THE JOURNAL
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
BUDDHIST STUDIES

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Roger Jackson
Dept. of Religion
Carleton College
Northfield, MN 55057
USA

EDITORS
Peter N. Gregory
University of Illinois
Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, USA

Ernst Steinkellner
University of Vienna
Wien, Austria

Alexander W. Macdonald
Université de Paris X
Nanterre, France

Jikidō Takasaki
University of Tokyo
Tokyo, Japan

Steven Collins
Concordia University
Montréal, Canada

Robert Thurman
Columbia University
New York, New York, USA

Volume 13 1990 Number 2
CONTENTS

I. ARTICLES

1. A Lajjā Gaurī in a Buddhist Context at Aurangabad by Robert L. Brown 1

2. Sa-skya Paṇḍita the “Poemicist”: Ancient Debates and Modern Interpretations by David Jackson 17


4. The Mantra “Om maṇi-paḍme hūṃ” in an Early Tibetan Grammatical Treatise by P. C. Verhagen 133

II. BOOK REVIEWS

1. Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka, by Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere (Vijitha Rajapakse) 139

2. The Emptiness of Emptiness: An Introduction to Early Indian Mādhyamika, by C. W. Huntington, Jr., with Geshe Namgyal Wangchen (José Ignacio Cabezon) 152

III. NOTES AND NEWS

1. Notice of The Buddhist Forum (Roger Jackson) 163

ERRATA 164
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS 165
The Mantra "Om mani-pade hūm"
in an Early Tibetan Grammatical Treatise

by P.C. Verhagen

Among the treatises on Sanskrit grammar incorporated into the Tibetan Buddhist canon commonly known as Bstan-'gyur, a few can be found that were written originally in Tibetan, while the vast majority are translations of Sanskrit texts.¹ One of these original Tibetan compositions dealing with Sanskrit grammar is a highly interesting treatise entitled Sgra'i-rnam-par-dbye-ba-bstan-pa, "Exposé (of) the Nominal Cases."² It describes the essentials of the Sanskrit system of nominal declension, while also relating this system to the semantics—and sometimes even the morphology—of the Tibetan case-particles.

The author's name is not mentioned in the text or its colophon. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the Sgra'i-rnam-par-dbye-ba-bstan-pa and the two titles immediately preceding it in the Bstan-'gyur, also grammatical treatises,³ have been written by the Tibetan grammarian and translator Lce-khyi-'brug (alias Ci-khyi-'brug or Ce-khyi-'brug), who can positively be associated with the period 798–815 A.D.⁴ It seems fair to assume a date of composition for this treatise in the early period of the formation of the Tibetan canonical literature, most likely the ninth century A.D.⁵ In the treatise under consideration the Sanskrit nominal declension is described as a system of eight cases, with a further subdivision of each case into singular, dual and plural. These eight cases are dealt with in the traditional order: nominative, accusative, instrumental, dative, ablative, genitive, locative and vocative.⁶ For each of these cases a summary description of the semantics and the
main points of the morphology are presented, supplemented with Sanskrit examples (with their Tibetan translations).

In the final section of the text, dealing with the vocative case, the well-known mantra "Om maṇi-padme hūṃ" is cited as an example. Here I will present a short excerpt from the text, containing the reference to this mantra and its subsequent (grammatical) interpretation. In the paragraphs immediately preceding this excerpt it has been stated that the vocative case is indicated in Sanskrit mainly by (the interjection) he, "Oh!" or (the case-ending) -e. As examples for the use of he the author gives "*he he bhagavan," "Oh, oh, venerable one!" and "*he vajra," "Oh, vajra!": as an example for -e he mentions "*vrkṣe," "Oh, tree!"

Excerpt from 
Sgra'i-rnam-par-dbye-ba-bstan-pa
[Peking Bstan-'gyur: Mdo-'grel: vol. NGO 63v7–64r2:]


Translation

'Morever (gzhan-yang), this vocative (case) (bod-pa) is generally⁹ (phal-cher) indicated (ston-pa) (by case-ending) -e, and as the hearts (or essences) (snying-po-rnams) (sic, the mantras, or: of the mantras) are precisely (kho-na) invocations (or: vocatives) (bod-pa), these invocations (vocatives in the mantras) generally (phal-cher) have (yod) (case-ending) -e; so then (de-yang) (this vocative case-ending occurs) accordingly (di-ltar) for instance in (lta-bu-la) (the mantra) "Om maṇi-padme hūṃ."

(In this mantra) Om is uttered (smos-pa) as first (dang-por), because it is the essence (ngo-bo) of the five wisdoms (ye-shes-
lnga’i10; hūṃ, (which is to be translated as) “Be mindful of (this)!" (thugs-dgongs-shig),11 is placed at the end (mjug-bsdus), so the actual (dngos) vocative (or: invocation) (bod-pa) in between (bar-gyi) (Om and hūṃ consists of) maṇi, (to be translated as) “jewel” (nor-bu) and padme (emend to: padma) (“lotus”), which is the same (dngos) (word in Tibetan as in Sanskrit) and so remains unchanged (sor-bzhag)12 (in translation).

So (des-na), to (this) “jewel-lotus” (nor-bu-padma)13 an invocation (bod-pa) by means of a salutation (phyag-'tshal-gyi-sgo-nas) is (addressed), (which results in) the application (sbyar-ba) of (case-ending) -e in (the syllable) me, which is (to be translated as) “Oh!” (kye), so that (the translation of) the example (ltu-bu) is: “Oh, jewel-lotus!”.

Short Evaluation

The choice of the mantra Om maṇi-padme hūṃ as an example in the above passage from the Sgra'i-rnam-par-dbye-ba-bstan-pa—presumably dating from the ninth century—seems to be an indication of the relative popularity of this formula already in the early period of the spread of Buddhism in Tibet. This is contrary to the opinion prevalent in western Tibetology until rather recently that, as no mention of Om maṇi-padme hūṃ had (until then) been discovered in the Tibetan literature of that period, this mantra did not play a role of any significance in the earliest phases of Tibetan Buddhism.14

However, early references to this mantra can be found in the ninth- and tenth-century Tibetan literary remains from Dun Huang, notably in a text entitled Dug-gsum-'dul-ba,15 as well as in the well-known, rather cryptic, Sanskrit-Tibetan formulary.16 It would seem that the present passage can now provisionally be added to the ninth-century textual evidence of Om maṇi-padme hūṃ.

It should be noted that in this passage from the Sgra'i-rnam-par-dbye-ba-bstan-pa, the formula is nowhere explicitly associated with the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.

From a grammatical point of view it is rather interesting that the term maṇi-padme is cited as an example of the vocative case.17 This means that according to the morphology of classical Sanskrit this form should be considered either as a vocative dual of a neuter compound stem maṇi-padma or as a vocative
singular of a feminine compound stem *mani-padma*. In the former interpretation it would most likely be a *dvandva*-type of compound ("Oh, jewel and lotus!")$^{18}$ while in the latter, a *bahuvrīhi*-type of compound would have to be supposed ("Oh, [you woman] who have the jewel-lotus!")$^{19}$

Considering the above it would seem that the formula *Om mani-padme hūm*, which was to become such a prominent feature of later Tibetan Buddhism, was—at least—known in Tibet already in the period of the first propagation (snga-dar) of Buddhism.

NOTES:


There are ample text-internal indications (such as striking similarities in method and terminology) that the three texts—the first of which is certainly the work of Lce-khyi-'brug—are closely related, almost certainly contemporaneous and quite possibly by the same hand. Text-externally the main arguments for the attribution to Lce-khyi-'brug are to be found in several canonical catalogue-indexes (dkar-chag); the earliest *Bstan-'gyur* catalogue, written by Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290–1364) (ed. L. Chandra, *The Collected Works of Bu-ston*, vol. 26, New Delhi 1971, = Śata-Pitaka Series vol. 66, f. 117r3), a slightly later version by Bu-ston's pupil Sgra-tshad-pa Rin-chen-rgyal-mtshan (1318–1388) (ed. L. Chandra, *The Collected works of Bu-ston*, vol. 28, New Delhi 1971, = Śata-Pitaka Series vol. 68, f. 111r6), as well as the catalogue of the Peking *Bstan-'gyur* written by the fifth Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang-blo-bzang-rgya-mtsho (1617–1682) (ed. L. Chandra, *Catalogue of the Peking Tanjur*, vol. 1, New Delhi 1983, = Śata-Pitaka Series vol. 325, f. 138r4) have virtually identical entries pertinent to these texts, that seem to indicate that Lce-khyi-'brug was the author of all three texts.

5. Besides the characteristic similarities between our text and the treatise that can be positively attributed to Lce-khyi-'brug (cf. note 4), another
indication for an early date of composition is the location of the text in the
canon, viz. among a group of treatises written by early Tibetan scholars, e.g.,
the Sanskrit-Tibetan lexicon *Mahāvyutpatti* and its partial commentary *Sgras-
both datable to the late eighth, early ninth century, and *Sum-cu-pa* and *Rtags-kyi-
jug-pa* (Peking ed. Suzuki 1955–1961 title nrs. 5834 and 5835), the well-known
treatises on Tibetan grammar.

6. It should be noted that it is not common practice in the Indian indi-
genous grammatical traditions to employ the total number of eight for the
cases; usually we find a sevenfold case-system there with the vocative case as a
subtype of the first, nominative case.

7. In classical Sanskrit the case-ending *-e* as specific for the vocative
case occurs only in vocative singular of nominal stems (of all genders) ending
in *i* and feminine stems ending in *ā*, cf. W.D. Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, 1889,
par. 335.h, 339, 363.f, 364. This is by no means the only—or even the most
frequent—form the vocative case assumes. Moreover, the case-ending *-e* also
occurs as vocative (here identical to nominative and accusative) dual of neuter
stems ending in *a* and feminine stems ending in *ā*, cf. Whitney, op. cit., par.
328.b, 330, 363.g, 364.

The ending *-e* as specific for the vocative case does not seem to have been
particularly more frequent in Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit, cf. F. Edgerton, *Budd-
dhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, New Haven 1953, vol. 1, par. 8.27–
28, 9.14–15, 10.33–41, 12.15–16, 13.9; note the occasional use of nominative sin-
gular endings (*-o, -u, perhaps -e*) for vocative of stems in *a* (cf. Edgerton, op.
cit., par. 8.28) and the use of *-e* as vocative singular for stems in *r* (cf. Edgerton,
op. cit., par. 13.9).

8. This, in fact, is not the correct classical form. The vocative singular
of the nominal stem *vrksa*, "tree," is identical to the stem-form: *vrksa*; however,
Edgerton, op. cit., par. 8.28.

9. It certainly does not hold for classical Sanskrit that the case-ending
*-e* is the "general" or most frequent ending for the vocative case; cf. note 7.

110–114.

11. Note that a respectful expression (scil. *thugs-dgongs*) is employed here.

12. Translation of *sor-bzhag* is based on the relevant entry in *dge-bshes
Chos-kyi-grags-pa's Tibetan dictionary entitled *Brda-dag-ming-tshig-gsal-ba*
rang-ngo-bor-gso-bar-bzhag-pa," "to establish (bzhag-pa) (something), preserving
(gso-bar) the thing itself (rang) in identical (form) (ngo-bor) without altering
(ma-sgyur-bar) (it) into another (form) (gzhan-du)."

13. Apparently the author regards *mani-padma* as a compound. Unfortu-
nately he does not specify the relation between *mani* and *padma*, the two members
of the compound; cf. "short evaluation" and note 19.

Tun-huang Prelude to the *Karandavyūhā*," *Indian Historical Quarterly* vol. 14
(1938), p. 200. However, cf. also C. Regamey, "Motifs vichnouites et sivaites
dans le *Kāraṇḍavyūha*," in: *Études tibétaines, dédiées à la mémoire de Marcelle Lalou,*
138

JIABS VOL. 13 NO. 2


The three Dun Huang manuscripts of this text studied by Imaeda give variant readings of the mantra, scil.: “om-ma-ni-pad-me-hūṃ-myi-tra-sua-hā,” “om-ma-ma-ni-pad-me/ hum-mye/ /” and (correct Imaeda’s reading of Pelliot tib. 37 to:) “ōmm-ma-ma-n[?] i-pad-me/ hum-myi/.”

Imaeda suggests an interpretation of the syllables myi-tra in the first version as equivalent to mitra, either the Sanskrit word meaning “friend” (cf. also maitri, “compassion”) or perhaps even connected with the Iranian deity Mithra.

A different interpretation seems possible: I propose that the syllable myi in the first version and the final syllables me and myi of the latter two versions, could be interpreted as a notation of the stressed (and in ritual recitation often prolonged) nasalization which is the pronunciation of the anusvāra (viz. न) in the preceding syllable hūṃ. This could also account for the curious repetition of syllable ma in the latter two versions; in either version the first syllable ma could then be regarded as notation of this same pronunciation of anusvāra in the preceding syllable om.

This interpretation would not allow the reading of myi-tra as mitra; the syllable tra would have to be read separately or combined with the following element sua-hā (*trā-svāhā?).


17. It should be noted that the interpretation of (mani-) padme as ending in a vocative case is already found in the well-known account of the 18th-century Jesuit Ippolito Desideri’s missionary activities in Tibet between 1716 and 1721, commonly called Relazione; cf. R.A. Miller, “Notes on the Relazione of Ippolito Desideri, S.J.,” Monumenta Serica XXII:2 (1963), pp. 467–469.

18. The neuter gender is not common for padma, the final member of the compound, but not unthinkable either.

19. The bahuvrīhi type of compound allows a variety of grammatical relations between the members internally; possible translations for a bahuvrīhi mani-padmā would be inter alia: “(woman) who has the lotus of the jewel” or “(woman) who has the lotus with the jewel” or “(woman) who has the lotus in the jewel” or “(woman) who has the lotus that is a jewel.” Could it be that this feminine compound noun mani-padmā refers to Prajñā-pāramitā, the well-known Mahāyāna concept of “transcendental wisdom,” which is grammatically feminine and, when personified, female?