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Mahāmaudgalyāyana's Sermon on the Letting-in And not Letting-in (of Sensitive Influences)

by E. Waldschmidt

In the Chinese translation of the *Samyuktāgama* (*Tsa-a-han-ching*) we come across a Sūtra¹ corresponding to the *Avassutapariyāya* (also called *An-avassutapariyāya*) in the *Salāyatanasamyutta* of the *Samyuttanikāya*.² The substance of the text is a discourse addressed by Mahāmoggallāna (M., Skt. *Mahāmaudgalyāyana*) to his fellow monks on their request and in the place of the Buddha who does not feel well. M. preaches upon the letting in and not letting in of sensitive influences through the eye and the other organs of sense. This is the common base of the two versions, Pāli (P) and Chinese (C).

In an introductory part of the discourse we are informed of the sojourn of the Buddha among the Sakyas (Skt. *Śākyas*) in the Banyan grove near Kapilavatthu (*Kapilavastu*) at a time when the inhabitants of the town had just built a new assembly hall. The Exalted One was invited to be the first to make use of it, to which he consents. In fixed phrases which are met with in the canon at different places³ we are informed (a) of the preparations by the Sakyas to get the hall ready for its inauguration by the Buddha, (b) of the Master's arrival there, (c) of the order in which he, his pupils and the inhabitants of the town take their seats inside the hall, and (d) of the unspecified sermon with which the Buddha pleases the audience till late at night. Then he dismisses the Sakyas and asks M. to continue in edifying the monks with a speech on a self-chosen subject.⁴ Thereupon M. recites the *Avassuta(dhamma)pariyāya* characterized above.

A while ago my attention was drawn to two Central Asian Sanskrit Ms. fragments (Nos. 1416 and 1449) of the "Turfan Collection," written upon on both sides with characters of the seventh or eighth century A.D. in Northern Turkistan Brāhmī, Type VIb.⁵ The larger piece (No. 1416) showed five lines of script and was part of the left side of a paper folio in Pustaka size.

No. 1449, very small, could be proved to belong to the same folio as No. 1416. It supplies 4-8 syllables of the text in lines 1-4 of the obverse and lines 2-5 of the reverse of the folio. The compounded text of the two fragments reads:

Cat.-No. 1416 + 1449⁶

Folio 1[69]⁷

O

- 1 syāḥ paścima[s]yā[h] uttarasyān=diśaḥ tṛṇolkām=upasaṃharetā na labheta agnir=a(va)tāraṃ na labheta ā[laṃ]-(banam) ///⁸
- 2 vaṃ manaso=pi dharmeṣu māra upasaṃ O krāmati avatāraprekṣī avatāraga(veṣ)[ī] na labhate māra avat(āram) ///⁸
- 3 bhavati n[o] tu rūpair=abh[ī]bhūya O te śabdām gandhā[ṃ] rasām spraṣṭavyām dha[rm] (ām) + + + + . . no tu dharmair=abhi(bhūyate) ///⁸
- 4 rasābhibhūḥ spraṣṭavyābhibhūḥ O dharm[ā]bhibhūḥ abhibhūr=anabhibhū(r)= + + + (pā)[pa] kair=akuśa[lai] (r=dharmaiḥ) ///⁸
- 5 [ky]air=āyatyām jāti[ja] rāmarañīyaiḥ sammukhaṃ me āyuṣmantaḥ bhagavato=ntikāc=chru(taṃ) + + + + .i . . + + + ///⁸

R

- 1 sruto dharmaparyā[yaḥ] avasrut-ānavasrutam vo dharmaparyāyam deśayīṣye iti .[e] + + + + + + + + + + ///⁸
- 2 yanasya kathāparyavasānam vi O ditvā utthāya niṣīdati paryamka[m] (=ābhujya rjuṃ) [kā] yaṃ praṇi[dh] (āya) ///⁸
- 3 n=āyuṣma[nt] am mahāmaudgalyāya O nam=āmantrayati sādhu sādhu maudga(lyāyana sā)[dhu] khalu tvam maudgal[y] (āyana) ///⁸
- 4 deśayasi punar=api tvam=abhikṣṇa O m=api bhikṣūṇā[m]=a[va]srut-ānavasru(taṃ dhar)[m](a)[pa]ryāyam deśayata ///⁸
- 5 khāya tatra [bhagav]ām bhikṣūn=āma[m] trayati udgrṇī-[dhv] (am) bhikṣavaḥ avasru[t]-ānavas[ru] taṃ dharmaparyāyam dh[ā]ra[y] (ata) ///⁸

Thrice, in R 1, R 4, and R 5, the title "avasrut-ānavasruta dharmaparyāya" is found. After identification and comparison with the

corresponding texts in P and C it became evident that our text fragment sets in with the last part of M.'s discourse, and is followed by the Buddha's approval of what M. has spoken. The particulars are as follows:

M. ends his speech with two similes.⁹ Suppose, he says, there is a hut consisting of reeds or grasses, dried up, sapless and old. Then, if somebody with a bundle of inflamed grass comes upon it from the eastern, western, northern or southern quarter, or from below or above, in any case the fire would get access, would get a hold. Even so, Māra, the personified wickedness and seducer to sensuality, would get access, would get a hold, if a monk develops positive or negative inclinations on seeing an object with the eye or recognizing it through any other organ of sense. Furthermore, M. continues, suppose there is a tower or high hall built of firm clay and coated with fresh plaster, then fire would not get access when somebody with a fire-brand comes upon it.¹⁰ Even so, if a monk avoids positive or negative inclinations when using his senses, Mara would not get access, would not get a hold.

I am going now to present the partly restituted text and translation of the Sanskrit fragment which begins in the course of the statement just referred to.

Sanskrit	Translation
<p>1</p> <p>O (<i>dakṣiṇa</i>)<i>syāḥ</i> paścima- <i>syāḥ</i> uttarasyān diśaḥ tṛṇolkāṃ upasaṃharetā na labheta agnir a(va)tāraṃ na labheta āl(am- banam/)¹¹ + + + + + + + + + + +¹² yā)vaṃ manaso 'pi dhar- meṣu māra upasaṃkrāmati ava- tāraprekṣī avatāra(ve)ṣī na labhate māra avat(āraṃ <i>pūrvā-</i> <i>vat/</i>)</p>	<p>1 (If somebody) should bring along (to a firmly built [= fire-proof] house) a fire- brand of grasses from the southern, western, northern or eastern quarter, fire would not get access, would not get a hold. (Likewise) Māra, who looks out for access, who seeks access, does not get access, does not get a hold, if he ap- proaches (a self-restrained monk by way of the eye etc.) up to by way of the mind in the case of objects (of thought).</p>

2 (*evaṃvihārī bhikṣu rūpam abhibhūr*) bhavati no tu rūpam abhibhūyate (/) śabdām gandhām rasām spraṣṭavyām dharm(ām abhibhūr bhavati) no tu dharmair abhi(bhūyate /)¹³ (*rūpābhibhūḥ śabdābhibhūḥ gandhābhibhūḥ*) rasābhibhūḥ spraṣṭavyābhibhūḥ dharmābhibhūḥ (/)¹⁴ abhibhūr anabhibhūr (*bhavati pā*)pakair akūśalai(*r dharmair sāmkleśikair paunarbhavikair sajvarair duḥkhavipā*) kyair āyatyām jātijarāmarañiyaiḥ (/)¹⁵

3 saṃmukhaṃ¹⁶ me āyusmantāḥ bhagavato 'ntikāc chru(taḥ saṃmukham udgrhītaḥ yo 'yam avasrut-ānava) sru-to dharmaparyāyāḥ avasrut-ānavasrutam¹⁷ vo dharmaparyāyaṃ deśayiṣye iti .e + + + + + + + + + +

4 (*atha*¹⁸ *bhagavāṃ āyus-mato mahāmaudgalyā*)yanasya kathāparyavasānaṃ viditvā ut-thāya niṣṭdati paryamkam (ābhujya ṛjuṃ) kāyaṃ praṇidh(āya pratimukhaṃ smṛtim upasthāpya nivasya bhagavā)n āyusmantam mahāmaudgalyāyanam āmantrayati / sādhu sā-
28

2 (Such a monk) subdues visible objects, is by no means subdued by visible objects, subdues sounds, smells, flavors, touchable things, objects of the mind, is by no means subdued by objects. He is a subduer of visible objects, a subduer of sounds, a subduer of smells, a subduer of flavors, a subduer of touchable things, a subduer of objects of the mind. He is a subduer, is not subdued by evil, improper factors which are sinful, bring about rebirth, are connected with fever (affliction), result in pain, have the consequence of rebirth, decay and death in future.

3 In front of, in the presence of the Exalted One, reverends, I have heard, and in front of him taken up this discourse of letting in and not letting in (sensitive influences) (when once the Master proclaimed): "I shall preach to you the sermon of letting in and not letting in [sensitive influences]. Listen!"

4 Then the Exalted One, having recognized the conclusion of the venerable M.'s speech, arose, took up the sitting position of an ascetic, stretched his body upright and collected his attention. Having settled his robes the Exalted One addressed the venerable

dhu maudga(lyāyana / sā)dhu
khalu tvam maudgaly(āyana
bhikṣūṇām avasrut-ānavasru-
taṃ dharmaparyāyaṃ) deśaya-
si (/) punar¹⁹ api tvam abhikṣ-
ṇam api bhikṣūṇām avasrut-
ānavasru(taṃ dhar)maparyā-
yaṃ deśaya (/) ta(*d bhavi-*
ṣyati dīrgharātraṃ devamānu-
ṣyānām arthāya hitāya su-
khaya (/))

5 tatra²⁰ bhagavām bhikṣūn
āma(m) trayati (/) udgrhñīdhv-
(am) bhikṣavaḥ avasrut-ānava-
srutaṃ dharmaparyāyaṃ dhā-
ray(ata *grāhayata vācayata ava-*
srut-ānavasrutam dharmapar-
yāyam / tat kasmād dhetoh /
ayaṃ dharmaparyāyaḥ hitopa-
samhitāḥ arthopasamhitāḥ śi-
lopasamhitāḥ brahmacaryopa-
samhitāḥ abhiññāyai sambo-
dhaye nirvāṇāya samvartate
yāvaca satpuruṣeṇa pravra-
jitena śraddhayā avasrut-ānava-
sruto dharmaparyāya udgr-
hya²¹ paryavāpya tathā tathā
dhārayitavyo grāhayitavyo vā-
cayitavyaḥ (/))

6 (atha bhikṣavo bhagavato
bhāṣitam abhinandyānumodya
bhagavato 'ntikāt prakrāntāḥ /)

M.: “Bravo, bravo, Maudgalyā-
yana! Well indeed did you
preach to the monks the ser-
mon of letting in and not let-
ting in (sensitive influences).
That will conduce for a long
time to prosperity, welfare and
happiness of gods and human
beings.”

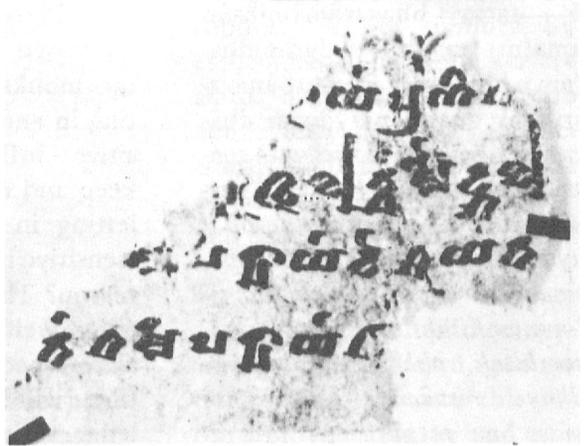
5 There, the Exalted One
addressed the monks: “Take
up, monks, the sermon of let-
ting in and not letting in (sen-
sitive influences), maintain,
keep and recite the sermon of
letting in and not letting in
(sensitive influences). For what
reason? This sermon will bring
about welfare, prosperity, mor-
al conduct, self-restraint (chas-
tity), will lead to higher know-
ledge, to enlightenment, to Nir-
vāna, up to: by an honest man
who has left worldly life
through faith should the ser-
mon of letting in and not let-
ting in (sensitive influences),
after taking it up and appropri-
ating it, be maintained, kept
and recited in exactly the
same manner.

6 Then the monks, after re-
joicing in the speech of the
Exalted One, and agreeing with
it, went away from the Lord's
presence.

Cat.-No. 1449 R



Cat.-No. 1449 O



Handwritten text in an ancient script, likely Brahmi, on a fragment of palm-leaf manuscript. The text is arranged in approximately 12 horizontal lines, though the fragment is irregular and partially damaged. The characters are dark and clearly visible against the lighter, textured background of the leaf.

Cat.-No. 1416 O

Handwritten text in an ancient script, likely Brahmi, on a fragment of palm-leaf manuscript. The text is arranged in approximately 12 horizontal lines. The fragment shows significant wear and tear, with some characters appearing faded or obscured by the texture of the leaf. The script is consistent with the one on the adjacent fragment.

Cat.-No. 1416 R

NOTES

1. Taishō Edition (T), Vol. 2, 316 a-c, Sūtra 276.
2. Ed. Pāli Text Society (PTS), Vol. IV, 182-188; XXXV.202 (*avassuto*).
3. The story of the building of an assembly hall by the Sakyas of Kapilavatthu is told with the same words in the *Sekhasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya* (Sutta 53; Ed. PTS I.353-359). A variation of the text with regard to the owners of the new building and the monk entrusted with the speech is found in the introduction to the *Samgītisuttanta* of the *Dīghanikāya* and in its Sanskrit counterpart, the *Sanḡītisūtra*. Cp. E. WALDSCHMIDT, *Die Einleitung des Sanḡītisūtra*, reprinted in E. WALDSCHMIDT, *Von Ceylon bis Turfan*, Göttingen 1967, pp.258-278, especially p.259. In the *Sanḡītisūtra* the owners of the new building are the Mallas of Pāpā (P: Pāvā), and the monk who recites the Sūtra is Śāriputra (P: Sāriputta), the second outstanding pupil of the Buddha.
4. This framework is—just as the chief contents of M.'s speech—told similarly in the P as well as in the C versions.
5. Cp. SANDER, LORE, *Paläographisches zu den Sanskrithandschriften der Berliner Turfansammlung*, Wiesbaden 1968, p.182, Alphabet u.
6. The first transcript of the text was made by Dr. D. SCHLINGLOFF, presently Professor at the University of Munich, during his activity in the Berlin Academy of Sciences between 1954 and 1961. The identification and compounding of the two fragments is due to E. WALDSCHMIDT.
7. O = obverse, R = reverse. *Akṣaras* of doubtful reading have been put into square, restored *akṣaras* in round brackets. A cross (+) marks a totally missing *akṣara*, two dots (..) an *akṣara* not readable. In the restituted text below, letters in bold type mark the beginning of a line in the Ms. Restituted parts of the text which have not already been supplemented in the documentary transcription are printed in italics.
8. Each line of the Ms. is calculated to have contained about 50 *akṣaras*. /// means that another 12 to 15 *akṣaras* of the line are missing.
9. The following extract refers to the P version.
10. From the eastern, western, etc., quarter, full recapitulation. P (Ed. PTS IV.187.1-8): *puratthimāya uttarāya dakkhiṇāya ce pi nam puriso ādittāya tinukkāya upasaṅkameyya neva labhetha aggi otāram na labetha aggi ārammaṇam*.
11. The C version is very short at places. For instance, here it has simply: If fire comes up from the four quarters, it is not able to set it (sc. the high and firm house) on fire. T 2. 316 c.6-7.
12. Conceivable restoration: (*evamvihāriṇaṃ khalu ced bhikṣum cakṣuṣo yāvaṃ . . .* Cp. P (IV.187.8-12): *evam eva kho āvuso evamvihāriṃ bhikkhum cakkhuto sotato ghānato jhivāto kāyato manato ce pi nam māro upasaṅkamati neva labhati māro otāram na labhati māro ārammaṇam*).

13. Cp. P (IV.187. 13-19): *evam vihārī cāvuso bhikkhu rūpe adhibhosi na rūpā bhikkhum adhibhamsu / sadde . . . gandhe . . . rase . . . phoṭṭhabbe . . . dhamme bhikkhu adhibhosi na dhammā bhikkhum adhibhamsu.*

14. Cp. P (ibid. 20-21): *ayaṃ vuccatāvuso bhikkhu rūpādhibhū saddādhībhū gandhādhibhū rasādhibhū phoṭṭhabbādhibhū dhammādhibhū.*

15. Cp. P (ibid. 22-24): *adhibhū anadhibhūto / adhibhosi te pāpake akusale dhamme saṅkilesike ponobhavike sadare dukkhavipāke āyatijāti-jarāmarañīye.* The corresponding Sanskrit phrase (used for the restitution of our text) is found in the *Avadānaśataka* II. 107. 3-4. Possibly the phrase has been shortened in our Ms.—For *vipākya* (normal *vipāka*) s. Edgerton *BHSD* s.v.—C (T 2. 316 c. 10-12) has: “If he is victorious over visible objects, victorious over sounds, smells, flavours, touchable things, and objects of the mind, he is also victorious over evil, improper factors which are sinful, inflaming, of painful results, and bring about future rebirth, old age, illness and death.”

16. Cp. the P sentence: *sammukhā me taṃ bhante bhagavato sutam sammukhā paṭiggaḥitaṃ . . .* at a place corresponding to MPS 18. 4 (Ed. WALDSCHMIDT, p. 220). C (T 2.316 c. 12-13) has: “I have received this instruction from the Exalted One personally, (the instruction) which is named the sermon (*dharmapariyāya*) of not letting in (sensitive) influences.”

17. Cp. P (IV. 184. 19-21): *avassutapariyāyaṃ ca vo āvuso desissāmi anavassutapariyāyam ca / taṃ sunātha sādhuṃ manasi karota bhāsissāmīti.*

18. Cp. P (IV. 187. 26-29): *atha kho bhagavā utthahitvā āyasmantam mahāmoggalānam āmantesi / sādhu sādhu moggalāna sādhu kho tvam moggalāna bhikkhūnaṃ avassutapariyāyaṃ ca anavassutapariyāyaṃ ca abhāsīti.* The C version (T 2. 316 c. 13-17) is more detailed: At that time the Exalted One knew that Mahāmaudgalyāyana had finished his speech. He arose, sat down with his body stretched upright, collected his mind in front and addressed M.: “Quite well, Maudgalyāyana, have you spoken to the men this sermon which is very profitable, which is (of importance) far beyond measure, which will bring luck for a long time to gods and men.”

19. The insertion “*punar api . . . (up to) . . . deśaya*” which is not found in C has a parallel in the *Saṅgītisūtra* (Ed. Stache-Rosen), I, p. 206. 2.

20. For the restitution of the conclusive Sanskrit passages of our text, corresponding phrases in the *Saṅgītisūtra* (Ed. Stache-Rosen), I, p. 206. 3-4 were available. There is general agreement also with C where the Sūtra ends as follows (T 2. 316 c. 17-22): Then the Exalted One addressed the (whole congregation of) monks: “You should take up the sermon of letting in and not letting in (sensitive influences), and preach it extensively to men. For what reason? In the interest of the perfection of morality, in the interest of the perfection of law, in the interest of the perfection of right conduct (chastity, *brahmacarya*) etc. (continuation as translated in the right column above) . . . When the Buddha had finished his speech, the monks who had heard the sermon of the Buddha rejoiced at it and went away respectfully.

21. The phrase *te* (scl. *dharmā*) *udgrhya paryavāpya (tathā ta)thā dhārayitavyā grāhayitavyā vācayitavyā(h)* is also known from the MPS (Ed. WALDSCHMIDT) 19.7 and 40.60.

