

BOOK REVIEWS

SCRIPTURE OF THE LOTUS BLOSSOM OF THE FINE DHARMA
(*The Lotus Sūtra*). Translated from the Chinese of Kumārajīva. By Leon Hurvitz.
Columbia University Press: New York, 1976, xxxviii+421 pp.

Leon Hurvitz's translation of Kumārajīva's version of the Saddharmapūṇḍarīka is the third English translation of this famous text. The translations by Katō and Murano, published respectively in 1971 and 1974, were reviewed in a previous issue (Vol. viii, No. 2, pp. 154-159). Hurvitz's work comprises a preface, the translation of the Chinese text, a glossary, notes on the Sanskrit text and an index. In the preface Hurvitz explains that he has attempted to satisfy two demands simultaneously, that of the series to which the present translation belongs and that of the translator's philological conscience. For this reason Hurvitz has added Sanskrit words and phrases either in parentheses or in notes in the back of the book for the benefit of "Sanskrit-oriented readers." In addition to this, where the difference between the two versions is sufficient to merit comment, the Sanskrit is given in English translation in the notes. Alas, Hurvitz has been badly guided by his philological conscience for it is obvious that his knowledge of Sanskrit is definitely inadequate. Elementary howlers abound. To illustrate this a few examples may suffice. Kern-Nanjio p. 245.8-10 contains the following passage: *tena khalu punaḥ samayeneyaṃ trisāhasramahāsāhasrī lokadhātus tathāgataparipūrṇābhūn na tāvad bhagavataḥ śākyamunes tathāgataḥ* *vyātmabhāvanīrmitā ekasmād api digbhāgāt sarva āgatā abhūvan*. Hurvitz translates: "Then indeed at that time the sphere of this thousand-millionfold world was filled with Thus Gone Ones. Nor is this to say that those fashioned from the Body of the Thus Gone One Śākyamuni arrived even from one quarter" (p. 374). Hurvitz adds the following comments: "I am by no means certain of the meaning of this. Two possibilities come to mind: (1) From no direction, no not one, did any Buddhas arrive who had been fashioned by Śākyamuni. This is as much as to say that they were all self-created. (2) Not by any means did they all come from any particular quarter, but from all

sides at once.” Of course, the text says that they had not yet all arrived, even from a single quarter. In order to accommodate the Tathāgatas who keep on arriving the Buddha creates twenty thousand koṭis of nayutas of Buddha-fields. After having done this the Buddha creates again in this way in every direction the same number of Buddha-fields (Kern-Nanjio p. 246.11: *anena paryāyeṇa punar aparāṇi. . .*). This sentence is the first of a new passage which repeats the previous passage. However, in Hurvitz’s translation, the same sentence is rendered as if it concludes the first passage: “Moreover, in that way Śākyamuni the Thus Gone One cleared twenty koṭis of nayutas of hundreds of thousands of world-spheres to provide accommodation for those Thus Gone Ones who had arrived” (p. 375). Hurvitz omits the words *ekaikāsyāṃ dīśi* (Kern-Nanjio, p. 247.1). On the same page Hurvitz translates *dharmanetrī* by “eye of Dharma” (cf. Kern-Nanjio p. 251.6). Expressions which one can find in Sanskrit dictionaries create great difficulties for Hurvitz. For instance, the expression *yathechchayā* “according to wish”, cf. Kern-Nanjio p. 264.5: *yathechchayā me sambodhiḥ sākṣi me ’tra tathāgataḥ* (Kern’s translation: “I have obtained enlightenment according to my wish; the Tathāgata can bear witness to it.”). Hurvitz translates: “Mine is perfect enlightened intuition, as if it were at will, and my witness thereof is the Thus Gone One” (pp. 378–379). He adds the following comments: “The first *ardhaśloka* of 51 is far from a certainty. It may also mean: *How* my *sambodhi* is a matter of the will, *of that* the Thus Gone One is an eyewitness.”

There is no point in multiplying examples of elementary mistakes made by Hurvitz in his translations of the Sanskrit text. Even when the meaning of the text is quite obvious, the translation is often completely wrong. If one wants to consult a translation of the Sanskrit text, Burnouf’s and Kern’s translations (published in 1852 and 1884) are infinitely preferable even though they are based upon Nepalese manuscripts and are not free from misunderstandings. Much work has still to be done with regard to a good translation of the Sanskrit text. Edgerton’s *Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* will be of great assistance but even his indications have to be examined critically. Kern-Nanjio p. 301.5 reads: *ābādhaviṣṇamukto ’si sparśaḥ kāye tavānagha*. Kern notes in his critical apparatus that O. (the Kashgar manuscript) has *sparśam* but all other manuscripts *sparśa*. Following the reading *sparśakāye* Burnouf translates: “Es-tu, ô toi qui es sans péché, libre d’obstacles dans les contacts que tu rencontres?” Kern’s translation is very free: “Dost thou feel free from bodily disease, O Perfect One?” Reading *sparśaḥ*, Hurvitz translates: “Are you free of obstacles? Do

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the things that touch your body cause it no illness?" (p. 386). This is, of course, complete gibberish. Edgerton proposes to read *sparsakāye* and translates as follows: "Are you free from trouble in your group-of-sensory-contacts?" (*op.cit.*, s.v. *sparsa-kāya*). Edgerton overlooked the fact that this half-verse repeats what has been said before in prose: *kaccid bhagavato 'lpābādhātā mandaglānatā sukhasaṃsparsavihārātā* (Kern-Nanjio p. 300.17-301.1). The correct reading is given by manuscript O. which has *sparsaṃ*, a Sanskritization of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit *phāsaṃ* or *phāsaṃ*. The latter occurs in the corresponding passage of the Gilgit manuscript edited by Watanabe Shōkō (Tōkyō, 1975, p. 102). The meaning and etymology of Pāli *phāsu* and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit *phāsa* have recently been explained in detail by Colette Caillat (*Journal asiatique*, 1960, pp. 41-55; 1961, pp. 497-502) and by R. L. Turner (*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 36, 1973, pp. 424-428; *Collected Papers*, London, 1975, pp. 430-435). The Tibetan translator correctly translated this half-verse: *gnod-las rnam-par rab-grol lam/sdig-pa mi-mñah sku bde 'am* "Are you free from injury? O, sinless one, are you comfortable in your body?"

Even more disturbing than Hurvitz's poor knowledge of Sanskrit is the fact that his knowledge of Buddhist literature seems to be rather limited. The well-known expression "the eighty-four thousand dharmaskandha" is being discussed by him in the following way: "Let them dwell with all the traditional verbose commentary on all eighty-four dharmas. (The Theravāda school, for example, lists the dharmas at eighty-four). If it comes to that, let them multiply their precious dharma-catalogue by a thousand. What's so so hard about that?" (p. 377). On p. 409 Hurvitz quotes the Sanskrit text of the well-known comparison between the chance of encountering a Buddha and the chance of a tortoise putting his neck through the hole of a yoke in the ocean. Hurvitz remarks that *yuga* (cosmic age) is not a Buddhist term, and that the compound is hard to construe. This is no wonder if one does not know that *yuga* here means "yoke". This comparison occurs in quite a few texts and has been studied by many scholars (for references see *T'oung Pao*, 42, 1954, p. 404 and *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 18, 1976, p. 317).

Hurvitz's translation of Kumārajīva's version is an excellent piece of work. In the chapters which I compared with the Chinese text (chapters 11-16) there are only very few places where one would prefer a different rendering. For instance, p. 183 "Tamālapatracandana scent"; read "the scent of Tamālapattra and sandal." P. 211, line 1: "Or those who seek to display passage into extinction." The Sanskrit text has: *yā nirvṛtiṃ gaveṣanti dṛṣṭe dharme upāsikāḥ*.

Chinese *hsien* 現 stands for *hsien-fa* 現法 *dṛṣṭadharma*. The Chinese text corresponds exactly to the Sanskrit: 求現滅度 “seek extinction in their present life.” According to the preface (p. xxv) Hurvitz made use of Akamatsu Kōyō’s *Kunten kōsei Myōhō renga kyō* (Kyoto, 1891), an edition which I have been unable to consult. On p. 219 (6th line from below) Hurvitz seems to have read *wang* 忘 instead of *wang* 妄. However, the Taishō edition has 妄 and does not record any variant. It is clear that 妄 is the correct reading as it is also found in the verses, cf. Hurvitz p. 221, line 18: “Would not set it forth recklessly.” On p. 201, line 1 Hurvitz has: “The Path of the Buddha is remote and cavernous.” The Taishō edition has 佛道懸曠 “The path of the Buddha is remote.” One wonders whether Hurvitz’s text is different. As in many other instances Hurvitz translates here a binom with two words. The tendency to translate each single character with an English equivalent makes the translation sometimes heavy reading. For instance, Hurvitz translates everywhere *chi-yüeh* 伎樂 with “skilfully played music” whereas other translators, and rightly so, have “music”. On p. 221 (last two lines) Hurvitz translates 不生貧窮卑賤醜陋 as follows: “Nor shall he be born into poverty, want, lowliness, degradation, ugliness or restriction.” The same passage is rendered by Katō as follows: “He will not be born poor, humble, or ugly.” Similarly Murano: “He will not be poor or humble or ugly.” Katō’s and Murano’s translations are to be preferred to the one given by Hurvitz. On p. 186 (line 11) Hurvitz omits to translate four characters 懸諸寶鈴. A much longer passage (cf. *Taishō Daizōkyō*, ix, p. 36a16–18) is left out on p. 203 (line 5). The translation is provided with very few notes. In view of the fact that it is meant to be used in undergraduate courses it is certainly necessary to explain, for instance, the term *anutpattikadharmaḥ sānti*. Hurvitz’s “acceptance of [the doctrine of] the unborn” (p. 197, line 17) will not be very comprehensible to the uninitiated reader.

It is very much to be hoped that there will be such a demand for Hurvitz’s work that a second and revised edition will soon be forthcoming. In that case it would be advisable to omit entirely the appendix, containing the Notes on the Sanskrit, to add a number of explanatory notes and to pay more attention to the translation of binoms. If that is done, then Hurvitz’s translation will be able to render useful service for a long time to come.

To conclude this review I would like to make some brief comments on Hurvitz’s discussion of the word *pratyekabuddhā* and its Chinese renderings (p. xix). Hurvitz remarks that Kumārajīva either transcribes *pi-chi-fo* or translates *yüan-chüeh*, “condition perceiver”. According to him “The Pāli

form of the word is *paccekabuddha*, which could as easily go back to *prātyayikabuddha*, 'Buddha related to [causes and] conditions,' as to *pratyekabuddha*. The latter is obviously a sanskritization postdating Kumārajīva or rejected by him." It is perhaps not superfluous to point out that no form *prātyayikabuddha* is found in any text and that of course Pāli *paccekabuddha* goes back to *pratyekabuddha*. It is therefore absurd to say that *pratyekabuddha* is a sanskritization postdating Kumārajīva or rejected by him. How to explain the rendering of *pratyekabuddha* by *yüan-chüeh*? Fujita pointed out that in early Mahāyāna texts (especially in verses) we find *pratyaya* or *pratyayabuddha* used instead of *pratyekabuddha* ("Sanjō no seiritsu ni tsuite," *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū*, vol. 5, 1957, p. 426, n. 19; "Ichijō to sanjō", Ōchō Enichi (ed.), *Hokke shisō*, 1969, p. 377). The latter article was translated by Hurvitz ("One Vehicle or Three," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 3, 1975, pp. 79-166). The examples quoted by Fujita are to be found in the verses of three texts only. Fujita is careful to refrain from stating that *yüan-chüeh* is a translation of *pratyayabuddha*. He draws attention to the fact that in early Mahāyāna there is a connection between the twelve causes and conditions and the *pratyekabuddha*. Especially interesting is a passage of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra quoted by him: *anye sattvā anācāryakam jñānam damaśamatham ākāṅkṣamāṇā ātmaparinirvāṇahetor hetupratyayānubodhāya tathāgataśāsane 'bhiyuyante | ta ucyante pratyekabuddhayānam ākāṅkṣamāṇās* (Kern-Nanjio p. 80.8-9). However, the widespread use of the term *yüan-chüeh* cannot be explained by the occasional occurrence of the term *pratyayabuddha* in a few texts or by early Mahāyāna theories about the *pratyekabuddha*. The explanation is to be sought in another direction. Fujita mentions in passing that Dharmarakṣa once translates *pratyekabuddha* by *yüan i chüeh* 緣一覺 (*Hokke shisō*, p. 378). His only comment is that this translation which seems to combine *pratyaya* with the *eka* in *pratyeka* is not correct (Hurvitz's translation of this sentence fails to render accurately the original). However, it is important to point out that *yüan i chüeh* is found in many translations of the second and third century. According to the indices of the *Taishō Daizōkyō* it is used in the following texts: Nos. 152, 225, 263, 313, 361, 442, 460, 474, 585, 635, 816 and 1507 which, probably, were all translated in that period. The only occurrences in translations belonging to the fourth and fifth centuries are found in No. 26 (*Taishō Daizōkyō* vol. 1, p. 722b16 and 25) and No. 640 (vol. xv, p. 621b28). It seems therefore very likely that the term *yüan-chüeh* does not go back immediately to a Sanskrit original but has to be explained as a simplification of the term *yüan i chüeh*. Chinese has a preference for two-character

compounds and *yüan-chüeh* sounds much better to Chinese ears. Hurvitz renders *yüan-chüeh* by "condition perceiver" but Demiéville interprets it as "awakened by conditions" (éveillé par les conditions). Demiéville remarks that the *pratyekabuddha* has become Buddha through the effect of his anterior conditions and not by the teaching of another Buddha ("La Yogācārabhūmi de Saṅgharakṣa," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*, XLIV, 1954, p. 425, n.5). Demiéville refers to a passage in the *Ta chih tu lun* 大智度論 (p. 191a), translated by Lamotte as follows: "A une époque où les Buddha n'apparaissent pas et où la Loi du Buddha a disparu, les Pratyekabuddha, en raison des causes antérieures (*pūrvajanmahetupratyaya*), produisent seuls la sagesse, sans l'avoir entendu des autres" (*Le traité de la grande vertu de sagesse*; Tome II, Louvain, 1949, p. 1068). In the same passage the *Ta chih tu lun* distinguishes two kinds of *pratyekabuddha*: the *tu-chüeh* 獨覺 and the *yin-yüan chüeh* 因緣覺. Lamotte translates the latter as "celui qui est illuminé à la suite d'un événement (*nidāna*)". According to the *Ta chih tu lun* only a 少因緣 "small motive (*nidāna*)" is sometimes sufficient for somebody to become a *pratyekabuddha* (cf. p. 191b4 and 266c9). However, the *Ta chih tu lun* mentions also that the Buddha preaches the twelve *nidāna* to the future *pratyekabuddha* (p. 295b11-12). Therefore two different theories about the *pratyekabuddha* were known to the author of the *Ta chih tu lun*. According to the first a *pratyekabuddha* is somebody who has accumulated merit in former lives so that a small motive is sufficient for him to become a *pratyekabuddha*. According to the second one becomes a *pratyekabuddha* through the understanding of the twelve *nidāna*. The existence of these two theories may have contributed to the ready acceptance of the term *yüan-chüeh* which can be interpreted in two different ways, either as "awakened through [the effect of former] conditions" or as "awakened through [the understanding of] conditions."

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