishi Karashima “Two Inscriptions in Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī” in this volume. Cf. also IBInsc I 961f. (Gandhāra I).

In the *Petavatthu* we find a story, which resembles our *Yulanpen jing*, namely the *Sāriputtattherassa mādupetiṅvatthu* (“The Elder Sāriputra’s Mother Petī Story”; Pv, no. 14), in which Sāriputta (Skt. Śāriputra) rescued his mother, who had become a female ghost (*petī*), being afflicted with hunger and thirst, and ate the pus and blood of animals and men. She asked her son, Sāriputta, to rescue her, saying: “Give, dear son, a gift for me and when you have given make it over to me (*uddisāhi me*) — surely then I will be freed from eating pus and blood”⁴¹. Having heard his mother’s words, Sāriputta “built four huts and he gave those huts together with food and drink to the Saṅgha of the four quarters and then dedicated that donation to his mother (*mātu dakkhiṇāya ādisi*). Immediately he dedicated this the result came into being, food, drink and clothing being the fruit of this donation (*dakkhiṇāya*). Thereupon she became pure, clad in fresh, clean clothes, wearing those more fine than those of Kāsi ...”⁴²

Also, Irisawa (1990: 154) has pointed out that stories in the *Avadānaśataka*, nos. 41~45 (= T. 4, no. 200, 222b~224c) have similar motifs as our *Yulanpen jing*. Especially no. 45 (Avś I 256f.) resembles greatly our sutra. The story states that Maudgalyāyana met five hundred *pretas* on his way to Rājagṛha, who explained to him how they had become *pretas* and asked him to convey to their relatives in Rājagṛha concerning the retributions of their evil deeds. They also asked him to request their relatives to make “freewill offerings” (*chandakabhikṣaṇam*)⁴³, to serve the community of monks with the Buddha as head with food, and to dedicate the merit from these gifts in their name (*asmākaṃ nāmnā dakṣiṇādeśanām kārayitvā*)⁴⁴, so that they could be liberated from the existence of *pretas*⁴⁵. After agreeing to do so, Maudgalyāyana visited their relatives and got them to prepare “freewill offerings” and to invite the community of monks with the Buddha as head the next day. Having done so, he told both the *pretas* and their relatives that they would meet together the next day. On the following morning, when the food was prepared and the time had come, the *pretas* did not appear. Maudgalyāyana tried in vain to find them by means of his supernatural powers, but he could not see them anywhere in the whole world. Being troubled, he went up to the Buddha and told him that he could not see the donors (*dānapati*). The Buddha replied that they had been blown away by the wind of *karman* (*karmavāyu*) and that there were limitless numbers of worlds which were beyond the capacity of disciples and *pratyekabuddhas* to perceive. Then, the Buddha said that he would manifest his supernatural power and he ordered the *ganḍī* to be struck. As the *ganḍī* was being struck, the whole community of monks and the relatives of *pretas* gathered together. Then, through the supernatural power of the Buddha, the scene became visible in which the *pretas* were beholding the Buddha and the monks eating. The *pretas* also remembered that their relatives were serving the Buddha and the monks on their behalf. Then, the Buddha dedicated the merit of the donation (*dakṣiṇām ādisati*) as follows: “The merit from this donation shall be

⁴¹ Pv-a(tr) 85; Pv 14-6.

⁴² Pv-a(tr) 87; Pv 14-8~10.

⁴³ Cf. BHSD, s.v. *chandaka* (1).

⁴⁴ Cf. BHSD, s.v. *dakṣiṇādeśanā*.

⁴⁵ Avś I 257.8f. *teṣāṃ asmākīnāṃ karmaṇaṃ nivedya chandakabhikṣaṇam kṛtvā buddhapramukhaṃ bhikṣusaṃghaṃ bhojayitvā asmākaṃ nāmnā dakṣiṇādeśanām kārayitvā cāsmākaṃ pretayoner mokṣaḥ syād*. Cf. Avś(tr) 175f.

dedicated to the *pretas*! They shall leave the dreadful world of *pretas*!” Having embraced faith in the Buddha, those *pretas* died and were reborn into Trāyastriṃśat Heaven.

Thus, filial piety and the rescue of deceased parents and ancestors, as described in the *Yulanpen jing*, which are often regarded as alien to Indian Buddhism, are in fact well attested in its literature.

(5) Previous Interpretations of *Yulanpen* 盂蘭盆

(5.1) Xuanying’s Interpretation

The meaning of *yulanpen* 盂蘭盆 has been largely discussed for more than a century and a vast number of articles and books, dealing with this mysterious word, have been published. I shall refrain from listing all those studies and instead, refer interested readers to Ashikaga 1951, Teiser 1988: 21~25 and Irisawa 1990: 159~166 for further readings. All the confusion surrounding the meaning of this word stems from Xuanying (玄應)’s misinterpretation of it in his *Yiqiejing Yinyi* 一切經音義 (“Sounds and Meanings in the Buddhist Canon”), which was published in 650 C.E. His explanation of the word is as follows:

Yulanpen 盂蘭盆. This word is corrupted. The correct form is *wulanponu* 烏藍婆拏, meaning “hanging upside down”. According to Indian custom, on the *Pravāraṇā* day of the community of monks, (lay people) prepare grand offerings and donate them to Buddhist monks in order for their deceased ancestors to be saved from the agony of being hung upside down. Accordingly, a secular book there (i.e. in India) says: “If a deceased ancestor had committed offences, and he/she has no descendent, and nobody holds a service to the gods in order to ask them to save him/her, then he/she will suffer the agony of being hung upside down in the ghost realm.” Although Buddhists follow such secular customs and perform the rites, they teach (people) to plant merits profoundly in the field of the Three Jewels. Traditionally, it has been said that *yulanpen*⁴⁶ is a vessel, in which to store food. This explanation is wrong.⁴⁷

(5.2) Modern Interpretations

In modern times, Buddhist scholars have been speculating for the last 130 years about the Sanskrit form of *wulanpona* 烏藍婆拏 as well as *yulanpen* 盂蘭盆, starting with Bunyiu Nanjio (南條文雄) who reconstructed 烏藍婆拏 as *ullambana* (< Skt. *avalambana* “hanging down”?) in his famous catalogue of the Buddhist Canon.⁴⁸ This reconstruction was followed by Pā. *ullumpāna* (“saving, helping”) by other Japanese scholars. There have also been scholars who maintain that 盂蘭盆 might be Sogdian *urvan* (“soul”), Iranian *ulavān* (<

⁴⁶ The manuscript reads 孟盆, which is presumably a scribal error for 盂蘭盆. In Huilin’s quotation, it reads 盂蘭盆 instead.

⁴⁷ 盂蘭盆：此言訛也。正言烏藍婆拏，此譯云倒懸。案西國法，至於衆僧自恣之日，盛設供具，奉施佛僧，以救先亡倒懸之苦。以彼外書云：“先亡有罪，家復絕嗣，無人祭神請救，則於鬼處受倒懸之苦。”佛雖順俗，亦設祭儀，乃教於三寶田中深起功德。舊云孟盆 (read 盂蘭盆) 是貯食之器，此言誤也。(《Zhonghua Dazangjing 中華大藏經》，vol. 56, no. 1163, 1014c19f.). This explanation is quoted in Huilin (慧琳)’s *Yiqiejing Yinyi* 一切經音義 as follows: 盂蘭盆：此言訛也。正言烏藍婆拏。此譯云倒懸。案西國法，至於衆僧自恣之日，云先亡有罪，家復絕嗣，亦無人饗祭，則於鬼趣之中受倒懸之苦。佛令於三寶田中，俱具奉施佛僧，祐資彼先亡，以救先亡(←云)倒懸飢餓之苦。舊云孟蘭盆是貯食之器者，此言誤也。(T. 54, no. 2128, 535b13f.).

⁴⁸ Nanjio 1883: 78, no. 303.

artavān māh; a name of the Iranian first month of the year) or *hufrawardān* (“[festival] of the honourable deceased”).

(5.3) Xuanying’s Interpretations are not reliable

There are two basic mistakes which have caused such controversies surrounding the etymology of *yulanpen* 盂蘭盆. The first is that scholars trusted Xuanying (玄應)’s *Yiqiejing Yinyi* 一切經音義 too credulously. As Xuanzang’s assistant, he participated in translating Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures into Chinese and compiled the *Yiqiejing Yinyi*, consisting of 25 *juans*, by the royal order. In this vast glossary, he commented on 450 Chinese Buddhist texts by explaining difficult Chinese characters, expressions and transliterations. It is obvious that he had a very sound knowledge of Sanskrit. However, problem is, he most probably *only* knew Sanskrit and not Middle Indic, let alone Gāndhārī, which had for a time been used widely in many Buddhist scriptures but subsequently became disused long before his time. Therefore, his comments on older translations often miss the point, as I have indicated elsewhere⁴⁹. For example, his comments on *manao* 馬腦 = 瑪瑙 are as follows:

manao 馬腦 : In Sanskrit 謨薩羅揭婆 (*musalagarbha*). 謨薩羅 (*musala*) means “pestle” in Chinese; 揭婆 (*garbha*) means “storehouse” in Chinese. It means also “embryo”, referring to its (i.e. *manao*’s) solidness. It was, in the past, also called 摩娑羅伽隸 (*masāragalla*) or 目薩羅伽羅婆 (*musāragalva*). It is translated as *manao* 馬腦. I assume that it is called so, because the colour of this precious stone resembles, at times, that of a horse’s brain. However, in dictionaries, the radical *shi* 石 is added to these characters and hence, they are written as 碼腦 in order to show that it is a kind of stone.⁵⁰

Thus, Xuanying interpreted *manao* 馬腦 as a translation of Skt. *musalagarbha* (= *musāragarbha*, *masāragarbha*, *musāragalva*; amethyst?)⁵¹, and commented that it was called so, because its colour resembles a horse’s brain! This strange explanation is still used even to this day.⁵² However, in actual fact, *manao* 馬腦 (“agate”) is a rendering of Skt. *aśmagarbha* (“emerald”) and its variant form *aśvagarbha*, found in older manuscripts.⁵³ An ancient Chinese translator probably interpreted this word as consisting of *aśva* (“horse”) and *garbha* (“womb; the interior of anything; an inner room; embryo”) and so, translated it as *manao* 馬腦, meaning literally “the brain of a horse”. He may have translated *garbha* as *nao* 腦 because the shape of the brain resembles an embryo in the womb.

Xuanying also interpreted *cha* 刹, the multi-storeyed disc-shaped structure above a *stūpa*, as the transliteration of Skt. *kṣetra* (“field”) and set out a detailed speculation about this word. However, as I have pointed out elsewhere, *cha* 刹 is a transliteration of Skt. *chattrā* (“parasol; a disc-shaped structure above a *stūpa*”)⁵⁴.

⁴⁹ Karashima 2007: 451f. = 2008: 150f.

⁵⁰ 馬腦：梵言謨薩羅揭婆。謨薩羅，此譯云杵；揭婆，此言藏。或言胎者，取其堅實也。舊云摩娑羅伽隸，或言目薩羅伽羅婆。譯云馬腦。案此寶或色如馬腦，因以為名。但諸字書旁皆安石作碼腦二（read 字）。謂石之類也。（*Zhonghua Dazangjing* 中華大藏經, vol. 56, no. 1163, 905c11f.).

⁵¹ Cf. Karashima 2007: 451, n. 31 = 2008: 161, n. 32.

⁵² E.g. *Foguang Dacidian* 佛光大詞典, pp. 5839, 6738.

⁵³ Cf. Krsh(2001) 170.

⁵⁴ Karashima 2007: 447f. = 2008: 146f.

Thus, Xuanying's knowledge of Indian languages is quite doubtful. His interpretation of *yulanpen* 盂蘭盆 is also one of his many peculiar interpretations. As such, the above-stated modern theories concerning this term which are premised on his dubious reconstruction, are thus unfounded.

(5.4) Necessity of Reading the Text Itself

The second mistake, which has caused a great deal of confusion surrounding the meaning of *yulanpen*, is that most of the scholars have investigated the word *yulanpen* 盂蘭盆 out of its original context. If it means “hanging upside down”, “saving”, “soul”, a name of a month or a festival, then how can the phrase 以百味飲食安盂蘭盆中 “place food and drink of a hundred flavours in *yulanpen*” possibly be interpreted? As we shall see later, *yulanpen* clearly means a vessel in the original context.

(6) The Meanings of *Yulan* 盂蘭 and *Yulanpen* 盂蘭盆

As we have seen above, this scripture had been entitled *Yulan jing* 盂蘭經, while the name *Yulanpen jing* 盂蘭盆經 appeared first no earlier than 695 C.E. in the *Dazhou Kanding zhongjing Mulu* 大周刊定衆經目錄⁵⁵. This fact indicates that we should not interpret this expression as a single term but as a compound word comprising *yulan* 盂蘭 and *pen* 盆.

As mentioned earlier, the word *yulanpen* 盂蘭盆 occurs three times in the text, namely:

- (1) 應奉盂蘭盆 “(Those who wish to practise filial piety,) should also offer *yulan* bowls (to the assemblage of monks).”
- (2) 以百味飲食安盂蘭盆中 “(Those who wish to practise filial piety, should) place food and drink of a hundred flavours in *yulan* bowls”
- (3) 作盂蘭盆施佛及僧 “(Those who wish to practise filial piety, should) prepare *yulan* bowls and offer them to the Buddha and the Community.

From the second phrase, it is evident that 盂蘭盆 is a sort of vessel in which food is placed. Therefore, *pen* 盆 in this compound means simply “bowl” as in the usual Chinese usage. From the phrases (1) and (2), it is clear that a bowl with food in it, offered to the Buddha and the community of monks on the occasion of the *Pravāraṇā*, is called “a *yulan* bowl” (盂蘭盆).

It is most probable that *yulan* 盂蘭 is a transliteration.⁵⁶ As, except for *yulan* 盂蘭, there are no examples of the character *yu* 盂 (EH ɣjwo > MC ju), used as a transliteration in the whole of the Buddhist Canon, it is, therefore, difficult to presume its underlying original form. However, there is a character which, like *yu* 盂, belongs to the *yu* 魚 category in Old Chinese and to the *yu* 虞 rhyme in Middle Chinese, namely *qu* 瞿 (also pronounced as *ju*; EH gj(w)o, kj(w)o > MC gju, kju). Dharmarakṣa and other earlier translators used this character *qu* 瞿 to render Skt. *go* and *ko*; e.g. 瞿曇彌 (Pā. *Gotamī*, Skt. *Gautamī*; T. 9, no. 263 by Dharmarakṣa; 286 C.E.), 瞿曇摩 (Pā. *Gotama*, Skt. *Gautama*; T. 1, no. 1, 107b15 etc.;

⁵⁵ Cf. note 12.

⁵⁶ Although Irisawa (1990: 164) maintains that 盂蘭 may be related to a Chinese word 干藍, meaning a stilt house, seen amongst the ethnic minorities in South-west China, this theory seems rather difficult to accept.

412~413 C.E.), 瞿舍利 (BHS. *Gośālī*; *ib.* 107b15), 瞿夷 (Skt = Pā. *Gopikā*; *ib.* 63c3), 瞿波梨 (BHS. *Kokālika*; *ib.* 126a16).⁵⁷ Consequently, from *yulan* 盂蘭, one may assume **olān(ā)*, **olāṅ(ā)*, **orān(ā)*, **orāṅ(ā)* as its original form. Unfortunately, there is no such Indian form which makes sense in this context. As we have seen above, *yulan* 盂蘭 is an attribute to *pen* 盆, a vessel. It can be an adjective like “excellent, great, wooden, iron” and so on or a noun which denotes a place or opportunity (such as a name of a festival). It is also possible that it means the content of a vessel, such as “water (bowl), curry (bowl), rice (bowl)” and so on and the content must be an offering to the Community on the *Pravāraṇā* day. The last choice seems, in my eyes, more suitable than other possibilities.

Then, the question that follows is this: what was and is still offered in such bowls on the occasion of the *Pravāraṇā* day in India, Theravāda Buddhist countries and East Asia? The most popular was and is probably cooked rice, which is called *odana* in Sanskrit and Pāli. *Odana* is what is given when monks are invited. For example, in the *Prātimokṣasūtra* or the *Pātimokkhasutta* in Pāli, dating back to the earliest times of Buddhist history, *odana*, meaning “boiled rice”, is referred to together with *sūpa* (“sauce”) and *vyañjana* (“condiments”) as being offered to monks as alms.⁵⁸ *Odana* as alms appears everywhere in Pāli and Sanskrit literature⁵⁹. *Odana* is boiled rice without fluid⁶⁰, though it is defined sometimes as “rice-porridge”.

In Middle Indic, including Pāli and Gāndhārī (Gā), *-d-* sporadically changes to *-l-*⁶¹, e.g. Skt. *ādīpayati* > Pāli *ālimpeti*; Skt. *kumuda* > Gā. *kumula*. There are also quite a few old Chinese transliterations which indicate this development in the underlying languages, such as 拘文羅 (EH. kou[kjou] mjən la; Gā. *kumula* < Skt. *kumuda*) in Lokakṣema’s translation (179 C.E.) of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*⁶². The following are examples from the Chinese translation of the *Dīrghāgama* (T. 1, no. 1; 413 C.E.): 伽伽羅(MC. lā)(13a13, 34b8), 伽拘羅(MC. lā) (128a1) < BHS *Kakuda*, Skt. *Kakudha*; 那羅(MC. lā) (34c27) < Pā. *Nādikā*; 伽藍(MC. lām)浮(115b26) < *kadamba*; 波那摠(MC. lwo) (80a11) < Pā. *Panādo*, Skt. *Praṇādaḥ*; 布吒婆樓 (MC. ləu) < Pā. *Poṭṭhapādo*⁶³.

In early Chinese translations, the last vowel of a word was generally not transliterated, e.g. 阿舍 (EH. ʔa gəm) < Skt. *Āgama*; 阿難 (EH. ʔa nan) < Skt. *Ānanda*; 泥洹 (EH. niəi ɣwan) < Skt. *nirvāṇa*; 安般 (EH. ʔan pan) < Skt. *ānāpāna* etc.

It is, therefore, probable that *yulan* 盂蘭 (MC. ju lān) is a transliteration of a Middle Indic form **olana* (not attested) from Skt. *odana*, and *yulanpen* 盂蘭盆 may mean “a bowl for boiled rice”, i.e. “a rice bowl”⁶⁴. *Odana* in this compound was probably transliterated in order to designate that this was no ordinary rice bowl but one specially used for the ceremony. Consequently, the original title of this scripture, *Yulan jing*, might mean

⁵⁷ Cf. Karashima 1994: 58f.; 1996: 37f.

⁵⁸ Pātim 84.13, 96.14, 96.18; PrMoSū(Sa.v.Si.) 236.10, 247.2, 249.10, 250.1; PrMoSū(Mā-L) 29.27, 33.1, 33.4.

⁵⁹ Cf. CPD, s.v. *odana*; DP, s.v. *odana*; SWTF, s.v. *odana*; Geiger 1960: § 34.

⁶⁰ Cf. Vism 70.18. *odana-piṇḍa* (“a lump of boiled rice”); Harivaṃśa 60.16. *prakāśaudanaparvata* (“a mountain of shining cooked rice”; my thanks are due to Ms. Hiromi Oikawa for drawing my attention to this reference).

⁶¹ Cf. Pischel § 244, Brough 1962: § 43b, 229, 255~256; von Hinüber 2001: § 200.

⁶² Cf. Krsh 2010: 281f.

⁶³ Cf. Karashima 1994: 19, 64, n. 38.

⁶⁴ In the *Abhisamācārikā Dharmāḥ*, we find a word *odana-mānikā* (“a vessel for boiled rice”); cf. Abhis II 370, n. 4.

“*Odana Sutra*” or “The Sutra of Boiled Rice”, while *Yulanpen jing* could be “The Sutra of Rice Bowl”.

(7) The *Yulanpen jing* 孟蘭盆經 is not apocryphal

Although, this sutra has often been regarded as apocryphal, the contents and ideas in it are well rooted in India as we have seen above. In addition to that, the vocabulary and usage of Chinese words are more archaic, compared with those of Kumārajīva’s corpus (401~413 C.E.), while they resemble greatly the translations by Dharmarakṣa (fl. 265?~311 C.E.). Moreover, the transliteration 鉢和羅 (EH pat ḡwa la > MC pwât ḡwâ lâ) of Skt. *pravāra(nā)*, which occurs only in this sutra and its adaptation, i.e. the *Baoen Fengpen jing* 報恩奉盆經 (T. 16, no. 686, 780a20), indicates clearly that this sutra is not apocryphal but a genuine translation, because only somebody who knew the original Indian form was able to transliterate it thus correctly into Chinese.⁶⁵

In conclusion, I assume that this sutra is not apocryphal, but a translation from an Indian text translated by Dharmarakṣa or somebody else in pre-Kumārajīva times.

Abbreviations and Bibliography

Abhis = *Die Abhisamācārikā Dharmāḥ: Verhaltensregeln für buddhistische Mönche der Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādīns*, herausgegeben, mit der chinesischen Parallelversion verglichen, übersetzt und kommentiert, unter Mitwirkung von Oskar von Hinüber, Tokyo 2012: International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, Soka University, (Bibliotheca Philologica et Philosophica Buddhica XIII), 3 vols.

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Avś(tr) = *Avadāna-ṣataka: Cent légendes bouddhiques*, traduite du Sanskrit par Leon Feer Paris: Leroux, 1891 (Annales du Musée Guimet, tom. 18); Reprint: Amsterdam 1979: APA-Oriental Press.

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Brough, John

⁶⁵ There is another archaic transliteration of the same Sanskrit word, namely 鉢和蘭 (EH pat ḡwa lan > MC pwât ḡwâ lân; = Skt. *pravāra(nā)*), which is found also only in pre-Kumārajīva translations: namely the *Xinsui jing* 新歲經 by Tan Wulan 曇無蘭 (fl. 381?~394 C.E.), T. 1, no. 62, 859, 860c12, 13, 24, 28 etc.; the *Chuyao jing* 出曜經 by Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 (fl. during the Eastern Jin Dynasty [317~420 C.E.]), T. 4, no. 212, 775b17; the *Zishisanmei jing* 自誓三昧經 allegedly by An Shigao 安世高 (fl. 148~168 C.E.) but probably a translation made in the 3rd~4th century, T. 15, no. 622, 346a3, 5; the *Rulai Duzheng Zishisanmei jing* 如來獨證自誓三昧經 by Dharmarakṣa (fl. 265?~311 C.E.), T. 15, no. 623, 348a20.

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