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Notes on the *Ratnakūṭa* Collection

by K. Priscilla Pedersen

The *Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra* is not a single Buddhist work, but a large collection of forty-nine works which comprises a section of both the Chinese Tripiṭaka¹ and the Tibetan Kanjur.²

The collection in its present Chinese form was compiled in the T'ang dynasty by Bodhiruci, a South Indian Brahman and illustrious Tripiṭaka master who arrived in China in 693. Bodhiruci brought with him Sanskrit manuscripts which he used in making his version of the collection. The Emperor Chung-tsung requested him to translate the *Ratnakūṭa*, and Chung-tsung's successor, Jui-tsung, also took a personal interest in the project. Bodhiruci began work with a team of assistants in 706 and completed the translation in 713. It was the last of the many translations which Bodhiruci undertook before devoting himself to the practice of meditation in preparation for his death. He died at a great age in 727.³

In editing the collection, Bodhiruci used as they were previous Chinese translations of twenty-three works. He retranslated fifteen works of which he considered the previous translations inadequate and newly translated eleven works, making altogether a total of the forty-nine works of the collection as it now stands.

The history of the collection before Bodhiruci is obscure, and it is uncertain when, where and by what processes a collection of this name may have taken shape. One should note the following data in consideration of the question.

Examination of the Tibetan *Ratnakūṭa* collection does not help in establishing a date before Bodhiruci for the collection's formation, since it is likely that the Tibetan compilers followed the order of the Chinese version, with which their *Ratnakūṭa* corresponds as to the works included and the order of arrangement.⁴

Biographies of Hsüan-tsang record that on New Year's Day, 664, when the famous scholar and pilgrim had recently completed his

translation of the voluminous *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, a group of translator monks approached him and asked him to translate the *Ratnakūṭa*. Hsüan-tsang protested, saying that the work was as long as the *Prajñāpāramitā*. When pressed further, he opened the Sanskrit text and translated a few lines, but then stopped saying that he knew he would not live much longer and his strength was not equal to such a task.⁵ (Hsüan-tsang had actually already translated one large work in the *Ratnakūṭa*, the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka-sūtra* (Rk No. 12), shortly after his return from India.⁶) This anecdote shows that in Hsüan-tsang's day, some forty years before Bodhiruci's translation, Chinese Buddhist scholars knew of the collection, it enjoyed prestige, and Hsüan-tsang possessed some Sanskrit version of it.

The *Li-tai-san-pao-chi*⁷ reports that the Gandharan translator Jñānagupta, who arrived in Chang-an in 559, often said that in the southeast of the country Che-chu-chia⁸ (the modern Karghalik), in an area of precipitous mountains, the following Buddhist scriptures were kept as the country's transmission of Buddhist doctrine in twelve divisions: *Mahāsannipāta*, *Avataṃsaka*, *Vaipulya*, *Ratnakūṭa*, *Laṅkāvatāra*, *Lalitavistara*, *Śāriputradhāraṇi*,⁹ *Puṣpakūṭadhāraṇi*,¹⁰ *Tuṣāragarbha*,¹¹ *Mahāprajñāpāramitā*, *Prajñāpāramitā* in eight sections, and *Mahāmegha-sūtra*. Here "*Ratnakūṭa*" appears alongside titles of major collections or classifications of scripture, such as *Avataṃsaka* or *Vaipulya*. Jñānagupta's account would make a "*Ratnakūṭa*" in some form as early as mid- or early sixth century, and also associates it with a specific geographical area.

Of the forty-nine works in Bodhiruci's collection, only five have Sanskrit originals or fragments of originals now extant.¹² These are the *Sukhāvatīvyaṅga* (Rk No. 4), the *Rāṣṭrapālāparipṛcchā* (Rk No. 18), the *Kāśyapaparivarta* (Rk No. 43), the *Ratnarāśi-sūtra* (Rk No. 44) and the *Mañjuśrībuddhakṣetraguṇavyūha* (Rk No. 46). As these remains represent only a small fraction of the total body of the collection, they do not provide much basis for speculation as to the manner of the collection's formation or its date.

Quotations in other Buddhist works from works in the *Ratnakūṭa* always refer to the quoted work by its individual title without referring to it as part of a larger collection. One important exception to this is discussed below. Seventeen of the forty-nine works are referred to in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* and *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, but the authors of these works, Maitreya-nātha and Śāntideva, do not mention a collection.¹³ Moriz Winternitz remarks in his *A History of Indian Literature*,

...the various single texts which are mentioned as parts of the Ratnakūṭa in Chinese and Tibetan works only occur as independent works in Sanskrit. . . Maitreyaṇātha quotes the Ratnakūṭa in his Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra, XIX, 29. The Ratnakūṭa is mentioned in Mahāvīyutpatti, 65,39, but the single texts, too, are enumerated as independent works. Similarly, in the Śikṣāsamuccaya, both the Ratnakūṭa and the works which it comprises, such as the Rāṣṭrapālāparipṛcchā, Ugraparipṛcchā, Akṣayamatiparipṛcchā, and others, are cited. When the Śikṣāsamuccaya quotes the Ugraparipṛcchā and the Ratnakūṭa side by side, as on pp. 146, 196, or when the Śikṣāsamuccaya, p. 54f., quotes first the Ratnakūṭa, then the Rāṣṭrapāla Sūtra, and then again the Rāṣṭrapāla Sūtra, and then again the Ratnakūṭa are quoted, it follows that Śāntideva did not know the Ugraparipṛcchā and the Rāṣṭrapālāparipṛcchā as parts of the Ratnakūṭa.¹⁴

Winternitz apparently was unaware when he drew this conclusion that when Śāntideva cites a "*Ratnakūṭa*," he is referring to the work known among Japanese scholars as the "old *Ratnakūṭa*," also called the *Kāśyapa-parivarta*.¹⁵ A. von Stael-Holstein in his edition of this text (published at almost the same time as Winternitz's *History*) says that his investigation shows that all quotations from a "*Ratnakūṭa*" in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* are from this single work.¹⁶

A number of studies have been done of the *Kāśyapa-parivarta*. The edition of Stael-Holstein includes Sanskrit fragments from a ninth- or tenth-century Khotanese manuscript, with Chinese and Tibetan translations. Kuno Hōryū has published fragments corresponding to sections of Stael-Holstein's text, based on a manuscript also from the Khotan area, and probably belonging to the third to fifth centuries.¹⁷ The work has attracted the attention of scholars because of its numerous and early translations (Lokakṣema did the first of four Chinese translations c. 147–186), and because a number of Mahāyāna works, some by important authors, quote it. Quotations occur in the *Ratnagotravibhāgamahāyanottaratantraśāstra*,¹⁸ the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*,¹⁹ Prajñākaramati's commentary on the *Bodhicaryāvatara*,²⁰ the *Buddhagotrāśāstra*, attributed to Vasubandhu,²¹ Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*,²² and the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*.²³ None of these, however, mentions the *Kāśyapa-parivarta*, or "*Ratnakūṭa*," as part of a larger collection.

The sole exception to this is the *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣa*, translated by Kumārajīva and attributed to Nārgārjuna.²⁴ This work refers to a "*Kāśyapa* section of the *Ratnakūṭa*"²⁵ as well as to an "*Akṣayamati* section"²⁶ which the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra*²⁷ also mentions. Shiomi

Tetsudō²⁸ and Haseoka Ichiya²⁹ show that quotations in the *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣa* from the *Ugraparipṛcchā* and the *Vimaladattaparipṛcchā-sūtra* correspond to these sections (Nos. 19 and 33 respectively) of the *Ratnakūṭa* collection.³⁰

Scholarship has not established Nārgārjuna as the author of the *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣa*. One thus cannot assume a connection between the founder of the Mādhyamika in the second century and a *Ratnakūṭa* collection, although Mādhyamika writers seem to esteem the *Kāśyapa-parivarta*. Japanese scholars agree, however, that the *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣa* quotations show that a *Ratnakūṭa* collection existed when Kumārajīva was engaged in translation between 402 and 415. Kajiyama Yuichi states that "it is certain that Kumārajīva was aware that RK was a collection of sutras."³¹ If so, the collection would date as far back as the fifth or even fourth century, but we still know nothing of the form of the collection at that time, apart from its inclusion of the *Kāśyapa* and *Akṣayamati* sections and possibly of the other two sections mentioned.

Bodhiruci's collection is heterogeneous in composition. As the name "*Ratnakūṭa*" or "heap of jewels" might suggest, it includes a variety of types of works differing in content. According to the editors of the *Index to the Taishō Tripiṭaka*³² and Nagai Makoto in his introduction to the *Ratnakūṭa* section of the *Kokuyaku Issaikyō*,³³ the collection contains "Hīnayāna" works (Nos. 29 and 49), two works translated by I-Ching which correspond to parts of the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya (Nos. 13 and 14),³⁴ Jātakas (Nos. 16, 17, and 38), works corresponding to parts of the *Prajñāpāramitā* (No. 46), Pure Land works (Nos. 5 and 6), works of "esoteric Buddhism" (which, I am advised by Professor Alex Wayman, here means simply those containing *dhāraṇīs* rather than Tantric works properly speaking), and other works. The editors of the Taishō index find that certain basic Mahāyāna concepts give a thematic unity to the collection, while Sakurabe Bunkyō feels that the collection is so miscellaneous as to have no real coherence. The very heterogeneity of the collection might indicate that its compilers intended it to be a cross-section of Buddhist scripture.

Let us now briefly review our collected evidence. The *Ratnakūṭa* collection in a form similar to that in which Bodhiruci arranged it probably existed in Hsüan-tsang's day. At that time it had prestige; on the other hand, it is significant that unlike, for example, the *Avatamsaka* collection, the *Ratnakūṭa* had had no previous Chinese translation as a whole collection, either because the collection was unknown or because its popularity was later in developing. The statement of Jñānagupta,

who in mid-sixth century refers to a Central Asian collection of scripture including a "*Ratnakūṭa*," as well as other well-known works, is of interest. References to a "Kāśyapa section" and an "Akṣayamati section" of a *Ratnakūṭa* in Kumārajīva's translation of the *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣa* show that Kumārajīva knew of a collection of this name. Scholars have suggested that the *Kāśyapaparivarta* or "old *Ratnakūṭa*," which has an early date, was a nucleus around which other works in the collection were assembled in the course of time. Taking this information and the character of the collection into account, we can date the collection no earlier than the fourth century and no later than the seventh century. Indian authors do not refer to the *Ratnakūṭa* collection although they quote from works included in it. This in itself is not sufficient basis for a judgement that they did not know that the collection existed. In the absence of positive evidence, however, we can say nothing about an Indian *Ratnakūṭa* collection. The formation of the collection may have taken place not in India, but in Central Asia or China or both. We know that the collection was probably current in Central Asia because of the account of Jñānagupta, because Kumārajīva, who mentions a *Ratnakūṭa* collection, was from Kucha, and because both existing fragments of the *Kāśyapaparivarta* or "old *Ratnakūṭa*" are from the Khotan area.

NOTES

1. Volume 11 of the Taishō Tripiṭaka includes the *Mahāratnakūṭa* collection proper, T No. 310, as compiled by Bodhiruci, and additional translations, not used by Bodhiruci, of works in the collection. Nanjio Bunyiu's *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1883) lists Bodhiruci's collection as No. 23, with additional translations following.

2. Section 6 (Dkon-brtegs), in six volumes.

3. Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, *Le Canon Bouddhique en Chine* (2 vols.; Paris, P. Guethner, 1927–38), Vol. 2, pp. 542–43.

4. See Marcelle Lalou, "La version Tibétaine du *Ratnakūṭa*," *Journal Asiatique*, Vol. 211 (1927), p. 233ff., and Sakurabe Bunkyo, "Saizō Daihōjaku-kyō no kenkyū," *Ōtani Gakkuō*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (September, 1930), pp. 134–175.

5. See the *Ta-t'ang-ku-san-tsang-hsuan-tsang-fa-shih-hsing-chuang*, T No. 2052, Vol. 50, p. 219a, and the *Ta-tz'u-en-ssu-san-tsang-fa-shih-ch'uan*, T No. 2053, Vol. 50, p. 276c. I am indebted to Professor Sakurabe for these references. See also Bagchi, *loc. cit.*, and Arthur Waley, *The Real Tripitaka* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1952), p. 126.

6. See the *Ta-tz'u-en-ssu-san-tsang-fa-shih-ch'uan*, T No. 2053, Vol. 50, p. 236a, p. 254a, and p. 258a.

7. T No. 2034, Vol. 49, p. 103a. Again, I am indebted to Professor Sakurabe for this reference.

8. 遮拘迦 This place appears with the alternate name of Cho-chu-chia (斫拘迦) on Ōshio Dokuzan's map of Indian Buddhist history, *Indo-bukkyō-shi chizu*

(Tokyo: Daiyūkaku Shoten, 1927), map location K4.

9. Ono Gemmyō's encyclopedia of Buddhist texts, *Bussho Kaisetsu Daijiten* (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1933–36) gives the Sanskrit title of this work as *Anantamukhanihāra-dhārāṇī*, which is T No. 1016, Vol. 19. Nanjio's catalogue, No. 353, gives the Sanskrit title *Anantamukhasādhakadhārāṇī*.

10. This Sanskrit title is conjectural. T Nos. 1356 and 1358, Vol. 21, have similar titles.

11. This Sanskrit title is conjectural, as I have not been able to locate such a title in any catalogue.

12. Yamada Ryūjō, *Bongo Butten no shobunken* (Tokyo: Heirakuji Shoten, 1959), p. 96.

13. Sakurabe, pp. 527–28.

14. Moriz Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, rev. ed., trans. S. Ketkar (3 vols.; Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1927), Vol. 2, p. 329.

15. In the Bodhiruci collection, this work has been retitled *Samantaprabhāsa-bodhisattvapariprcchā*. Bodhiruci apparently made this change in order to avoid confusion with Rk No. 23, *Mahākāśyapaśaṅgītisimhanāda* or 摩訶迦葉會.

16. A. von Stael-Holstein, *The Kāśyapaparivarta, a Mahāyānasūtra of the Ratnakūṭa Class* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, Ltd., 1926), Preface, p. 16.

17. Kuno Hōryū, "Sei-iki shutsudo Bukkyō bonpon to sono seitenshironjō no chii," *Bukkyō Kenkyū*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1938), pp. 1–40.

18. See Tsukinowa Kenryū, "Kobun Daihōjakukyō ni tsuite," *Bukkyōgaku no shomondai* (Tokyo, 1935), pp. 849–869.

19. Stael-Holstein, *loc. cit.*

20. *Ibid.*

21. Tsukinowa, *loc. cit.*

22. *Ibid.* See also Hachiriki Hiroki, "Prasannapadā no inyō kyōten (2)—Ratnakūṭa-sūtra no inyō ni tsuite," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (March, 1967), pp. 720–723.

23. Stael-Holstein, *loc. cit.*

24. T No. 1521, Vol. 26.

25. 寶頂經迦葉品

26. 無盡意菩薩會品

27. T No. 1509, Vol. 25.

28. Shiomi Tetsudō, "Ryūju shōin no daijō kyōten no nisan ni tsuite," *Shukyō Kenkyū*, New Series, Vol. 9, No. 6 (1932), pp. 1031–1044.

29. Haseoka Ichiya, "Jūjūbibasharon ni okeru Kāśyapaparivarta no inyō no tsuite," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (March, 1954), pp. 200–203.

30. See also Amano Hirofusa, "Hōjakukyō ni tsuite," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (March, 1956), pp. 464–465.

31. Kajiyama Yuichi, "Bhāvaviveka, Sthirmati and Dharmapāla," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens und Archiv für Indische Philosophie*, Band XII-XIII, 1968–1969 (*Beiträge zur Geistesgeschichte Indiens—Festschrift für Erich Frauwallner*), p. 197.

32. *Index to the Taishō Tripittaka*, Vol. 6 (*Hōjaku-bu*) (Tokyo: Daizōkyō Gakujutsu Yōgo Kenkyūkai, 1966).

33. *Kokuyaku Issaikyō*, Vol. 32 (*Hōjaku-bu*, 1), (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1931).

34. See Marcelle Lalou, *op. cit.*

Selected List of Chinese Text Titles

Akṣayamatipariṣcchā	無盡意菩薩會
Avataṃsaka	華嚴
Bodhisattvapiṭaka-sūtra	菩薩藏會
Daśabhūmikavibhāṣa	十住毘婆沙論
Kāśyapaparivarta	迦葉品
Lalitavistara	方廣
Laṅkāvatāra	楞迦
Li-tai-san-pao-chi	歷代三寶記
Mahākāśyapasaṅgītisīmhanāda	摩訶迦葉會
Mahāmegha-sūtra	大雲經
Mahāprajñāpāramitā	摩訶般若
Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sāstra	大智度論
Mahāratnakūṭa	大寶積
Mahāsannipāta	大集
Mañjuśrībuddhakṣetraguṇavyūha	文殊師利說般若會
Prajñāpāramitā	般若
Puṣpakūṭadhāraṇī	華聚陀羅尼
Rāṣṭrapālapariṣcchā	護國菩薩會
Ratnakūṭa	寶積 or 寶頂
Ratnarāśi-sūtra	寶梁聚會
Samantaprabhāśabodhisattvaparipṛcchā	普明菩薩會
Sāriputradhāraṇī	釋舍利弗陀羅尼
Sukhāvatīvūha	無量壽如來會
Ta-t'ang-ku-san-tsang-fa-shih-hsing-chuang	大唐故三藏玄奘師行狀
Ta-tz'u-en-ssu-san-tsang-fa-shih-ch'uan	大慈恩寺三藏法師傳
Tuṣāragarbha	都薩羅藏
Ugraparipṛcchā	有伽長者會
Vaipulya	方等
Vimaladattaparipṛcchā	無垢施菩薩應辯會

Proper Names

Bodhiruci	菩提流志
Hsüan-tsang	玄奘
I Ching	義淨
Jñānagupta	闍那崛多
Kumārajīva	鳩摩羅什
Lokakṣema	支婁迦讖

Abbreviations

RK	— Ratnakūṭa
T	— Taishō Tripiṭaka