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Volume 6 1983 Number 1
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The Generalization of an Old Yogic Attainment in Medieval Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature: Some Notes on Jātismara

by Gregory Schopen

1. Introduction: Ideas Concerning Jātismara Found in the Nikāyā Agamas

The obtainment of jātismara, "the ability to recollect or remember one's former births," is well known in early Buddhist sūtra literature. It occurs as the first of three "sciences" (vidyā), the fourth of the five or six "superknowledges" (abhijñā), and the eighth of the ten "powers" of a Tathāgata (tathāgatadassabala).

Many years ago the late Professor Demiéville published a richly detailed study of the references to jātismara in the Nikāyā Agama literature, which we might quickly summarize. Referring to Majjhima i 22–23, he says, "le Buddha définit les trois vijjā telles qu'il les obtint par la discipline spirituelle dans la solitude de la forêt, après avoir atteint les quatre degrés de jhāna." He notes that Majjhima i 278–80 refers to "un bhikkhu qui, par la méditation solitaire, s’est acquis diverses facultés mentales, dont les dernières énumérées et définies, après les quatre degrés de jhāna, sont: le connaissance des existences antérieures, l’œil divin, la fin des écoullements," that according to Samyukta Agama TT. XIII, 3, 83ab "les trois vidyā sont attribuées à ceux qui n’ont plus à étudier (açaikṣa), c’est-à-dire aux saints du quatrième ‘fruit’ ou degré, aux arhats." He notes further that at Samyutta i 196 "ayant atteint l’arhattvam, Vaṅgīsa déclare avoir obtenu les trois vijjā," that at Samyutta ii 210 "Kassapa posséda les quatre jhāna, et les six abhiññā," and that at
Samyutta i 191 “sur cinq cents arhats entourant le Buddha, soixante possèdent les trois viññā, soixante les six abhiññā; soixante sont délivrés de deux manières; les autres sont délivrés par la sagesse (paññā).” Finally, he notes that at Dīgha i 13 “la mémoire des existences antérieures au nombre d’une à plusieurs centaines de milliers, résultant d’une état de samādhi obtenu par le zèle ardent, l’effort, l’application, l’attention soutenue...,” is attributed to non-Buddhist ascetics, and that the independent Chinese translation of the Brahmajāla-sutta TṬ. XII, 10, 91ª says that “s’il y a un religieux hérétique qui tranche le désir et pratique le dhyāna, et si son imagination se trouve en samādhi, il peut penser aux choses de vingt kalpa passés.”

On the basis of these and similar passages it is quite clear that in the Nikāya/Āgama literature jātismara, “the ability to recollect or remember one’s former births,” invariably occurs as only one of a list of faculties, never by itself. It is equally clear that it is invariably connected with the higher stages of meditational technique, that it was, in fact, a concomitant of the most sophisticated forms of yogic attainment. It is also clear that in this literature it is ascribed only to religious virtuosos—notably to asaikṣas, Arhats, and, of course, to the Buddha himself.

These findings are, of course, of interest in themselves. But they also are of interest because references to jātismara continue to be found in Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature, and a comparison of the Mahāyāna references with those found in the Nikāya/Āgama texts will allow us to see how that movement we now call the Mahāyāna handled a specifically “elitist” idea of a particular ascetic or yogic attainment.

II. The Continuation of the Ideas Found in the Nikāya/Āgamas in Some Mahāyāna Sūtras & A First Indication of Something Different: The Upālīparipṛcchā.

There are a number of references to jātismara in Mahāyāna sūtra literature that remain close in character to the references found in the Nikāya/Āgamas. This is the case, for example, in the Pratyutpannabuddhasamapādhi-vasthitasadāhā-sūtra, where jātismara is said to be obtained—as one of the ten “powers” of a Tathāgata—as the result of abiding in a particular samādhi.
is also the case in the *Samādhirāja-sūtra*, where the chief interlocutor, Candraprabha, is described as “one who has done his duty under former Jinas, has planted roots of merit, has the recollection of his former births, has inspired speech, etc. (pūrvajina-kṛtādhikāro ‘varopitakuśalamūlo jātismaro labhapratibhāno . . .),” and where the same Candraprabha is explicitly urged to train for “control of the body” (kāyasamvara) and “purity of body and conduct” (pariśuddhakāyasamudācāra), since the Bodhisattva who has kāyasamvara and is pariśuddhakāyasamudācāra is said to obtain—again as one of the ten “powers” of a Tathāgata—jātismara, the faculty by which he recollects his former states of existence (pūrve nivāsam anusmarati).

These passages, and a limited number of similar passages, are not so remarkable in themselves. They do, however, indicate that jātismara continued to be connected with the religious virtuoso; that it continued to be perceived as a concomitant of meditation (samādhi) and yogic discipline at an advanced level; and that it continued to occur primarily in association with the various lists of “powers,” “sciences,” and “superknowledges.” We do not have to read far, however, before we begin to find something quite different, and this difference—as we shall see—tends to occur on something like a massive scale.

When we move to other, and perhaps later Mahāyāna texts, we begin to find jātismara occurring in a rather different context. We might look, for example, at the first “section” of the *Vinayaviniścaya-upāliparipṛcchā*. Python has pointed out that the text as we have it “se divise en deux sections” and that “chaque section se suffit à elle-même.” The first “section” opens with the Buddha looking over the assembly and asking “qui serait capable (utsahate), dans les temps à venir, pour le maintien de la bonne Loi, de se fixer sur ce parfait et complet Éveil . . . et de veiller à faire mûrir les êtres (sattvaparipāka) par des moyens très variés (nānā-upāya). . . .” In response, a long list of Bodhisattvas declare their “capability” to save beings, each specifying his particular means. Among these Bodhisattvas, one, Manibhadra, declares: *bcom ldan 'das bdag ni sngon gyi skye ba rjes su dran par bgyid pas sms can rnams yongs su smin par bgyid par spro lags so: “O Blessed One, I shall be willing and able to mature beings by causing them to recollect their former births.”*
In this short passage we begin to sense a fairly fundamental difference. It involves at least two interrelated ideas. First, jātismara is here not the result of meditational development on the part of the individual, but something that is effected by an external agent—a Bodhisattva—for the purpose of furthering the religious life of “beings.” Second, since the text is here concerned with “beings” it is clear that in this passage jātismara is not presented as a faculty attainable only by the religious virtuoso. Instead, it appears as something available in one way or another to all “beings.” We find similar indications of this fundamental difference in several passages in the Suvarṇabhāsottama-sūtra.

III. The Difference Confirmed: Two Cases from the Suvarṇabhāsottama and Their Parallels

There are four references to jātismara in the Suvarṇabhāsottama, three of them in Chapter Three. This is of some significance, since Nobel has argued that this chapter “ist der Kern unseres ganzen Goldglanz-Sūtra.” Chapter Three appears, in fact, to have been a kind of “confessional formulary” intended for individual recitation, a formulary by which one ritually expressed the intentions of his act, “confessed” or declared his faults, worshipped the Buddhas, and turned over the resulting merit to specific ends—all according to a specific sequence also found elsewhere, notably in the Bhadracarīprāṇidhāna (vss. iv ff.) and the Bodhicaryāvatara (Chs. II & III).

The individual, reciting the words of the formulary, begins by declaring a series of pious wishes which he hopes the formulary will effect: “By the excellent drum of golden light [i.e., these desanāgāthās, “confessional verses,” or the “confessional formulary” that constitutes this chapter] let the woes in the triple-thousand world be suppressed, the woes in the evil states, the woes in the world of Yama. . . . May those beings who dwell in an evil state [apāyabhūmau], their limbs alight with blazing fire, hear the sound of the drum. May they take up the refrain: ‘homage to the Buddha.’ May all beings be mindful of their (former) births during hundreds of births, thousands of millions of births [jātismarāḥ satva bhavantu sarve / jātiṣatā jātisahas-
Further on in the formulary, after the "confession" of faults, the worship of the Buddhas, and the "going for refuge," the individual reciting the formulary is to say: "And by this good act [kusålena karmanå], may I ere long become a Buddha. . . And may I be continually mindful of former births for hundreds of births, thousands of millions of births [jåtismaro nitya bhaveya cåhaṁ / jåtiśatå jåtisahasrakoṭyoha], etc." ⁹

Both these occurrences of jåtisamara in the Suvarnavāsottama have fairly close parallels elsewhere. In the Bhadracaritprāṇidhāna, another "formulary" intended for and used in individual recitation, a formulary by which, again, the individual is to express the intentions of his act, declare his faults, worship the Buddhas, and turn over the resulting merit to specific ends, we find:

"Whatever is the merit (subham) accumulated by me from honoring, worshiping, confessing, rejoicing, and beseeching—all that I turn over for enlightenment." ¹⁄₁²

As numerous as are all the living beings in the ten directions, may they always be at ease and free from illness. May their religious purposes (dhārmiku artho) be successful and their wishes fulfilled! ¹⁄₁⁵

And may I, practicing the practice for enlightenment in all rebirths, be possessed of the memory of my former births (bodhicārin ca aham caramāno / bhavi jåtisamaru sarvagatiśu) . . . ¹⁄₁⁶ ¹⁰

Something very like what we see in both the Suvarṇabhāsottama and the Bhadracaritprāṇidhāna is also found in the tenth chapter of Śāntideva’s Bodhicaryāvatāra. This chapter is, I think, of particular significance because Śāntideva appears here to be speaking as an individual religious man, not as a "professional theologian": he is here dedicating his meritorious act—that is to say, the exposition of the Dharma in the form of the Bodhicaryāvatāra—in the same way as countless individual donors have done in Buddhist donative inscriptions. He says first in reference to other living beings: “through the power of my meritorious act (mama kuśalabalena, X. 10),” “through my meritorious acts (matkuśalaiḥ, X. 15),” “. . . may they always have memory of
their former births! (.. santu jātismara sadā, X. 27).” Later, in regard to himself, he says “through this merit of mine (anena mama punyena, X. 31) .. may I always obtain recollection of my former births and the going forth (.. jātismaratvam pravrajyām aham ca prāpnuyām sadā, X. 51).”

In all of these passages, as in the Upāli-parīprcechā, jātismara occurs without the invariable association with lists of other faculties—the ten “powers,” the three “sciences,” etc.—found in the Nikāya/Āgama literature studied by Demieville; in all these passages jātismara occurs without the usually invariable association with the religious virtuoso; and here, again, jātismara is no longer associated with the higher forms of meditational development. In both the first occurrence in the Suvarnabhāsottama and in Śāntideva’s dedication, jātismara is again, as in the Upāli-parīprcechā, both something that is available to all living beings—even those in the hells—and something that can be effected by an external agent. In the Suvarna, the Bhadracari and in Śāntideva the obtainment of jātismara is one of the reasons for which the individual undertakes the act of “confession” and worship, one of the things to which he turns over the resulting merit. It is not through meditational activity, but kusalena karmanā, “through a meritorious act,” and anena mama punyena, “through merit,” that jātismara is to be obtained through “whatever is the merit (subham) accumulated through honoring, worshipping, confessing, rejoicing, etc.” That this—in part at least—came to be the most common conception of jātismara in Mahāyāna sūtra literature is further confirmed by yet another passage from the Suvarṇabhāsottama and its parallels.

IV. A Passage from the Suvarṇabhāsottama & the Emergence of a Pattern: The Obtainment of Jātismara through Non-meditational Activity Involving Ritual Acts & Sacred Images

The third and final reference to jātismara in the third chapter of the Suvarṇabhāsottama occurs in the following passage:

\[
\text{yo vandate stōsyati daśabalān sadā ca prasannaśuddhāmalamānasena imāya pariṇāmanavarnītiyā śaṣṭić ca kalpāṇi jahate apāyan //}
\]
Although Professor Nobel describes his text here as “sehr unsicher,” and although Professor Emmerick has understood the text a little differently than I would, still I think the “parallel” passages that will be cited below indicate that these verses should be translated as follows:

Who always worships and praises the Daśabalas with a devout, pure, and spotless mind by means of this (formulary) which is praised as (a way of) turning over merit, he avoids (birth in) the hells for sixty kalpas. //

And whoever—men, women, brāhmaṇas, and kṣatriyas—having stood with his hands in the gesture of reverence, praises the Muni by means of these celebrated verses, he has everywhere in his rebirths recollection of his former births; //

He has all his members, all his faculties, and a beautiful body; he is possessed of qualities and manifold merits and is always honored by the kings of men—everywhere he will be such as this. ///

This translation, I hope, makes it clear that jātismara occurs here, as elsewhere even in the Suvarṇabhūṣottama, as a stipulated reward or “blessing” (anusāsana) for a form of non-meditational religious activity—in this case for “worshipping and praising” the Buddhas by means of the ritualized recitation of this specific formulary—and that its obtainment is open to all: “men, women, brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas.” But that this passage is only one example of a definite pattern is clear from a number of other passages elsewhere, where ritualized acts of worship of varying degrees of elaboration are said to result in the same thing. We might look first at a few passages where the ritualized acts of worship are rather simple and uncomplicated.

The first occurrence we might note is in a short passage in
the Avalokana-sutra (’phags pa spyan ras gzigs shes bya ba theg pa chen po’i mdo, Pek. Vol. 34, 234–1–8), the Sanskrit text of which is preserved at Mahāvastu ii 366.5–6. Here, although the larger context concerns the ritual presentation of items to, and the worship of, the stūpas of the Tathāgata, our passage says simply of the individual that “. . . having done pūjā to the Tathāgata, he becomes one who has recollection of his former births, and he is not carried away by passions, etc. (. . . pūjāṃ kṛtvā tathāgata / jātismaraś ca so bhoti na so rāgena hrīyati, etc.).”

In a passage from the Samghāta-sūtra found at Gilgit we also find: “The Blessed One said: ‘Listen Bhaisajyasena! The man who at the moment of death, being deprived of life, after having rendered his mind devoutly inclined towards the Tathāgata, has spoken thus: “Homage to the Blessed One, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the Completely and Perfectly Awakened One” — he, having done so a single time, O Bhaisajyasena, through that root of merit will experience the ease of the gods of the thirty-three for sixty aeons; he will have recollection of the succession of his former births for eighty aeons (sa tena bhaisajyasena kuśalamūlena sāṣṭih kalpān trāyāstrīṃśatām devānām sukham anubhaviṣyatī. aṣṭiḥ kalpāṃ jātyājātismaro bhaviṣyatī).’”

Elsewhere, the ritual activity is specifically said to involve the use of images and is more elaborately described. In another text from Gilgit, the Tathāgatavinibhikṣā-Dhāraṇā-sūtra, in reference to which Professor Mette says “die grammatische Konstruktion ist nicht immer durchsichtig,” the making, bathing and worshipping of an image of the Buddha is said to result in the obtainment of jātismara. Of the doer of such acts it is said: yah kaścid bhikṣur vā bhikṣunī vā upāsako [vā] upāsikā vā kṣatryo vā brāhmaṇo vā vaiśyo vā śudro vā evaṃ rūpāsya jātiṣu śrutidhāro bhavati. jātismaro bhavati: “A monk or nun or lay man or woman, a kṣatriya or brāhmaṇa or vaiśya or śudra comes to be in all births one who retains what has been heard and remembers his former births.”

In the Gilgit text of the Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra it is said that if “friends, relatives, and kinsmen who will go for refuge to the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru perform pūjā in a certain way (ūdryena prayogeneṇa pūjāṃ kurvanti) for the sake of a man who has just died,” the result will be that either “his consciousness could return again immediately (and) he then becomes aware of him-
self [i.e. of his 'judgement' before Yama, which has just taken place] as if in a dream; or if on the seventh day or the twenty-first or thirty-fifth or forty-ninth day his consciousness would be reborn again, he would obtain recollection. He himself (in either case) is a direct witness to (the effects of) merit, demerit, and the results of his (past) actions (... tasya vijñānāṃ punar eva pratinivarteta svāpānātara iśvātmānaṃ samjñāṇāti; yadi vā saśāpame divase ... yadi vā navacatvāriṃśatime divāse tasya vijñānām nivar-teta, smṛtim upalabhet; so kuśalām akuśalām karma-vipākam svayam eva pratyakṣo bhavati).” The puja to be done is then described in some detail: “... for seven days and nights the obligation of the Upōsadhā possessed of eight parts is to be undertaken, and for the community of monks pūjā and service is to be performed with food and drink, with all the requisites, according to one’s abilities; three times in the night, three times in the day worship is to be done (namasyitavyam) to the Blessed One Bhaisajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabha, the Tathāgata; forty-nine times this sūtra is to be recited (an)usmārayitavyam); forty-nine lamps are to be lighted; seven images are to be made; for each image seven lamps are to be set up; each lamp is to be made the size of the wheel of a cart. If on the forty-ninth day the light is not exhausted, forty-nine five-colored flags are to be (left standing (?). All the Mss. are here faulty).”

We find a similar and equally detailed passage in the Bud-dhabalādhānaprāthāravikaṃkurubāṇanirdeśa-sūtra ('phags pa sangs rgyas kyi stobs bskyed pa'i cho 'phrul rnam par 'phrul ba bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo, Pek. Vol. 34, 193–2–3ff.). Here, it is said that if someone, “for the benefit of those beings who have gone to the Avici Hell, or have been born in the three unfortunate destinies, or for the sake of releasing friends and relatives, has painted images or images of clay of those Tathāgatas made [the Tathāgatas are listed earlier at 192–5–3, and include Bhaisajyaguru, Amitābha, Śikhin, Kāśyapa, etc.]; and having had them made also directs the most excellent thought of compassion towards all living beings, and having undertaken the eight-limbed worthy path ('phags pa'i lam yan bṛgyad pa dang par gyur nas), from the eighth day of the waxing moon until the fifteenth, three times a day and three times a night, does pūjā to those Tathāgatas with flowers, perfumes, etc. ... and (if), for the sake of freeing those beings, he turns over (the resulting
merit), etc."—if he does all this then, the text says, "the names of those Tathāgatas would be heard by those then born in the Avīci Hell and the unfortunate destinies, and on account of this, and of copying, reading and worshipping this text," they, "having recollected their good and bad acts (i.e., the fruits thereof), afterwards would not perform an evil act. From that they would be freed from those sufferings and would go to a fortunate destiny (. . . dge ba dang mi dge ba'i las rjes su dran par gyur nas phyis sdig pa'i las byed par mi 'gyur te/ de nas sdug bsgal de dag las yongs su grol bar 'gyur zhih bde 'gro bar 'gyur ro /)."

These and similar passages clearly indicate that ritualized worship of a Buddha or Buddhas, frequently directed towards sacred images or involving the recitation of a specific text, forms a distinct category of non-meditational activity which can be undertaken by all—monks, nuns, lay men and women—and which is stipulated to result in the obtainment of jātismara. Two further points, however, are worth noting here.

Hsüan-tsang, in the record of his travels in India, confirms the fact that we have to do here with an element of actual practice, or, rather, that ritual activity in regard to specific Buddha images was in practice actually connected with the potential obtainment of jātismara. He says in his account of Bodhgaya: "To the north-west of the Bodhi-tree in a vihāra is the image of Kāśyapa Buddha. It is noted for its miraculous and sacred qualities. From time to time it emits a glorious light. The old records say, that if a man actuated by sincere faith walks around it seven times, he obtains the power of knowing the place and condition of his (former) births." 19

The second point to be noted is that the obtainment of jātismara is of particular importance for both the Buddhabaladhanaprāthīrīya-vikurvanirdeśa and, especially, the Bhaisajyaguru-sūtra. It is, as a matter of fact, clear from both texts that in both cases the one essential reason for undertaking the ritual is to assure that the individual on whose behalf it is undertaken will obtain jātismara and—as we shall see—undergo the behavioral transformation that is held to be its inevitable consequence. This, in fact, is specifically stated in the Bhaisajyaguru-sūtra. But since, in regard to the Bhaisajyaguru-sūtra, the passage under discussion constitutes the central piece of the text and, by extension, of the cult of Bhaisajyaguru based on it, it would
appear that the primary function of this figure, and the primary purpose of the cult devoted to him was to assure for a given individual the obtainment of *jātismara* and its concomitant behavioral change. This view is of course not in entire agreement with at least one recent view, which wants Bhaiṣajyaguru to be seen as a "Buddha of Healing."  

V. A Final Passage from the *Suvarṇabhāṣottama* & the Obtainment of *Jātismara* Through a Second Kind of Non-meditational Activity: Acts Connected with Sacred Names

If the ritualized worship of Buddhas or Buddha images forms a distinct category of non-meditational acts that are stipulated to result in the obtainment of *jātismara*, it is by no means the only category of such acts. This is obvious, for example, from the fourth and final reference to *jātismara* in the *Suvarṇabhāṣottama*. This reference occurs in the last sentence of what is now the ninth chapter of the text, "The Chapter on the Preservation of the Names of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas." This short chapter is, apart from the last line, entirely made up of a series of invocations to a series of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, in the form *namo bhagavato ratnasikhinas tathāgatasya*, or some slight variation thereof. After this series of invocations, the chapter concludes with the stipulation that "who [that is to say 'anyone who'] preserves, recites, or attends to these names of the Tathāgatas and names of the Bodhisattvas from the *Suvarṇabhāṣottama*, the King of the Best Sūtras, he will always have recollection of his former births (sa nityam jātismaro bhaṇiyaḥ)."

Similar occurrences where the obtainment of *jātismara* is contingent on some activity connected with a Buddha's name can be seen in the *Kusumasāṃcaya-sūtra* ('phags pa me tog gi tshogs shes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo, Pek. Vol. 37, 78–5–7ff) where it is said that "if a son or daughter of good family hears the name (mtshan thos na) of the Tathāgata Pad mo la bzhud pa"—one of the numerous Buddhas mentioned in the text—he, "having passed away, will come to have a beautiful and handsome form, and beings will delight in seeing him . . . and recalling to mind incalculable kalpas, as they really were, so he will fully know
them (the "phos nas gzugs bzang zhing mdzes pa dang / sems can rnams mthong na dga' ba dang / . . . bskal pa grangs med pa rjes su dran zhung yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin du rab tu shes so / )."

In yet another passage from the Bhaisajyaguru-sūtra it is said of those people who refuse to give gifts even when the occasion arises—clearly not religious virtuosos—that they, “having passed away from here, will be reborn in the world of the pretas or among animals. (But) by which of them, when formerly they were men, the name of that Blessed One Bhaisajyaguruvaiduryaprabha, the Tathāgata, will have been heard, to them now dwelling in the world of Yama, or dwelling among animals, the name of that Tathāgata will (again) come to be present. Immediately, through (that name) being merely recalled, having passed away from there, they will once again be reborn among men, and they will have recollection of their former births ( . . . tatra teṣām yamaloke sthitānām vā tiryagyonausthitānām vā tasya tathāgataasya nāma āmukhibhaviṣyati saha smaritamātrena tataḥ cyutvā punar api manusyaloke upapatsyanti jātismaraś ca bhaviṣyanti).”

In the closely related Saptatathāgataapūrva-pranidhānahaviṣeṣa-vistarāsūtra (’phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa bdun gyi sngon gyi smon lam gyi khyad par rgyas pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po’i mdo, Pek. Vol. 6, 126–2–5ff.) there are, in addition to the two references to jātismara also found in the independent version of the Bhaisajyaguru-sūtra, two further references. The first concerns the name of the Buddha Mya ngan med mchog dpal: “Mañjuśrī, who, hearing the name of the Blessed One Mya ngan med mchog dpal, recites it three times a day and three times a night, dwells in friendliness towards all beings, and worships that Tathāgata, of them all the obstructions due to past acts would be purified, they would be freed from all sorrow and suffering and anxiety and trouble; they would always be free of disease; living a long time, they would be free from all sickness; until the time that they attained awakening they would not undergo any downfall; they would recollect their former births, etc. ( . . . byang chub kyi mthar thug gi bar du log par thugs bar ‘gro bar mi ’gyur / skye ba dran bar ’gyur / etc., 129–5–5ff.).” A very similar passage, in which jātismara—among other things—results from “hearing, preserving, and having faith in” the name of the Buddha Chos
bsgrags rgya mtsho'i dbyangs, occurs later in the same text at 130-3-6.

In the Ratnajāliparipṛcchā-sūtra (‘phags pa rin chen dra ba can gyis zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo, Pek. Vol. 33), as a part of the opening question of the text, Ratnajāli specifically asks who the Buddhas are through hearing the names of which a “son or daughter of good family” would—again, among other things—come to be possessed of the recollection of his former births (tshe rabs dran pa dang yang ldan par 'gyur, 240–2–7f.). Then, at 241–4–3, as one of the results which follow from “hearing” (thos pa) and “preserving” (dzin pa) the name of one of the several Buddhas mentioned in the text we find: “Having seen the Illuminator of the World, he obtains immeasurable joy; while practicing the Bodhisattva-practice he will recollect his former existences (. . . byang chub spyad pa spyod pa nu / tshe rabs dag ni dran par 'gyur).”

Similar passages in which the obtainment of jātismara is said to result from “hearing, preserving, and having faith in” the names of one or another Buddha are found once in the Dvādaśabuddha-sūtra (‘phags pa sangs rgyas bcu gnyis pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo, Pek. Vol. 37, 96–1–5); twice in the Daśabuddha-sūtra (sangs rgyas bcu pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo, Pek. Vol. 37, 94–5–4, 5–5); and twelve times in the Buddhaṃakūṭa-sūtra (‘phags pa sangs rgyas kyi dbu rgyan zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo, Pek. Vol. 37, 96–5–7; 97–1–5, 2–6, 3–3, 4–6, 5–2; 98–1–6, 2–1, 3–1, 3–7, 4–6, and 5–4).

VI. The Obtainment of Jātismara Through a Third Kind of Non-meditational Activity: Acts Connected with Sacred Texts.

It is clear from these Mahāyāna texts that for them, unlike for the Nikāya/Āgama texts, jātismara was to be obtained not through meditational or yogic attainments, but through merit and merit-making activity, through at least two distinct categories of such activity—the ritualized worship of Buddhas, often directed towards images, and the hearing and preserving of the name of any of a long list of Buddhas—and that it could be obtained by anyone. It is equally clear from other passages that
there were at least two other categories of non-meditational religious activity that could produce the same result for the same category of individuals: acts connected with sacred texts, and acts connected with dhāraṇīs. In regard to the first of these additional categories, it can be noted that the activity concerned is occasionally directed towards the Dharma as a general category rather than to a specific text. This is the case, for example, in a verse from the Subhāṣitaratnakararāṇḍaka-kathā which Professor Zimmermann translates as:

Wer in diesem Leben beharrlich das Juwel des Dharma niederschreibt, hört, (oder) unablüssig darüber nach denkt—oder auch wenn ihm einer hohe Verehrung erweist,—der erlangt stets die Fähigkeit, sich (seiner früheren) Geburten zu erinnern [. . . jātismarātvam labhate su nityam /].”

More typically, however, jātismara is said to result from “Copying, preserving or worshipping” a specific text. At Buddhādāhānapraṇīthāvīkurvānānirdeśa (Pek. Vol. 34) 193–5–4ff., for example, it is said that “if someone worships or copies or has copied this discourse on Dharma they will obtain eight great benefits (yon tan chen po),” the last of which is “they are reborn in a place in accordance with their desire and they will recollect their former births (ji ltar 'dod pa'i gnas su skye zhing tshe rabs dran par 'gyur ba ste).”

At Aparimitāyur-jñāna-sūtra 23.8 we find it said that he “who will copy or will have copied this Aparimitāyuh-sūtra . . . is never reborn in the hells, will never be reborn among animals nor in the world of Yama; in whatsoever state he is reborn, he in every single birth has recollection of his former births (yatra yatra javmany utpadyate sarvato jātau jātau jātismaro bhavati).” Virtually the same thing is said at Kāraṇḍavyūha-sūtra 278.32 of those who have the Kāraṇḍavyūha copied. In fact, earlier in the Kāraṇḍavyūha we find that in regard to those who “hear, and having heard, copy, preserve and worship the text,” “for them the five acts with immediate retribution will be exhausted; after having exhausted (these), they will come to be purified in body and have recollection of their former births (tesāṃ ca pañcānantar-yāṇi karmāṇi kṣapayanti kṣapayītvā pariṣuddhakāyā bhavisyanti jātismaraś ca, 269.19).”

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In the Samghāṭa-sūtra it is said first that he who will wholeheartedly honor (adhyāsayena namaskarisyati) the Samghāṭa-sūtra “will in births for ninety-five aeons have recollection of his former births (pamcanavatikelpām jātuu jātismaro bhavisyati),” and later that he who will hear the Samghāṭa-sūtra “will have recollection of his former births for eighty aeons (yam [but Tib: gang gi] samghāṭo dharmaparyāyah śrotrāvabhāsam āgamisyati so ‘śīth kalpām jātismaro [so no. 36] bhavisyati).”

In the Tathāgatānām-buddhaksetra-guṇokta-dharmaparyāya (’phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa rnam s kyis rgyas kyi zhiṅ gi yon tan brjod pa’i chos kyi rnam grangs, Pek. Vol. 28, 262–5–6), as a part of the concluding section of this short text it is said of those who “preserve, retain, read, study, and teach this text to others” that at the moment of their death innumerable Buddhas will appear before them, and that “until they fully awaken to utmost, right, and perfect awakening, they will recollect their former births (bla ma med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa’i byang chub mgon par rdzogs par sangs rgyas kyi bar du skye [so Lhasa, Vol. 50, 255–1–1; Pek.: sde] ba dran par ’gyur ro /).”

In addition to the texts already cited, at least three of the “shorter” Prajñāpāramitā texts also contain references to jātisāra. In the Prajñāpāramitā-Vajrapāni-sūtra (’phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa lag na rdo rjei mdo, Pek. Vol. 21, 259–2–4) it is said that one who preserves this Perfection of Wisdom (su zhig shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ’di ’dzin par byed na), will remember his former births (de skye ba dran par ’gyur ro). In the Adhyāyadāśataki Prajñāpāramitā we find it said that “he who carries this discourse on Dharma within himself, or (by whom), after being written in a book, it is circulated, that man becomes an object to be honored. He for many millions of aeons will remember his births (chos kyi rnam s grangs ’di gang gi lus la thogs sam /glegs bams la bris te spyod pa’i gang zag de phyang bya ba’i gnas su ’gyur ro / de bskal pa bye ba mang por skye ba dran par ’gyur ro).” Finally, there are two references to jātisāra in the somewhat redundant concluding paragraph of the Āryaprajñāpāramitā nāma aṣṭaśatakā, both of which appear to have been misunderstood by its translator. The paragraph should probably be translated as follows: “If this Perfection of Wisdom is preserved, the Perfection of Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Lines will be preserved. Through reciting it continually (rtag tu
bzlas brjod bas na), all the obstructions due to one's actions would be purified. After having passed away from here, he would also come to be possessed of the recollection of his former births, attentiveness, and matchless wisdom ('di nas shi 'phos nas kyang skye ba dran pa / yid gzhungs shing shes rab mitshungs pa med par 'gyur /). He would preserve without exception the Dharma of all the Tathāgatas of the three periods of time. He would also preserve all the mantras and vidyās. Having passed away from here, he would also come to be possessed of the recollection of his former births, attentiveness and great wisdom ('di nas shi 'phos nas kyang / skye ba dran pa dang / yid bzhungs shing shes rab chen por 'gyur ro).28

One further point in reference to passages of this kind might also be noted. If these passages make it clear that for the authors or compilers of a considerable number of Mahāyāna sūtras the obtainment of jātiswarā was for some reason held to be of considerable religious significance, and that merit-making activity in regard to the Dharma or one or another specific dharmaparyāya—copying, retaining, reciting, etc.—was an important means for its obtainment, it is equally true that the same can be said for some of the most prominent “Doctors of the Church.” This at least can be demonstrated for Asaṅga or Maitreyanātha, whichever was the author of the Mahāyāna-Sūtraśālamkāra, and for Nāgārjuna, or whoever was the author of the Ratnāvali. In the Mahāyāna-Sūtraśālamkāra it is said: “Who would undertake the preservation of only two verses (of the Dharma), whether in regard to the words or their meaning, he indeed obtains ten kinds of blessings (yo granthata 'rthato vā gāthā-dvayadhāraṇe prayuṣyeta / sa hi daśavidham anusāsanaṃ . . . )”; he will have—among other things—“the most elevated joy at the moment of death; a state of rebirth in accordance with his desire; and everywhere the recollection of his former births (. . . prāmo- dyāṃ cottaṃmah maraṇakāle / jānma ca yathābhikāmaṃ jātiswaratām ca sarvatra).”29 A passage of similar purport is found in the Ratnāvali (rgyal po la gtam bya ba rin po che'i phreng ba, Pek. Vol. 129, 179–3–3 = Ch. III, vs. 296) which, at least from the time of Candrakīrti, has been ascribed to Nāgārjuna. That such passages continued to be relevant to the scholastic tradition can also be surmised from the fact that many centuries later Bu-ston cites both passages with approval.30

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VII. The Obtainment of Jātismara Through a Fourth Kind of Non-meditational Activity: Acts Connected with Dhāraṇīs.

A fourth and final distinct category of non-meditational activity held to result in the obtainment of jātismara consists of acts connected with dhāraṇīs, acts which, to a large degree, are the same as those to be undertaken in regard to the Dharma, or to one or another specific text: reciting, copying, etc. Typical of the passages of this kind is the Sitātapatra-dhāraṇī where it is said that “he who, after copying this dhāraṇī, will preserve it, will—for as long as he lives—not be threatened by poison, the sword, floods, etc. . . and he will have recollection of his former births for eighty-four thousand great aeons ( . . . caturasīṭīnāṃ mahākalpasahasrāṇi jātismarau bhaviṣyate).”

Likewise, in the Nārāyanaparāścāhā, it is said that “by whom-so-ever this dhāraṇī would be recited three times every day, whether it be by one who is purified or not purified. . . , he, indeed, having exhausted his accumulation of evil, even the five acts with immediate retribution, obtains an accumulation of merit and will be possessed of the recollection of his former births. Everywhere among beings he enjoys extensive wealth, delights in good practices, and is not one of those who falls into error and bad practices ( . . . bsod nams kyi phung po thob cing skye ba drang par 'gyur ro / sens can thams cad kun tu khyab pa'i nor la nge bar longs spyod cing dge ba'ichos rnams la mngon par dga' ste mi dge ba log par ltung ba rnams la ni ma yin no /).”

In the Saptabuddhaka-sūtra (phags pa sangs rgyas bdun pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo, Pek. Vol. 37, 90–1–1), a short text in which each of the six māṇḍūkya Buddhas, through Śākyamuni’s power, appears in the sky and gives a vidyā (rig sngags) or mantrapada (gsang sngags kyi gzhi) for the “benefit” of all beings, we read in reference to the mantra given by the Buddha Krakuchanda: “If, taking up and preserving (this mantra), one fixes it well in mind, and if in the last period a monk or nun or lay man or woman, having then obtained faith in the three jewels, and bathing, having worshipped the Blessed One with flowers and incense and perfume, would recite this mantra one hundred and eight times, he (or she) would obtain the recollection of his former births for seven births; among devas he (or she) would obtain the exhausted state of a deva, etc. ( . . . / tshe rabs bdun du
In addition to dhāraṇī-texts of this kind, an identifiable sub-group of dhāraṇī-sūtras, which I have superficially treated elsewhere, makes frequent reference to the obtainment of jātisāmara. The texts belonging to this sub-group all deal primarily—and with greater or lesser degrees of elaboration—with the practice of copying dhāraṇīs and depositing them in stūpas, frequently in “miniature” stūpas. The Mchod rten gcig btob na bye ba btob par ’gyur pa’i gzungs (Pek. Vol. 11, 168–5–7), the Sanskrit title of which appears not to have survived, is characteristic of these texts and their view regarding the obtainment of jātisāmara when it says: “If one would follow thus the method [just described], by making [perhaps better: ‘by casting,’ as in clay] a (single) caitya, he would make ten million. Everywhere he would obtain recollection of his former births (cha ga de ltar byas na tsai tya btob pas bye ba btob par ’gyur ro / thams cad du skye ba dran par ’gyur/). A very similar passage also occurs in the concluding verses of the Sarvaprajñāntapāramitāsiddhīcaitya-dhāraṇī (shes pas thams cad mthar phyin par grub pa’i mchod rten zhes bya ba’i gzungs, Pek. Vol. 11, 117–3–6).

Equally characteristic is a passage from the Bodhimaṇḍalalaksālaṃkāra-dhāraṇī (byang chub snying po’i rgyan ’bum zhes bya ba’i gzungs, Lhasa, rgyud Ta 495a), where the Blessed One says “this dhāraṇī causes all acts to succeed . . . causes all evil and obstructions to be exhausted. . . . If someone, after having bathed and put on new, clean garments, were to recite it a hundred and eight times each day, he would see the face of all Tathāgatas; he would live a hundred years; for a long time all sickness would be avoided . . . in all births he would have recollection of his former births (skye ba thams cad du tshe rabs dran par ’gyur ro).”

Likewise, in the Samantamukhaapraveśaraśmīvimalaśnā- prabhāsasarvatathāgatahṛdayasyāsasayāvilokate-dhāraṇī (kun nas sgor jug pa’i ’od zer gtsug tor dri ma med par snang ba de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi snying po dang dam tshig la rnam par lta ba zhes bya ba’i gzungs, Pek. Vol. 11, 228–1–7) we find: “thus, in the last time, in the last period, a son or daughter of good family, or a monk or nun, or lay man or woman should call to mind this vidyā of the mantra once (rig sngags kyi rgyal mo ’di dus gcig tu dran par
bya’o). A stūpa having a relic chamber or a Tathāgata relic chamber is to be circumambulated. Both the wish-fulfilling gems [i.e. the two dhāranīs given previously] are also to be called to mind once. Through that he would produce roots of merit under Tathāgatas as numerous as the sands of hundreds of millions of Ganges Rivers; he would be possessed of great merit; the obstructions due to past acts having immediate retribution would also be purified; he would be freed from the unfortunate destinies, from the hells, birth among animals, and the world of Yama... in all his births he would have recollection of his former births (tšhe rabs thams cad du tšhe rabs dran par ’gyur ro).

Similar passages are also found on two other occasions in the Samantamukhapravesarāsmivimalosnīśaprabhāsa (Pek. Vol. 11, 227–5–4; 228–3–7), and three times in the similar Rasmivimalavi-śuddhaprabhādhārani (’phags pa’od zer dri ma med pa rnam par dag pa’i od ces bya ba’i gzung, Pek. Vol. 7, 189–5–1; 190–5–1; 192–4–5).

VIII. The Obtainment of Jātismara as an Element of Sūtra Narratives.

One further kind of passage connected with the obtainment of jātismara deserves some mention. In passages of this kind the obtainment of jātismara occurs as a narrative element, as an element of various “frame-stories” that enclose the body of a given text, or as a part of an illustrative “story of a past time.” Frequently, then, it will occur as a part of the introduction or conclusion of a text. Typical of this kind of passage is the conclusion to the Ratnajālipariprcchā. There, when the Buddha finishes delivering the “sūtra,” the earth—in typical narrative fashion—quakes and, the text says, hundreds of millions of devas, having saluted with their heads the feet of the Blessed One, “recollected many hundreds of millions of their former states (gnas bye ba khrag khrig ’bum phrag du ma dag rjes su dran no, Pek. Vol. 33, 244–4–1)”; and, a little later: “a full hundred thousand ten millions of men worshipped the incomparable, excellent Jina; recollecting hundreds of their former states, they saluted with their heads the utmost excellent Muni (mi ni bye ba ’bum tham pa / rgyal mchog zla med pa la mchod sngon gyi gnas

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Equally typical is a passage found at the beginning of the Ratnaketuparivarta, yet another text found at Gilgit. Here, it is said that as a result of the light (prabhā) shot forth from the Buddha’s body, “many billions of millions of hundreds of thousands of those born in the hells, or among animals, or in the world of Yama obtained recollection. After having recollected the roots of merit they had formerly planted, having made the ‘namo buddhāya,’ having passed away from those unfortunate states, they were reborn among devas (bahūni ca nairayikatairyag-yonikayamaalaukikākṣobhyakotishatasahasrāṇi smṛtim pratilabhīre pūrvā-varopitakusala(mūlam) anusmṛtya namo buddhāyeta kṛtvā te bhṛyo ‘pāyeḥ-bhyāḥ cavītvā deveṣaḥpapannah’.”

A similar passage also occurs in the long and elaborate nidāna of the Pāñcavimsatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā. Here, when the Buddha enters into a samādhi called “The Lions Play,” the earth quakes in six ways and, the text says, “thereupon, at that moment, minute, and second, in this great trichiliocosm the hells, and the animal world, and the world of Yama, all were abolished and became empty, and all the places of untoward rebirth disappeared. And the beings who had deceased in these destinies... all, through their joy and rejoicing, were reborn among men, and also among the six kinds of gods (of the realm of sense desire). Thereupon, these men and gods, through the very might of the Lord, recalled their former lives. In their great joy and rejoicing they then approached the Lord, saluted his feet with their heads, raised their folded hands to the Lord and paid homage to him, etc.”

Of a somewhat different kind is the reference to jātismara that occurs as a part of a “narrative of the past” in the Samantamukhapraveśarasminivalentaprabhāsa. Here, the Buddha, in recounting the past lives of a particular deva, says that the deva, as a wealthy householder, had had murderous thoughts in regard to a brahmin who recited and taught this dharani. As soon as these thoughts arose, he became ill, and suffered greatly until he died. He then underwent a long series of rebirths in the hells and among animals, finally being reborn as a blind man. As that blind man he encountered a monk, and that monk “having seen him, being filled with compassion, gave him food.
He also recited this dhāraṇī for him. The blind man heard this dhāraṇī, and having become (as a result) possessed of the recollection of his former lives, remembered the brahmin (rig sngags kyi rgyal mo 'di yang bsgrags so/ dmus longs des gzungs sngags 'di thos pa dang tshe rabs dran par gyur nas bram ze de yang dran te, Pek. Vol. 11, 227–5–4).” Note that the Chinese text corresponding to the last sentence of this passage has been translated by Chavannes as “lorsque (l’aveugle) eut pu l’entendre, il y fit grande attention et y appliqua sa pensée. Alors dans cette naissance il obtint la compréhension de ses anciennes destinées et il put réfléchir à ce qui était leur origine.”

These and similar passages are of interest because they indicate that a number of the ideas concerning the obtainment of jātismara that we have seen previously only as doctrinal assertions were sufficiently well-established so that on occasion they could be, and were, used simply as narrative elements. The conclusion of the Ratnajāliparipṛcchā, for example, no longer asserts that hearing a particular text results in the obtainment of jātismara; instead, this idea is narratively expressed as a fact: the obtainment of jātismara occurs as an accepted and unquestioned part of the series of events that follow after the “congregation” has heard a particular text, just delivered by the Buddha.

IX. The Historical Context of Our Texts and the Ideas They Express: Medieval Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature.

We have looked now at a considerable number of Mahāyāna sūtras, but before we try to summarize what they tell us about ideas concerning the obtainment of jātismara, and before we attempt to formulate any conclusions, it might be well to try to place our texts in something like a historical context. We need not, I think, be concerned here with absolute chronology, nor the date of composition. The latter, in fact, is rarely the real question. The important point is not when a text was composed, but when it was read or used or circulated, and the two are not necessarily, or even frequently, the same. What we want to do, then, is attempt to establish the period during which the ideas concerning the obtainment of jātismara found in our texts
were actually available, widely circulated, and an established part of the Indian Buddhist context—when, in short, the ideas and the texts that express them had some chance of influencing actual behavior. In this regard, of course, the references to the obtainment of jātismita in specifically "authored" works are of some importance: they indicate when some of our ideas had penetrated at least one segment of the Indian Buddhist community.

We may note, then, that if Nāgārjuna was the author of the Ratnāvalī, and if he lived in the second half of the second century A.D., then the idea that jātismita could be obtained through non-meditational acts directed toward the Dharma—hearing, preserving, etc.—was already accepted at this time, at least among Buddhist scholastics.37 Again, if the Mahāyāna-Sū-trālaṃkāra is the work of Asaṅga or Maitreya, and if these authors actually lived during the 3rd/4th Century A.D., then we can say that this same idea continued to be current among scholastics for another two centuries.38 In regard to the sūtra literature, it should be noted that apart from the Samādhirāja, the Pratypatpanna, and perhaps the Upālipariṇāmcha, probably none of the texts we have cited is so early. Note, too, that the Samādhirāja and the Pratypatpanna are notable for their continuation of the old ideas concerning the obtainment of jātismita, and are therefore quite distinct from the majority of our texts. The bulk of our evidence, in fact, would seem to indicate that the period of widest currency for both our ideas and the texts expressing them was somewhat later.

The passage quoted above from Hsuan-tsang establishes the fact that the idea that jātismita could be obtained as a result of activity undertaken in regard to sacred images was current in the 7th century at one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in India. The passages from Śaṅtideva's Bodhicaryāvatara would seem to indicate that related ideas were firmly established and actually acted on by at least one prominent scholastic at roughly the same time.39 We also know that at least eight of our texts—from which a considerable number of our passages were taken—were all available in the 6th/7th century at Gilgit: the Bhaiṣajyaguru, Buddhabalādhana, Kāranadavīha, Samgha, Tathāgatabimbakārāpana, Ratnaketupariwarta, Pañcavinśatisāhasrikā, and the Samādhirāja, and some of these were available there in
several different manuscripts.\textsuperscript{40} We also know that all three of the "shorter" \textit{Prajñāpāramitā} texts that we have cited have been assigned by Professor Conze to a period falling between the 6th and 12th centuries\textsuperscript{41}; that two of our texts, the \textit{Aparimitāyurjñāna} and \textit{Sitātapatra} were—to judge by the number of extant manuscripts—extremely popular in Central Asia, Khotan, and Tun-huang from the 8th century on\textsuperscript{42}; that the \textit{Suvarṇabhāṣottama} too was well known in Central Asia in Sanskrit, Khotanese, and Uigur versions at roughly the same time\textsuperscript{43}; and that the \textit{Subhāṣitaratnakaranḍakakathā}, though ascribed to Āryaśūra, probably came into existence "between Śāntideva and the eleventh century."\textsuperscript{44} Finally, we can note that Indian inscriptions testify to the presence of at least two of our texts in several places beginning from the 10th century and probably somewhat earlier: an extract from the \textit{Bodhimandalalaksālāṃkāra-dhāraṇī} occurs—as I will show in some detail in a future paper—in the Cuttack Museum Stone Inscription and on at least two of the hundreds of terracotta tablets found at Nālandā; and one of the dhāraṇīs from the \textit{Samantamukhapraveśarasāṃvimalopaḥnīṣaprabhāsā}—again as I will show in the future—is found on "seals" or terracotta tablets or strips of birchbark, at Paharpur, Bodh-Gayā, Nālandā, Gilgit, and Tikse in western Tibet; the \textit{Samantamukhapraveśa} is also "le sūtra de la paroi occidentale de l'inscription de Kiu-yong koan."\textsuperscript{45}

It would appear, then, that we are dealing with both ideas and texts that were current and were being used or acted upon during a period extending from the 5th/6th century to the 12th century and even later, even though there are indications that some forms of the ideas may have been older—for example those expressed by Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga/Maitreya. It is in this sense that I would characterize our texts as a whole as typical of "current" medieval Mahāyāna sūtra literature.

Incidentally, it might also be noted that the dates of the Chinese translations of our texts support what we can know from other sources. The \textit{Dvādaśabuddhaka}, for example, was translated first in the 6th/7th century (T.1348), and again in the 8th (T.1349); the \textit{Buddhamakuta} was translated in the 11th century (T.438), the \textit{Saptabuddhaka} twice in the 6th (T.1333, 1334) and once in the 10th century; the \textit{Raśmivimalaviśuddhaprabhā} was translated in the 7th century (T.1024); etc.\textsuperscript{46}
X. A Summary of the Shifts in Ideas Concerning the Obtainment of Jātismara.

Having established the approximate period during which our texts appear to have circulated, we might summarize what they can tell us. If we move from the passages studied earlier by Demiéville to those we have looked at in what we have called medieval Mahāyāna sūtra literature, we can, I think—putting aside the passages from the Pratyutpaṇṇa and the Samādhīrāja sūtras—see that a distinct and fundamental shift has taken place in the latter in regard to jātismara and its obtainment. This shift, in fact, involves a number of specific factors.

In the Nikāya/Āgama literature studied by Demiéville, jātismara usually occurs as only one item in at least three stereotyped lists—the vidyās, abhijñās, balas, or, at least, in close association with one or more of the other items in these lists. Moreover, it was attributed almost exclusively to the religious virtuoso, and it appears to have been thought to have been attainable only by means of sophisticated forms of meditational or yogic practice. In the Mahāyāna sūtra literature we have examined, the situation is different on all three counts. Here, jātismara has become completely disassociated from the traditional lists of abhijñās, balas, etc., and occurs almost always as an independent item, without reference to its earlier associates. Moreover, these texts make it abundantly clear that, far from being restricted to the religious virtuoso, it is here within the reach of virtually everyone: monks, nuns, lay men and women—or simply men or women—brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śudras, and those reborn in the hells or other unfortunate destinies. Perhaps the most significant shift, however, concerns the means by which jātismara was thought to be obtainable. First of all, it is clear from a number of texts that the authors or compilers of some Mahāyāna sūtras held that the obtainment of jātismara by the individual could be effected by agents external to him—by a Bodhisattva working for the sake of “maturing” beings (Upliparipṛcchā), by other individuals undertaking specific ritual or merit-making activity on his behalf, etc. (III & IV). This, of course, marks a major transformation of the “original” concept. But this is not all. Even in regard to the means by which the individual can obtain jātismara for himself there has
been a clearly observable shift. Rather than by sophisticated meditational technique, the province in fact of the ascetic few, in Mahāyāna sūtra literature current in the medieval period, jātismara was available by means of a variety of non-meditational activities: ritualized acts of worship, often directed towards sacred images (IV); activity connected with sacred names—hearing, reciting, etc. (V); activity connected with sacred texts—reciting, copying, preserving, worshipping, etc. (VI); and activity connected with dhāranīs—reciting, copying, preserving, and depositing in stūpas, etc. (VII).

It is interesting to note that what we see here happening to the idea of the obtainment of jātismara is almost exactly the same sort of thing that happened to the idea of rebirth in Sukhāvatī in virtually the same literature: a specialized attainment associated with a specific group and attainable through limited and specialized means has been transformed into a generalized “benefit” open to all and available through a broad range of basic religious activities. This process—which I would call generalization—appears in fact to be one of the most characteristic elements of that “movement” we now call “the Mahāyāna.” It is not only the idea of jātismara and the idea of rebirth in Sukhāvatī that have been reshaped by this characteristic process; but a whole series of basic religious concepts have been transformed in exactly the same way: the idea of avaivartikātā and the idea of the attainment of Buddhahood itself are just two notable examples that have yet to be systematically studied from this point of view. When applied to ascetic ideas or practices of the religious virtuoso, this process effects what might be described as the “domestication” of radical asceticism or the “democratization” of “elitist” attainments—these are in fact only two aspects of a single phenomenon. In any case, this process always involves the movement away from specialization of ideals and group-specific attainments. It is particularly worth noting that this includes, of course, the movement away from specifically associating ideals or practices with either the monastic community or the lay community. Although the current tendency is to take the kind of texts we have cited as “popular,” if we limit ourselves to the material we have collected here we would, for example, have to conclude that the generalization of jātismara appeared first among learned monks—Nāgārjuna,
Asaṅga, or Maitreyanātha. Moreover, the passages from Śāntideva clearly indicate that the obtainment of jātisāra through merit-making activity continued to be a “monastic” ideal, held to and acted upon by learned monks. It should be clear, then, that we are not here dealing with a “lay” or “popular” phenomenon—if by “lay” or “popular” we intend something distinct from “monastic.” These and other considerations confirm from yet another point of view that the distinction between “lay” and “monastic” is simply not a useful one—and almost certainly not a real one—in most of Indian Buddhism.

There is one further consideration here. The process of the generalization of group-specific ideals and attainments was undoubtedly related to other changes that occurred in the ongoing process of the development of Indian Buddhism and, I think, our passages can tell us a little more in regard to some of these other changes, as well.

First, we should note that the obtainment of jātisāra—like rebirth in Sukhāvatī—occurs over and over again in more or less standardized lists of “blessings” or “benefits” stipulated to follow from a wide variety of merit-making activity. In addition to the obtainment of jātisāra and rebirth in Sukhāvatī, such lists also promise freedom from sickness (Suvarṇabhāsottama, Saptatathāgata-pūrvapraṇañāha, Bodhimaṇḍalalakṣa), avoidance of rebirth in the hells or other unfortunate destinies (Suvarṇabhāsottama, Saptatathāgata-pūrvapraṇañāha, Aparimitāyurv-jnāna, Kāraṇḍavyāha, Samantamukhapravēsa), a favorable rebirth (Samghāta, Buddhabaladāhāna, Saśtabuddhaka), an auspicious death (Tathāgatānām-buddhakṣetragunokta, Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra), the “purification” or “exhaustion” of the obstructions due to past karma (Saptatathāgata-pūrvapraṇañāha, Kāraṇḍavyāha, Nārāyanapa-ripṛcchā, Bodhimaṇḍalalakṣa, Samantamukhapravēsa, Prajñāpāramitā nāma aṣṭaṣatakā), etc., and these lists occur almost everywhere, not just in medieval, but in early Mahāyāna sūtra literature as well. The sheer bulk of the references, the fact that these lists occur everywhere and in all periods, suggests that we are dealing with real and active concerns of both those who wrote these texts—whatever else they might say—and those who listened to them. The connection of the obtainment of jātisāra with these other concerns—the concern for a favorable rebirth, the concern with the avoidance of rebirth in the
hells, etc.—may not at first sight be self-evident, but a closer look at some of our passages will, I think, indicate that it is intimately related to the basic problem that appears to lie behind all these lists.

XI. The Significance of the Obtainment of Jātismara for the Religious Life of the Individual in Medieval Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature.

Professor Demiéville has already shown that in the literature he surveyed the "value" of jātismara was not constant. "Chez les religieux non bouddhistes," for example, it could and did—according to the Brahmajāla-sutta—serve as the fundamental basis for the affirmation of "l'éternité du moi et du monde." In the Mahāvibhāṣā, on the other hand, "... se trouve spécifié," according to Demiéville, "ce que les bouddhistes retirent de la contemplation de leurs existences antérieures: c'est le dégout de l'impermanence." A little further on, however, he notes that "d'après le Mahāprajñāpāramitā-čāstra de Nāgārjuna ... la notion abstraite dégagée par les bouddhistes de la mémoire des existences antérieures est celle de la causalité; le Mahāvibhāṣā en fait aussi une des conséquences de cette mémoire. . . ."50

Putting aside the conflicting character of the conclusions drawn, it still is clear that all these passages want above all to extract from jātismara a "notion abstraite," and that its primary significance here lies in the fact that it functions to confirm and legitimate a given doctrinal position. But, as we shall see, the significance attached to jātismara in the Mahāyāna sūtra literature we have examined appears to be of a fundamentally different sort.

There are in our sample several passages in which the effects of jātismara are specifically stated. As we have seen, the Bhaisajyagurusūtra says of the individual on whose behalf the pūjā to Bhaisajyaguru has been undertaken that as a result, in the final instance, he would be reborn and—significantly—"he would obtain recollection; he himself is then a direct witness to (the effects of) merit, demerit, and the results of his (past) actions." But the text then immediately adds: "(As a consequence,) even for the sake of his life he does not do an evil
deed. For that reason, by a believing son or daughter of good family pūjā is to be performed to that Tathāgata (... smṛtim upalabheta; so kuśalam akuśalam karmavipaṇam svayam eva pratyaksō bhavati. jīvitahe tor api pāpaṁ karma na karoti. tasmāc chrādhena kulaputreṇa vā kuladuhitṛā vā tasya tathāgatasya pūjā kartavyah).31 Note here that for this text, at least, the significance of the obtainment of jātismara is, apparently, behavioral: jātismara effects a restructuring of the individual’s behavior. Having become “a direct witness to the effects of his acts,” he will behave in a certain way: “he will not do evil even for the sake of his life.” Note too that the behavioral transformation that takes place appears to be the sole reason for which the pūjā is undertaken. This is at least the case if we take—as it appears we must—the final statement (tasmāc, “for that reason”) as referring to that which immediately precedes it: pāpaṁ karma na karoti.

Elsewhere, the Bhaisajyaguru-sūtra says that those reborn in the hells through greed and stinginess will—through the agency of the Buddha’s name—once again be reborn among men, and “they will have recollection of their former births.” But here too the text immediately adds: “Terrified by the fear of an unfortunate destiny, no longer seeking for the objects of desire, delighted in the act of giving ... renouncing all their property, in due order they will present to beggars their head or hands or feet or eyes ... how much more other accumulations of material goods (punar api manusyaloke upapatsyanti, jātismaraś ca bhavisyanti. durgatibhayabhītā na bhūyah kāmaguṇair arthikā, etc...).”32 Note here that once again the obtainment of jātismara effects above all else a radical restructuring of behavior. Note too that the behavioral change effected by jātismara is particularly clear in this passage.

Buddhabalādhānaprātiḥārya (Pek. Vol. 34, 193–2–3) says of the individuals reborn in the hells on whose behalf a pūjā directed towards any of several Buddhas is undertaken that, as a result, “having recollected their good and bad acts (i.e., the fruits thereof), they afterwards (physis) would not perform an evil act. From that they would be freed from those sufferings and would go to a fortunate destiny. Until they fully and completely awaken to utmost, right, and perfect awakening they would conform to this practice (... sangs ma rgyas kyi bar du spyod
pa 'thon par 'gyur ro).” A little later, the same text repeats the same thing in verse: . . . dge ba'i gnas su skye ba 'dzin par 'gyur / sngon gyi las rnam s rjes su dran 'gyur zhung / dran nas mkhas pa sdig pa byed mi 'gyur / (194–2–2): “They would take rebirth in an auspicious place, and they would recollect their past acts. Having remembered that, the wise would not do evil.”

In the Ratnaketuparivarta, as we have seen, through the “light” emitted by the Buddha countless beings born in the hells and among animals obtained recollection and “after having recollected the roots of merit which they had formerly planted, having made the ‘namo buddhāya,’ having passed away from those unfortunate states, they were reborn among devas.” In the Pañcavinīśatisāhasrikā, in a similar passage, the recollection of their past lives on the part of those who had formerly been reborn in the hells and other unfortunate destinies had a similar effect: “Thereupon, these men and gods . . . recalled their former lives. In their great joy and rejoicing they then approached the Lord, saluted his feet with their heads, raised their folded hands to the Lord and paid homage to him, etc.”

Finally, in the Samantabhadrapravesharasmivimalasprabhāsa, as we have seen, a man who had had murderous thoughts in regard to a brahmin who taught this dhāraṇī sickened and died and had to undergo a long series of rebirths in the hells and among animals. Finally reborn as a blind man, he encountered a monk who out of compassion recited the dhāraṇī for him. “The blind man”—the text says—“heard this dhāraṇī, and having become possessed of the recollection of his former lives, remembered the brahmin.” But then it immediately adds: rjes su seems shing kye ma'o mi bzas pa'i las byas so snyam nas ngo tsha dang / khrel yod par 'gyur te / 'chi ba'i dus byas pa dang gzung sngags 'di'i mthu's sum bcu risa gsum pa'i lha'i nang du skyes te, etc. (Pek. Vol. 11, 227–5–5): “Reflecting on that, having thought ‘Ah! I have done a dreadful thing,’ he was ashamed and remorseful, and passing away then, through the power of this dhāraṇī (i.e., what it effected) he was reborn among the devas of the thirty-three, etc.”

We can note two things about all these passages. First, jātismara is specifically stated to effect in every case a radical alteration in behavior, attitude, or both: having recollected his former births, the individual would not perform an evil deed even
for the sake of his life (Bhaśajyaguru, Buddhabalādāhāna), or else he would undertake religious activity: he would give gifts (Bhaśajyaguru), perform homage to the Buddha (Ratnaketu, Paṅcavimśati) or acknowledge his wrong doing and feel shame and remorse (Samantamukhapraveśa). In every case, the behavior or state of mind that follows the recollection of former births is either implicitly or explicitly stated to be in sharp contrast with the behavior that preceded it. Secondly, the obtainment of jātismara in all these texts takes place either in or in reference to a rebirth in the hells or one of the other unfortunate destinies and—importantly—the behavioral or attitudinal alteration effected by jātismara effects in turn a change in the individual’s position in regard either to his present or his potential future rebirth in such a state. In the Ratnaketu, the obtainment of jātismara takes place in the hells and its associated behavioral change effects the individual’s release and his progression to a more favorable state. Much the same holds for the Samantamukhapraveśa, except that there the attitudinal change effected by jātismara effects the individual’s release from an unfortunate human rebirth. In the Buddhabalādāhāna, the obtainment of jātismara again takes place in the hells, but here its concomitant behavioral change effects, first, the individual’s release from the hells and his movement to a better state, and, secondly, a restructuring of his behavior in such a way that he avoids a repetition of his former fate. In both passages from the Bhaśajyaguru and in the Paṅcavimśati, finally, the obtainment of jātismara and the consequent behavioral change take place after the individual has undergone his “judgement” or unfortunate rebirth, but in specific reference to it. They here function, then, primarily as a solution to the problem of the future avoidance of an unfortunate rebirth—direct knowledge of his former unpleasant fate effects a restructuring of the individual’s behavior in such a way that he would avoid a repetition of that fate.

It should be clear from all of this that in our texts the significance of the obtainment of jātismara appears to have been conceived of primarily in terms of the fact that it could or did effect not—as in the texts studied by Demiéville—the confirmation of a given doctrinal position, but a radical restructuring of behavior and attitude in the individual concerned, and—im-
portantly—the release from, or avoidance of, rebirth in the hells and other unfortunate destinies. It is, indeed, the latter function, above all else, that appears to lie behind and explain the fact that the obtainment of jātismara had come to be offered as a generalized reward for religious activity in Mahāyāna sūtra literature.

XII. The Obtainment of Jātismara in a Larger Context: A Suggestion Concerning the Dysfunctionality of the Doctrine of Karma.

We might finish here with one further and final observation of a more general kind. All the passages we have just examined begin with individuals either actually reborn in the hells or other unfortunate destinies, or with individuals who are about to be reborn there. This would seem to indicate that for these texts, at least, the primary concern was the individual reborn in the hells or other unfortunate destinies, and how his release from, or future avoidance of, such a state could be effected. Although the fact has not yet been fully realized, this appears to have been a fundamental problem in much of Mahāyāna sūtra literature. Unless I am very much mistaken, all the “benefits” or “blessings” said to follow from merit-making activity are offered as “solutions” to this same problem: the promise of the avoidance of an unfortunate rebirth certainly, but also the promise of a good rebirth, or rebirth in Sukhāvati, of the removal of the “obstructions due to karma,” of an auspicious death, etc. Lists of these and other related “benefits” occur, as I have already said, almost everywhere and in all periods of Mahāyāna sūtra literature. But the emergence of rebirth in the hells as a serious religious problem and major preoccupation is, in turn, almost certainly connected with yet another factor not yet sufficiently acknowledged.

Many scholars, beginning with Max Weber, have said that theoretically the doctrine of karma as it is presented in early Buddhist literature is one of the most complete and satisfying theodicies in the history of religions. And this may be—theoretically—true. What Weber and others after him have not noted, however, is that the doctrine of karma appears—in fact—to have created as many problems as it solved. Its acceptance at a
Formative stage appears to have laid the foundations for some fundamental and far-reaching problems that only gradually became apparent. If, for example, the "logic" of karma gave a satisfying answer for the visible disparities among men, if it provided a complete solution for the problem of suffering, the very "completeness" of the solution became in its turn a serious problem. That same "solution" in fact inadvertently gave an almost equally complete assurance that the average man, the non-virtuoso, whether layman or monk, could, by virtue of his necessarily imperfect daily life, look forward to rebirth in the hells or other unfortunate destinies: every act must be paid for and "ni dans le royaume de l'air, ni dans le milieu de la mer, ni si tu t'enfonces dans le creux des montagnes, nulle part tu ne trouves sur la terre un lieu où tu puisses échapper au fruit de tes mauvaises actions." This, of course, is bad enough, but once an individual was born into an unfortunate rebirth, that same "logic" made it very difficult to explain how he could ever escape from it, since such unfortunate rebirths placed the individual in situations that appeared to allow no opportunity for making merit and every opportunity to accumulate further demerit. La Vallée Poussin, referring to Bodhicaryāvatara IV. 17–20 "et surtout 22," has noted that "les damnés, par exemple, sont incapables d'une bonne pensée, et leur péché ne fait que s'accroître par ses propres forces." The basic idea here had already been much more fully expressed in passages like Majjhima-nikāya iii 169.9, where the Buddha, using a simile found throughout Buddhist literature, is made to say:

"Suppose, Monks, that a man were to throw a yoke with one hole into the ocean and it would be blown around in all directions by the wind. Suppose, too, there were a blind turtle who came to the surface once every hundred years. What do you think, Monks? Would that blind turtle ever manage to stick his neck through the hole in that yoke?"

"If at all, O Blessed One, it could happen only once in an extremely long while."

"Sooner or later, Monks, that blind turtle might manage to push his neck through that hole. But, Monks, I say that it is even more difficult than that for a fool who has fallen into an unfortunate birth again to obtain rebirth as a human (. . . ato dullabhatarāham bhikkhave manussattam va-
And why is that? Because there (in those unfortunate rebirths) there is no practice of the Dhamma, no right practice, there is no doing of good or making of merit; there, Monks, there is only mutual devouring and preying on the weak (na h'ettha bhikkhave atthi dhammacariyā samacariyā kusalakiriyā punña kiriyā, aṇṇamañña khādikā ettha bhikkhave vattati dubbalamārikā). Even if, Monks, that fool once in an extremely long time might obtain a human rebirth, he would be born into inferior families, outcaste families, families of hunters... in such a family that is poverty stricken, without food or drink. Moreover, he would be ill-favored, ugly, dwarfish, sickly, blind... and he would be unable to obtain food, or drink, or clothes... (as a consequence) he would act wrongly in body, speech, and mind, and having acted wrongly in body, speech, and mind he would be reborn in a bad state, a bad destiny, an unfortunate destiny, a hell (... apāyām duggatim vinipātam nirayam uppajjati)."  

As a piece of homiletics this, of course, would have been forceful and perhaps effective. But as an established "theological" position, it became a doctrinal assertion of the fate inadvertently assured for all believers—whether layman or monk—who were less than perfect. Such considerations appear gradually to have become apparent, and eventually required solutions. The presence of our passages, the modification and adaptation of the concept of jātismara, and much else in Mahāyāna sutra literature, begins to make sense when they are seen as "solutions" to the problems created by the doctrine of karma—as correctives to a "solution" that became in its turn a problem.

NOTES

1. The initial research for this paper and a first draft were both completed during the year I spent as a Visiting Research Fellow at The International Institute for Buddhist Studies (formerly The Reiyukai Library) in Tokyo, and I will always owe a tremendous debt of gratitude, for things both large and small, to the staff of the Institute and especially to its enlightened Director, Dr. Akira Yuyama. Further research and a second draft were made possible by a grant from The Translations Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, for which I am also very grateful.

2. P. Demiéville, "Sur la mémoire des existences antérieures," Bulletin de l'école française d'extrême-orient 27 (1927) 283–98; esp. 283–90. For some inter-
esting remarks from a slightly different perspective see L. de La Vallée Poussin, "Le bouddha et les abhijñās," Le museon 44 (1931) 334–42; and for the abhijñās as a whole see the rich documentation assembled in Ét. Lamotte, Le traité de la grande vertu de la sagesse, t.IV (Louvain: 1976) 1809–1816.

3. P. Maxwell Harrison, The Tibetan Text of the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Saṅ-
mukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra, Studia Philologica Buddhica, Monograph Series I (Tokyo: 1978) 20k, vs.1; see also 1k; 20k, vs.13; and 20h.


6. The Tibetan text is cited from Python, 26.5, but I have altered his transcription so that it conforms to the system proposed in T. Wylie, "A Standard System of Tibetan Transcription," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 22 (1959) 261–67. All my citations from Tibetan will be transliterated according to this system.


9. Emmerick, 14; Nobel, 37.5.

10. For the Bhadracariprajñāhāna, I have used the text edited in K. Watanabe, Die Bhadravari, Eine Probe buddhistisch-religiöser Lyrik, Untersucht und herausgegeben (Leipzig: 1912).

11. All references are to the edition in V. Bhattacharya, Bodhicaryāvatāra (Calcutta: 1960).

12. Nobel, 44.3f.

13. This is a translation that might also be suggested by Tibetan I (J. Nobel, Suvarnaprabhāṣottamasūtra, Das Goldglanz-Sūtra, ein Sanskrittext des Mahāyāna-Buddhismus, die tibetischen Übersetzungen mit einem Wörterbuch, Erster Band (Leiden/Stuttgart: 1944) 34.1), and more definitely by Tibetan III (J. Nobel, Suvarnaprabhāṣottamasūtra, Das Goldglanz-Sūtra, ein Sanskrittext des Mahāyāna-Buddhismus, I-Tsings chinesischen Version und ihre tibetische Übersetzung (Leiden: 1958) 72.17f.).

14. Apart from a few exceptions, which will be noted, all my Tibetan material will be cited from The Tibetan Tripiṭaka (Peking Edition), edited by D.T. Suzuki; references will give volume number, then page—"folio"—and line number.


17. For the Bhaisajyaguru-sūtra I quote the text established in G. Schopen, A Sanskrit Text of the Bhaisajyaguru-sūtra from Gilgit: An Annotated Transcription of Manuscript No. 10b, to be published in Studia Philologica Buddhica,
Monograph Series, by The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, Tokyo, in 1984. Although the text I have established differs considerably, the corresponding passages in Dutt's edition are found at N. Dutt, Gilgit Manuscripts, Vol. I (Srinagar: 1939) 24.12 = my § 17 and 26.1 = my § 18.

18. Although I quote the Tibetan here, the Buddhabaladhanā—or at least some important fragments of it—was also found at Gilgit. See most recently G. Schopen, “The Five Leaves of the Buddhabaladhanaprātiḥāryavikurvaṇ-anirdeśa-sūtra Found at Gilgit,” Journal of Indian Philosophy 5 (1978) 319–36.


25. For the Kāraṇḍavyūha I have used the text in P.L. Vaidya, Mahāyāna-Sūtra-Samgraha, Part I (Darbhanga: 1961), although a fragmentary manuscript of it too was found at Gilgit (cf. O. von Hinüber, Die Erforschung der Gilgit-Handschriften (Funde buddhistischer Sanskrit-Handschriften, 1) (Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. 1: Philo-Hist. Kl. Jg. 1979, Nr. 12) 343.


27. Text cited from Togano’s edition reprinted in Y. Hatta, Index to the Ārya-Prajñāpāramitā-Naya-Sūtra-Pañcāśati (Kyoto: 1971) 225.10.


30. E. Obermiller, History of Buddhism (Chus-hbyung) by Bu-ston, Part I (Heidelberg: 1931) 12.

31. Text from H.W. Bailey, Indo-Scythian Studies, Being Khotanese Texts Volume V (Cambridge: 1963) 375.166; see also 366.132 for the same passage in a second manuscript of the same text.

32. Text from A.C. Banerjee, Nārāyaṇaparipṛčchā, Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts (Calcutta: 1941) 15.4 (the Skt. for this passage is missing from Banerjee’s Ms.).

This passage from the Nārāyaṇaparipṛčchā is followed immediately by another passage that also refers to jñātismara. Although the Skt. text for this
second passage is preserved, it unfortunately appears in part to be corrupt, and Banerjee’s handling of the Ms. material makes it difficult to suggest a satisfying emendation. He gives the passage in the following form (I have inserted in brackets the material I have taken from his notes):

\[
yāś ca punar nārāyaṇa imāṃ [yogyāṃ] [reconstructed from Tib. rung] dhāraṇin dhārayāmāṇaḥ kula-putraḥ vā kuladūhiḥ vā bhikṣur vā bhikṣurī vā upāskā vā upāśā vā rājā vā rājaputraḥ vā brāhmaṇaḥ vā mṛtyaḥ kālagaṇaḥ saddharmabhāyaḥ vā dagdho bhasmibhūto [Ms. ‘ṣmi ca] vā punās ca puruṣō vā strī vā kācit [Ms. cchāra (?)].
\]

Banerjee emends on the basis of Tib. la la zhig spṛṣṭ sa eva niyato [Ms. niyato(?)] jātisamro bhavisyati (4.18-5.2).

The Tibetan translation has:

\[
\text{Tib. translation has:}
\]

\[
\text{Although this Tib. text somewhat different from that found in Banerjee’s Ms. and is therefore not altogether helpful for solving the problems in the latter, still it supports a certain interpretation of at least a part of the Skt. text. If we tentatively accept Banerjee’s bhasmibhūto but reject the vā following it: if in addition we reject the kācit which Banerjee read on the basis of Tib. and take cchāra(?) as possibly standing for sārā in the sense of “core,” that which remains after cremation, or as a mistake for śarīra, then we can tentatively translate the Skt. as:}
\]

\[
\text{“And if again, Nārāyaṇa, a son or daughter of good family, or a monk or nun, or a lay man or woman, or a king or a prince or a brahmin wearing this dhāraṇi were dead, deceased; or if a reciter of the Good Law had been cremated, reduced to ashes; and if again a man or woman were to touch the remains, he or she assuredly will come to be possessed of the recollection of his former births.”}
\]

Lest the idea here seem altogether strange, we might cite another instance of the transmission of the benefits of a dhāraṇi through contact with remains of the dead. In this instance, however, which comes from the Samantamukha-pravēṣarasmimālanaḥprabhāsāvaratathāgatḥādayasmayavilokatehārāṇi (Pe. Vol. 11, 228—1), the transmission is in the opposite direction: bye ma la len yi shu rṣa gcig bchas brjod byas te dur khrud du gtor na / gang gi rīs pa la bog pa de dang sens can dmyal ba gang dang gang du skye ba de dang de nas yongs su thar te mtho rīs su skye bar ‘gyur ro / gang dag mtho rīs su skye ba de dag gi lus la me top gi char ‘bab par ‘gyur ro /: “If, reciting [this dhāraṇi] twenty-one times over some sand, he throws it into the burning grounds, on whom-so-ever’s bones it would fall, they, in whatever hell they had been reborn, being released from that, would be reborn in heaven. Those who had (already) been reborn in heaven, on their bodies a rain of flowers would fall.”

45. On both these texts in inscriptions see the paper cited above in n.33, and G. Schopen, "The Bodhigarbhālahākāralakṣa and Vimaloṣuṣa Dhāraṇī in Indian Inscriptions: Two Sources for the Practice of Buddhism in Medieval India," in preparation. In regard to Gilgit it might be noted that if my identification of the "Schutzformel" written on birch bark strips and published by Professor von Hiniüber is correct, if it is in fact the 2nd dhāraṇī from the *Samantamukhapraveśa*, then it would seem that this text too—although it has not yet been found among the known Mss.—was also known at Gilgit. This identification might also suggest some minor corrections to Professor von Hiniüber's reading of the "formula" (see O. von Hiniüber, "Namen in Schutzzaubern aus Gilgit," *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 7 (1981) 166–67.
I have taken all these dates from P. Demiéville, H. Durt et A. Seidel, Répertoire du canon bouddhique sino-japonais, édition de Taisho, Fascicule annexe du Hōbōgirin, deuxième édition révisée et augmentée (Tokyo:1978)

There are two possible exceptions to this. In the Daśabuddhakasūtra (Pek. Vol. 37, 94–5–1) it is said . . . de'i mīshan bzung na . . . tse rabs dran par 'gyur ro / mgon par shes pa lnga dang sangs rgyas kyi chos ma 'dres pa bco bgyud 'thob par 'gyur ro l: . . . if one would preserve his name [i.e. that of the 9th Buddha mentioned in the text] . . . he would recollect his former births. He would obtain the five superknowledges and the eighteen characteristics peculiar to a Buddha.” In the Raśmimalaviśuddhaprabhā (Pek. Vol. 7, 190–5–1), as a part of a list of “benefits” following from making a stūpa in conjunction with reciting a dhārāṇī, it is said that the individual will be reborn in his next life in a pure Buddha field and that . . . der yang te sngon gyi gnas rjes su dran pa dang / tha'i mig dang tha'i ma bu rnam par dag pa thob cing pha rol gyi sens shes pa dang 'chi ba 'pho ba dang skye bu shes 'thob bo / t'us las tsa'n dan gyi dr'i ngad 'byung zhing, etc. In the first of these two passages, note that while it is true that jātismara occurs in a list the next item of which is the five abhijñās, the way in which the list is drawn up appears to indicate that whoever compiled it had completely forgotten that jātismara was supposed to be the fourth of the five abhijñās. It appears that for him jātismara and the five abhijñās were two completely independent things. In the second passage, in addition to the somewhat unusual order, note that jātismara is obtained in association with the other four abhijñās not in this world but in a “pure Buddha field,” and that this reference is therefore closest to the reference to jātismara already pointed out by Demiéville in the Sukhāvatīvyūha (Demiéville, “Sur la mémoire des existences antérieures,” 296n.3).

See G. Schopen, “Sukhāvatī as a Generalized Religious Goal in Sanskrit Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature,” Indo-Iranian Journal 19 (1977) 177–210. Of the texts I have cited in the present paper which offer the obtainment of jātismara as a generalized “benefit” following from merit-making activity, note that the following also offer rebirth in Sukhāvatī on the same terms: the Bhadracariprāṇidhāna, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Aparimitāyur-jñāna, and the Kāraṇḍavyūha, all of which are discussed in Indo-Iranian Journal 19 (1977), plus the following texts in which rebirth in Sukhāvatī is offered as a generalized “benefit” but which are not mentioned there: Daśabuddhaka (Pek. Vol. 37, 94–3–6); Saptabuddhaka (Pek. Vol. 37, 90–4–4); Sūtātputra (Bailey) 367.141, 375.177; Bodhimaṇḍalalakṣa (Lhasa, rgyud Ta)495a; Raśmimalaviśuddhaprabhā (Pek. Vol. 7, 192–2–4); Samantamukhapravesa (Pek. Vol. 11, 227–2–7; 228–3–6, 4–4, 5–7).


53. See VII above.

54. I am here not talking about the well known problems of harmonizing the doctrine of karma and the doctrine of anātman. These were essentially problems of Buddhist scholastics, which probably had little if any effect on the actual "world" of the average practicing Buddhist (cf. L. de La Vallée Poussin, "Dogmatique bouddhique. La négation de l'âme et la doctrine de l'acte," *Journal asiatique* (1902) 237–306). The problem or problems I am concerned with here are of a fundamentally different sort.

