

**A STUDY and TRANSLATION**  
**of**  
**the SAMANTABHADRA CARYĀPRAṆIDHĀNAM (prose)**  
**of**  
**the GAṆḌAVYŪHASŪTRA**

Douglas Edward Osto

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

University of Washington

1999

Department of Asian Languages and Literature

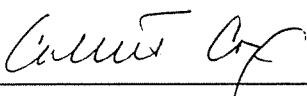
University of Washington  
Graduate School

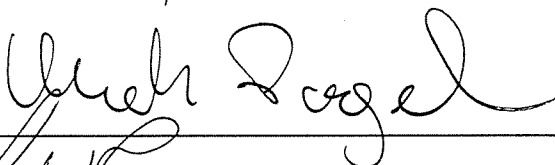
This is to certify that I have examined this copy of a master's thesis by

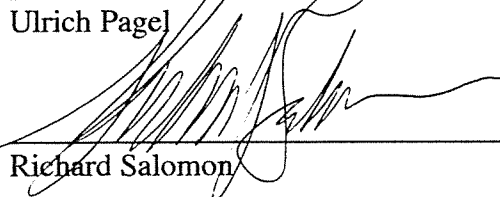
Douglas Edward Osto

and have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
and that any and all revisions required by the final  
examining committee have been made.

Committee Members:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Collett Cox

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ulrich Pagel

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Salomon

Date: 6/11/99

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's degree at the University of Washington, I agree that the Library shall make its copies freely available for inspection. I further agree that extensive copying of this thesis is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed in the U.S. Copyright Law. Any other reproduction for any purposes or by any means shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature Daugh E. Cote

Date June 11, 1999

## Table of Contents

Abbreviations.....	ii
Introduction.....	1
I. The Text	
Origin, Development, Title.....	4
Manuscripts, Language, Translations.....	6
Modern Scholarship.....	9
The Scp in Relation to the <i>Gv</i> .....	12
Concluding Remarks.....	15
II. The Narrative.....	17
The Pilgrimage of Sudhana.....	19
The Samantabhadracaryāpraṇidhānam.....	28
Concluding Remarks.....	35
III. The Worldview	
Worldview Defined.....	36
The Worldview of the <i>Gv</i> .....	39
The Relation between Worldview and Narrative.....	51
The Role of the Scp within the Narrative and Worldview of the <i>Gv</i> .....	53
IV. The Context.....	61
India.....	62
China.....	63
Tabo.....	67
Barabudur.....	69
The Buddha Statues of the Fifth Balustrade.....	74
Concluding Remarks.....	77
V. Translation of the Samantabhadracaryāpraṇidhānam	
Introduction.....	79
English Translation.....	81
Bibliography.....	107

## Abbreviations

Aṣṭa	Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitasūtra
Av	Avataṃsakasūtra
Bhad	Bhadracarī (the final verses of the Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra)
BHSG&D	Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar & Dictionary by Franklin Edgerton
D	Derge Kanjur (sDe dge bKa' 'gyur)
Gv	Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra
P	Peking Kanjur
S	Suzuki-Idzumi edition of the Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra
Scp	Samantabhadracaryāpraṇidhānam (final prose section of the Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra)
T	Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō
V	Vaidya edition of the Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra

## **Acknowledgements**

This work would not have been possible without the encouragement, careful consideration and constructive criticism of Collett Cox, Ulrich Pagel and Richard Salomon. Of course, any errors, omissions or oversights which remain are strictly my own.

**To my parents**

## Introduction

From out of the mists of time, the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra* (*Gv*) appears to us---its authorship, place and time of origin unknown. Written somewhere in the Indian sub-continent probably during the first few centuries of the Common Era, this Mahāyāna sūtra came to be highly regarded by Indian commentators of both the Madhyamaka and the Yogācāra schools (Warder 1980, 429-30). Translated four times into Chinese (twice as the final and longest chapter of the *Avataṃsakasūtra*), the *Gv* was one of the foundational texts of the Chinese philosophical school, Hua-yen, and was chanted by numerous Chinese lay Buddhist societies. The *Gv* was translated into Tibetan in the early ninth century, and an inscriptional text of it accompanied by paintings can still be found today on the temple walls of Tabo dating to the 10th century. In the late eighth or early ninth century, the complete narrative of the *Gv* was carved into the gallery walls of Barabudur in Java, the largest Buddhist monument ever built.

Thus the impact of the *Gv*'s narrative and worldview upon Asian religious art and thought is undeniable. Given this fact, it is surprising that still only a fraction of the Sanskrit text has been translated into any modern language. Most of the translation work that has been done in English has focused on particular sections (Suzuki 1953), selected verses (Gómez 1967), or selected prose (Ehman 1977; Paul 1985). Although these translators discuss the philosophical message of the text, none expresses an interest in the cultural or art historical impact the text may have had for particular



cultures or societies. Conversely, although there are a number of excellent studies on the art historical aspect of the *Gv*'s narrative, none of these scholars has probed very deeply into the philosophy of the text for answers to art historical problems.<sup>1</sup>

Through a study and translation of the Samantabhadracaryāpranidānam (Scp),<sup>2</sup> the final prose section of the *Gv*, I hope to begin to breach the gap between the textual study of the *Gv* and its cultural context. I have chosen this section for a number of reasons. First, sandwiched as it is between the Maitreya section and the *Bhadracarī* (*Bhad*) verses, the Scp has been largely neglected by both modern scholars and indigenous commentators. Second, the Scp plays a crucial role in both the narrative and worldview of the text---it is in this section that Sudhana attains his realization of omniscience through the power of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. Third, in its description of Samantabhadra, the Scp appears to blur the distinction between bodhisattvahood and buddhahood, which may have important implications for our understanding of Mahāyāna notions of spiritual perfection. Finally, the Scp supplies valuable textual evidence for unraveling one of Barabudūr's greatest mysteries---the identification of the Buddha statues on the fifth balustrade.

My thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter I deals with the origin, development, extant manuscripts, editions, and translations of the *Gv*. This chapter also

---

<sup>1</sup> See Mus 1935, Hitaka 1960, Fontein 1964, and Nou and Frédéric 1996. This lack of attention to the philosophical importance of the text for understanding Barabudūr is particularly apparent. Gómez (1981) has started to move in a direction which corrects this, but his "*kūṭāgārā* theory" presents problems. I discuss his theory in chapter IV.

<sup>2</sup> In this study I use 'Samantabhadracaryāpranidhānam' ('The Vow Concerning the Course of Conduct Samantabhadra') or 'Scp' to refer to only the prose portion of the final section of the *Gv*. The verse I refer to by its independent title '*Bhadracarī*' (*Bhad*).'

outlines the modern scholarship on the *Gv* and the textual relationship between the *Scp* and the *Gv*. Chapter II discusses the narrative of the *Gv* and the attainment of omniscience by Sudhana, the merchant's son, through Samantabhadra's five-fold revelation of ultimate reality in the *Scp*. Chapter III examines the worldview of the *Gv*, the relationship between the text's narrative and worldview, and the *Scp*'s role within that worldview. Chapter IV looks at the cultural context of the *Gv*, giving special attention to the relationship between the *Gv* and Barabudur. Chapter V is an English translation of the Sanskrit *Scp* with introduction and notes based on a comparison of the Sanskrit text with its Tibetan translation.

My approach throughout has been to provide as detailed an account as possible of the textual, historical, philosophical and cultural context of the *Scp* in order that the text be made intelligible to the English reader. I have attempted to make the English translation as readable as possible while remaining faithful to the underlying Sanskrit. Mahāyāna sūtras are notoriously difficult to translate into English, and the *Gv* is no exception. As imperfect as this first translation of the Sanskrit *Scp* might be, I hope it has created for the English reader a small window from which to view the highest spiritual attainment within the magical world of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*.

## I. The Text

### Origin, Development, Title

As with other Mahāyāna sūtras, the *Gv* is considered by Mahāyāna Buddhists to be the “Word of the Buddha” (*buddhavacana*), and therefore derives its spiritual authority and ultimate authorship from the historical Buddha.<sup>1</sup> To the empirically and historically minded academic this mere assertion is not sufficient to determine the *Gv*’s origins. Modern scholarly consensus considers the work to have been anonymously composed several centuries after the time of the historical Buddha. Based on quotations from the *Gv* found in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśaśāstra*, Gómez places the *terminus ad quem* of the work at the second half of the third century CE.<sup>2</sup> Since the authorship of the *Upadeśa* and dates of Nāgārjuna are not agreed upon,<sup>3</sup> a more conservative *terminus ad quem* would be just prior to the *Gv*’s first Chinese translation in the early fifth century.<sup>4</sup> For the *terminus a quo*, Gómez states that the work “probably belongs to a period shortly after the beginning of our era” (1967, lxxiv).<sup>5</sup> The *Gv* may have been compiled over a number of centuries in oral and / or written form, gradually

---

<sup>1</sup> In some cases authority derives from a cosmic Buddha or other enlightened being. The primary narrative voice of the *Gv* is never made explicit, although the text does start in typical sūtra fashion with “Thus have I heard.”

<sup>2</sup> Gómez states that “it is probably safe to attribute the original citation of all except one of these quotations to Nāgārjuna himself.” Gómez follows Lamotte’s dates for Nāgārjuna at ca. 243-300 CE. See Gómez 1967, lxviii.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lamotte 1973.

<sup>4</sup> A large portion of *Gv* was first translated into Chinese at a date no later than 408 CE, by the monk Shēng Chien. See below for details.

<sup>5</sup> The first two centuries CE are generally agreed upon as a rough approximation for the origin of many Mahāyāna works.

expanding over time.<sup>6</sup> Although the location of the work's composition / compilation is not known, internal evidence could suggest a south Indian origin.<sup>7</sup>

Even the name "*Gaṇḍavyūha*" for the sūtra is problematic. It has been variously interpreted by modern scholars.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps "The [Sūtra possessing] Arrays in Sections" captures some sense of its original meaning.<sup>9</sup> The Chinese translations of the *Gv* refer to the text as the *\*Acintyavimokṣa* ("The [Sūtra of] Inconceivable Liberations") or the *\*Dharmadhātupraveśana* ("The [Sūtra which is] the Entrance into the *Dharmadhātu*"). Either of these may have been the text's original title.<sup>10</sup>

Sometime before the early fifth century, the *Gv* was incorporated into the much larger *Avataṃsakasūtra* (*Av*) as the collection's final and longest chapter. Thought to have been compiled in central Asia, the *Av* survives in its entirety only in Chinese and Tibetan. The collection was translated twice into Chinese, first by Buddhābhadda together with other monks in 418-420 CE, and then by Śikṣānanda and his team of translators in 695-699 CE (Nakamura 1980, 194). The Tibetan translation dates from

<sup>6</sup> The *Gv*'s narrative structure particularly allows for the easy insertion of additional sections over time. See chapter II for a detailed discussion of this narrative structure.

<sup>7</sup> Sudhana is continually sent southward to the next Good Friend (*kalyāṇamitra*) by the previous one. Warder sees this as a sign of the text's southern origin and states that the place of origin of the *Gv* was "very likely in Andhra" (1980, 424). Contrary to this, Afshar (1981) argues that the term "*dakṣiṇāpatha*" does not mean "Southern Region (the Deccan)" in the *Gv*, but "the right direction" (n. 2, 115). Without any external evidence, the question of the *Gv*'s place of origin remains an open one.

<sup>8</sup> Edgerton suggests "supernal manifestation in (many small) sections" (1954, 50). Gómez, generally following Edgerton, offers "[The Sūtra Containing] Manifestations in Sections" (1967, lxii). Warder translates *Gv* as "array of flowers" (1980, 424). Some recent suggestions---"The Sacred Speech which is the display of (the Buddha's Body that is) the trunk (of the Kalpa-Tree, as it is embodied in the Dharma's Body)" (Afshar 1981, 6), "The Harmony of the Young Sapling Sutra" (Paul 1985), and "Appearance of the *uṣṇīṣa*, the prominence on the Buddha's head" (Nou and Frédéric 1996, 126)---seem entirely unwarranted.

<sup>9</sup> See chapter III for a discussion of the term '*vyūha*' as 'array.' Because the *Gv* is divided into many sections, translating '*gaṇḍa*' as 'section' is a logical, if not completely satisfactory, choice.

<sup>10</sup> Gómez favors *\*Acintyavimokṣa* (1967, lxiv); while Afshar suggests *\*Dharmadhātupraveśana* (1981, 6).

the ninth century.<sup>11</sup> Since the Chinese used the term “*Hua-yen*” for both the *Av* and the *Gv*, the entire *Av* may have originally been called “*Gaṇḍavyūha*”<sup>12</sup>---which seems to indicate that there was some confusion, or at least lack of distinction between the *Av* and the *Gv* at some point. The *Gv* and the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* are the only sections of the *Av* which survive in Sanskrit.

### Manuscripts, Language, Translations

Gómez lists twelve extant Sanskrit manuscripts of the *Gv* (1967, xviii-xx). The following six mss. were used by Suzuki and Idzumi for their edition:<sup>13</sup>

1. Royal Asiatic Society, London. Palm leaf; 289 folia; 6 lines to a page; 22 1/2 by 2 inches. Dated at 1166 CE. Written in Early Nepalese hooked characters.
2. Cambridge University Library. Paper; 309 folia; 11 lines to a page; 13 1/2 by 6 1/2 inches. No date, but modern. In square Nepalese characters of the Kuṭila type.
3. Cambridge University Library. Paper; 297 folia; 9 lines to a page; 18 by 15 inches. No date, but modern. Characters similar to the previous Ms.
4. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Paper; 415 folia; 7 lines to a page; 12 by 43 cm. Dated 1810 CE. Devanāgarī script.
5. Tokyo University Library. Paper; 464 folia; 7 lines to a page; 13 1/2 by 3 3/4 inches. No date. Nepalese characters.
6. Kyoto University Library. Paper. (No further details available).

For his edition, Vaidya used these six mss. plus the following one:

7. Collection of the Oriental Institute, Baroda. Paper; 218 folia; 9 lines to a page; 61.5 by 27.2 cm. No date. Newari script.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See Gómez 1967, xxxi; and Steinkellner 1995, 19.

<sup>12</sup> See Nakamura 1980, 194; and Gómez 1967, lxv.

<sup>13</sup> These mss. are listed in the front of Suzuki and Idzumi 1949. For details see Gómez 1967, xviii-xix. Gómez used mss. 1-4 for his dissertation.

In addition to these manuscripts, we have a Sanskrit fragment of twelve lines from the Night Goddess Sarvanagararakṣāsambhavatejāhśrī section of the *Gv* which was discovered at Turfan.<sup>15</sup>

The Sanskrit *Gv* as it survives in its extant manuscripts comprises fifty-six sections. A total of 975 stanzas are distributed among eighteen of these sections; the remaining sections are written in prose alone (Gómez 1967, xxxix). A clear distinction can be recognized between the language of the verse and prose within the Sanskrit *Gv*. The verse of the text is strongly hybridized with many Middle-Indicisms, while the prose conforms more closely to classical Sanskrit, showing few signs of Middle Indic phonology or morphology. Although the prose, which largely consists of seemingly endless strings of compounds, shows little hybridization, its vocabulary is heavily Buddhistic. Based on this mixed level of hybridization between verse and prose and its Buddhistic vocabulary, Edgerton placed the *Gv* within his second category of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit texts, along with such texts as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, *Lalitavistara*, *Kāśyapaparivarta*, and *Daśabhūmikasūtra* (BHSg, xxv).

The *Gv* was translated four times into Chinese.<sup>16</sup> The first translation was by the monk Sheng Chien completed between 408 and 412 CE (T 294). Compared to the

---

<sup>14</sup> Vaidya 1960, ix. For a comparison of the Suzuki-Idzumi and the Vaidya editions of the *Gv* see the section below. The other five manuscripts mentioned by Gómez are: 8. Bir Library (no further details), 11. Durbar Library, Calcutta (no further details) 10. Asiatic Society of Calcutta (paper; 232 folia; 12 lines to a page; 17 by 6 3/4 inches. Nepalese characters), 11. Asiatic Society, Bombay Branch (paper; 292 folia; 7 lines to a page; 20 3/4 by 5 inches), and 12. Indian Office Library, London (no further details).

<sup>15</sup> Waldschmidt 1965, 235-6. For the corresponding section in Vaidya see V240-2.

<sup>16</sup> The information on the Chinese translations is taken from Gómez 1967, xxiii-xxix.

Sanskrit *Gv*, this is only a partial translation.<sup>17</sup> The *Gv* was translated again as the final chapter of the *Av* by Buddhabhadra and his team of translators between 418 and 420 CE (T 278). In this work the *Gv* has the title *\*Dharmadhātupraveśanaparivarta*. Here the *Bhad* is not included at the end of the *Scp*; instead the *Gv* ends with verses praising all the bodhisattvas. The *Gv* was translated a third time again as the final chapter of the *Av* between 695 and 699 CE, by Śikṣānanda and his team (T 279). According to Gómez, this translation differs from Buddhabhadra's only in a few minor details (1967, xxvii). One such detail was "the addition of a short salutation in verse at the point where Sudhana meets the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra."<sup>18</sup> A century later, the *Gv* was translated a yet again; this time as an independent work with the title *\*Acintyavimokṣagocarapraveśanasamantabhadracaryāpraṇidhāna* by Prajñā, a Kashmiri monk, between 796 and 798 CE (T 293). Gómez informs us in this translation "the prose preceding the *Samantabhadracaryāpraṇidhāna* has been expanded considerably," and the *Bhad* added to the end.<sup>19</sup>

According to the Kanjur versions, the *Gv* was translated into Tibetan by a team of translators consisting of Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi, Ye śes sde and others at the beginning of ninth century (Steinkellner 1995, 14-15). This same group also took part

<sup>17</sup> According to Gómez this translation only contains part of the prose from the *Nidānaparivarta*, skips the first nine Good Friends, and ends abruptly after the thirty-fourth Good Friend (see Gómez 1967, xxiv).

<sup>18</sup> Gómez 1967, xxvii. This statement is interesting for two reasons. Cleary states that his translation of the *Av* is based on Śikṣānanda's translation (1993, 2) and yet it does not include these salutation verses (see 1503-1511). Also, Cleary's translation ends with the *Bhad*, whereas Gómez attributes the addition of the *Bhad* to Prajñā's translation (1967, xxviii). Cleary may have conflated the Śikṣānanda and Prajñā versions in his translation. See below for details on the Prajñā translation.

<sup>19</sup> 1967, xxviii. I am unclear what Gómez means by the prose "preceding" the *Scp*. I suspect he is using the term "*Samantabhadracaryāpraṇidhāna*" to refer to the *Bhad* which is also known as the *Samantabhadracaryāpraṇidhānagāthas*, and therefore the prose preceding it would be the *Scp* proper.

in the great revision of terminology which began at the end of the eighth century. It is possible that an earlier Tibetan version, no longer extant, of the *Gv* existed before the ninth century, and then was revised by this translation team, although Steinkellner believes this very unlikely (1995, 19). For my translation of the *Scp*, I have consulted the Derge and Peking versions of the Tibetan, which both closely follow the surviving Sanskrit text in the highly mechanical style so typical of Tibetan translation material.<sup>20</sup>

### Modern Scholarship

B. H. Hodgson, a British civil servant stationed in Nepal, first brought the Sanskrit *Gv* to the attention of the western world. Upon his arrival in Kathmandu in 1821, Hodgson immediately began collecting Buddhist manuscripts, and published his initial findings in *Asiatic Research* (1828), wherein he classified the *Gv* as a narrative scripture (Ehman 1977, 9). But details of its narrative were not published until Mitra's *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal* (1882, 90). Working from Hodgson's manuscripts, Mitra characterized the *Gv* as "the history of Sudhana in search of perfect knowledge" (*ibid.*). Although Mitra accurately described the general outline of the *Gv*'s narrative, he made no attempt to explain the text's worldview. This matter was first addressed in the West by the Dutch Buddhologist H. Kern in *Der Buddhismus und seine Geschichte in Indien* (1882). Kern understood the *Gv* as an idealist text (*idealistische Schrift*) in which the Buddha is not an historical figure, but a spiritual omnipresence

---

<sup>20</sup> I discuss differences between the Sanskrit text and the Tibetan versions, as well as differences between the Derge and Peking in the introduction to the translation in chapter V.



which “concretizes” itself in the forms of images of nature through a process of

“miracle” (*Wunderkraft*).<sup>21</sup> About Kern’s interpretation Ehman states,

...he endeavors to render Buddhist terminology into a western philosophical mold. He equates *Tathāgata* with “reason personified” and betrays his indebtedness to Hegelian metaphysics by observing that reality (in this case, Śakyamuni) in its most graphic form is manifested as nature (1977, 17).

Thus Kern’s interpretive strategy is to map the *Gv*’s philosophical concepts onto an

Hegelian schema, thereby equating the *Gv*’s worldview with Hegelian Idealism.

Although Kern should be duly recognized for his pioneering work, such an interpretation of the *Gv* has come under criticism by more recent approaches which seek to understand the text as far as possible on its own terms, employing its own vocabulary and inner logic.<sup>22</sup>

A new era of *Gv* studies began in the 20th century, first with the publication of Suzuki’s and Idzumi’s critical edition of the Sanskrit *Gv* between 1934-36 in four volumes (revised edition with corrections, 1949), followed by the publication of Edgerton’s monumental *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary* (BHSG&D) in 1953. Although the Suzuki-Idzumi edition possesses many errors and the promised volume of variant readings was never published, it was the first major step towards establishing an authoritative Sanskrit version of the *Gv*. Using the Suzuki-Idzumi edition, Edgerton gives numerous citations and entries from the *Gv* in his BHSG&D which provide much insight into and important information about the language of the Sanskrit text.

---

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Kern 1882, 512.

<sup>22</sup> For some more recent attempts see chapter III.

In 1960, the Mithila Institute published a new edition of the Sanskrit *Gv* edited by P. L. Vaidya. In addition to filling in many lacunae with the Baroda manuscript, Vaidya's edition improved on the Suzuki-Idzumi edition in numerous places with regard to punctuation, separation of words, phrases and paragraphs.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, I have used Vaidya for my translation of the *Scp*. I have followed the Suzuki-Idzumi edition only in two places where it seemed to offer obviously better readings.<sup>24</sup> Of course, for a more detailed study, the Sanskrit manuscripts would need to be consulted.

Although there is no complete English translation of the Sanskrit *Gv*, a number of portions have been translated by various scholars. In his *Essays on Zen Buddhism* (1953), Suzuki provides a complete translation of Sudhana's verses of praise in the Maitreya section (124-131), as well as translations of other selected passages from the Nidānaparivarta (71-102), Maitreya and Sāgaramegha sections (132-217). In his Ph. D. dissertation, "Selected Verses from the Gaṇḍavyūha: Text, Critical Apparatus and Translation" (1967), Gómez critically edits and translates verses from the Nidānaparivarta and Samantagambhīraśrīvimalaprabhā sections based on four Sanskrit manuscripts (1-4 above), the two Sanskrit editions, and the Peking and Lhasa versions of the Tibetan. Gómez also has translated a portion of the Sutejomaṇḍalaratiśrī section using Vaidya's edition (1977, 248-57). Ehman, in his Ph. D. dissertation, "The Gaṇḍavyūha: Search for Enlightenment" (1977), translates the prose portion of the

---

<sup>23</sup> Vaidya states, "It is on account of these features that the present edition marks a vast advance over the older edition" (1960, ix). Gómez supports this---"This edition [Vaidya] nevertheless improves over the previous one considerably" (1967, xxi). In addition to these editions, Gómez (1967) has edited selected verses (see below) and Jastram (1975) has edited the Meghaśrī, Sāgaramegha, and Supratīṣṭhita sections of the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts.

<sup>24</sup> These are noted in the translation.

Nidānaparivarta, and the Meghaśrī, Sāgaramegha, Supraṭiṣṭhita, Ratnacūḍa, and Samantanetra sections, using Vaidya. Guenther has translated selections from the Sarvajagadrakṣāvīryaprabhā, Śrīsaṃbhava and Śrīmatī, Vāsantī, Gopā, and Maitreya sections.<sup>25</sup> In *Women in Buddhism* (Paul 1985), Francis Wilson translates the Siṃhavijrmbhitā, Āśā, Prabhūtā and Vasumitrā sections using Vaidya.

In addition to these selected translations from the Sanskrit text, the entire *Gv* (as a part of the *Av*) has been translated from the Chinese versions into Japanese, German and English. Sokuō Etō translated both the Buddhahadra and Śikṣānanda translations of the *Av* into Japanese (Nakamura 1980, 194). Using the Buddhahadra translation, T. Doi translated the *Av* into German under the title *Das Keron Sūtra---Das Buch vom Eintreten in den Kosmos der Wahrheit* (1978).<sup>26</sup> Using the Śikṣānanda translation, Thomas Cleary has translated the entire *Av* into English.<sup>27</sup>

### The *Scp* in relation to the *Gv*

Chinese translations indicate that the Veṣṭhila, Avalokiteśvara and *Scp* sections of the *Gv* underwent considerable revisions as late as the end of the eighth century CE. The most significant change to the *Scp* was the addition of the *Bhad* in the eighth century.<sup>28</sup> Gómez states that the *Bhad* gave the *Gv* a “new orientation” because,

<sup>25</sup> Guenther 1977, 3-35. Guenther does not specify from which text he is translating. Because he includes some parenthetical Sanskrit equivalents and given his background in Tibetan Buddhism, I am assuming he used a Sanskrit edition and one or more Tibetan versions.

<sup>26</sup> See Afshar 1981, 3-4 for more details.

<sup>27</sup> Published in three volumes between 1984-89. A single volume edition was published by Shambala in 1993.

<sup>28</sup> According to Gómez, the *Bhad*, although present in the Prajñā translation (8th century), is absent from both the Buddhahadra and the Śikṣānanda translations which ends with verses praising “all the bodhisattvas of the universe” (1967, xxv-xxviii). Although Cleary claims that his translation is from

These *gāthās* present the vows of the Bodhisattva as the culmination of his career, whereas the original *Gv.* saw the consummation of the Bodhisattva's course in his realization of the nature of the Principle-foundation (*dharmadhātu*) (1967, xxix; n. 1).

This “new orientation” created through the addition of the *Bhad* is conspicuous for two reasons. First, Samantabhadra continually vows in the *Bhad* to attain powers and knowledges which according to the prose he has already attained.<sup>29</sup> Second, the final verses of the *Bhad* mention seeing Amitābha or being reborn in Amitābha's pure land as the highest religious goal<sup>30</sup>---a goal which I have not found mentioned anywhere else in the *Gv*, and one which seems contrary to the attainment of supreme enlightenment which Sudhana achieves at the end of the *Scp*. Based on the Chinese translations and on internal evidence, the *Bhad* clearly represents a late addition to *Gv* which replaced the earlier verses found in Buddhābhaddra and Prajñā translations at the conclusion of the *Scp*.<sup>31</sup>

Gómez has suggested that the *Gv* originally ended with Sudhana's return to Mañjuśrī after seeing Maitreya, and that *Scp* was also added to the *Gv* at some later date.<sup>32</sup> This view is not supported by the Chinese translations<sup>33</sup> and I have found no

---

Śikṣānanda translation (7th century), it includes with the *Bhad*. After consulting the Śikṣānanda and Prajñā translations with the help of my colleague, Mei-huang Lee (who unlike myself can read Buddhist Chinese), I have concluded that Gómez is correct and Cleary has conflated the two versions in his translation. The *Bhad* also exists as a separate text in the Chinese Canon (T 297; see Gómez 1967, xxv).

<sup>29</sup> Samantabhadra already is omniscient---see V422.11-13; V425.26-28; V426.31-32; and V428.15-16.

<sup>30</sup> See V434-36: vs. 49, 57, 59, and 62.

<sup>31</sup> Whether these verses praising all bodhisattvas were originally included at the end of the *Scp* remains an open question.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Gómez 1981, 183 and 193-4; n. 47. Gómez does not offer any evidence to support this claim in Gómez 1981. In n. 47 he refers to a “yet-unpublished paper read at the 1973 Meeting of the American Oriental Society” in which he first proposed this view. When I spoke to Prof. Gómez at the 1997 Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, this paper was still unpublished.

<sup>33</sup> All the Chinese translations end with the *Scp*, except for the first partial translation which ends abruptly after the thirty-fourth Good Friend (see above).

internal evidence in the Sanskrit text which would support it. Rather, I have found indications within the *Av* and *Gv* which suggest the opposite.

When the *Av* is viewed as a whole, there can be no doubt that Samantabhadra is the most important figure of the sūtra collection. He is mentioned first among the list of bodhisattvas attending Vairocana in the opening scene of the *Av*. One quarter of the entire *Av* is devoted to discourses given by Samantabhadra or passages in praise of him. If we subtract the *Gv* from the *Av*, then this proportion increases to 32%. These figures are greater than those for any other single individual, including Vairocana and Mañjuśrī.<sup>34</sup> In the opening section of the *Gv*, the Nidānaparivarta, Samantabhadra also is mentioned first among the bodhisattvas in the assembly around Vairocana.<sup>35</sup> Immediately following the Nidānaparivarta is the section entitled “Samantabhadra” which contains Samantabhadra’s elucidation of Vairocana’s *samādhi* and ten verses recited by him praising the buddhas and bodhisattvas. The position of Samantabhadra’s verses after a long list of other bodhisattvas’ recitations also suggests his elevated status.<sup>36</sup> Thus the first two sections of the *Gv* seem to depict Samantabhadra as the foremost of all bodhisattvas representing the highest perfection of the path. Due to the lofty status of Samantabhadra in the first two sections of the *Gv*, one would expect to find him mentioned further on toward the end of Sudhana’s quest. Therefore the Scp would form a logical conclusion to the text.

<sup>34</sup> See Cleary 1993, 56-57; 130-131; 176-257; 652-665; 812-888; 933-945; 952-1133.

<sup>35</sup> Maitreya, on the other hand, is not mentioned in the list of bodhisattvas at the beginning of either the *Av* or the *Gv*. In fact, outside of his section in the *Gv*, I have only found two brief references to Maitreya in the *Gv* and none in the *Av*.

<sup>36</sup> Samantabhadra’s verses are followed only by Mañjuśrī’s.

The *Gv* mentions by name fifty-two different Good Friends (*kalyāṇamitra*) visited by Sudhana, before Mañjuśrī returns him to his home town of Dhanyākara. Only after returning to where he started his quest does Sudhana attain his vision of Samantabhadra---a vision which the *Scp* makes clear is the highest realization of the bodhisattva path.<sup>37</sup> Given that Samantabhadra's exalted status is stressed in the *Av* and in the beginning of the *Gv*, and given that we lack solid textual evidence to prove otherwise, we may assume on this internal evidence that *Scp* represents one of the earlier strata of the *Gv*.<sup>38</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

The complex history of the *Gv* has lasted for almost two millennia and spanned across Asia. Thanks to the Nepalese tradition, it is one of only a small number of surviving Mahāyāna sūtras in Sanskrit. The work has also been preserved in four Chinese translations composed between the fifth and eighth centuries, and one Tibetan translation from the ninth century. During the last two centuries, scholarship has made considerable progress in elucidating the *Gv*'s meaning and history. The majority of scholars have worked with the Chinese translations, although some (most notably Suzuki, Idzumi, Vaidya, Edgerton and Gómez) have made substantial progress on the

---

<sup>37</sup> About Samantabhadra's role in the *Gv*, Edgerton states, "But it seems that his prime importance, surpassing even that of Mañjuśrī and Maitreya, in the Gaṇḍavyūha may be due to the convenient word-play on his name when it is prefixed to *caryā* or *carī*, since the name means 'completely excellent, noble, fair'" (1954, 51). Although simplistic, Edgerton's comment highlights the ambiguity created in several places in the *Gv* as to whether the bodhisattva is mentioned by name or whether the text is simply using '*samantabhadra*' as an adjective.

<sup>38</sup> One could speculate that the *Scp* was added to the *Gv* when the *Gv* was incorporated into the *Av* as its final chapter. Although possible, there is no textual evidence to support this view.

Sanskrit text. Two important *desiderata* remain for Sanskrit *Gv* studies: an true critical edition of the Sanskrit text including apparatus, and a complete English translation from the Sanskrit. These accomplishments would greatly facilitate a more comprehensive study of the *Gv*'s narrative, worldview and cultural context which I discuss in the following chapters.

## II. The Narrative

The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is a literary masterpiece, the most readable of all the Mahāyāna *sūtras* and almost the only one organised on an effective plan.... The elaborate descriptions and wealth of similes and figurative language generally mark this as a work of art. In fact it is a highly imaginative religious novel, though it opens in the manner of a *sūtra* (Warder 1980, 424).

This quote from Warder highlights one of the most interesting features of the *Gv*: its progressive narrative structure. Although the work begins like most Mahāyāna *sūtras*, it quickly moves away from the typical Mahāyāna *sūtra* literary form consisting primarily of philosophical discourses and dialogues. Nevertheless, Warder's "imaginative religious novel" is still a Mahāyāna *sūtra*, albeit one with a developed and progressive narrative structure in the form of a pilgrimage story. The general form of this literary genre involves a protagonist's long and difficult journey in a quest for religious illumination / salvation.<sup>1</sup>

The religious pilgrimage story is not unique to the *Gv* in Indian Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature. A number of significant parallels exist between Sudhana's story and the account of the Sadāprarudita's journey in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāmitasūtra* (*Aṣṭa*).<sup>2</sup> Both protagonists are fledgling bodhisattvas who set out on a pilgrimage seeking enlightenment. Sadāprarudita travels to his Good Friend (*kalyāṇamitra*) Dharmodgata, while Sudhana continues from one Good Friend to another until his final encounter with Samantabhadra. Also, Sadāprarudita's meeting with Dharmodgata at a peaked dwelling

---

<sup>1</sup> John Bunyan's *A Pilgrim's Progress* would be one example of this genre from the Christian tradition.

<sup>2</sup> Conze 1973a, 277-300.



(*kūṭāgāra*)<sup>3</sup> parallels Sudhana's visit to Maitreya at his peaked dwelling (V368-418).

Finally, both stories came to exist as the final section of larger sūtras (the *Aṣṭa* and *Av*).

Both the *Aṣṭa* and *Av* are lengthy works consisting mostly of philosophical discourses and dialogues, which conclude with pilgrimage narratives. These narratives may function as prescriptive accounts relating how the devout Mahāyāna Buddhist is to achieve the spiritual experience of reality as described in the more philosophical discourse portion of the larger sūtras in which they are found. The message of both narratives is the same: "one practices the bodhisattva path by going on pilgrimage to Good Friends." The relatively brief expression of this prescription which one finds in the story of Sadāprarudita, is found in a much more detailed and complex form in Sudhana's story.

As Ehman has pointed out (1977) the structure of Sudhana's pilgrimage is circular. Sent on his quest by Mañjuśrī, Sudhana visits one Good Friend after another, each time asking the same questions about the bodhisattva's course of conduct. After describing his or her own special attainment, each Friend admits his or her ultimate ignorance and sends Sudhana to the next Friend. After visiting fifty-two different Good Friends, Sudhana is returned to his home by Mañjuśrī, where he finally attains omniscience through a five-fold revelation of Samantabhadra, the supreme embodiment of bodhisattvahood. Thus Sudhana's entire journey in the *Gv* may be viewed as a preparation for his final vision of Samantabhadra, the central figure of the entire *Av*.

---

<sup>3</sup> Conze 1973a, 288-300.

The compilers of the *Av* considered the *Gv* as the fitting conclusion to the *Av* because it describes how one transverses the mundane world to the supra-mundane world of Samantabhadra which is described so verbosely and grandly in the rest of the *Av*. Each Good Friend acts as a station at which a particular attainment is achieved that further propels Sudhana toward his quest for omniscience. In this way Sudhana's pilgrimage functions as a map of the path toward enlightenment.

The graphic and plastic representations of the Good Friends around the walls of Tabo and galleries of Barabudur support this view. Rather than describe the Buddhist path in a technical and scholastic way through listing stages, attainments, qualities etc., the *Gv* uses the story of Sudhana. This narrative structure, culminating as it does in the five-fold revelation of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, lent itself easily to visual representation, and allowed for the (non-literate?) Buddhist to symbolically emulate Sudhana's pilgrimage by visiting the various representations of the Good Friends as he or she progress around walls of Tabo or through the galleries of Barabudur.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Pilgrimage of Sudhana**

The *Gv* begins in typical Buddhist sūtra fashion: "Thus have I heard. At one time the Lord was dwelling at Śrāvastī, in the Jetavana grove of Anāthapiṇḍada within the Great Array *Kūṭāgāra* together with five-thousand bodhisattvas, foremost among them the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī."<sup>5</sup> The text then lists one hundred

---

<sup>4</sup> Tabo and Barabudur are discussed in detail in chapter IV.

<sup>5</sup> Vaidya p. 1, lines 1-3. Citations from Vaidya will henceforth be abbreviated, such as "V1.1-3" for the above quote.

and fifty-three of these bodhisattvas arranged in fifteen groups of ten.<sup>6</sup> Each group represents a particular power and the bodhisattvas within each seem to be arranged hierarchically (Ehman 1977, 43-44). Following this list, the *Gv* relates that the bodhisattvas and śrāvakas present wish that the Buddha (called Vairocana) would reveal to them all of his previous powers, attainments and transformations. Knowing their thoughts, the Buddha enters into a trance (*samādhi*)<sup>7</sup> called “The Lion’s Yawn” (*simhaviṣṭambhita*), which transforms the peaked dwelling (*kūṭāgāra*) into a miraculous place unlimited in extent, filled with countless diamonds, jewels, gems, turrets, arches, banners, flags, umbrellas, etc. Likewise, the Jetavana and buddha fields equal in number to the dust particles in buddha fields far beyond description also become unlimited in size and filled with the same wondrous things (V6).

As a result of this *samādhi*, ten great bodhisattvas from far-distant buddha fields come with their retinues from the all directions and assemble before the Buddha (V6-12). “But those Great Auditors (*mahāśrāvaka*)... in the Jetavana did not see the miracle of the Tathāgata....<sup>8</sup> because of the dissimilarity in [their] roots of merit.<sup>9</sup>” Also, they had not undertaken the protection of all beings, had not accumulated the roots of merit conducive to omniscience, had not ascertained the origin of the great bodhisattva vows, had not ascertained the extraordinary character of the wisdom eye of the Bodhisattva

<sup>6</sup> One group has twelve and another eleven. In view of the frequent occurrence of lists of ten, Ehman is convinced that these additional names are errors (1977, 43).

<sup>7</sup> See the notes to my translation of the *Scp* for a discussion of *samādhi* in the *Gv* and my rendering of it as ‘trance.’

<sup>8</sup> *na ca te mahāśrāvakāḥ... jetavane tathāgathavikurvitamadrākṣuḥ* (V12.26-27). These Great Auditors were headed by Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, Revata, Subhūti, Aniruddha, Nandika, Kapphīṇa, Kātyāyana, and Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra (V12.26).

<sup>9</sup> *kuśālamūlāsabhāgatayā* (V13.7).

Samantabhadra, etc.<sup>10</sup>---in short, they had not practiced the bodhisattva path, and therefore failed to acquire the roots of merit necessary to see the Buddha's miracle. This discussion of the auditor's ignorance is a Mahāyāna device used to explain why they did not know the *Gv*'s teachings. But unlike other Mahāyāna sūtras, the *Gv* is not a polemical text, or a text which constantly praises itself and the merit that one acquires through its recitation, copying etc.

Next, each of the ten bodhisattvas recites ten verses describing the *samādhi* of the Buddha.<sup>11</sup> This is followed in the next section with ten verses and some prose by Samantabhadra and thirteen verses by Mañjuśrī.<sup>12</sup> Thereupon the assembly was

filled with compassion and decided to help other creatures attain bodhisattvahood as well as its preliminaries, assumed various forms such as monks, Brahmins, kings physicians, merchants, lay disciples, princesses, queen-mothers etc. and moved in different parts of the country for that purpose.<sup>13</sup>

This passage is interesting because, if taken literally, it implies that all of the *kalyāṇamītras* Sudhana visits may not be who they appear, but are actually advanced bodhisattvas role-playing various parts as a skillful means (*upāya*) to lead Sudhana to enlightenment.<sup>14</sup>

Having left the assembly with the other bodhisattvas, Mañjuśrī travels south toward the Dakṣiṇāpatha. On the way he is seen by Śāriputra who requests that he preach to him and his fellow monks. Mañjuśrī teaches them, they enter into a trance

---

<sup>10</sup> From Ehman 1977, 148-150.

<sup>11</sup> V17-24. The last bodhisattva actually recites eleven verses. See Gómez 1967, 21-36 for a translation of these verses.

<sup>12</sup> V25-35. See Gómez 1967, 37-40 for a translation of the verses.

<sup>13</sup> Vaidya's (slightly modified) summary referring to V34-35 (1960, XI).

<sup>14</sup> I discuss this topic in more detail below.

called “the sphere of the unobstructed eye for the vision of all buddhas”

(*sarvabuddhavidarśanāsaṅgacakṣurviśaya*), and attain enlightenment.<sup>15</sup>

Proceeding southward, Mañjuśrī comes to the town of Dhanyākara where a large audience gathers around him. Seeing Sudhana, the merchant’s son, in the crowd Mañjuśrī explains that he is called ‘*su-dhana*’ (‘good-wealth’) because of the miraculous appearance of wealth in his family’s house at his conception and birth (V40.12-32). Then Mañjuśrī preaches a sermon to the crowd and departs. As he is leaving, Sudhana recites thirty-seven verses asking Mañjuśrī to teach him further (V41-46). Seeing that Sudhana is ready to begin his quest for enlightenment, Mañjuśrī stops and tells Sudhana that attending and serving Good Friends is the beginning of omniscience and for the perfect development of omniscience (*sarvajñatāpariniṣpattaye*) it is a necessary consequence (*niṣyanda*) (V46.13-15). Sudhana then asks a long series of questions beginning with “How should a bodhisattva practice in the course of conduct of the bodhisattva?”<sup>16</sup> and ending with “How is the cycle of the completely good course of conduct (*samantabhadracaryā*) fulfilled by a bodhisattva?”<sup>17</sup> In response, Mañjuśrī recites ten verses predicting the supreme attainment of Sudhana and sends him to the monk Meghaśrī, the first *kalyāṇamitra* of Sudhana’s long pilgrimage towards spiritual perfection.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> V36-38. This conversion of the śrāvakas demonstrates the Gv’s universalistic and inclusivist stance.

<sup>16</sup> *Katham bodhisattvena bodhisattvacaryāyām śikṣitavyam?* (V46.16).

<sup>17</sup> *Katham bodhisattvasya paripūrṇaṁ bhavati samantabhadracaryāmaṇḍalam?* (V46.22). Here we see the word-play with *samantabhadracaryā* which Edgerton mentions (see above, p. 15). The compound could mean here “The cycle of the course of conduct of (the Bodhisattva) Samantabhadra;” but in one of Mañjuśrī’s verses which follow we have ‘*caryām samantabhadrām*’ (V47.6; v.45), which clearly shows an adjectival relationship rather than a possessive one.

<sup>18</sup> See chapter IV for more on *kūṭāgāras* in Mahāyāna literature.

In the course of the *Gv*'s narrative, Sudhana visits fifty-three different *kalyāṇamitras*,<sup>19</sup> asking each one how the course of conduct of a bodhisattva is to be carried out. Each Good Friend teaches Sudhana whatever attainment s/he has achieved and then sends him on to the next Friend. In this way, Sudhana travels all over India<sup>20</sup> visiting Friend after Friend in search of omniscience. There has been some debate over whether Sudhana's journey is progressive and whether the Friends are arranged hierarchically.<sup>21</sup> All but five Friends admit their ultimate ignorance to Sudhana, stating "How am I to know the course of conduct of the bodhisattva or explain its virtues?"<sup>22</sup> After this confession, each Friend sends Sudhana to the next, which would seem to imply that at least the previous *kalyāṇamitra* thinks that the next one possesses greater knowledge than s/he does. This transitional device within the narrative suggests a hierarchy involved in the ordering of the Friends leading up to the three most important Friends---Maitreya, Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra.<sup>23</sup> Also, the text makes it clear that

<sup>19</sup> The number fifty-three is an approximation which counts Sudhana's two encounters with Mañjuśrī as one Friend, his visit to Śrīsaṃbhava and Śrīmatī as one Friend, and Samantabhadra as the final *kalyāṇamitra*. The *Gv* mentions one hundred and ten Friends (V394.21), which may be why there is the tradition recorded in the manuscript colophons that the *Gv* was originally much larger (Vaidya, vii).

<sup>20</sup> Most of the toponyms in the *Gv* are not known. Afshar (1981) has made tentative identifications based on somewhat dubious philological arguments. Most scholars accept the interpretation of '*dakṣiṇāpatha*' as the Deccan, in which case most of the place names would be situated in that region. The other main area of activity is the Magadha region (Ehman 1977, 14).

<sup>21</sup> Gómez (1967) and Warder (1980) argue that the Friends teach Sudhana various liberations (*vimokṣa*), whereas Ehman (1977) argues that they do not teach Sudhana anything useful to his quest and only function as an opportunity to raise his question concerning the course of conduct of the bodhisattva. Ehman's argument seems to me unwarranted.

<sup>22</sup> *kim mayā śakyam bodhisattvānām caryām jñātum guṇān vā vaktum?* The five friends who do not say this are Viśvāmitra (V352), Ajitasena (V358), Maitreya (V368-418), Mañjuśrī (V419), and Samantabhadra (V420-438) (See Ehman 1977, 215; n. 17). The omissions in the first two are most likely oversights. Given the importance of the last three, the omissions here would seem to be intentional.

<sup>23</sup> Outside of this device, other indications of hierarchy are not apparent in the content of the sections.

visiting the *kalyāṇamitras* is meritorious,<sup>24</sup> and such merit is a necessary requisite for acquiring omniscience.

The Good Friends Sudhana meets are according to outward appearances heterogeneous: among them are boys, girls, monks, a nun, laymen, laywomen, a prostitute, merchants, brahmins, kings, goddesses, and five celestial bodhisattvas.<sup>25</sup> Half of the *Gv* is devoted to female Good Friends (twenty-one). The single largest group of Friends is the goddesses (one earth goddess, one goddess of the Lumbinī grove, and eight night goddesses). Three other female Friends of interest are: the prostitute Vasumitrā who teaches through erotic contact (V154-56); Gopā, the wife of the Buddha (V300-38);<sup>26</sup> and Queen Māyā, who declares herself to be the mother of all bodhisattvas (V339-49).<sup>27</sup> The prominence of female Good Friends, especially Vasumitrā and the night goddesses, is highly suggestive of Tantra. Such proto-Tantric elements in the *Gv* need further study and may shed light both on the development of the text and on Tantric Buddhism in India.

The longest and one of the most important sections of the *Gv* is the Maitreya section (V368-418). Having been told where to find Maitreya by Śrīsaṃbhava and Śrīmatī, Sudhana goes to a park called “Great Array” (*mahāvyūha*) in Samudrakaccha, where he comes upon a great *kūṭāgāra* called “[The Great Peaked Dwelling] Containing the Arrayed Ornaments of Vairocana” (*vairocanavyūhālaṃkāragarbha*). After he has circumambulated the *kūṭāgāra* hundreds of thousands of times, Sudhana

<sup>24</sup> See for instance V427.27-30.

<sup>25</sup> The five bodhisattvas are: Avalokiteśvara, Ananyagāmī, Maitreya, Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra.

<sup>26</sup> This is the second longest section in the *Gv*.

<sup>27</sup> *sarveṣāṃ... bodhisattvānāmahaṃ jananī* (V345.7).

recites fifty-five verses praising Maitreya and all the enlightened inhabitants of the *kūṭāgāra*, beginning with:

Here [dwells] Maitreya, who has acquired great compassion, whose mind is completely pure; radiant with love, he is intent upon the welfare of the world. Abiding at the Anointing Stage, this eldest son of the conquerors dwells reflecting upon the sphere of the Buddha.<sup>28</sup>

And this is the dwelling of all those matchless, peerless, renowned sons of the conquerors, whose range is great knowledge and who abide in liberation. Unattached, they roam the *Dharmadhātu*.<sup>29</sup>

Upon finishing these verses, Sudhana sees Maitreya approaching from a distance flanked by Śakra and Brahmā and surrounded by a great retinue (V377). Seeing Sudhana, Maitreya recites one hundred and twenty-three verses praising him and predicting his attainment of supreme enlightenment.<sup>30</sup> Sudhana then asks Maitreya his questions concerning the course of conduct of the bodhisattva. Pleased, Maitreya praises Sudhana and then preaches to the crowd, describing the aspiration for omniscience (*sarvajñatācittotpāda*) with a long list of similes beginning with “just as...” (*tadyathā*). Then Maitreya tells Sudhana that to find the answers to his questions he should enter the *kūṭāgāra*.

Once he has circumambulated Maitreya, Sudhana respectfully asks to enter the peaked dwelling. Maitreya snaps his fingers and the gates to the *kūṭāgāra* open.

<sup>28</sup> *iha so mahākaruṇa lābhi viśuddhabuddhirmaitreya maitrīśīri lokahitābhīyuktaḥ // abhiṣekabhūmisthita jyeṣṭhasuto jinānāṃ viharāti buddhaviṣayaṃ anucintyantaḥ* (V371.32-372.2).

<sup>29</sup> *sarveṣa co jinasutāna mahāyaśānāṃ mahājñānagocara vimokṣapratīṣṭhitānāṃ // ye dharmadhātu vicaranti asajjamānā āvāsu teṣamayamapratipudgalānāṃ* (V372.3-6).

<sup>30</sup> V377-393. This is the longest continuous verse in the *Gv*. The Maitreya section is also the section with the most total verse (178 verses). The Gopā section has the second most verse (152 verses).



Sudhana enters and the gates immediately close behind him. Cleary translates

Sudhana's vision of the *kūṭāgāra*'s interior as follows:<sup>31</sup>

He saw the tower immensely vast and wide, hundreds of thousands of leagues wide, as measureless as the sky, adorned with countless attributes: countless canopies, banners, pennants, jewels, garlands of pearls and gems, moons and half moons, multicolored streamers, jewel nets, gold nets, strings of jewels, jewels on gold threads, sweetly ringing bells and nets of chimes,... images of bodhisattvas, singing birds, radiant gems, arrays of all kinds of jewels. Also, inside the tower he saw hundreds of thousands of other towers similarly arrayed; he saw those towers as infinitely vast as space, evenly arrayed in all directions, yet these towers were not mixed up with one another, being each mutually distinct, while appearing reflected in each and every object of all the other towers.

Having seen this “miracle from the inconceivable sphere” (*acintya viśaya vikurvita*) of the great peaked dwelling containing the arrayed ornaments of Vairocana, Sudhana is overcome with joy and bliss, and bows in all directions. The moment Sudhana bows, through the power of Maitreya, he perceives himself simultaneously in each and every *kūṭāgāra*. Inside each peaked dwelling, Sudhana witnesses a different scene from the bodhisattva path of Maitreya: he sees Maitreya make his first aspiration for complete, perfect enlightenment (*samyaksambodhi*); he sees Maitreya's attainment of “the trance of benevolence” (*maitrasamādhi*) from which he gained his name “The Benevolent One” (*maitreya*) (V408.23-24); he sees Maitreya as Śakra and Brahmā; he sees him teaching in the heavens and hells, and in every realm of existence with countless other bodhisattvas and buddhas; he sees Maitreya perfecting every bodhisattva practice; he sees him at his Anointing Stage (*abhiṣekabhūmi*) only one life-time away from supreme

---

<sup>31</sup> Cleary 1993, 1489-90 = V407-08.

omniscience; he even sees Maitreya in his final birth as a buddha teaching the Dharma (V410.16-30).

While Sudhana is witnessing infinite manifestations of Maitreya and hearing infinite teachings, Maitreya enters the *kūṭāgāra*, snaps his fingers once more, and says to Sudhana, “Arise, O Son of a Good Family. This is the nature of things (*eṣā dharmāṇām dharmatā*). O Son of a Good Family, characterized by their non-fixity, all things are controlled through the knowledge of bodhisattvas. In this way, lacking the perfection of own-being (*svabhāvāpariniṣpanna*), they are like illusions, dreams and reflections.” (V415.27-29).

Aroused from his *samādhi*, Sudhana discovers that the peaked dwelling has vanished. Maitreya then explains to Sudhana the mystic power of the bodhisattvas to generate phenomena through their understanding of the ultimate unreality of all things. Having instructed Sudhana in this way, Maitreya tells Sudhana to go to Mañjuśrī and ask him his questions concerning the course of conduct of the bodhisattva. Maitreya then praises Mañjuśrī in the most glowing of terms, summing up his endorsement with “And that Ever-Young Mañjuśrī has obtained the supreme perfection.”<sup>32</sup>

Passing over one hundred and ten cities, Sudhana comes to Sumanāmukha and stays there ardently desiring a vision of Mañjuśrī. Stretching out his hand for one hundred and ten *yojanas*, Mañjuśrī places it upon Sudhana’s head, praises him, instructs him and returns him to his own country.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *sa ca mañjuśrīḥ kumārabhūtaḥ paramapāramitāprāpta* (V418.29).

<sup>33</sup> V419. This entire section is only fourteen lines long, which is surprising given that Maitreya praises Mañjuśrī’s virtues for eighteen lines immediately preceding this section. Also, Sudhana does not ask

### The Samantabhadracaryāprañidhānam

The Scp begins, “Then Sudhana, the merchant’s son, having honored Good Friends equal in number to the dust particles in a world system of thirty million worlds, possessed a mind which had accumulated the requisites for omniscience” (V420.2-3). This introduction raises two issues about the *Gv*’s narrative. First, the particular number of Good Friends mentioned by name who were visited prior to Samantabhadra must be considered as only a partial list, if Sudhana has honored innumerable *kalyāṇamitras* before his visit to Samantabhadra. Also, the Scp’s opening statements raises the question of whether Sudhana’s visits to Good Friends were merely preparation for his vision of Samantabhadra, who ranks above the Friends, or whether Samantabhadra is to be considered a Good Friend. Although I have found no reference to Samantabhadra as a *kalyāṇamitra*, it seems that ‘bodhisattva’ and ‘*kalyāṇamitra*’ are practically synonymous terms in the *Gv*. The identity of *kalyāṇamitras* as bodhisattvas (and bodhisattvas as *kalyāṇamitras*) is strengthened by the possibility that all the *kalyāṇamitras* visited by Sudhana are actually advanced bodhisattvas in disguise (see p. 21). Given this apparent equivalence, Samantabhadra, as the supreme bodhisattva, would then be considered the supreme *kalyāṇamitra*.<sup>34</sup>

The Scp continues to detail the attainments of Sudhana and how Sudhana, reflecting on the range of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra and the stages (*bhūmī*) of his

---

Mañjuśrī his questions about the course of conduct of a bodhisattva, nor does Mañjuśrī instruct Sudhana to seek a vision of Samantabhadra, which he does in the next section.

<sup>34</sup> For the superiority of Samantabhadra, see particularly V427.27-30, which I discuss in more detail below.

course of conduct, was “longing eagerly for a vision of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.”<sup>35</sup> What follows is a five-fold revelation of the Bodhisattva leading up to Sudhana’s attainment of supreme enlightenment.

The five stages of this revelation are:

1. Ten signs prior to the vision of the Samantabhadra became visible.
2. Ten great lights prior to the vision of the Samantabhadra became visible.
3. Samantabhadra appears before Sudhana
4. Samantabhadra places his right hand upon Sudhana’s head
5. Sudhana penetrates all world system which are inside the body of Samantabhadra.

This five-fold revelation highlights the central importance of Samantabhadra in the *Gv*. Samantabhadra is the only character in the *Gv* who is progressively disclosed to Sudhana in such a mystical fashion. Whereas all the other *kalyāṇamitras* exist within a definite location with the space-time continuum of the world system (except Mañjuśrī), Samantabhadra appears to Sudhana from outside the mundane realm beyond time and space. Samantabhadra’s course of conduct occurs within the entire *Dharmadhātu*, and as such it is both simultaneously everywhere and nowhere. The Form Body (*rūpakāya*) of Samantabhadra is the *Dharmadhātu* in its aspect of inter-reflecting (or interpenetrating) totality (as illustrated by Maitreya’s tower), and his Dharma Body (*dharmakāya*) is the *Dharmadhātu* in its aspect of undivided unity.<sup>36</sup> By seeing Samantabhadra’s Form Body, being touched by it, and finally entering into it, Sudhana gains equality with the Bodhisattva’s Dharma Body, thereby attaining supreme enlightenment.

<sup>35</sup> *samantabhadrabodhisattvadarśanaparitr̥ṣita* (V420.20).

<sup>36</sup> This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

In the first two stages of revelation, the ten signs and ten lights experienced by Sudhana purify all buddha fields and transform the mundane sphere through clouds of multi-colored lights, flowers, gems etc. into the limitless sphere of the *Dharmadhātu*. Through their mystical transformation of the mundane sphere, these signs and lights foreshadow the appearance of Samantabhadra, and emphasize the extraordinary and supramundane power of the Bodhisattva.

Seeing these ten signs and ten lights, “supported by the power of his own roots of merit”<sup>37</sup> and “conscious of obtaining the light of omniscience through the vision of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra”<sup>38</sup> Sudhana attains the third stage of revelation: his vision of Samantabhadra. The Scp states,

[Sudhana] saw the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra sitting on the Lion Throne containing the great lotus gem in front of the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the completely enlightened Buddha, Lord Vairocana.... [Sudhana saw that Samantabhadra’s] sphere of knowledge was unlimited, his range insuperable, his inconceivable sphere conformed to the equality of the three times, and that he had *obtained equality with all tathāgatas*<sup>39</sup> (V422.9-13).

The Scp then describes in great detail Sudhana’s miraculous vision of Samantabhadra. Sudhana sees emitting from every single pore of Samantabhadra’s body clouds of light rays, fragrant trees, wish-fulfilling gems, assemblies of gods, magical creations, buddha fields, bodhisattvas, etc. (V422.13-423.28). Then reflecting upon the body of Samantabhadra, Sudhana sees within every pore of Samantabhadra’s body the entire

<sup>37</sup> *svakuśalamūlabalopastabdha* (V42130).

<sup>38</sup> *samantabhadrabodhisattvadarśanasarvajñatāprabhālābhasaṃjñin* (V421.32).

<sup>39</sup> *sarvatathāgatasamatānuprāpta* (V422.13). This phrase will be important for discussions concerning the status of Samantabhadra in chapter III. I have italicized other phrases in English below which are also important to this discussion.

world system of thirty million worlds with all its mountains, rivers, oceans, towns, cities, countries, etc. Just as he sees this world, in the same way he sees all worlds by means of “reflection” (*pratibhāsa / gzugs brñan*) within every pore of Samantabhadra’s body. Sudhana witnesses the entire histories of these worlds from the furthest past eon unto the furthest future eon. Just as he sees the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra displaying this miracle before Vairocana in this world, in the same way he sees him in every direction, within every single particle of dust within every buddha field emitting from his body all buddhas, bodhisattvas and realms (V423.29-V424.29). Experiencing this inconceivable miracle of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, Sudhana attains eleven abodes within the perfection of knowledge.<sup>40</sup>

Sudhana then enters the fourth stage of revelation when Samantabhadra places his right hand upon his head. As soon as Samantabhadra’s hand is placed upon his head, Sudhana realizes trances equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields.

Within every single trance Sudhana achieves the following:<sup>41</sup>

1. He penetrates oceans of world systems.
2. He accumulates previously unseen requisites for omniscience.
3. productions of factors for omniscience appear to him.
4. he makes himself ready through many preparations for omniscience.
5. he penetrates oceans of vows.
6. he goes forth by the paths for setting out toward omniscience.
7. he is intent upon the course of conduct of bodhisattvas.
8. he is developed through the impelling forces of omniscience.
9. he is illuminated with power through the lights of knowledge of all buddhas.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. V424.31-425.7. The text actually states that he attained ten abodes, but I counted eleven.

<sup>41</sup> See V425.10-17. Each of these attainments the Scp states, “are equal to the dust particles in all buddha fields.”

Just as Sudhana experiences Samantabhadra placing his hand upon his head in this world, in the same way he experiences Samantabhadra placing his hand upon his head in all worlds, and within every single dust particle within all worlds. In this way Sudhana realizes countless entrances into the Dharma within every dust particle in every world.

Then Samantabhadra says to Sudhana, “O Son of Good Family, did you see my miracle?”

Sudhana replies, “I saw [it], O Noble One. *But [only] an understanding tathāgata would understand a miracle so inconceivable.*”<sup>42</sup>

Samantabhadra then describes to Sudhana how desiring the mind of omniscience (*sarvajñatācitta / thams cad mkhyen pa ñid kyi sems*), he practiced for untold eons sacrificing innumerable bodies, empires, and loved ones; while serving, honoring and worshipping buddhas far beyond description. Never in the course of those countless eons, did he possess any thought which was harmful, possessive, differentiating between self and other, concerned with weariness, or confused---“other than the thought of enlightenment which is the unconquerable essence of unsurpassed knowledge for the requisites of omniscience.”<sup>43</sup>

Samantabhadra then tells Sudhana that through these practices he acquired ten powers:<sup>44</sup>

1. the power of the requisites
2. the accumulation of root causes
3. the performance of virtues

<sup>42</sup> *api tu tathāgataḥ prajānan prajāñīyāttāvadacintyamidaṃ vikurvitam* (V425.27-28).

<sup>43</sup> *anyatra aparājītajñānaduryodhanagarbhabodhicittāt sarvajñatāsaṃbhāreṣu* (V426.18).

<sup>44</sup> V426.28-30.

4. the proper comprehension of all factors
5. the eye of wisdom
6. *mastery of the tathāgatas*
7. the power of the great vow
8. the power of great compassion
9. the well-purified supernatural powers
10. the acceptance of all Good Friends

Samantabhadra next tells Sudhana that through these powers he obtained the *Dharma Body* (*dharmakāya / chos kyi lus*),<sup>45</sup> which is absolutely pure and non-differentiated within the three times (*sarvatryadhvāsambhinna / dus gsum du tha mi dad pa*). In addition to this Dharma Body, Samantabhadra states that he has acquired a supreme Form Body (*anuttara rūpakāya / bla na med pa'i gzugs kyi lus*), which arises in all worlds and times, and makes visible all miracles in every direction.

This supreme Form Body, the sight of which is difficult to obtain even after countless eons, acts as a source of enlightened activity. Those who see or touch it, even in a dream, are not liable to turn back from supreme, perfect enlightenment. Some attain spiritual maturity merely by hearing Samantabhadra's name or recollecting him. Others attain maturity by seeing his light rays, or through the trembling of the earth. In this way, the soteriological efficacy of Samantabhadra's Form Body is described.

Then Samantabhadra says to Sudhana, "...beings who hear about the complete purity of *my buddha field* are reborn within pure buddha fields. Those beings who see the purity of my body are *reborn within my body*. O Son of Good Family, see this purity of my body!" (V427.15-17).

---

<sup>45</sup> V426.31. This term will be discussed in more detail in the chapter III.



Reflecting upon the body of Samantabhadra once more, Sudhana attains the fifth and highest stage of revelation. Within every single pore of Samantabhadra's body, Sudhana sees all bodhisattvas, buddhas, and realms. And within all realms he sees all beings brought to maturity in supreme, perfect enlightenment. Through this vision, Sudhana penetrates into all world systems which are *inside of the body of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra*,<sup>46</sup> and he brings all beings to maturity. And the merit Sudhana acquires from this vision is so great that

...those accumulations of the roots of merit which belonged to Sudhana, the merchant's son, from the light of knowledge [obtained] through approaching, seeing and waiting upon Good Friends equal in number to the dust particles in the buddha fields, did not approach even a hundredth, a thousandth, a hundred-thousandth, or a hundred-thousand-ten-millionth part of the accumulation of the roots of merit [that arose] immediately upon seeing the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra (V427.28-30).

Through this vision Sudhana penetrates within every single pore of Samantabhadra in every instant of thought into infinitely numerous oceans of fields within all times, bringing beings to maturity. In this way, Sudhana arrives at supreme enlightenment, which the Scp expresses as his attainment of thirteen 'equalities' (*samatā / mñam pa*):

1. equality with the ocean of vows concerning the course of conduct of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra
2. *equality with all tathāgatas*
3. equality in accomplishing the group of all fields
4. equality in fulfilling the course of conduct
5. equality in accomplishing the vision of the miracle of perfect enlightenment
6. equality in the turning the wheel of Dharma
7. equality in the purity of special knowledge
8. equality in the utterances of voice
9. equality in joining together the oceans of all qualities of sound
10. equality in strength and fearlessness
11. equality in the abodes of the buddhas

<sup>46</sup> *samantabhadrabodhisattvakāyāntargata* (V427.27).

12. equality in great love and compassion
13. equality in the inconceivable miracle of the liberation of bodhisattvas

Following Sudhana's final attainment, Samantabhadra recites the *Bhad* which Vairocana approves and the *Gv* comes to end.

### Concluding Remarks

To sum up, the *Gv* may be viewed as a Mahāyāna sūtra narrative which tells the story of Sudhana's pilgrimage in search of supreme enlightenment. The young hero's journey to fifty-two Good Friends is a necessary, but not sufficient means of attaining his goal. By visiting the Friends Sudhana attains the required store of merit needed for his vision of the supreme embodiment of bodhisattvahood, Samantabhadra. Through a five-fold process of revelation, Sudhana becomes one with Samantabhadra, thereby obtaining his Form Body and Dharma Body which represent the infinite manifestations and absolute unity of the *Dharmadhātu*.<sup>47</sup> Thus the importance of Samantabhadra in the *Av* is reflected in the *Gv*---first in the opening sections of the *Gv* and then by the *Scp*. As the supreme bodhisattva and *kalyāṇamitra*, Samantabhadra is described in such lofty terms as to blur the distinction between bodhisattvahood and buddhahood. This blurring may be due in part to a tension within the *Gv* between the spiritual ideals of attaining omniscience and worshipping all buddhas. These issues I will address in more detail in the following chapter.

---

<sup>47</sup> I discuss these two aspects of the *Dharmadhātu* in more detail in the next chapter.

### III. The Worldview

#### Worldview Defined<sup>1</sup>

In *Worldviews, Crosscultural Explorations of Human Belief*, Ninian Smart uses the term 'worldviews' to refer to both traditional religions and secular ideologies (1983, 2). Borrowing this term with modification, I shall define a 'worldview' as a "general theory of existence." As a general theory of existence, a worldview is an attempt to construct meaning out of experience by defining the relationship between the individual, society and reality.<sup>2</sup> A worldview is the lens through which individuals perceive experience. Every thinking human being will out of necessity have some means of making sense of experience.<sup>3</sup> Due to shared language and culture, and a need to act collectively, individuals in the same society will tend to have much overlap in their worldviews. Also, because human beings share certain ways of living, different cultures and societies can be expected to share resemblances in their worldviews.

Because worldviews are general theories about how the individual, society and reality interrelate, they must deal with questions concerning what is true or real and what is false or unreal. Nietzsche stated that 'truth' is a "will to truth" (1956, 289). For Nietzsche this "will to truth" is a will to power. Worldview construction as a will to

---

<sup>1</sup> This section is largely taken from my unpublished paper, "A Pilgrimage Beyond Spacetime: Myth and Worldview in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* Scripture" (1996).

<sup>2</sup> Smart, in discussing the structure of worldviews, uses a triangle simile with the apex representing the 'cosmos' and the two corners of the base representing 'self' and 'society' (1983, 54). I have also utilized a tripartite model, but employ my own terms.

<sup>3</sup> A worldview need not be systematic and the individual need not be fully conscious of his/her worldview in a way which allows for clear articulation. Nevertheless, people need frameworks of meaning in order to act in the world.

power may be illuminated by Catherine Bell's concept of "redemptive hegemony." Bell states,

In sum, a redemptive hegemony is not an explicit ideology or a single and bounded *doxa* that defines a culture's sense of reality. It is a strategic and practical orientation for acting, a framework possible only insofar as it is embedded in the act itself. As such, of course, the redemptive hegemony of practice does not reflect reality more or less effectively; it creates it more or less effectively (1992, 85).

Thus worldview as a will to power constructs the redemptive hegemony which in turn does not reflect reality but creates reality. This reality is played out as power relations of domination, subjugation, appropriation, resistance, misrecognition, legitimization and objectification between persons and groups in societies (Bell 1992, 85).

Influenced by some of Wittgenstein's insights into language, Peter Winch has asserted that reality is not what gives language its sense, rather "what is real and what is unreal shows itself in the sense that language has" (Capps 1995, 260). If we combine Bell's concept of redemptive hegemony with Winch's notions on language and reality, we can see worldviews as theories of existence expressed in language, which, through their very act of theorizing, construct their own 'reality.' In this way, worldviews may be seen as "reality games"<sup>4</sup> which play out power relations within a redemptive hegemony.

Worldviews are the way individuals and societies imagine their worlds and their place in those worlds. The social, cultural and psychological 'games' that are played in these worlds negotiate power. Thus a worldview is continually being constructed and

---

<sup>4</sup> The term "reality games" I have developed through a modification of Wittgenstein's notion of "language games." See Wittgenstein 1988, 5.

deconstructed in acts of imagining and re-imaging, which both inform the way individuals act and are informed by the way they act. In this sense, a worldview is more than an abstract, static theory of existence---it is an imaginative *praxis* always in flux which is continually negotiated within the redemptive hegemony.

This definition of worldview can be further refined by distinguishing between religious and non-religious worldviews. A religious worldview is a worldview which recognizes the reality of one or more transcendental source(s) of power. I am using the term 'transcendental' here as Tambiah does in his definition of "religious charisma" as deriving from "transcendental claims to authoritative leadership" (1993, 325). Tambiah states,

Transcendental claims are extrawordly and assert the extrawordly to be superior to the world (hence suprawordly)---to encompass it (hence the notion of immanence), to inform and elevate it (hence its ethical centrality), and finally to supersede it (hence its message of salvation) (*ibid*).

Thus a religious worldview will recognize one or more transcendental power source(s) such as Ultimate Reality, Dharma, God, gods, spirits, etc., and place it / them at the top of a hierarchically arranged redemptive hegemony. In the reality game of a religious worldview, ultimate or superior power is imagined to come from (a) transcendental source(s). Thus in religious worldviews, power is conceived primarily as spiritual power, although in the worldly realm these power relations may be played out within the

social, economic and political spheres.<sup>5</sup> A non-religious worldview is a worldview which does not recognize any source of transcendental power.

Texts as social constructs will necessarily reflect the imagined worldview of their author(s). Religious texts, such as the Bible, the Koran, the Vedas, or Buddhist sūtras, will reflect the religious worldview of their authors, but as scripture these texts claim their authority from transcendental power source(s). Thus a religious scripture will both describe a particular religious worldview and situate itself within that worldview as a locus of spiritual power acting within the redemptive hegemony. As objectified “religious charisma” (Tambiah 1993, 335), scriptures offer us valuable windows into the religious worldviews of particular societies and cultures.

### **The Worldview of the *Gv***

As a Mahāyāna sūtra, the *Gv* expresses a religious worldview which developed in India during the first centuries of the Common Era. Although sharing a number of similar features with other Mahāyāna sūtras (the Bodhisattva Ideal, the quest for omniscience, etc.), the *Gv* possesses its own expression of reality, and description of the path towards the realization of this reality. In order to gain insight into the unique worldview of the *Gv*, I shall begin by outlining the interpretative approaches of three modern scholars towards this text: D. T. Suzuki, Luis Gómez, and Mark Ehman.

---

<sup>5</sup> It is no accident that throughout world history the priestly castes had such high social status, economic wealth and political power. Their supposed closeness to transcendental power has functioned to legitimate the professional religious castes’ worldly power.

One of the foremost scholars of the *Gv* in the twentieth century, Suzuki has discussed the worldview of the text in a number of important essays published in *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (1953). Suzuki begins,

When we come to the *Gaṇḍavyūha*... there is a complete change in the stage where the great religious drama of Mahāyāna Buddhism is enacted. We find nothing cold, nothing gray or earth-coloured, and nothing humanly-mean; for everything one touches in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* shines out in an unsurpassable manner. We are no longer in the world of limitation, obscurity, and adumbration; we are miraculously lifted up among the heavenly galaxies. The ethereal world is luminosity itself (1953, 75).

The worldview of the *Gv*, as Suzuki points out, describes a spiritual world governed by its own rules. No longer is the Buddha a historical figure limited by space or time. The Buddha, called Vairocana, is the universe and the universe is the Buddha (1953, 76). When Vairocana enters his *samādhi*, his *kūṭāgāra* and the Jetavana expand to infinity. As with space, time also is no longer finite---the linear progression of past, present and future has collapsed into a single, eternal moment. All objects within this limitless space-time are transparent, luminous, and reflect every other object. According to Suzuki, this universe of “universal interpenetration” the *Gv* calls the *Dharmadhātu* (1953, 78). Although containing the ordinary world (called the *lokadhātu*) within it, the *Dharmadhātu* transcends the boundaries of the ordinary world and represents the universe as seen from the spiritual level of the bodhisattvas. Because the world of the *Gv* is not the world of mortals, but of the bodhisattvas, the dominant feeling “...that runs through the text is an active sense of grand inscrutable mystery (*acintya*) going beyond the power of thinking and description” (1953, 79 & 82).

Suzuki refers to the notion of ‘Interpenetration’ as “the fundamental insight of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*” (1953, 87). About it he states,

It is, philosophically speaking, a thought somewhat similar to the Hegelian concept of concrete-universals. Each individual reality, besides being itself, reflects something of the universal, and at the same time it is itself because of other individuals. A system of perfect relationship exists among individual existences and also between individuals and universals, between particular objects and general ideas. This perfect network of mutual relations has received at the hand of the Mahāyāna philosopher the technical name of Interpenetration (*ibid.*).

According to Suzuki, this interpenetration of the *Dharmadhātu* is demonstrated by the *mahākūṭāgāra* of the Maitreya section: “...Maitreya’s Tower is no other than the Dharmadhātu itself...” (1953, 148). The inter-reflection of the towers within the tower and all objects within the towers, represents the complete interpenetration and non-obstruction of all phenomena. Maitreya’s finger snap represents the sustaining power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the bodhisattva which gives rise to all the wonderful phenomena of the Maitreya’s tower and thus of the entire *Dharmadhātu* (1953, 149).

Through his description of the *Gv*’s worldview, Suzuki points out that the ground and ultimate goal of the bodhisattva’s ‘life of enlightenment’ (*bodhicaryā*) is none other than the *Dharmadhātu*. According to Suzuki, this life of enlightenment “...is identified with the Bhadracaryā, the life of Bhadra, that is, Samantabhadra” (1953, 170). He states,

The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is in a sense the history of the inner religious consciousness of Samantabhadra the Bodhisattva, whose wisdom-eye (*jñānacakṣus*), life of devotion (*caryā*), and original vow (*praṇidhāna*) make up its content. Thus all the Bodhisattvas taking part in the establishment of the Dharmadhātu are born (*abhiniryāta*) of the life and vows of Samantabhadra. And Sudhana’s chief object of pilgrimage...



was nothing else but the identifying of himself with Samantabhadra the Bodhisattva (1953, 83-84).

Luis Gómez has also discussed the worldview of the *Gv* on two different occasions.<sup>6</sup> Gómez defines the philosophical approach of the Mahāyāna sūtras as “speculative mysticism” which have as their “...fundamental criteria of Truth... the mystic path (*mārga*) and the mystic experience (*bodhi*)” (1967, lxxviii). According to Gómez,

The central doctrines of the *Gv*. represent an elaboration and combination of two notions common to all Buddhists: The notion that all appearance is illusory and the traditional belief in the psychic powers attained through the exercise of asceticism (1967, lxxvi).

The illusory nature of phenomena is expressed in terms of the ten comparisons: all dharmas are like acts of magic, a mirage, the moon reflected in water, space, an echo, the city of the Gandharvas, a dream, a shadow, an image reflected in a mirror, and objects created by psychic powers (Gómez 1967, lxxvi). According to Asaṅga, the psychic powers (*ṛddhī*) of a bodhisattva attained through *samādhi* are twofold: powers of transformation (*pāriṇāmikī ṛddhī*) and powers of creation (*nairmāṇikī ṛddhī*).<sup>7</sup> Powers of transformation include the power to emit light rays and produce fire which allay the suffering of all beings, the power to make everything visible anywhere in an instant, the power to introduce any object into one’s body, and the power to appear anywhere. Due to its effectiveness as a means (*upāya*) of teaching sentient beings, the most important power among the powers of creation is the ability to create illusory

---

<sup>6</sup> See the introduction to “Selected Verse from the Gaṇḍavyūha” (1967) and “The Bodhisattva as Wonder-Worker” in *Prajñāpāramita and Related Systems* (1977), pp. 221-261.

<sup>7</sup> Gómez 1977, 230. The following two paragraphs are from Gómez 1977, 230-34.

bodies. Although these bodies are illusory insofar as they have been created for the sole purpose of teaching beings, because all phenomena are ultimately unreal, these bodies are no less real than anything else, and thus speak, eat, drink, sleep, etc. just as other beings do.

According to the *Gv*, only the buddhas and most advanced bodhisattvas have the power to create illusory bodies. This is because they possess two bodies: a Dharma Body (*dharmakāya* or *dharmasārīra*) and a Form Body (*rūpakāya* or *rūpasārīra*), corresponding to two different aspects of the *Dharmadhātu*: the undivided (*asambhinnadharmadhātu*), and its ‘manifestations’ (*dharmadhātutalabheda*). The Dharma Body represents the *Dharmadhātu* as the non-differentiated, absolutely pure, empty, metaphysical foundation of all phenomena.<sup>8</sup> The Form Body represents the infinite, illusory manifestations of the *Dharmadhātu*---all the forms of buddhas, bodhisattvas, realms, beings, and objects inter-reflecting and interpenetration one another.<sup>9</sup> Thus enlightened beings who possess the Dharma Body are beyond duality and therefore are able to recreate the illusion of duality with their Form Bodies for the sake of saving all deluded beings. In this way, the *Dharmadhātu* is the foundation, the goal and the fruit of the bodhisattva’s course of conduct. Viewed from the “mentalist position” (*cittamātravāda*), the *Dharmadhātu* is pure, untainted consciousness (*amalacitta*); viewed from the “dialectical negativistic position” (*śūnyatāvāda*), it is the non-essence of all phenomena as the foundation of the virtues of buddhahood (Gómez 1967, lxxix). Gómez states,

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Harrison (1992a) for more about the Dharma Body in the Mahāyāna.

<sup>9</sup> The *Gv* makes no mention of the “Enjoyment Body” (*sambhogikakāya*) of the *trikāya* systems.

Going beyond the common ground of Mahāyāna, the *Gv* is trying to establish an equation between the true nature of *dharmas*, the *Dharmadhātu*, the ultimate essence of Buddhahood, and the bodhisattva's course (*caryā*) represented by the function of the Form Body. To this purpose the sūtra expands the notion of *ṛddhi*. The principle fruit of concentration and trance is presented then as the attainment of the faculty of producing reality (1977, 235).

Thus as the central concept of the *Gv*, the *Dharmadhātu* possesses metaphysical, magical, and soteriological aspects.

Like Suzuki, Gómez views Maitreya's *kūṭāgāra* as representing the *Dharmadhātu*. For Gómez, this is where Sudhana will receive the "supreme teaching" (1977, 236) and "final answer to his quest" (1977, 240), which is how one carries out the "The Perfect Noble Course" (*samantabhadracaryā*) of bodhisattvas (1977, 230). Thus according to Gómez, the *samādhi* that Sudhana attains through the power of Maitreya is the highest vision of the *Dharmadhātu* and the attainment of complete omniscience.<sup>10</sup>

Mark Ehman also discusses the worldview of the *Gv* in "The Gaṇḍavyūha: Search for Enlightenment" (1977). According to Ehman, the central concept of the *Gv* is *buddhaviśaya*---the "Sphere of the Buddha." Ehman sees the *buddhaviśaya* as possessing both a center and circumference. The center of the *buddhaviśaya* is represented by the Vairocana's *kūṭāgāra* in the Nidānaparivarta and by Maitreya's *kūṭāgāra*. Its circumference is represented by Sudhana's pilgrimage, which leads him around in circles asking the *kalyāṇamitras* about how one carries out the course of

---

<sup>10</sup> Gómez's view that the *samādhi* in the Maitreya section is the highest vision explains in part why he views the Scp as a later edition to the *Gv* (see chapter I).

Samantabhadra.<sup>11</sup> The *buddhaviṣaya* is also structured on the form of an orderly arrangement or pattern (*vyūha*), which is demonstrated by the constant use of the number ten and the repetition of formulas which occur during Sudhana's visits to the Good Friends. Ehman states,

Repetition and re-enactment of the *vyūha* serves to establish one in reality. In the *Gv*, Sudhana walks in circles--i.e., he repeats his actions. Indeed, he repeats his questions and his thoughts. Such repetition brings him ultimately to his starting point. He has now circumambulated the cosmic pattern, both physically and psychically; and, consequently, he understands the nature of reality (1977, 105-6).

This repetition of the patterns in Sudhana's search for the *buddhaviṣaya* highlights the importance of pilgrimage, which for Ehman suggests a possible cultic focus in the *Gv*.<sup>12</sup>

Like Gómez, Ehman sees Maitreya's *kūṭāgāra* as representing ultimate reality in the *Gv*, but for him this reality is not the *Dharmadhātu*, but *buddhaviṣaya*---

"buddhaviṣaya is none other than Maitreya's dwelling place" (1977, 93). Within the interior of the tower, Sudhana is exposed to a new perceptual sphere whereby space is immeasurable, time indivisible, and number innumerable. This new sphere, the Buddha Sphere, establishes a new consciousness which transforms the entire universe. Thus the *samādhi* of Maitreya's tower is the realization of "highest perfect enlightenment" (1977, 92), and what follows in the *Gv* is somewhat "anti-climactic."<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> As already stated in chapter I, Ehman views Sudhana's visits to the Good Friends as serving only as occasions to ask his questions again and again, and that the Good Friends do not teach him anything important (1977, 80-81).

<sup>12</sup> About this "cultic focus" Ehman speculates, "...reverence of the *kalyāṇamitras* would be linked to the adoration of the cult image and circumambulation of the *kalyāṇamitras* would be related to the practice of *pradakṣiṇā* engaged in by pilgrims at a shrine" (1977, 83).

<sup>13</sup> Ehman 1977, 101; see also Gómez 1981, 183.

Having briefly outlined these three contemporary interpretations of the *Gv*'s worldview, I shall now critically assess some of their strengths and weaknesses. Both Suzuki and Gómez point out the central importance of the *Dharmadhātu* in the *Gv*. This concept occurs repeatedly throughout the entire text and an understanding of it is without a doubt crucial for an accurate understanding of the *Gv*'s worldview. Ehman's almost complete disregard for this concept and his fixation upon *buddhaviṣaya* are completely unwarranted. Although the term '*buddhaviṣaya*' does occasionally occur in the *Gv*, it is not nearly as common as '*dharmadhātu*,' and I have not found any passages in the text which place such importance on the term.

Both Suzuki and Gómez are right to point out the connection between the bodhisattva's course (*bodhisattvacaryā*) and the *Dharmadhātu*, although they disagree about the characterization of this course, due to their different interpretations of the compound '*samantabhadracaryā*.' As Edgerton has pointed out (1954, 51) this compound may contain a pun, for it can be interpreted as either "the course of conduct of Samantabhadra" or as "the completely good course of conduct." Suzuki translates the term as the "life of Samantabhadra," and therefore reads the compound in the first way; whereas Gómez translates it as "The Perfect Noble Course," which follows the second reading. Suzuki's interpretation concords with his conclusion that the entire *Gv* is "the history of the inner religious consciousness of Samantabhadra" and attributes the highest status in the *Gv* to this bodhisattva. Gómez, by reading the compound the other

way, minimizes the importance of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, in favor of exalting Maitreya, who according to him imparts the highest vision to Sudhana.<sup>14</sup>

Suzuki's characterization of the fundamental insight of the *Gv* as 'Interpenetration' seems insightful, although he fails to give a Sanskrit equivalent for this term.<sup>15</sup> Also, with his comparison of this term to the Hegelian concept of concrete-universals, Suzuki comes dangerously close to Kern's fault of reducing the *Gv*'s worldview to Western philosophical categories and failing to analyze the text on its own terms.

Gómez's analysis is useful in that it places the *Gv* within the larger context of Mahāyāna Buddhism. But Ehman is right to point out (1977, 26) that Gómez's statement that the *Gv* is concerned with the "psychic powers attained through the exercise of asceticism" finds little textual support. Psychic powers are certainly a central concern of the *Gv*, but there is really no discussion of ascetic practices leading to these powers. Rather it is the attainment of *samādhis* which leads to *ṛddhi*. Whereas other systems might emphasize asceticism as a necessary means to attaining *samādhis*, in the *Gv* these come exclusively through the instruction and sustaining power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the *kalyāṇamitras*.

<sup>14</sup> Gómez's interpretation of this compound is clearly related to his beliefs that Sudhana's vision of Maitreya's peaked dwelling is the highest realization and that the *Scp* was a later edition to the *Gv*.

<sup>15</sup> Suzuki seems to be using the term 'Interpenetration' to represent Hua-yen philosophical concepts expressed by *Shih Shih Wu-ai* and *Li Shih Wu-ai* (see section on China in chapter IV). I have found no direct Sanskrit equivalents to these terms---rather they seem to encompass a cluster of Sanskrit terms such as *pratibhāsa* ('reflection'), *prativedha* ('penetration'), *spharaṇa* ('pervading'), among others used to describe the nature of the *Dharmadhātu* in the *Gv*.

Although Ehman's fixation on *buddhaviṣaya* is misguided, he does offer a number of important insights into the *Gv*. His argument for the interpretation of *vyūha* (*bkod pa*) as "orderly arrangement" rather than "manifestation,"<sup>16</sup> is supported by the patterns of repetition and endless lists of ten within the text. These structural patterns without a doubt express a worldview which is concerned with orderly arrangements rather than simply manifestations. Also, Ehman's concern with Sudhana's pilgrimage admirably attempts to integrate the narrative of the text into an understanding of its worldview.<sup>17</sup>

Both Gómez and Ehman see the Maitreya section as the climax of the *Gv* and Sudhana's vision of Maitreya's tower as his highest realization. Neither offers a detailed argument in favor of this interpretation and both see the *Scp* as anti-climactic. This position of Gómez and Ehman seems to confuse the narrative climax of the *Gv* with Sudhana's attainment of supreme enlightenment or omniscience. Without a doubt, the Maitreya section is of central importance to the *Gv*. This is the longest section of the text and contains Sudhana's vision of Maitreya's tower which represents the infinite, inter-reflecting manifestations of the *Dharmadhātu*. But as I shall argue below, Sudhana only attains his penultimate realization in this section. This realization is equal to the highest attainment of Maitreya, the "Anointing Stage" (*abhiṣekabhūmi*) of a bodhisattva one birth away from omniscience. This stage seems to represent a pivotal development on a bodhisattva's quest for omniscience according to the authors /

---

<sup>16</sup> Ehman follows Suzuki's interpretation of the word (Suzuki 1953, 94), rather than Edgerton's (BHSD) or Gómez's (1967, lxii). Following generally Suzuki and Ehman and more specifically Cleary (1993), I have chosen 'array' in my translation.

<sup>17</sup> I will discuss the relationship between the *Gv*'s worldview and narrative in detail below.

compilers of the *Gv*. As the critical turning-point in his bodhisattva career, Sudhana's attainment in the Maitreya section could present the *Gv*'s narrative climax without being equal to the highest attainment. The Scp would then represent not the climax of the *Gv*, but the resolution of Sudhana's quest---his attainment of omniscience through the five-fold revelation of Samantabhadra.<sup>18</sup>

During my discussion and critique of these three interpretations of the *Gv*'s worldview, a number of important key concepts have emerged for understanding the text. Although the *Gv* is more concerned with demonstrating the inconceivable magic power of the bodhisattva rather than giving a detailed philosophical account of the *Dharmadhātu* (Gómez 1977, 243), the concept of *Dharmadhātu* is essential for understanding the worldview of the text and forms the metaphysical basis and ultimate goal of the bodhisattva's course of conduct (*bodhisattvacaryā*). This course is one that begins with an aspiration toward enlightenment (*bodhicittotpāda*), is maintained through vows (*praṇidhāna*), and finds fruition in perfect, supreme enlightenment (*samyaksambodhi*) or omniscience (*sarvajñatā*). This attainment is synonymous with the acquisition of the Dharma Body (*dharmakāya*) which is at one with the undivided *Dharmadhātu*. In the *Gv*, this course is known through word-play either as the "the course of conduct of Samantabhadra" or the "perfectly good course" (*samantabhadracaryā*). It is carried out through serving and honoring all Good Friends (*kalyāṇamitra*) and maturing all beings. As spiritual teachers and guides the Good Friends teach *samādhis* which lead to liberations (*vimokṣa*). These liberations give the

---

<sup>18</sup> I would like to thank Beverly Jean Jenden-Riedlinger for pointing out to me the difference between a narrative's climax and its resolution (personal conversation, Spring 1998).



aspirant insight into reality and the ability to perform miraculous feats through psychic powers (*rddhi*). Once an aspirant has gained complete realization of the illusory nature of reality, s/he achieves an unlimited ability to generate and control illusory phenomena for the spiritual development and enlightenment of all beings.

Therefore, in the reality game of the *Gv*, power is conceived of as the spiritual power of the Good Friends to generate and manipulate the illusory phenomena of the *Dharmadhātu*. The more spiritually advanced a Good Friend is the greater his or her mastery over reality. The Friends appear to be hierarchically arranged according to their spiritual attainments. Each Friend is only able to teach Sudhana a particular liberation (*vimokṣa*) attained through trance (*samādhi*), and then sends him to a more advanced Friend for further instruction. Thus the knowledge attained through the Good Friends allows Sudhana to gain greater spiritual power and advance up the hierarchy. In Bell's terminology, the Good Friends, as the possessors of power, define the redemptive hegemony within the *Gv*. One attains 'redemption' in such a hegemony through acting according to the instructions of the Friends.

Thus we may summarize the worldview of the *Gv* as: religious (it recognizes the transcendental spiritual power of the buddhas and bodhisattvas), metaphysical (the *Dharmadhātu* is believed to be the ultimate, unchanging ground and mirror supporting all the inter-reflecting illusory phenomena), mystical (the realization of the *Dharmadhātu* is attained through the visionary experiences of *samādhi*), and docetic (all phenomena are empty (*śūnya*) of independent existence, and as such are the magical

creations generated through the sustaining power or mastery (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of advanced spiritual beings).

### **The Relation between Worldview and Narrative**

A fault in the both Suzuki and Gómez's interpretations of the *Gv*'s worldview is their failure to elaborate on the connection between the text's worldview and narrative. How does Sudhana's pilgrimage throughout India function within the *Gv*'s worldview? Or put another way, how does the pilgrimage narrative tell a story and describe a worldview at the same time?

The narrative and the worldview of the *Gv* seem to work on two distinct levels. The narrative takes place in linear space-time: Sudhana visits specific individuals and travels to geographical regions in ancient India. Yet the worldview asserts the ultimate reality of the *Dharmadhātu* beyond all appearances and denies the separate reality of phenomena within linear space-time. As Sudhana travels throughout India visiting the Friends within linear space-time, he is constantly hearing described and experiencing *samādhis* which reveal the inter-reflection of all space-time within every point-moment of space-time. Thus these trances function as 'ruptures' with the linear space-time continuum, exposing the ultimate unreality of separate phenomena within the continuum. Viewed from the unenlightened perspective, things appear in discreet locations and specific times, but viewed from the point of view exposed through *samādhi*, things appear as they really are---magical reflections upon the eternally, infinite *Dharmadhātu*.

Later Buddhist thinkers expressed this tension between linear and non-linear notions of space-time with the distinction of the two levels of truth: the conventional (*saṃvṛti*) and the ultimate (*paramārtha*). From the conventional point of view there is a pilgrimage within linear space-time. From the ultimate point of view such a pilgrimage is unreal. Another way of expressing the two levels of truth is that the narrative uses prescriptive language: “in order to attain omniscience, one should practice pilgrimage to the *kalyāṇamitras*,” while the worldview uses descriptive language: “this is what reality is like for one who has attained omniscience.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus on the narrative-conventional-prescriptive level, the *Gv* is the religious pilgrimage of Sudhana, the merchant’s son. On the worldview-ultimate-descriptive level, the *Gv* exposes the ultimate unreality of linear space-time and reveals the religious, mystical, metaphysical and docetic reality of the *Dharmadhātu*. The prescriptive level of the text, by laying out a map of how one attains the vision of the *Dharmadhātu* through the instructions of the Good Friends, describes the redemptive hegemony of the *Gv*. Sudhana achieves redemption in this reality game through the *samādhis* revealed by the *kalyāṇamitras*. The more he advances, the greater his mastery (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of reality, until he ‘wins’ the reality game through the complete control of illusory phenomena with the attainment of omniscience in the *Scp*.

---

<sup>19</sup> I first discussed the distinction between prescriptive and descriptive language in the *Gv* in Osto 1996.

### The Role of the Scp within the Narrative and Worldview of the Gv

Both Gómez and Ehman see Sudhana's vision of Maitreya's *kūṭāgāra* as the highest revelation of the *Dharmadhātu*. But having closely examined the narrative and worldview of the *Gv*, I believe there is strong evidence indicating that Sudhana's vision of Maitreya's tower is actually a penultimate realization, and that Sudhana's quest for omniscience does not reach complete fruition until his encounter with the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

There are a number of clues in the Maitreya section which suggest that Sudhana's *samādhi* within the tower is not the highest realization of the *Dharmadhātu*. The first is the name of the tower: "The Great Peaked Dwelling Containing the Arrayed Ornaments of Vairocana" (*vairocanavyūhālaṃkāragarbho mahākūṭāgaraḥ*). As I discussed earlier, the *Dharmadhātu* may be understood as having two aspects: the non-differentiated or undivided (*asambhinna*) aspect and its manifestations or division into various levels (*talabheda*). It would seem to follow that the 'Arrayed Ornaments' (*vyūhālaṃkāra*) of Vairocana would more likely represent the manifestations of the *Dharmadhātu*, rather than its undivided nature. Thus a realization of Vairocana's ornaments, although a very high attainment, would not be the highest revelation of his Dharma Body representing the undivided *Dharmadhātu*.

We are given another clue by Maitreya's characterization of Sudhana's *samādhi*. When asked by Sudhana, Maitreya says, that the *samādhi* is called "The Liberation Containing the Array which is the Unconfused Recollection for the Entrance into the

Knowledge of the Basis of All Three Time Periods”<sup>20</sup> and it is obtained by a bodhisattva who will attain supreme enlightenment in one birth.<sup>21</sup> Once again a *vyūha* seems to suggest manifestations or reflections, rather than the undivided *Dharmadhātu*, and mention of one birth would seem to indicate that Maitreya, who imparts the liberation, is at least one lifetime away from the highest goal. Maitreya admits as much when he says that Sudhana will see him again once he has realized omniscience after his descent from Tuṣita (V418).<sup>22</sup>

As a bodhisattva one lifetime away from omniscience, Maitreya resides at the “Anointing Stage” (*abhiṣekabhūmī*).<sup>23</sup> A general rule in the reality game of the *Gv* appears to be that a *kalyāṇamitra* is not able to bestow a *samādhi* which would allow anyone to attain a stage of enlightenment higher than his or her own. Therefore it follows that the vision of Maitreya’s tower would not allow Sudhana to attain a stage beyond the “Anointing Stage.”

As grand and elaborate as the vision of Maitreya’s tower, it is still only a single trance (*samādhi*) when compared to the “entrances into trance equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields” (V425.10) which were realized by Sudhana when

<sup>20</sup> *sarvatryadhvārambañajñānapraveśāsammoṣasmṛtivyūhagarbho... vimokṣaḥ* (V416.3-4).

<sup>21</sup> *ekajātipratibaddho bodhisattvo lābhī* (V416.5).

<sup>22</sup> Of course the situation is more complex than this. While in the tower, Sudhana sees Maitreya already as a buddha. As a rupture with linear space-time, Maitreya’s *samādhi* reveals the entire course of time--- from this ultimate perspective Maitreya is already enlightened. But the Maitreya who enters the tower and snaps his fingers is still within the conventional, linear space-time continuum and as such is one lifetime away from omniscience. Thus Maitreya seems to be a mediator between the conventional space-time continuum and the ultimate nature of the *Dharmadhātu*. His *samādhi* therefore takes Sudhana to the very pinnacle of conventional reality, whereby he is a witness to the totality of all phenomena with the *Dharmadhātu*. Now all that is left is for Sudhana to realize the undivided nature of the *Dharmadhātu* revealed to him by Samantabhadra.

<sup>23</sup> Cf V372.1 where Sudhana describes Maitreya as “*abhiṣekabhūmīsthita*.”

Samantabhadra placed his hand upon his head. Maitreya's liberation, although it reveals the totality of all time arrayed within the *Dharmadhātu* and the entire bodhisattva course of Maitreya, is nevertheless only a single liberation granted by a bodhisattva still a lifetime away from omniscience. As such, it can not be the highest realization.

There is strong textual evidence indicating that Sudhana's encounter with Samantabhadra leads to Sudhana's highest realization. A number of passages in the Scp suggest Samantabhadra's omniscience. And because the Scp states that Sudhana attains equality with Samantabhadra these passages are strong evidence for Sudhana's attainment of omniscience in this section. After Sudhana sees the ten signs and ten lights prior to his vision of Samantabhadra, he sees the great Bodhisattva sitting before the Buddha Vairocana. In the description of Samantabhadra, the text states that he had "*obtained equality with all tathāgatas*" (V422.13). 'Equality' or 'sameness' (*samatā*) is an important quality in the *Gv* which on one level represents the absolute sameness of all phenomena due to their inherent emptiness of own-being (*svabhāva*). Those who realize the undivided nature of the *Dharmadhātu* realize this sameness and simultaneously attain sameness / equality with regard to powers and attributes with all other enlightened beings. Tathāgatas are by definition omniscient, so by stating that Samantabhadra has obtained equality with them is equivalent to saying he is omniscient.

Having attained the eleven abodes within the perfection of knowledge from his vision of Samantabhadra, Sudhana is touched upon the head by the right hand of the bodhisattva. Immediately he attains trances as numerous as the dust particles in all buddha fields. From these *samādhis*, Sudhana achieves nine spiritual feats including

these four: he accumulated previously unseen requisites for omniscience; the productions of factors for omniscience appear to him; he went forth on paths for setting out toward omniscience; and he was developed through the impelling forces of omniscience---and all of these were equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields. Samantabhadra then asks Sudhana, “Did you see my miracle?” To which Sudhana replies, “I saw, O Noble One. *But [only] an understanding tathāgata would understand a miracle so inconceivable*” (V425.27-28). If we assume that Samantabhadra is able to understand the miracle which he himself has imparted to Sudhana, then this reply strongly suggests Samantabhadra’s equality with all tathāgatas.

Samantabhadra then explains to Sudhana that, desiring the mind of omniscience, he practiced for untold eons and eventually attained ten powers. One of these powers was “*the mastery of the tathāgatas*” (V426.29). This ‘mastery’ or ‘sustaining power’ (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the tathāgatas is their ability to generate and manipulate illusory phenomena for the benefit of all beings. The mastery of the tathāgatas is the highest form of mastery, and one who has attained such a power, we may assume, is equal to a tathāgata.

Through these ten powers Samantabhadra obtained the Dharma Body which is absolutely pure and non-differentiated within the three times. This statement is the strongest indication in the Scp that Samantabhadra has attained the highest realization. As we discussed earlier, the Dharma Body is equivalent to the non-differentiated *Dharmadhātu*, the ultimate nature of reality. Having penetrated into and become one

with ultimate reality, Samantabhadra has attained supreme, perfect enlightenment---the omniscience of the buddhas.

In addition to his Dharma Body, Samantabhadra has also acquired a supreme Form Body which arises in all worlds and all times, and makes visible all miracles in every direction for the maturity of all beings. In this way, Samantabhadra has perfected the bodhisattva course and has become the very embodiment of the perfect noble course (*samantabhadracaryā*).

Then Samantabhadra says to Sudhana “...beings who hear the complete purity of *my buddha field* are reborn within pure buddha fields” (V427.15). This statement by a bodhisattva referring to his own buddha field seems odd, unless Samantabhadra was actually thought to be buddha. Although the *Gv* never states directly that Samantabhadra is a buddha, his status is so exalted in the text that the line between bodhisattvahood and buddhahood becomes blurred in his case.<sup>24</sup> Is a bodhisattva who has attained equality with the tathāgatas not himself a tathāgata? I shall return to this question shortly.

Samantabhadra then says to Sudhana, “Those beings who see the purity of my body are *reborn within my body*.”<sup>25</sup> O Son of Good Family, see the purity of my body!”

---

<sup>24</sup> Williams states, “Samantabhadra is a Bodhisattva, or Buddha (at such rarefied levels distinctions tend to get blurred), who is used by the *sūtra* as the model, the path and the goal” (1989, 125-6).

<sup>25</sup> I find it interesting that Samantabhadra states, “those who see the purity of my body are *reborn within my body*.” Should we understand Sudhana’s penetration into all worlds within the body of Samantabhadra as a sort of death and rebirth? Also, if Sudhana attains the *abhiṣeka* stage in the Maitreya section, he would still be one lifetime away from omniscience. If he attains omniscience in the *Scp* (and I believe he does), then this also suggests that the *Scp* represents a kind of spiritual death and rebirth for Sudhana.

A significant feature of the *Gv* is that Sudhana advances from a relatively low spiritual state to complete omniscience in a single lifetime. According to many Mahāyāna systems such an attainment would require innumerable lifetimes. Through the power of the *kalyāṇamitras*, Sudhana appears to cut short this arduous process and attain the final goal in just one life---a feat generally associated with



(V427.16), and upon beholding Samantabhadra once again Sudhana sees all bodhisattvas, buddhas and realms, and penetrates into all world systems *inside the body of Samantabhadra*. In every instant of thought Sudhana enters infinite oceans of fields throughout all time within every single pore of the Bodhisattva, and brings all beings to maturity. In this way, Sudhana attains thirteen equalities (*samatā*), the most important of which are: equality with the ocean of vows concerning the course of conduct of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, equality with all tathāgatas, equality in accomplishing the vision of the miracle of perfect enlightenment, and equality in the inconceivable miracle of the liberation of bodhisattvas. Thus through entering into the body of Samantabhadra, Sudhana attains equality with him and all the tathāgatas. This equality is none other than the attainment of the Dharma Body, the non-differentiated *Dharmadhātu*, supreme, perfect enlightenment and omniscience. Appropriately, this realization occurs in the final sentences of prose within the *Gv*. Beyond this point words fail.

Our discussion of the role of the *Scp* within the worldview of the *Gv* raises two important questions: what exactly is the status of Samantabhadra in the *Gv* and what is the highest religious goal according to the text? As we have seen, the description of Samantabhadra in the *Scp* blurs the distinction between perfected bodhisattva and a buddha. The *Gv* never refers to Samantabhadra or the other advanced bodhisattvas (Mañjuśrī, Maitreya, or Avalokiteśvara) as buddhas, but the text makes it clear that

---

statements in the Buddhist Tantras. This feature of the *Gv*, together with its emphasis on the power of the Good Friends and the important role it gives to the female Friends, all suggest that the *Gv* may represent at Proto-Tantric movement within the Mahāyāna.

Samantabhadra has attained equality with the tathāgatas. This equality would seem to imply equality also with regard to perfect enlightenment and omniscience.

Samantabhadra is clearly the embodiment of the ultimate religious goal of the *Gv*, and the perfection of his course of conduct is the means to that goal. Thus I can only conclude that for the *Gv*, the highest religious goal is to become an *omniscient bodhisattva*.

I have found no references in the *Gv* to bodhisattvas postponing their enlightenment out of compassion for sentient beings. Śrāvakas may reside at the limit of reality (*bhūtaḥ*), but there is no final passing away of buddhas. All the infinite buddhas and bodhisattvas, like other phenomena, are ultimately illusory reflections of the eternal, unchanging *Dharmadhātu*. Beings who attain omniscience acquire the Dharma Body, the non-differentiated *Dharmadhātu*, and can manifest innumerable buddhas and bodhisattvas with their Form Body. Whereas the Dharma Body is completely beyond all qualities, the Form Body represents enlightened activity within the illusory realm of phenomena. This enlightened activity is the bodhisattva course, the *samantabhadracaryā*. The two primary aspects of this course are to honor and serve all *kalyāṇamitras* and mature all beings.

Due to the strong devotional element in the *Gv*, buddhas as the highest objects of veneration play a more passive role than the advanced bodhisattvas. As illusory manifestations of the Dharma Body, Form Body buddhas represent the highest perfection of relative existence. In this way, the Form Bodies of buddhas act as loci for advanced bodhisattvas to acquire merit through their devotion to them. The elevated

status of the Form Body buddhas removes them from most mundane activity and places them in a more passive role as objects of worship. Perfected bodhisattvas such as Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī worship buddhas and also have attained the highest knowledge. In this way, perfected bodhisattvas represent both the perfection of devotion and the omniscience of buddhahood. Thus the tension between the ideals of devotion and omniscience within the reality game of the *Gv* finds resolution through the omniscient bodhisattva as embodied in Samantabhadra.

Therefore, within the *Gv* (and the *Av*) Samantabhadra represents both the path (*samantabhadracaryā*) and the goal of enlightenment. As path and goal, Samantabhadra has both a Form Body within space-time and a Dharma Body beyond space-time. On the prescriptive level of narrative, he resides at the top of the hierarchy of Good Friends, who through their instructions describe the redemptive hegemony by which Sudhana wins the reality game of the *Gv*. On the level of worldview, Samantabhadra symbolizes the gateway from the mundane world to the absolute mystical ground of reality. Whereas the Maitreya section functions as the narrative climax of the *Gv* in which Sudhana sees the infinite illusory manifestations of *Dharmadhātu*, the *Scp* functions as the narrative resolution wherein the story dissolves into the highest, unspeakable mystic vision of non-differentiated *Dharmadhātu*. Thus the *Scp* forms the necessary conclusion of the *Gv*'s narrative and the highest revelation of its worldview.

#### IV. The Context

Texts exist neither in vacuums, nor in Platonic realms of pure thought. Every literary work was composed at some time, in some place, by someone(s). To continue to exist through time, a work must constantly be transmitted orally or reproduced in written form, and as it is transmitted and reproduced its meaning and message will change. It is a law of information theory that messages change when transmitted. The most obvious example of this in classical literature is that manuscript copying inevitably leads to copying errors. Also, while some changes to a work are accidental, others are intentionally made for doctrinal, sectarian, or ideological reasons. In addition to these changes, there are inevitable changes which occur whenever a work is translated into a different language---every translation is an act of interpretation.

Thus the meaning of a text should not be thought of as deriving solely from what the author(s) intended it to mean---a text means everything it has meant throughout its history. Nor is the meaning of a literary work restricted to its linguistic codes, but is also contained within its bibliographical codes such as the materials used to write it, the materials it is written on, as well as the languages, scripts and artistic ornamentation used for its production (McGann 1991). Other non-linguistic meanings of a literary work may be encoded in paintings, sculpture, architecture, and in its ritual use. These meanings are the result of a text's connection to historical and cultural contexts.

As we have seen, the *Gv* has a long and complex history spanning almost two millennia. In order to illuminate some of the *Gv*'s many meanings in its different

contexts, I shall in this chapter briefly discuss four such contexts: India, China, Tabo, and Barabudur.

## India

The *Gv* was composed somewhere in the Indian sub-continent (possibly in the south), probably during the first few centuries of the Common Era. Outside of these general approximations, very little of the *Gv*'s Indian context is known. As far as I am aware, there is no art historical evidence of the *sūtra* in India. All the evidence we have of the *Gv* in India are references to it in a number of Indian Buddhist works.

As already mentioned, the *Gv* was highly regarded by both Madhyamaka and Yogācāra commentators (see Introduction). Gómez mentions eight Indian texts which refer to or quote the *Gv* (1967, xxxiii-xxxvii): the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśasāstra*, the *Mahāyānāvatārasāstra*, the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, the *Sūtrasamuccaya*, the first *Bhāvanākrama*, the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, and the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*. Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and *Bodhicaryāvatāra* contain the most quotations from the *Gv* with fifteen and eleven respectively. Most of these are from the Maitreya section.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> In addition to these textual quotations and references, we also learn something about the *Gv* in India from a letter sent to the Emperor of China from the king of Orissa (Gómez 1967, xxvii). In 795, King Śubhakaradeva of Orissa sent his personal copy of the Sanskrit *Gv* along with a letter to the Emperor of China. This copy was translated into Chinese by Prajñā between 796 and 798. This letter indicates that although the *Gv* had been incorporated into the *Av* by the fifth century (possibly in Central Asia), it continued to be circulated as an independent text in India. Interestingly, there are no known references to the *Av* as a distinct collection in Indian sources.

## China

With the development of the Hua-yen school, the *Gv*, as the final chapter of the *Av*, became immensely influential in Chinese Buddhism. The Hua-yen school came into being through an attempt by Chinese Buddhists to explain the miraculous reality of the *Dharmadhātu* as depicted in the *Av* (Williams 1989, 127). The tradition recognized five patriarchs: Tu-shun (557-640), Chih-yen (?600-68), Fa-tsang (643-712), Cheng-kuan (?738-7839), and Tsung-mi (780-841) (*ibid.*). More than mere scholars, these patriarchs were often thought to have mystic powers gained through their recitation of the *Av*. Believed to be a manifestation of Mañjuśrī, Tu-shun is said to have performed numerous miracles such as healing the sick, commanding animals, and generating food for the masses (Williams 1989, 128). Legends tell of lights appearing and the ground shaking during a number of Fa-tsang's sermons (Chang 1971, 238). Other Hua-yen masters, such as the hermit monk P'u-an (530-609),<sup>2</sup> and the hermit layman Li T'ung-hsüan (635-730),<sup>3</sup> were thought to possess similar powers.

A number of lay Buddhist societies developed around the recitation of *Av* due to the charismatic influence of the wonder-working Hua-yen masters (Gregory 1983, 283). Organized by these masters, the Hua-yen societies gathered together for great feasts where they recited the *Av* in order to generate merit. These gatherings are thought to have been modeled after communal feasts founded on animal sacrifices to local deities common to Chinese folk religion. By the early ninth century, these societies had

---

<sup>2</sup> Gregory 1983, 284-285. There is even a story of P'u-an raising a man from the dead (*ibid.*).

<sup>3</sup> Gimello 1983, 368ff.

become a highly organized and widespread social phenomenon cutting across different levels of the Chinese social strata (Gregory 1983, 294).

Hua-yen reached the height of its popularity in China during the reign of Empress Wu (625-705), who embraced the school under the discipleship of the famous patriarch, Fa-tsang. As the only woman to become ruler of China in her own right, Empress Wu sought out an alternative ideological basis to the patriarchal Confucian orthodoxy. This alternative ideology she found in the Hua-yen school. Williams states,

Empress Wu was also attracted by the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* in her attempt to create a state ideology of Buddhism. The *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* gave an important role as Bodhisattva teachers to women---even those lay women whose morality was, to uninitiated eyes, open to question.<sup>4</sup>

This imperial patronage created an environment in T'ang China highly favorable for the development and flourishing of Hua-yen thought and practice. Unfortunately, this golden age of Hua-yen ended with the ninth century persecution of Buddhism, resulting in the destruction of Hua-yen as an independent school in China.

Although this is not the place for a detailed discussion of Hua-yen thought, mention needs to be made of the more famous and influential works of the Hua-yen masters. The most important and original work of Hua-yen philosophy is Tu-shun's *On the Meditation of Dharmadhātu* (*Fa Chieh Kuan*).<sup>5</sup> In this essay, Tu-shun sets forth the philosophy of the four *Dharmadhātus*: The *Dharmadhātu* of *Shih* (the realm of phenomena or events), the *Dharmadhātu* of *Li* (the realm of noumena or principles), the *Dharmadhātu* of Non-Obstruction of *Li* against *Shih* (the realm of principle against

---

<sup>4</sup> 1989, 129. Williams's reference here is undoubtedly to the prostitute Vasumitrā (V154-156).

<sup>5</sup> T 1883. Cf. Chang 1971, 207.

events in total freedom and merging), and the *Dharmadhātu* of the Non-Obstruction of *Shih* against *Shih* (the realm of events against events in total freedom and merging).<sup>6</sup> With this philosophy Tu-shun attempts to explain in Chinese terms the complete interpenetration and non-obstruction of phenomena within the *Dharmadhātu*.

The most popular work of Hua-yen philosophy is Fa-tsang's *Treatise On the Golden Lion* (*Chin-shih-tzu chang*).<sup>7</sup> Legend tells us that once while Fa-tsang was explaining the subtle working of Hua-yen thought to Empress Wu, he pointed out a golden lion guarding the palace and used it as a metaphor to illustrate the teaching. Using the gold to represent *Li* or the noumenon and the lion to represent *Shih* or the phenomenon, Fa-tsang demonstrates the ten mysteries of *Shih-Shih Wu-ai*, the Non-Obstruction of Events against Events.<sup>8</sup>

Another important Hua-yen work of the T'ang period is the *Exposition of the Avatamsakasūtra* (*Hua-yen ching lun*)<sup>9</sup> by the layman hermit, Li T'ung-hüan. Unlike his contemporary Fa-tsang, Li believed that the *Gv* was the most important sūtra of the *Av*.<sup>10</sup> Gimello writes,

For Li, the pith of the *Sūtra* [*Av*] was its final chapter, "On Entering the *Dharmadhātu*," otherwise known as the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Like much else that Li had to say about the *Hua-yen Scripture*, this choice seems to reflect his greater sensitivity to the text itself as opposed to schemes of doctrine that can be applied to the text (1983, 378; n. 12).

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of this philosophy and translation of the essay see Chang 1971, 141-55 & 207-23.

<sup>7</sup> T 1880. Cf. Chang 1971, 224.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion and translation of Fa-tsang's treatise see Chang 1971 155-170 & 224-30.

<sup>9</sup> T 1739. Cf. Gimello 1983, 326.

<sup>10</sup> Committed to Tathāgatagarbha thought, Fa-tsang chose the "Chapter on the Arising of the Tathāgata" as the most important sūtra of the *Av* (Cf. Gimello 1983, 378; n.12).



In his *Exposition*, Li summarizes each of Sudhana's visits to the Good Friends in the *Gv*. Particularly relevant for this study are his comments about Maitreya and Samantabhadra. Describing Sudhana's visit to Maitreya's tower, Li writes, "...he saw the enlightening being Maitreya and *realized the way to buddhahood in one lifetime*."<sup>11</sup> Therefore, contrary to Gómez and Ehman, and in accordance with my position argued in the previous chapter, Li did not view the Maitreya section as leading to Sudhana's supreme enlightenment. Li summarizes the final passage of the *Scp* as follows:

Then Sudhana attained the ocean of practical vows of Samantabhadra, equal to Universal Good and equal to the buddhas, filling all worlds with one body, equal in sphere, equal in practice, equal in true awareness, equal in spiritual powers, equal in teaching, equal in kindness and compassion, equal in the freedom of inconceivable liberation. This illustrates how the ocean of infinite practices is carried out by all buddhas of all times and places. *This is the ultimate enlightenment*, in which there are no more ideas of attaining buddhood or not attaining buddhahood.<sup>12</sup>

Again in agreement with my position, Li viewed the *Scp* as containing Sudhana's supreme enlightenment. Based on these passages from Li's *Exposition*, Gimello assessment that Li's interpretations of the *Av* are due to his greater sensitivity to the "text itself" seems correct.

In addition to the philosophical treatises of the Hua-yen masters, there are a number of important Chinese works of art based on the *Gv*. Unfortunately, no art based on the *Gv* survives from the time of Hua-yen's height during the T'ang period (Fontein 1967, 24). But during the Northern Sung period there was a revival of interest in the *Av*,

---

<sup>11</sup> Cleary 1993, 1622 (italics mine). Cleary's translation is from a Ming dynasty distillation of Li's commentary (Cf. Cleary 1993, 1549).

<sup>12</sup> Cleary 1993, 1627 (italics mine).

and from this period a number of important works of art have survived. Of these, three examples are particularly noteworthy. First, two books, the *Wen-shu chih-nan t'u-tsan* and the *Hua-yen Fu-fa-chieh-p'in Shan-ts'an-wên pien-hsiang-ching*, contain elaborate woodcuts vividly depicting scenes from Sudhana's pilgrimage (Fontein 1967, 24-61). Each woodcut is accompanied by verses praising the Good Friends. Next, at the Northern Pagoda at Pei Shan, Ta-tsu there are stone sculptures within niches which provide a continuous representation of Sudhana's visits to all fifty-three *kalyāṇamitras* (Fontein 1967, 63-65). Finally, a number of scenes depicting Sudhana's visits have been discovered on a teakwood column now in the possession of the Honolulu Academy of Arts (Fontein 1967, 65-70). The scenes from this 'Pilgrimage Column' begin at the base with Sudhana's first encounter with Mañjuśrī and end at the top with his vision of Samantabhadra.

## Tabo

The earliest surviving Tibetan translation of the *Gv* is a redacted inscriptional text accompanied by paintings on the assembly hall walls of Tabo monastery in Spiti, dating to the tenth century. Steinkellner describes the continuous painted frieze in the assembly hall with the following:

The frieze consists of complex narrative units structured by the steps taken by the hero, Sudhana (*nor bzan*), on the path towards his goal of ultimate realization, and mostly relates Sudhana's visits to various spiritual friends (*kalyāṇamitra*) in the pursuit of his quest. These units combine both paintings, some of which are identified by small insets, and adjacent framed inscriptional panels which contain the appropriate portions of the sūtra text (1995, 4).

Desiring to reproduce the *Gv* as completely and faithfully as possible, but limited by space, the creators of the Tabo inscription abbreviated the text. Omissions were either unmarked or marked by various redactional words or phrases (Steinkellner 1995, 13). In this way, the inscription text and paintings at Tabo form a continuous, illustrated narrative of the *Gv* in an abbreviated version.

From his study of the inscriptions, Steinkellner has concluded that not only is the Tabo text the earliest Tibetan translation we have of the *Gv*, it also forms an independent witness to the Kanjurs and possibly represents an old, local West Tibetan tradition (1995, 7-8). Thus the philological importance of the text is “manifold and can hardly be overestimated” (Steinkellner 1995, 1). Unfortunately, the work was never finished, and a number of paintings are without inscriptions, including the painting showing Sudhana’s vision of Samantabhadra.

Seven centuries after Tabo, we find the *Gv*’s narrative playing another subtle but ideologically and politically significant role in Tibetan history. Starting from about 1645, there was continuous construction of the fifth Dalai Lama’s palace upon the long high ridge above Lhasa (Snellgrove & Richardson 1995, 199). This palace was given the name ‘Potala’ after Avalokiteśvara’s ‘Mount Potalaka’ in the *Gv* (V158). Giving the palace this name functioned to strengthen the growing identification of the Dalai Lamas as earthly manifestations of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, and thereby provided a powerful spiritual / ideological basis for their temporal / political power in Tibet. In this way, the Dalai Lamas, like the Empress Wu in China, found scriptural support in the *Gv* for their worldly rulership.

## Barabudur

Built in central Java at the end of the eighth or early ninth century, Barabudur is the largest Buddhist monument ever constructed. It measures 402 feet from North to South, 383 feet East to West, and 98 feet from its base to the *harmikā* of the central stūpa (Nou & Frédéric 1996, 23). The four sides of the structure face the cardinal directions and possess steep staircases leading through four square galleries to three round terraces. Each terrace has a circular ring of latticed stūpas containing a buddha statue in the *dharmacakra mudrā*. The outermost terrace has thirty-two stūpas, the second terrace twenty-four, and the third sixteen. Thus the stūpas of the terraces form three concentric circles radiating outward from the thirty-six foot high central stūpa.

Covering the walls of the four galleries are stone reliefs depicting scenes from a number of Buddhist texts. These texts are arranged as follows:<sup>13</sup> the main wall of the first gallery has scenes from the *Lalitavistara* and assorted *jātakas* and *avadānas*;<sup>14</sup> the balustrade of the first gallery has *jātakas* and *avadānas*; the main wall of the second gallery has reliefs of *Gv*; the balustrade of the second gallery has *jātakas* and *avadānas*; and both the main walls and the balustrades of the third and forth galleries have scenes from the *Gv*. Thus the top two galleries and half of the second are entirely devoted to reliefs showing scenes from the *Gv*.

<sup>13</sup> I have excluded from this list the reliefs of the hidden base which depict scenes from the *Mahākarmavibhaṅga*. The reason for the base being covered remains unknown. For a discussion of current theories, see Nou & Frédéric 1996, 94-100.

<sup>14</sup> The principal texts thought to be used for the *avadānas* are: the *Divyāvadāna*, the *Avadānaśataka*, and the *Avadānakalpalatā* (Nou & Frédéric 1996, 126).

The reliefs on the main wall of the second gallery were first identified as scenes from the *Gv* by N. J. Krom (Fontein 1967, 116). Published in 1927, Krom's findings led to F. D. K. Bosch's publication in 1929 of the reliefs of the third and fourth galleries, which he identified as scenes from the Maitreya section, Sudhana's final visit with Mañjuśrī, the Scp, and the *Bhad* (*ibid.*). More recently Hitaka (1960) and Fontein (1967) have studied the *Gv* reliefs. While restricting his own study to the reliefs of the second gallery, Fontein is critical of Hitaka's identifications of the third and fourth gallery reliefs and favors Bosch's interpretations (Fontein 1967, 119). Frédéric also follows Bosch's identifications in his recent study (Nou & Frédéric 1996). Thus Bosch's interpretations have been generally held as authoritative, although they have not gone unquestioned. Concerning Bosch's identification of the reliefs on the main wall of the fourth gallery as the *Bhad*, Gómez states, "At least eighty per cent of his parallels are doubtful, if not altogether unfounded" (1981, 194; n. 50).

After closely examining photographs of the reliefs on the fourth gallery wall, I discovered a number of reliefs which support Gómez's statement.<sup>15</sup> In reliefs IV27 and IV40 Samantabhadra appears with Sudhana---something which is not mentioned in the *Bhad*. Reliefs IV30-IV35 show scenes of beings honoring Samantabhadra, which Bosch attributes to *Bhad*, verse 18; but these reliefs are just as likely, if not more likely, to represent the prose passage of the Scp V427.4-15. Finally, Bosch identifies the buddha in IV70 and IV71 as Amitābha, who is mentioned in a number of *Bhad* verses. But this buddha is in the *dharmacakra mudrā*---a *mudrā* which, based on an analysis of the

---

<sup>15</sup> Photographs of these reliefs are reproduced in Nou & Frédéric 1996, 276-94.

buddha statutes on the balustrades of Barabudur, represents Vairocana.<sup>16</sup> Thus several of the reliefs on the fourth gallery wall may easily be interpreted as depicting scenes from the *Scp*, rather than the *Bhad*. Clearly this line of inquiry is consistent with the important role the *Scp* plays in the *Gv*, and warrants closer investigation by art historians and textual scholars.

A long standing and popular theory concerning the structural symbolism of Barabudur interprets the monument as consisting of three levels: the *kāmadhātu* represented by the hidden base, the *rūpadhātu* represented by the galleries, and the *arūpadhātu* represented by the terminal stūpa and circular terraces.<sup>17</sup> Frédéric, believing that the hidden base should not be used to interpret the monument because it was concealed, also proposes a three-fold divisions consisting of the galleries, the terraces and the central stūpa. Rejecting the three *dhātu* theory, Frédéric offers his own interpretation based on the three bodies of the Buddha. He states,

The monument then truly has three levels, corresponding to the three bodies of the Buddha (*trikāya*), all of which together symbolize the Buddha, his teachings, and his immanence. From this perspective, we are inclined to think that Borobudur describes Mahāyāna Buddhism as it was understood at the time of the last Śailendras, and that this Buddhism is related to the philosophical school of the Vijñāvēdin-yogācāra (Nou & Frédéric 1996, 187).

A substantial weakness in both the three *dhātu* and *trikāya* theories is that there is no concrete evidence that the architects of Barabudur were familiar with these ideas, or if

---

<sup>16</sup> The statues of Amitābha on top of the balustrades are in the *dhyāna mudrā* (see below for a discussion of these statues).

<sup>17</sup> For a history of this theory see Gómez and Woodward 1981, 9. For a more recent interpretation see Nou & Frédéric 1996 54-65.

they were, that they used either of them as a theoretical basis for the monument's construction.

Gómez avoids this weakness in his own "*kūṭāgāra* theory" developed from the idea that the architects of Barabudūr may have constructed the monument on the basis of the *Gv*'s description of Maitreya's *kūṭāgāra* (1981, 173-94). Although there is no way of substantiating this theory, it has the distinct advantage over the previous views since there is physical evidence (namely, the reliefs) that at least some of the individuals responsible for the construction of Barabudūr were familiar with the *Gv*. Not only were they familiar with the text, but they also must have held it in very high esteem in view of the number and location of its reliefs upon the monument's walls. According to Gómez's theory Barabudūr would be a plastic representation of the *Gv*'s concept of *Dharmadhātu* as exemplified by Maitreya's *kūṭāgāra*. He states,

The theory of the Barabudūr as a representation of the *Gaṇḍavyūha*'s vision of the *dharmadhātu* (embodied in Maitreya's abode) finds confirmation in the key terms used to signal these multiple aspects of the *dharmadhātu*. The *dharmadhātu* of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* is divided into different levels or terraces (*talabheda*), in each of which there are diverse stations or locations (*ārambaṇa*), constituting the abodes (*bhavana*) of different beings (1981, 182).

Gómez himself admits that there are two obstacles to his theory: the role of Samantabhadra in the *Gv*, and the reliefs on the fourth gallery wall depicting scenes from the *Bhad*.<sup>18</sup> We have already discussed the textual evidence within the *Scp* to suggest that Sudhana achieves his highest realization in this section and not in the Maitreya section. Because of their position on the highest wall above the reliefs

---

<sup>18</sup> As already discussed, there are serious doubts about Bosch's identifications of the reliefs of the fourth gallery as representing the *Bhad*. Several of these reliefs may represent scenes from the *Scp*.

depicting Maitreya and directly before the entrance into the terraces, the reliefs on the fourth gallery wall of Barabudur showing scenes of *Scp* and the *Bhad* also supply evidence that Sudhana's encounter with Samantabhadra leads to his highest attainment and that the *samādhi* of Maitreya's *kūṭāgāra* was thought as Sudhana's penultimate realization. Thus both the *Scp* and the fourth gallery wall reliefs call into question the validity of Gómez's theory.

Gómez's basic intuition that the *Gv* may have played an important role in the architectural design of Barabudur seems plausible. But problems result when he becomes too specific and attempts to show that the monument represents Maitreya's *kūṭāgāra*. If we view Barabudur as simply a plastic representation of the *Dharmadhātu* (and not necessarily as Maitreya's abode), we may see the central stūpa as representing the Dharma Body or non-differentiated *Dharmadhātu*, and everything outside of the central stūpa as the *Dharmadhātu* divided into levels (*talabheda*). The latticed stūpas on the terraces would represent buddha manifestations of the Form Body, and the galleries would symbolize the rest of the phenomenal world as manifestations of the Form Body. This interpretation would fit well with the fourth gallery wall reliefs and the identification of the buddha statues on the fifth balustrade as Samantabhadra, given his role as the bestower of the highest realization of the non-differentiated *Dharmadhātu* in the *Gv* (see below).

In view of this interpretation the four galleries may represent a *kūṭāgāra*, but not the entire monument of Barabudur. The galleries apart from the terraces could represent Maitreya's *kūṭāgāra*, or they may be modeled after another *kūṭāgāra*, such as



Vairocana's great *kūṭāgāra* which he expands to the limits of space in the opening scene of the *Gv* (V6). *Kūṭāgāras* appear over and over again in Mahāyāna literature as abodes of enlightened beings, as objects of devotion, and as important symbols of the illusory nature of reality and the power of buddhas and bodhisattvas to manipulate that reality.<sup>19</sup> Thus the galleries as the manifestations of the *Dharmadhātu* could represent Maitreya's, Vairocana's, or an unspecified *kūṭāgāra*, while the entrances into the terraces leading up to the central stūpa would signify initiation into the highest realization of the non-differentiated *Dharmadhātu* as represented by the terminal stūpa. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the terraces remain completely invisible both from outside the monument and from inside the galleries, until one reaches their four entrances from the fifth balustrade.

### The Buddha Statues of the Fifth Balustrade

One of Barabaḍur's greatest mysteries is the identity of the buddha statues along the top of the fifth balustrade. The five balustrades of the square galleries each have sixty-four buddha statues located in niches along their tops. The statues of the first four balustrades are divided into four groups of sixteen statues. Each group of statues is distinguished by the compass direction they are facing and their particular *mudrā*.

---

<sup>19</sup> Two noteworthy examples of *kūṭāgāras* in Buddhist literature are in the *Lalitavistara* and the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitasūtra*. In the *Lalitavistara* (which is one of the texts depicted on the first gallery of Barabaḍur), the unborn Buddha resides inside Māyā's womb within three *kūṭāgāras*, one inside the other. The innermost is as hard as a diamond, yet soft to the touch, and contains "all the glories of the palaces of all the *kāmāvacara* gods" (Edgerton 1954, 27). In the *Aṣṭa*, Sadāprarudita finds that his *kalyāṇamitra*, the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata, "...had at that time created, for the perfection of wisdom, a pointed tower [*kūṭāgāra*] made of the seven precious substances, adorned with red sandalwood, and encircled by an ornament of pearls" (Conze 1973, 288). For a discussion of *kūṭāgāras* in Mahāyāna literature, see Eckel 1992, 18-20.

These groups represent four of the five so-called ‘Dhyāni-Buddhas’ (van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1965, 408). They are: Akṣobhya facing the East in the *bhūmiśparśa mudrā*, Ratnaśāmbhava facing South in the *varada mudrā*, Amitābha facing West in the *dhyāna mudrā*, and Amoghasiddha facing North in the *abhaya mudrā*. The fifth buddha of this system is Vairocana who resides at the zenith in the *dharmacakra mudrā*. As I mentioned earlier, the buddha statues in the latticed stūpas of the three terraces are in the *dharmacakra mudrā*; therefore they would seem to represent Vairocana. Unfortunately, we are left with the sixty-four buddha statues of the fifth balustrade which are in the *vitarka mudrā* facing all four directions.

Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw has argued persuasively for the identification of these statues as Samantabhadra (1965, 408-16). First, she indicates both the importance of Samantabhadra in the *Gv* and the number and location of reliefs depicting him in the galleries of Barabudur.<sup>20</sup> She concludes from this that, “...Samantabhadra occupied a very high position in the Buddhist system of Barabudur” (1965, 408). Next, van Lohuizen-de Leeuw points out that Samantabhadra was worshipped by certain sects in Japan and Sri Lanka as “Lord of the Five Dhyāni-Buddhas” (1965, 409). In support of this view she refers to the Kuṣṭarajā statue at Vāligama, Sri Lanka, as a representation of Samantabhadra in this form, citing also inscriptional evidence linking Sri Lanka and Java during the period of Barabudur’s construction (1965, 411). Finally, van Lohuizen-de Leeuw mentions that several “Yogācārya” sects, such as those who practice ecstatic

---

<sup>20</sup> She states, “...out of the eleven rows of panels on this monument, no less than five illustrate a text extolling Samantabhadra as the supreme savior. Moreover, these series of reliefs are situated on the three higher terraces [galleries], an arrangement which undoubtedly has a special significance in view of the generally accepted symbolism of Barabudur’s architectural plan” (1965, 408).

meditation (*Hokke sammai*) in Japan, regard Samantabhadra as the founder of the Yoga doctrine and as the “Divinity of Religious Ecstasy” (1965, 410).

In *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana* (1967), Fontein argues against van Lohuizen-de Leeuw’s interpretation stating that “...there is nothing in the text [*Gv*] to suggest that Samantabhadra was ever thought of as a Jina” (166). Here Fontein points out the fundamental difficulty with the Samantabhadra hypothesis: the statue on the fifth balustrade is of a buddha, and Samantabhadra in the *Gv* is a bodhisattva. Arguing in support of the Samantabhadra hypothesis, Frédéric attempts to surmount this difficulty when he states, “...the buddha represented on the fifth balustrade can be none other than the buddha-bodhisattva Samantabhadra” (Nou & Frédéric 1996, 184). Like van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, Frédéric points out Samantabhadra’s important role within Yogācāra doctrine in support of his view (*ibid.*).<sup>21</sup>

In their arguments concerning the identification of the buddha statues of the fifth balustrade, none of these scholars has made direct textual reference to the *Gv*. As I have demonstrated from my close reading of the *Scp*, although the text never refers directly to Samantabhadra as a buddha, there is substantial evidence indicating that he was thought to be omniscient, equal to the tathāgatas, and in possession of his own buddha field. Samantabhadra in the *Scp* may blur the bodhisattva / buddha distinction enough to allow his iconographic representation as a buddha. It is also possible that this blurred distinction led the architects of Barabudūr to conflate the *Gv*’s omniscient Bodhisattva

---

<sup>21</sup> Frédéric cites the visit of the Tantric masters Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra (who he refers to as “two monks of the Yogācāra school”) to Śrīvijaya as evidence linking the Yogācāra school to Barabudūr (see Nou & Frédéric 1996, 211).

Samantabhadra with the Buddha Samantabhadra of certain Tantric and Yogācāra systems popular at the time of the monument's construction.<sup>22</sup> This conflated Buddha-Bodhisattva Samantabhadra depicted in the form of a buddha on the fifth balustrade would then simultaneously represent the Bodhisattva of the *Gv* and the Buddha of the other systems.

Whether the architects of Barabudūr ever actually conceived of Samantabhadra as a buddha and represented him as such upon the fifth balustrade may forever remain an unanswered question. Nevertheless, the *Gv* and particularly the *Scp* supply important textual evidence for unraveling this art historical problem---evidence that we can no longer afford to ignore.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The reliefs narrating the story of the *Gv* upon the walls of Barabudūr offer a fascinating case study in the relationship between a text and its context. A complete study of this subject would demand both an in-depth knowledge of the *Gv* (this would include: a strong philological background in Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese; a knowledge of the text's transmission history; and an understanding of the text's narrative structure and worldview), and a strong background in art history and architecture. Since such an undertaking would be beyond the grasp of most individuals it would require collaborative work by scholars from different fields. Through my study

---

<sup>22</sup> Both van Lohuizen-de Leeuw (1965, 408-9) and Frédéric (Nou & Frédéric 1996, 211) believe that the architecture of Barabudūr may have been influenced by Tantric and Yogācāra ideas.

and translation of the *Scp*, I have hoped to supply a small piece to this complicated textual / art historical puzzle. Much work remains to be done on both the *Gv* and *Barabudur*; but with the correct approach these stunningly complex and beautiful monuments to Buddhist culture may begin to reveal their secrets.

## V. Translation of the Samantabhadracaryāpraṇidhānam

### Introduction

The following translation of the *Scp* is based on Vaidya's Sanskrit edition of the *Gv* (V420-28). For ease of reference, I have inserted in brackets Vaidya's page and line numbers at every new page, tenth and twentieth line of his text. I have also consulted the Suzuki-Idzumi edition, but only found two occasions to emend Vaidya's text based on their readings (see the notes to the translation).<sup>1</sup> Since neither Sanskrit edition includes a complete list of variant readings (the promised apparatus to the Suzuki-Idzumi edition was never published, and Vaidya only supplies sporadic variant readings from the Baroda ms.), my translation of the Sanskrit is based solely on the editorial choices of these publications.

As a check against the Sanskrit editions, I have also consulted the Derge (vol. 38, 689-716) and Peking (vol. 26, 237a-249b) Kanjur translations.<sup>2</sup> The Tibetan of these versions is very similar and both seem to represent the same recension of the *Gv* as the Sanskrit. Where the Derge and Peking differ from each other, the Derge usually possesses readings that parallel the Sanskrit. The Derge's closer correspondence with the Sanskrit editions is not surprising given that it is thought to be based on both the Tshal pa and Them spangs ma lines of transmission.<sup>3</sup> Since the Derge's compilers consulted

<sup>1</sup> See p. 11 for a comparison of the Vaidya and Suzuki-Idzumi editions.

<sup>2</sup> My decision to use the Derge and Peking Kanjurs is largely based on convenience. In order to do a more text critical study of the Tibetan, I would need to consult several Kanjurs from both Tshal pa and Them spangs ma branches.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Skilling 1997, and Harrison 1992b.

Kanjurs from both branches, they were able to correct errors from the Tshal pa line which are preserved in the Peking Kanjur.

Agreement between Derge and Peking against the Sanskrit editions, I cite in the notes. As a convention, text included in the Tibetan but not in the Sanskrit, I abbreviate as “Tib. inserts.” Passages included in the Sanskrit but not in the Tibetan, I abbreviate as “Tib. omits.” I use this convention only as a short-hand to specify the difference between the Sanskrit and Tibetan, and I do not mean to imply that the Sanskrit editions possess temporal or authoritative priority over the Tibetan. The Sanskrit manuscripts upon which these editions are based are very late, and there are no grounds for assuming the authority of the Sanskrit editions over the Tibetan in every case. Not wishing to conflate the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts in my translation, I have refrained from emending my text based on the Tibetan in those cases where I thought the Tibetan might offer better readings; instead I discuss these occurrences in the notes. Also, I have used the Tibetan to clarify a number of passages where the Sanskrit grammar is problematic or ambiguous. Again, these passages are explained in the notes.

I have attempted to make this translation as readable in English as possible while remaining faithful to the Sanskrit. This is no simple task, and I fear that at times my English style may have suffered to achieve technical accuracy. As an apology for my use of “Buddhist Hybrid English,” I merely mention the Chinese and Tibetan translators before me, who invariable hybridized their languages to some extent in order to translate

Buddhist texts.<sup>4</sup> I have included the Sanskrit and Tibetan equivalents of important or difficult words and phrases in parentheses or discussed them in the notes.

## English Translation

### The Vow Concerning the Course of Conduct of Samantabhadra

[V420] Then Sudhana (*nor bzañs*), the merchant's son, having honored Good Friends (*kalyāṇamitra / dge ba'i bśes gñen*) equal in number to the dust particles in a world system of thirty million worlds,<sup>5</sup> possessed a mind which had accumulated the requisites for omniscience. Having practiced by means of grasping well<sup>6</sup> the admonitions and instructions of all Good Friends, he was impartially devoted to the intentions (*āśaya / bsam pa*) of all Good Friends. His intellect was pleasing and not displeasing to all Good Friends, and he followed the ocean of principles from the admonitions and instructions of all Good Friends. His essence (*garbha / sñiñ po*)

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the difference between classical Tibetan and Chinese and Buddhist translations in these languages, see Beyer 1992, 36-37.

<sup>5</sup> *trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu / ston gsum gyi ston chen po'i 'jig rten gyi kham*s. This term is problematic and has been translated a number of different ways by modern scholars: "world system consisting of a triple thousand great thousand (worlds)" (BHSD, 259), "The Great Trichiliocosm" (Conze 1973, 323), "three-thousandfold, multi-thousandfold world system" (Gómez 1975, 242), "world system of three thousand great-thousand worlds" (Schopen 1989, 123), and "Trichiliomeghachiliocosm" (Harrison 1990, 13). Edgerton points out that in the *Mahāvīyutpatti* 7999 ff. and in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* 343.16 ff. "mahā- compounded with other numbers means ten times the number" (BHSD, 256). Although there is no way of knowing if *mahā*- functions like this here, in order to render this compound into something that makes sense in English (as opposed to the other modern translations), I am assuming that it does mean "times ten" and that "three thousand" is meant to be multiplied by "ten thousand (worlds)" to equal "a world system of thirty million worlds."

<sup>6</sup> *pradakṣiṇagrāhitā (mthun par 'dzin pa)*. See BHSD, 379.



produced an ocean of intentions arising from great compassion. Shining upon all beings with a cloud of principles due to his great love, his body expanded from the impelling force (*vega / ūgs*) arising from great affection. Abiding in the calm of the liberation of great bodhisattvas, he possessed the eye of renunciation (*tyāgacakṣu / gtoñ ba'i mig*) that was intent upon all directions. Completely filled with the practices of the ocean of good qualities of all the tathāgatas, he was intent upon the path of resolution of all tathāgatas. Having developed the impelling force of energy toward the requisites for omniscience, his intellect was well developed by the intentions of the minds of all bodhisattvas. Comprehending (*avatīrṇa / zhug pa*) the succession of all the tathāgatas of the three times, he was awakened to the ocean of principles of the teachings of all buddhas. Following the ocean of principles from the wheels of teaching of all tathāgatas, [V420.10] he possessed a range which makes visible the reflections (*pratibhāsa / gzug brñan*) of the states of existence of all worlds. Comprehending the ocean of principles by the vows of all bodhisattvas, he set out for the course of conduct of the bodhisattvas of all eons. Having obtained the light (*avabhāsa / snañ ba*) of the sphere of omniscience, he expanded the [spiritual] faculties possessed by all bodhisattvas. Having obtained the light of the path of omniscience, and a light (*āloka / snañ ba*) free from darkness in all directions, his intellect, which was produced from the light of the principles of all fields was intent upon the principles of the entire *Dharmadhātu* (*chos kyi dbyiñs*). Following the stream that does not go against religious actions<sup>7</sup> for the benefit which spreads to all beings, and having destroyed the mountains and cliffs of all obstructions, he acquired

---

<sup>7</sup> *kriyāpratisrota* (*bya ba la rgyud dañ mi 'thun pa med par*). The Tib. seems to read this compound as '-*kriyā+apratī+srota-*' (D690.4; P237b.4). But '*mi 'thun pa*' generally does not simply mean '*prati*.'

the state of Dharma free from obstructions. Abiding in the calm of the liberation of the bodhisattvas in the womb of the *Dharmadhātu* at the stage which is the universal ground, seeking the range of all tathāgatas, empowered (*adhiṣṭhita* / *byin gyis brlabs pa*) by all tathāgatas, he stood reflecting on the range of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra (*byañ chub sems dpa' kun tu bzān po*).

Having heard the name of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, and having heard about his course of conduct toward enlightenment, the excellence of his vow, the excellence of his abiding and the method (*prasthāna* / *'jug pa*) for the production of the requisites, the excellence of his path for going forth (*niryāṇa* / *'byuñ ba*) [toward enlightenment] and [its] realization, [and having heard about] the investigation (*vicāra* / *rgyud*) upon the practices of the stages of Samantabhadra, the requisite for the stages, the excellence of attainment,<sup>8</sup> the impelling force for obtaining the stages, the approach to the stages, the foundation of the stages, the course departing from [one] and going on to the [next] stage, the importance of the stages, [V420.20] the power of the stages, the abiding in the stages, and longing eagerly for the vision of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, [Sudhana] sat upon a lotus throne filled with all gems, facing the Lion Throne of the Tathāgata upon that very seat of enlightenment containing (*garbha* / *snin po*) an ocean of diamonds.<sup>9</sup>

[Sudhana sat there] with his mind as extensive as empty space, free from all obsessions, with a well cultivated awareness of all fields. [He sat] with [his] mind gone

<sup>8</sup> Tib. omits: “the excellence of attainment” (*lambhaviśeṣa*)

<sup>9</sup> Tib. places this sentence “[Sudhana] sat upon a lotus throne... containing an ocean of diamonds” (V420.21) further down after “...through the fearlessness and power of all the tathāgatas” (V420.28; D691.7; P238a.7).

entirely beyond worldly attachment, with an unobstructed mind whose range is free from the obstructions of all factors and pervades the ocean of all directions. [He sat] with a pure mind approaching the sphere of omniscience; with a well balanced mind purified through correct insight into the ornaments of the seat of enlightenment; with an extensive mind comprehending the ocean of teachings of all buddhas; with a great mind pervading [everywhere] in order to guide (*vinaya / gdul ba*) toward maturity all the realms of beings. [He sat] with an immeasurable mind cleansing all buddha fields; with an infinite mind not exhausted by the abodes of all eons; [with a mind that] has obtained the reflection in the assembled group of all buddhas, [and which reaches] up to the unique qualities (*dharma / chos*) of the buddhas through the fearlessness and power of all the tathāgatas.

To Sudhana, the merchant's son, who had undertaken mental concentration in this way, through the power of all tathāgatas, who overflowed with previous roots of merit, and through the resemblance of [Sudhana's] previous roots of merit to the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra's, there appeared ten signs prior to the vision of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.<sup>10</sup> Which ten? All buddha fields were purified through:<sup>11</sup>

1. the complete purification of the ornaments upon the seats of enlightenment of all tathāgatas.
2. the freedom from the paths to all inopportune births, hell states, and evil destinies.
3. [V421] the purification of all buddha fields by means of arrays (*vyūha / rgyan*) of lotus ponds of the Dharma.<sup>12</sup>
4. the attainment of joy in the minds and bodies of all beings.

<sup>10</sup> Literally: "ten prior signs became visible for the sake of the vision of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra" (*samantabhadrasya bodhisattvasya darśanāya daśa pūrvanimitāni prādurbhūvan / byañ chub sems dpa kun tu bzai po mthor bar 'gyur bar sñon gyi ltas bcu byuñ ño*).

<sup>11</sup> Each of the ten begins with "all buddha fields were purified through..." In order to abbreviate the list I have given this phrase only once at the beginning.

<sup>12</sup> Tib omits: "of the Dharma."

5. the appearance (*saṃsthāna / kun tu gnas pa*) of all [things being] made of gems.
6. the appearance of all realms of beings adorned with the major and minor characteristics.
7. the appearance of clouds of ornaments and all arrays.
8. the appearance of unmalicious minds and minds established in love for one another within all realms of beings.
9. the appearance of arrays of adornments upon the seat of enlightenment.
10. the appearance of all beings undertaking the mental concentration toward the recollection of the Buddha.

These were the ten signs which appeared prior to the vision of the great being, the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

Further, ten great lights appeared as a sign prior to the vision of that great being, the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. Which ten? From every single dust particle from among the dust particles of all world systems:<sup>13</sup>

1. [V421.10] the network of all tathāgatas shone.
2. clouds of circular light from all buddhas with many colors,<sup>14</sup> various colors, many hundreds of thousands of colors came forth (*niścarya / 'thon*) and pervaded the entire *Dharmadhātu*.
3. clouds of all gems manifesting the reflections of all tathāgatas<sup>15</sup> came forth and pervaded the entire *Dharmadhātu*.
4. clouds of circles and wheels of flames from all tathāgatas came forth and pervaded the entire *Dharmadhātu*.
5. clouds of incense, unguent, garlands and all fragrant flowers came forth, sending out<sup>16</sup> clouds from the ocean of all the virtuous qualities of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, and pervaded the entire *Dharmadhātu* in the ten directions.
6. clouds of suns, moons and stars came forth sending out the light of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra and pervaded the entire *Dharmadhātu*. [V421.20]

<sup>13</sup> Each one of the following ten begins with the phrase “From every single dust particle from among the dust particles of all world systems,” except for the first one which uses the locative case instead of the ablative: “Within every single dust particle from among [loc. pl.] the dust particles of all world systems.” In order to abbreviate this list I have given the opening phrase that is used for the other nine only once in the beginning. The Tib. uses the ablative for all ten (cf. D693.2-694.7; P239a.1-239b.6).

<sup>14</sup> Tib. reads: “one color” (*kha dog gcig pa*).

<sup>15</sup> The Sanskrit compound “manifesting the reflections of all tathāgatas” (V421.14) is in the ablative case which would make it agree with the “every single dust particle.” This is rather awkward given the non-parallelism with the next sentence. Tib. clearly reads this compound as agreeing with the “clouds” (cf. D693.4-5; P239a.3-4) and I have followed the Tib. here.

<sup>16</sup> Literally “roaring forth” (*nigarjamāṇā / 'brug sgra rab tu sgrog*). Cf. BHSD, 291.

7. clouds of light with the forms of the bodies of all beings came forth shining like the light rays of the Buddha and pervaded the entire *Dharmadhātu*.
8. clouds with individual gems and jewels having within them the reflections of the bodies of all tathāgatas came forth and pervaded the entire *Dharmadhātu* in the ten directions.
9. clouds of individual light rays with the forms of the bodies of all tathāgatas came forth pouring down clouds of vows and masteries (*adhiṣṭhāna* / *byin gyi rlabs*) of all buddhas and pervaded the entire *Dharmadhātu*.
10. lights having the color of all forms, possessing an ocean of clouds containing the reflection of the body of the bodhisattva functioning (*prayoga* / *sbyor ba*) through the action of magical creations of all beings, and producing the fulfillment of all intentions of all beings,<sup>17</sup> came forth and pervaded the entire *Dharmadhātu*.

These ten great lights appeared as a sign prior to the vision of the Bodhisattva

Samantabhadra.

When Sudhana, the merchant's son, had seen these ten lights which were a prior sign, he obtained the opportunity for the vision of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

Supported by the power of his own roots of merit, born from the light of the teachings of all buddhas through the mastery of all tathāgatas,<sup>18</sup> imbued with the vow of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, he turned toward the range of all tathāgatas. Having obtained the deposit (*ādhāna* / *śugs*) of power through his fixed intention toward the range of the mighty Bodhisattva, he consciously obtained the light of omniscience through the vision of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, and [V422] his faculties were directed toward the vision of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

After he obtained the impelling force of great energy for the vision of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, he functioned with the inexorable energy of one who is

<sup>17</sup> Tib (D694.7; P239b.5-6) reads: "perfectly accomplishing the intentions of the Dharma for all beings" (*sems can thams cad kyi chos kyi bsam pa yōns su rdzogs par sgrub pa*).

<sup>18</sup> Tib. (D695.2; P239b.8) inserts: "manifested in the course of conduct of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra" (*byaṇ chub sems dpa' kun tu bzai po'i spyod pa la ni mion du gyur*).

ferently seeking (*parigaveṣamāṇa / yon̄s su btsal ba*) the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. Endowed with the wheel of his faculties directed toward all directions, with a bodhisattva body that entered into the visual sphere of Samantabhadra,<sup>19</sup> with a mind guided by the support (*ārambaṇa / dmigs par bya ba*) of all tathāgatas and bound to the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra who is at the base of the feet of buddhas without remainder, with an intention not separated from the fervent seeking for the support of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, his essence<sup>20</sup> was focused on the awareness of the vision of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra within all supports.<sup>21</sup>

Endowed with an eye of knowledge intent upon the path of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, with an intention as extensive as the realm of space, with a superior intention which had grasped well the diamond[-like] great compassion, with a vow connected to the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, with a sustaining power (*adhiṣṭhāna / byin gyis brlabs*) [lasting] for eons gone to the utmost limit, with a purity that proceeded in a regular order following the equality (*samatā / mnam pa*) of the course of conduct of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, an abode of knowledge firmly established in the stage of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra dwelling within the sphere of all tathāgatas, [Sudhana] saw the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra sitting on the Lion Throne containing a great lotus gem in front of the Tathāgata, Arhat, [V422.10] completely enlightened Buddha,<sup>22</sup> the Lord Vairocana (*rnam par snan mdzad*).

<sup>19</sup> Tib. (D695.5; P240a.3) reads: “overcoming the sphere through a universal vision” (*kun tu lta bas yul yon̄s su gnon pa*).

<sup>20</sup> -*garbhah* (nominative, masculine, singular). The case of this compound is problematic, and the Tib. does not resolve the problem. The text may be defective here.

<sup>21</sup> Tib. omits: “within all supports.”

<sup>22</sup> Tib. omits: “the Arhat, the completely enlightened Buddha.”

[Sudhana saw him] amidst an ocean of assembled groups<sup>23</sup> of bodhisattvas, surrounded by companies of bodhisattvas, and accompanied by (*puraskṛtaṃ / mdun du byas*) the community of bodhisattvas. [He saw] his erect body imitated (*anusṛta / rjes su 'brad ba*) by all the assembled groups,<sup>24</sup> unsurpassed in all worlds, continuously gazed upon by all bodhisattvas. [Sudhana saw that Samantabhadra's] sphere of knowledge was unlimited, that his range was insuperable, that his inconceivable sphere conformed to the equality of the three times, and that he had attained equality with all tathāgatas.

[Sudhana] saw from every single one [of Samantabhadra's] pores, clouds of light rays equal in number to the dust particles in all world systems come forth, illuminate all world systems up to the supreme realm of space within the *Dharmadhātu* and extinguish the suffering of all beings. He saw from [Samantabhadra's] body clouds of multi-colored groups of light equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields come forth, and increase the mighty (*udāra / rgya chen po*) impelling force of affection and joy [directed toward] all bodhisattvas.

[Sudhana] saw from [Samantabhadra's] head, shoulders, and from every pore clouds of multi-colored fragrant flames come forth, pervade the assembled groups of all tathagatas and pour down [on them]. He saw from every single one of his pores clouds of all flowers equal in number to the dust particles in all the buddha fields come forth, [V422.20] pervade the assembled groups of all tathāgatas, and pour down [on them]. He

<sup>23</sup> '*parśanmaṇḍala*' ('*khor gyi dkyil 'khor*) I am reading as an appositional karmadhāraya: "a group (*maṇḍala*) which is an assembly (*parśad*)," which I have rendered in an adjective-noun relationship to avoid this awkward phrasing.

<sup>24</sup> V422.11 reads '*parśamaṇḍala*-' , but S533.10 has '*parśanmaṇḍala*-' , which I am taking as the correct reading. This is supported by the Tib. (cf. D696.4; P240b.2).

saw from every single one of his pores clouds of all fragrant trees equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields come forth, adorn the entire *Dharmadhātu* up to the realm of space with the ornament of clouds of fragrant trees as well as an inexhaustible store of fragrant powders and unguents, pervade the assembled groups of all tathāgatas and pour down [on them]. He saw from every single one of his pores clouds of all [types] of cloth come forth, envelope and adorn the entire *Dharmadhātu* up to the realm of space. He saw from every single one of his pores clouds of all [types of] silk ribbons, ornaments, strings of pearls, and wishing-fulfilling gems [all] equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields come forth, pervade the assembled groups of all tathāgatas and pour down [on them] for the complete fulfillment of all the wishes of all beings. He saw from every single one of his pores clouds of coral equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields come forth, pervade the entire *Dharmadhātu* up to the realm of space, adorn [it] with the ornament of clouds of broken (*visphuṭa* / *nam par 'phro ba*) coral and pour down with great showers of gems upon the assembled groups of all tathāgatas.

[Sudhana] saw from every single one of [Samantabhadra's] pores clouds of assemblies of gods from the realm of form equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields come forth, praise the Bodhisattva and pervade the entire world realm.<sup>25</sup> He saw from every single one of his pores, clouds of magical creations [in the form] of assemblies of gods belonging to all the Brahmā abode come forth [V423] and request the completely enlightened tathāgatas to set in motion the wheel of Dharma. He saw from

---

<sup>25</sup> Tib. (D698.5; P241b.2) reads: "all buddha fields" (*saṅs rgyas kyi zhiñ thams cad*).



every single one of his pores, clouds with the form of the lord of the gods within all the realms of desire come forth and receive the wheels of Dharma from all tathāgatas. He saw from every single one of his pores, clouds of all buddha fields belonging to the three times, equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields come forth in every moment of thought, pervade the entire *Dharmadhātu* up to the realm of space and become a refuge, a defense and a shelter for beings who are without refuge, defense and shelter.

[Sudhana] saw from every single one of [Samantabhadra's] pores clouds of purified fields completely filled (*paripūrṇa* / *yoṅs su gaṅ ba*) with assembled groups of bodhisattvas who were produced from all buddhas equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields come forth in every moment of thought and pervade the entire *Dharmadhātu* up to the realm of space, acting for the purification of beings who have a mighty<sup>26</sup> resolution. He saw from every single one of his pores clouds of purified and afflicted fields equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields come forth in every moment of thought and pervade the entire *Dharmadhātu* up to the realm of space, arising for the purification of afflicted beings. [V423.10] He saw from every single one of his pores, clouds of purified fields and [fields containing] afflicted minds equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields come forth in every moment of thought

---

<sup>26</sup> S534.20 reads '-*tvaudāra*'. Edgerton takes *audāra* (meaning 'gross, unrefined') as the correct reading. He states, "this cannot = *udāra* (tho this is compounded elsewhere with *adhimuktika*, q.v.) since that is a complimentary term, and this is not (cf. the parallel 534.23 *saṃkṣiptānāṃ sattvānāṃ viśuddhaye*, and similarly 534.26)." Edgerton seems to have missed the point of this passage. There is a gradation from beings having a mighty resolution, to afflicted beings, to severely afflicted beings. I am following Vaidya's reading here which is supported by the Tib. (cf.. D699.4; P242a.1).

and pervade the entire *Dharmadhātu* up to the realm of space, arising for the purification of those severely afflicted.

[Sudhana] saw from every single one of [Samantabhadra's] pores clouds of groups (*kāya / lus*) of all bodhisattvas<sup>27</sup> equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields come forth in every moment of thought<sup>28</sup> and pervade the entire *Dharmadhātu*<sup>29</sup> up to the realm of space, following the course of conduct of all beings and guiding [all beings] to maturity in the supreme, complete enlightenment of all beings. He saw from every single one of his pores, clouds of groups of bodhisattvas equal in number to the dust particles in all world systems come forth in every moment of thought, and pervade the entire *Dharmadhātu* up to the realm of space, pronouncing the names of all buddhas in order to develop the roots of merit of all beings. He saw from every single one of his pores, clouds of groups of bodhisattvas equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields come forth [V423.20] and pervade the entire *Dharmadhātu* up to the realm of space, producing the completion of all roots of merit of all bodhisattvas beginning from [their] initial production of the intention [for enlightenment] within the arisings (*prasara / 'byam klas pa*) of all buddha fields. He saw from every single one of his pores clouds of bodhisattvas equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields come forth and illuminate the ocean of vows of all bodhisattvas for purification through the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra's course of conduct within every single buddha field.

---

<sup>27</sup> Tib. reads: "beings" (*sems can*).

<sup>28</sup> Tib. omits: "in every moment of thought."

<sup>29</sup> Tib. reads: "the realm of beings" (*sems can gyi kham*s).

[Sudhana] saw from every single one of [Samantabhadra's] pores clouds of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra's course of conduct equal in number to the dust particles in all the buddha fields come forth and pour down, completely fulfilling the wishes of all beings, and developing the impelling force of joy leading to omniscience. He saw from every single one of his pores clouds of perfect enlightenment equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields coming forth (*niścaramāṇa / mñon par 'thon pa*), reveal perfect enlightenment within all buddha fields and develop the impelling force of the great Dharma which leads to omniscience.

After Sudhana, the merchant's son, had seen this miracle within the sphere of magic power belonging to the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, he was pleased, satisfied, enraptured, delighted, overjoyed, cheerful and joyous to a very high degree.<sup>30</sup> Reflecting upon the body of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, he saw from every single limb of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, from every single part of his limbs, from every single portion of his body, from every single part of [every] portion of his body, from every single [V424] spot on his limbs, from every single part of [every] spot on his limbs, from every single shape (*deha / lus*), from every single part of the shapes, from every single pore, from every single part of [every] hair, this world system of thirty million worlds with its wind,<sup>31</sup> earth, and fire elements; with its oceans, islands and rivers; with its

<sup>30</sup> *bhūyasyā mātrayā / de bas kyañ śas cher*. See BHSD, 411.

<sup>31</sup> Tib. (D701.6; P243a.3) inserts: "water element" (*chu'i phuñ po*). Since this is part of the traditional list of four elements (*skandha*), it is tempting to think that the Skt. editions are defective here. But suprisingly, Cleary's translation based on Śikṣānanda's seventh century translation also only lists the air, earth and fire elements (1993, 1507).

mountains [made of] gems, Mount Sumeru<sup>32</sup> and Cakravāla Mountains; with its villages, towns, cities, kingdoms and capitals; with its forests, dwellings and species of creatures; with its hell, animal, Yama, Asura, Nāga, and Garuḍa worlds; with its world of men, world of gods, and Brahmā world; with its sphere of the realm of desire<sup>33</sup> and sphere of the formless realm; with its sustaining powers, bases (*sapraṭiṣṭhāna* / *rten dan bcas*) and forms; with its clouds, lightening and heavenly bodies; with its days and nights, fortnights, seasons, years, intermediate eons and eons.

Just as [Sudhana] saw this world system, in the same way he saw all the world systems to the east. Just as to the east, in the same way to the south, west, north, northeast, southeast, southwest, northwest, below, above, from all around, in every direction and intermediate direction, [V424.10] he saw by means of reflection all world systems with their coming forth of all buddhas, assembled groups of bodhisattvas and beings.

[Sudhana] also saw the successions of all world systems in the furthest past here within this Sahā world system [emerge] from one of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra's marks of a Great Person (*mahāpuruṣa* / *mi chen po*), with their coming forth of buddhas, assembled groups of all bodhisattvas, beings, dwellings, days and nights and eons. In the

---

<sup>32</sup> Mount Sumeru was believed to be located in the center of the world system, while the Cakravāla Mountains were thought to form a ring encircling the world system. Thus these two form the center and periphery of the world system.

<sup>33</sup> Tib. (D702.2; P243a.6) inserts: "with its sphere of the realm of form" (*gzugs kyi kham kyi yul dan bcas*). Because the realm of form is part of the traditional list of three realms (*dhātu*), its absence from the Skt. editions is conspicuous. Cleary's translation, listing only "realms of desire" and "formless realms" (cf. 1993, 1507), agrees with the Skt. editions. The agreement between the Skt. editions and Śikṣānanda's Chinese translation (based on my reading of Cleary) in this list and the list of four elements (see note above) is intriguing. Could the Skt. mss. and the Śikṣānanda translation be based on a manuscript tradition differing from the Tib.? Only a detailed study of the Skt mss., Chinese translations, and Tibetan Kanjurs could conclusively answer this question.

same way he also saw the arisings of all buddha fields in the furthest future. And as he saw here within this Sahā world system the succession of all world systems in the furthest past and future, in the same way from the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra's body, from every single mark of the Great Person, from every single pore, he saw [emerge] the series of all world systems in the ten directions in the furthest past and future, [all] well divided and not mixed with each other.

Just as [Sudhana] saw the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra displaying this miracle while sitting upon the Lion Throne containing a great gem lotus in front of the Lord Vairocana, the Tathāgata, in the same way he saw him displaying this same miracle in the east within the world system Padmaśrī of the Lord Bhadraśrī. [V424.20] And just as in the east, in the same way from all around, in every direction and intermediate direction, within all world systems, he saw the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra displaying this same miracle while sitting upon the Lion Seat containing the great gem lotus at the base of the feet of all tathāgatas. And just as in the ten directions, in the same way within all world systems, he saw him displaying this same miracle while sitting upon the Lion Throne containing a great gem lotus at the base of the feet of all tathāgatas.

In this way, from all around, in the ten directions, within every single dust particle equal in number to the dust particles in all the buddha fields, within the expanse of the *Dharmadhātu* with its assembled groups of the teachings of<sup>34</sup> the buddhas, [Sudhana] saw the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra<sup>35</sup> at the base of the feet of all tathāgatas.

---

<sup>34</sup> Tib. omits: "of the teachings."

<sup>35</sup> Tib. (D704.3; P244a.4-5) inserts: "sitting upon the Lion Throne containing a great gem lotus displaying this miracle" (*señs ge'i khri rin po che'i pad mo'i sñin po can la 'dug ciñ mām par rtse ba 'di ñid yonīs su ston pa*).

And from every single one of his bodies he saw all supports obtained within the three times being manifested by means of reflection. He saw all fields, all beings, the coming forth of all buddhas and the assembled groups of all bodhisattvas manifested by means of reflection. He heard the sounds of all beings, the voices of all buddhas, the setting in motion of the wheel of Dharma of all tathāgatas, the miraculous occurrences of all teachings and instructions, the attainments of all bodhisattvas and miracles of all buddhas.

Having seen and heard the inconceivable<sup>36</sup> miracle of the Great Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, [Sudhana] obtained the ten abodes within the perfection of knowledge. Which ten?<sup>37</sup> He obtained:

1. the abode that pervades the group of all buddha fields in a single moment of thought.
2. the abode which is undivided (*asambhinna / tha mi dad pa*) for approaching the base of the feet of all tathāgatas [V425].
3. the abode for the worship and attendance upon all tathāgatas.
4. the abode for asking questions and receiving [answers] about the teachings of the buddhas from every single tathāgata among all tathāgatas.
5. the abode for the profound meditation on the setting in motion of the wheel of Dharma of all tathāgatas.
6. the abode for the inconceivable miracles of the buddhas.
7. the abode where the elucidation of a single sentence of Dharma which possesses sustaining power for eons into the furthest future due to an imperishable special knowledge of all factors (*dharma / chos*).
8. the abode for the direct perception of the signs<sup>38</sup> of all teachings.
9. the abode within the ocean of principles within the entire *Dharmadhatu*.
10. the abode for dwelling within the concepts (*saṃjñā / 'du śes*) of all beings.
11. the abode for the direct perception of the course of conduct of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra in a single instant.

<sup>36</sup> Tib. omits: “inconceivable.”

<sup>37</sup> The text actually lists eleven abodes. Each abode is described as “the abode within the perfection of knowledge,” which in order to abbreviate the list, I am omitting.

<sup>38</sup> Skt. = *mudra*. Tib. reads: “ocean” (*rgya mtsho*) and Cleary’s translates the Chinese with “ocean” (1993, 1508). Since Skt. ‘*samudra*’ is often translated by Tib. ‘*rgya mtsho*’, this could reflect a copy error in the Skt. editions. See also n. 40.

[Then] the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra putting forth his right hand, placed it upon the head of Sudhana, the merchant's son, who was endowed in this way with these abodes within the perfection of knowledge. In the very next moment immediately after the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra had placed his hand upon the head of Sudhana, the merchant's son, [Sudhana] realized [V425.10] entrances into trances<sup>39</sup> equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields. Through every single trance he penetrated oceans<sup>40</sup> of world systems equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields and accumulated previously unseen requisites for omniscience equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields. Productions of factors for omniscience equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields appeared to him, and [Sudhana] made himself ready through many preparations for omniscience equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields. He penetrated oceans of vows equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields, and went forth by the paths for setting out toward omniscience equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields. He was intent upon the courses of conduct of bodhisattvas equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields. He was developed through the impelling forces for omniscience equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields and illuminated with power through the lights of knowledge of all buddhas equal in number to the dust particles in all buddha fields.

<sup>39</sup> I have chosen 'trance' to translate Skt. *samādhi* (Tib. *tin ne 'dzin*) rather than 'concentration' based on my understanding of the term within the *Gv*. Since *samādhis* are bestowed upon Sudhana through the sustaining power or mastery (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the *kalyāṇamitras*, rather than acquired by him through ascetic practice or meditation, I feel 'trance' (in the sense of an altered state of consciousness induced by another person, such as a 'hypnotic trance') better captures the sense of the term than 'concentration.'

<sup>40</sup> V425.11 reads '*mudra*.' S538.1 reads '*samudra*.' Tib. (D706.3; P245a.2) has "ocean" (*rgya mtsho*) and Cleary translates the Chinese as "ocean" (1993, 1508). Based on this evidence I have emended Vaidya.

Just as the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra at the base of the feet of the Lord Vairocana had put forth his right hand and placed it upon head of Sudhana here in this Sahā world, so the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra sitting at the bases of the feet of all tathāgatas within all world systems put forth his right hand [V425.20] and placed it upon head of Sudhana, the merchant's son. In this way from all sides in all directions and intermediate directions the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra sitting at the base of the feet of all tathāgatas within all world systems, even within the interior of the dust particles of all world systems, put forth his right hand and placed it upon the head of Sudhana, the merchant's son. Just as Sudhana, the merchant's son, who was touched with the hand [put forth by] the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra at the base of the feet of the Lord Vairocana, realized the entrances into the Dharma, in the same way Sudhana, the merchant's son, touched by clouds of hands put forth by the bodies of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, realized entrances of Dharma through various principles.

Then the great being, the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra said this to Sudhana, the merchant's son: "O Son of Good Family, did you see my miracle?"

[Sudhana] said, "I saw [it], O Noble One. But [only] a understanding tathāgata would understand a miracle so inconceivable."

[Samantabhadra] said, "O Son of Good Family, for eons equal in number to the dust particles in buddha fields far beyond description, I have practiced desiring the mind of omniscience. Within every single great eon I met with tathāgatas equal in number to the dust particles in buddha fields far beyond description, leading to the purification (*pariśodhayatā / yoṅs su sbyon ba*) of the mind of enlightenment. And within every



single great eon, I performed great sacrifices which were proclaimed in all worlds and furnished with the abandonment of all---this state of the requisite of merit for omniscience teaching all beings.<sup>41</sup> Within every single great eon, I made [V426] renunciations, great renunciations equal in number to the dust particles in buddha fields far beyond description. Longing for the factors of omniscience, I made extreme renunciations. Within every single great eon I gave up bodies far beyond description; I gave up great empires, villages, towns, cities, countries, kingdoms and capitals, dear and charming communities of followers who were difficult to give up, sons, daughters and wives. Out of care for the knowledge<sup>42</sup> of the buddhas through an indifference to my body and life, I gave up the flesh of my own bodies. I gave up blood from my own body to beggars; I gave up my bones and marrow;<sup>43</sup> my limbs and body parts; my sense organs [such as] my ears, noses, eyes, and tongues from my own mouths. And within every single great eon, I gave up my own heads equal in number to the dust particles in buddha fields far beyond description, longing for the head of supreme omniscience arisen from all worlds out of my own bodies.

Just as it was in every single great eon, so it was in oceans of great eons equal in number to the dust particles in buddha fields far beyond description. [V426.10] Within every single great eon, I, the supreme lord, honored, praised, respected and worshipped tathāgatas equal in number to the dust particles in buddha fields far beyond description. I

---

<sup>41</sup> *sarvasattvapratipādanā sarvajñatāpuṇyasaṃbhārātā* (V425.31-32). The meaning of this expression in this context is unclear to me. The Tibetan is equally confusing to me (D708.3-4; P245b.8-246a.1). The text may be corrupt here.

<sup>42</sup> Tib. (D708.5; P246a.2) reads “Dharma” (*chos*).

<sup>43</sup> Tib. (D709.1; P246a.5) inserts: “legs and arms” (*rkañ pa dan lag pa dan*).

offered them personal belongings [consisting of] robes, alms food, dwellings and medicine for curing the sick. Going forth into the teaching of those tathāgatas, I practiced according to the instructions of all the buddhas and I maintained their teaching.

O Son of Good Family, through so many oceans of eons I do not know of the production of even a single thought that would give rise to (*utpādayitum / bskyed pa*) injury to the teaching of the tathāgatas. Through so many oceans of eons I do not know of the production of even a single thought that would give rise to association with anger, or would give rise to a thought laying hold of (*graha / 'dzin pa*) a self, or a thought of possession resulting from the laying hold of a self, or a thought about the difference between self and others, or a thought about avoiding the path of enlightenment, or a thought of weariness with dwelling within the cycle of existence (*samsāra / 'khor ba*), or a despondent thought, or a thought which is confused due to the hindrances, [or any thought] other than the thought of enlightenment which is the unconquerable (*duryodhana / rgyal par dka' ba*) essence of unsurpassed knowledge for the requisites of omniscience.

Thus, O Son of Good Family, the ocean of all eons would be exhausted through the proclaiming of these: my efforts (*prayoga / sbyor ba*) toward the purification of the fields of perfectly enlightened buddhas in previous lives; [and] the efforts toward the deliverance, bringing to maturity, and purification of all by me [V426.20] [acting] with an intention which has been obtained through great compassion.

Thus, O Son of Good Family, from among so many of [these] my oceans of factors (*dharma / chos*) [such as:] those efforts in worshipping and attending buddhas,

efforts in obedience to one's teacher for the sake of seeking after the true Dharma, efforts in abandoning my body for the sake of receiving the true Dharma, efforts in abandoning my own life motivated by the defence of the true Dharma, there was not even a single word or sound which was not purchased through the giving up of the empire of a wheel-turning monarch, which was not purchased through giving up all there is, undertaken for (*prayukta / brtson pa*) the deliverance of all beings, undertaken for the comprehending of my own mind-stream (*saṃtaticitta / sems kyi rgyud*), undertaken for the direct attainment of the supreme Dharma, undertaken for the promulgation (*prabhāvanā / rab tu brjod pa*) of the light of all worldly knowledge, undertaken for the promulgation of all knowledge surpassing the world, undertaken for the production of the pleasures of the cycle of existence for all beings, undertaken for the quality of praise regarding the virtues of all tathāgatas. In this way the oceans of eons equal in number to the dust particles in buddha fields far beyond description would be exhausted while proclaiming the attainment of my previous lives.

Therefore, O Son of Good Family, in this way through the power of the requisites with this form, through the power of the accumulation of root causes, through the power of mighty resolution, through the power of the performance of virtues, through the power of comprehending properly all factors, through the power of the eye of wisdom, through the power of the mastery of the tathāgatas, through the power of the great vow, through the power of great compassion, through the power of the well purified supernormal powers, through the power of accepting (*parigraha / yonś su bzun ba*) all Good Friends, I obtained the Dharma Body which is absolutely pure and non-differentiated within the

three times. I also purified a supreme Form Body, which has [V427] arisen in all worlds, which gives instruction according to the intentions of the entire world, which is conformable (*anugata / rjes su soṇ ba*) everywhere, which is intent upon all buddha fields, which has a universal basis, which makes visible all miracles in every direction, and which is viewed (*abhilakṣaṇīya / yonṣ su sbyaṇṣ*) by the entire world. O Son of Good Family, look at this accomplishment which is the obtaining of this body, arisen within oceans of endless eons, whose appearance is difficult to obtain in many eons [numbering] hundreds of thousands of ten million *niyutas*,<sup>44</sup> whose sight is difficult to obtain!

O Son of Good Family, I do not even come within the range of hearing (*śravaṇapatha / rna lam*) of those beings whose roots of merit are not planted, how much less [do they obtain] a vision [of me]. O Son of Good Family, there are beings, who by merely hearing my name, are not liable to turn back from supreme, perfect enlightenment. There are [beings who] by merely seeing, touching, or following [me]; by merely touching [me], seeing [me] in a dream, or by hearing my name in a dream, are not liable to turn back from supreme, perfect enlightenment. Some beings attain maturity recollecting me for a day and night. Some attain maturity recollecting me for<sup>45</sup> a fortnight, others for a month, a year, a hundred years, an eon, a hundred eons, [V427.10] up to eons equal in number to the dust particles in buddha fields far beyond description. Some attain maturity recollecting me for one life; others for a hundred

<sup>44</sup> BHSD: '*niyuta*' - a high number . Tib. translates as '*khraḡ khriḡ*' = one hundred billion.

<sup>45</sup> Tib. inserts: "a week" (*zhig bdun*).

lives,<sup>46</sup> up to revolutions of lives equal in number to the dust particles in buddha fields far beyond description. Some beings attain maturity through a vision of light belonging to me. Some attain maturity through the appearance of the discharging of light rays, some through a great trembling of [their] field, some through the appearance of Form Bodies, some through something that causes joy. In this way, O Son of Good Family, through means equal in number to the dust particles in the buddha fields, beings are not liable to turn back from supreme, perfect enlightenment.

O Son of Good Family, beings who hear about the complete purity of my buddha field, are reborn within pure buddha fields. Those beings who see the purity of my body are reborn within my body. O Son of Good Family, see this purity of my body!

Then Sudhana, the merchant's son, reflecting upon the body of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, saw within every single pore oceans of buddha fields beyond description<sup>47</sup> completely filled with the coming forth of buddhas. And within every single ocean of buddha fields, [V427.20] he saw tathāgatas surrounded by oceans of assemblies of bodhisattvas. He saw all those oceans of fields with their various bases, forms, arrays, Cakravāla [mountain ranges], arisings of various buddhas enveloped in the sky by various clouds, and various sounds of the wheels of Dharma [being turned]. Just as [Sudhana saw this] within every single pore, so [he saw this] within all pores without remainder, and within all the marks, minor marks, limbs and body parts [of the Bodhisattva]. Entering oceans of fields equal in number to the dust particles within all buddha fields and clouds of magical creations of buddha bodies, and pervading all world

<sup>46</sup> Tib. omits: "some for a hundred lives,..."

<sup>47</sup> Tib. (D713.4; P248a.3-4) reads: "far beyond description" (*brjod du med pa'i yañ brjod du med pa*).

systems within the ten directions, he saw all beings being brought to maturity in supreme, perfect enlightenment.

Then Sudhana, the merchant's son, taught by the admonition and instruction of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, having penetrated into all world systems inside the body of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, brought beings to maturity. And those accumulations of the roots of merit belonging to Sudhana, the merchant's son, resulting from the light of knowledge [obtained] through approaching, seeing and waiting upon Good Friends equal in number to the dust particles in the buddha fields, did not approach even a hundredth, a thousandth, a hundred-thousandth, or a hundred-thousand-ten-millionth part of the accumulation of the roots of merit [that arose] immediately upon<sup>48</sup> seeing the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra; they were not worth even the sum, a part, an enumeration, a likeness, or a degree for<sup>49</sup> the coming forth of the first thought [of enlightenment] up to the vision of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

As many successions of oceans of buddha fields as [Sudhana] had penetrated in this interval, he penetrated so many [V428] successions of oceans of buddha fields in every instant of thought within a single pore<sup>50</sup> of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra; [successions] that have [good] qualities equal in number to the dust particles within buddha fields far beyond description. As in one pore,<sup>51</sup> just so within all pores<sup>52</sup> in every instant of thought by proceeding beyond world system[s] equal in number to the dust

<sup>48</sup> I am uncertain of the meaning of 'saha' in this compound. It is not translated in the Tib.

<sup>49</sup> The use of the dative here is strange. In the Peking the word 'bskyed pa' (Skt. *utpāda*) is unmarked (P248b.4). The Derge uses the ablative particle 'nas' (D714.5), which I suspect is the correct reading here.

<sup>50</sup> Tib. reads: "within every single pore..."

<sup>51</sup> Tib. reads: "As in each pore..."

<sup>52</sup> Tib. inserts: "without exception" (*ma lus pa*).

particles within buddha fields<sup>53</sup> far beyond description, and by proceeding beyond the world system which has as a basis the eons within the [furthest] future, he did not arrive at an end. He did not arrive at the end of the successions of oceans of fields, of the origins of the oceans of fields, of the separations of the oceans of fields, of the gatherings of the oceans of fields, of the births of the oceans of buddha<sup>54</sup> fields far beyond description,<sup>55</sup> of the destructions of the oceans of fields, or of the arrays of oceans of fields.

[Nor did he arrive at the end] of the origins<sup>56</sup> of the oceans of the coming forth of buddhas,<sup>57</sup> of the gatherings of the oceans of the coming forth of buddhas, of the births of the oceans of the coming forth of buddhas, or of the destructions of the oceans of the coming forth of buddhas.

[Nor did he arrive at the end] of the oceans of assembled groups of oceans<sup>58</sup> of bodhisattvas, of the successions of oceans of assembled groups of bodhisattvas, of the origins of the oceans of assembled groups of bodhisattvas, of the separations of the oceans of assembled groups of bodhisattvas, of the gatherings of the oceans of assembled groups of bodhisattvas, [V428.10] of the births of the oceans of assembled groups of bodhisattvas, of the destructions of the oceans of the assembled groups of bodhisattvas.

---

<sup>53</sup> Tib. reads “within world systems” (*’jig rten gyi khams*).

<sup>54</sup> Tib. omits: “buddha.”

<sup>55</sup> Tib. omits: “far beyond description”

<sup>56</sup> Tib. reads: “successions” (*gcig nas cig du brgyud pa*).

<sup>57</sup> Tib. (D715.2; P249a.2) inserts: “of the group of the oceans of the coming forth of buddhas, of the diversity of the oceans of the coming forth of buddhas” (*sañs rgyas byañ ba rgya mtsho ’i sku dan sañs rgyas byañ ba rgya mtsho ’i bye brag*).

<sup>58</sup> Tib. omits: “oceans.”

[Nor did he arrive at the end] of the entrances into the realms of beings, of the entrances into the knowledge at every moment of the faculties of beings, of the penetrations into the knowledge of the faculties of beings, of the ways of leading to maturity of beings, of the abodes of the unfathomable miracles of the bodhisattvas, or of the oceans of entrances into and departures from the stages of the bodhisattvas.

In a certain field, [Sudhana] practiced for an eon. In a certain field, he practiced for as many eons as are equal in number to the dust particles<sup>59</sup> in buddha fields far beyond description, not proceeding to [other] fields. In each moment of thought he penetrated infinitely numerous oceans of fields and brought beings to maturity in supreme, perfect enlightenment. Through a regular order, he obtained to the extent of equality with the ocean of vows and the course of conduct of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, he obtained equality with all tathāgatas, equality in accomplishing the group of all fields, equality in fulfilling the course of conduct, equality in accomplishing the vision of the miracle of perfect enlightenment, equality in turning the wheel of Dharma, equality in the purity of special knowledge, equality in the utterances of voice, equality in joining together the oceans of all qualities of sound, equality in strength and fearlessness, equality in the abodes of buddhas, equality in love and great compassion, and equality in the inconceivable miracle of the liberation of bodhisattvas.

[V428.20] Then the great being, the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra in this very way illuminating to a very high degree<sup>60</sup> the extension (*prasara / 'byam klas pa*) of eons for

---

<sup>59</sup> Tib. omits: “as are equal in number to the dust particles in.”

<sup>60</sup> Tib. omits: “to a very high degree.”



eons equal in number to the dust particles within buddha fields far beyond description in the succession of world systems, made a vow through the recitation of verses---

[The *Bhad* follows (V428-436), Vairocana approves, and the *Gv* concludes (V436)]

## Bibliography

- Afshar, Qobad. 1981. *An Ancient Indian Itinerary: The Geographical Appellatives in the Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra (tentative identifications)*. Lausanne, Switzerland: Kronasia-Diffusion.
- Beyer, Stephan V. 1992. *The Classical Tibetan Language*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Bell, Catherine. 1992. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bosch, F. D. K. 1959. "Une série de bas-relief au Barabudur" *Arts Asiatique* 6, 163-74.
- Capps, Walter H. 1995. *Religious Studies: The Making of a Disciple*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Chang, Garma C. C. 1986. *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: The Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Cleary, Thomas, trans. 1993. *The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Conze, Edward. 1978. *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature*. 2nd ed. Tokyo: Reiyukai.
- , trans. 1961. *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom with the divisions of the Abhisamayālaṅkāra, Part I*. London: Luzac & Company Limited.
- , trans. 1964. *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom with the divisions of the Abhisamayālaṅkāra, Parts II & III*. Madison: College Printing and Typing Company.
- , trans. 1973a. *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines & Its Verse Summary*. San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation.
- , trans. 1973b. *Perfect Wisdom: The Short Prajñāpāramitā Texts*. Devon: Buddhist Publishing Group.
- , trans. 1974. *Vajrachhedikā Prajñāpāramitā*, 2nd ed. Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Serie Orientale Roma, XIII.
- Davids, T. W. Rhys and William Stede. 1921-25. *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*. Oxford: Pali Text Society.

- sDe dge mTshal par bKa' 'gyur*. Vol. 38. 1995. Delhi: Delhi Karmapae Choedhey, Gyalwae Sungrab Partun Khang.
- Eckel, David Malcom. 1992. *To See the Buddha: A Philosopher's Quest for the Meaning of Emptiness*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Edgerton, Frankin. 1953. *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar & Dictionary*. 2 vols. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited.
- Ehman, Mark Allen. 1977. "The Gaṇḍavyūha: Search for Enlightenment." Ph. D. dissertation. University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Fontein, Jan . 1967. *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana: A Study of Gaṇḍavyūha Illustrations in China, Japan and Java*. The Hague: Mouton & Co.
- Gimello, Robert M. 1983. "Li T'ung-hsüan and the Practical Dimensions of Hua-yen." Pp. 321-389 in *Studies in Ch'an and Hua-yen*. Edited by Robert M. Gimello and Peter N. Gregory. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Gómez, Luis Oscar. 1967. "Selected Verses from the Gaṇḍavyūha: Text, Critical Apparatus and Translation." Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University.
- , 1975. "The Bodhisattva as Wonder-Worker." Pp. 221-261 in *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems: Studies in Honor of Edward Conze*. Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, no. 1.
- , 1981. "Observations on the Role of the Gaṇḍavyūha in the Design and of Barabudur." Pp. 173-194 in *Barabudur: History and Significance of a Buddhist Monument*. Edited by Luis O. Gómez and Hiram W. Woodward, Jr. Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series.
- Gregory, Peter N. 1983. "The Teaching of Men and Gods: The Doctrinal and Social Basis of Lay Buddhist Practice in the Hua-yen Tradition." Pp. 253-320 in *Studies in Ch'an and Hua-yen*. Edited by Robert M. Gimello and Peter N. Gregory.
- Guenther, Herbert V. 1977. "Excerpts from the Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra." Pp. 3-35 in *Tibetan Buddhism in Western Perspective*. Emeryville, California: Dharma Publishing.
- Harrison, Paul. 1990. *The Samādhi of the Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present: An Annotated English Translation of the Tibetan Version of the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Saṃmukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra*. Tokyo: The Internal Institute for Buddhist Studies.

- , 1992a. "Is the Dharmakāya the Real 'Phantom Body' of the Buddha?" *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 15, 44-94.
- , 1992b. "Meritorious Activity or Waste of Time? Some Remarks on the Editing of Texts in the Tibetan Kanjur." Pp. 77-91 in *Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies Narita 1989. Volume 1: Buddhist Philosophy and Literature*. Edited by Ihara Shōren and Yamaguchi Zuihō. Naritasan Shinshoji.
- Harvey, Peter. 1990. *Introduction to Buddhist: Teaching, History and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hikata, Ryusho. 1960. "Gaṇḍavyūha and the Reliefs of Barabudur-Galleries." In *Studies in Indology and Buddhology, presented in honour of Professor Gisho Nakano on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. (Nakanokyo koki kinen ronbushu.)* Koyasan: Koyasan University.
- , 1965. "On the Significance of Barabudur Edifice." *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda* 15, 8-33.
- Jaini, Padmanabh S. 1966. "The Story of Sudhana and Manohara: an Analysis of the Texts and the Barabudur-reliefs." *BSOAS* 29, 533-58.
- Jastram, Judy Ann. 1975. "Three Chapters from the Gandavyuha Sutra: A Critical Edition of the Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts of the Youth Sudhana's Visits to the Bhiksus Meghasri, Sagaramegha and Supratishita." Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley.
- Lamotte, Étienne. 1973. *Der Verfasser des Upadeśa und seine Quellen*. Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften, Göttingen: Van den Hoeck & Ruprecht, 1973.
- Kern, H. 1882. *Der Buddhismus und seine Geschichte in Indien*. Leipzig: Otto Schulze.
- Krom, N. J. 1927. *Barabudur: Archaeological Description*. 2 vols. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- McGann, Jerome J. 1991. *The Textual Condition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mitra, R. 1882. *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society of Bengal.

- , ed. 1888. *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*. Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica.
- Monier-Williams, Sir Monier. 1899. *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mus, Paul. 1935. *Barabudur: Esquisse d'une histoire du Bouddhisme fondée sur la critique archéologique des textes*. 2 vols. Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extreme-Orient.
- Nakamura, Hajime. 1987. *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographic Notes*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1956. *The Birth of Tragedy & The Genealogy of Morals*. Francis Golffing, trans. New York: Doubleday.
- Nou, Jean-Louis and Louis Frédéric. 1996. *Borobudur*. New York: Abbeville Press.
- Osto, Douglas E. 1996. "A Pilgrimage Beyond Spacetime: Myth and Worldview in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* Scripture." Unpublished paper.
- Pagel, Ulrich. 1995. *The Bodhisattvapitaka: Its Doctrine, Practices and their Position in Mahāyāna Literature*. Tring, U. K.: The Institute of Buddhist Studies.
- Paul, Diana Y. with contributions by Frances Wilson. 1985. *Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in Mahāyāna Tradition*, 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schopen, Gregory. 1989. "The Manuscript of the Vajracchedikā Found at Gilgit." Pp. 89-140 in *Studies in the Literature of the Great Vehicle: Three Mahāyāna Buddhist Texts*. Edited by Luis O. Gómez and Jonathan A. Silk. Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, the University of Michigan.
- , 1997. *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Skilling, Peter. 1997. "From bKa' bstan bcos to bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur." Pp. 87-111 in *Transmission of the Tibetan Canon*. Edited by Helmut Eimer. Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften.
- Smart, Ninian. *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983.

- Snellgrove, David L. 1996. "Borobudur: Stūpa or Maṇḍala?" *East and West*. 46 (no. 3-4): 477-483.
- Snellgrove, David and Hugh Richardson. 1995. *A Cultural History of Tibet*. Boston: Shambala.
- Steinkellner, Ernst. 1995. *Sudhana's Miraculous Journey in the Temple of Ta Pho: the inscriptional text of the Tibetan Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra edited with introductory remarks*. Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.
- Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro. 1934. *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, 3d ser. London: Luzac and Company.
- , ed. 1956-61. *The Tibetan Tripiṭika Peking Edition*. Tokyo: Tibetan Tripiṭika Research Institute.
- Suzuki, Daisetz Teirtaro, and Hokei Idzumi, eds. 1953. *The Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*, New Revised Edition. Tokyo: The Society for the Publication of Sacred Books of the World.
- Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. 1993. *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Vaidya, P. L., ed. 1960. *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra*. Darbhanga: Mithila Institute.
- Van Lohuizen-de Leew, J. E. 1965. "The Dhyāna-Buddhas of Barabudur." *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenskunde*, 121: 389-416.
- Waldschmidt, Ernst. 1965. *Sanskriithandschriften aus Den Turfanfunden*, I. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Warder, A. K. 1980. *Indian Buddhism*. Revised ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1988. *Philosophical Investigations*. Third ed. Translated by G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Williams, Paul. 1993. *Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*. New York: Routledge.