

**A Study and Translation of *An Extensive Commentary*
on the Four Immeasurables (Tshad med bzhi'i rgya cher 'grel pa)
attributed to Buddhagupta, with a Note About the Author**

⟨in English⟩

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Abstract

This paper focuses on a short commentary attributed to eight-century Indian Buddhist master Buddhagupta titled *An Extensive Commentary on the Four Immeasurables* (*Tshad med bzhi rgya cher 'grel pa*). The Four Immeasurables (*catur-apramāṇa*) is a set of virtues common to all Buddhist traditions: benevolence (*maitrī*), compassion (*karuṇā*), joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekṣā*). Buddhagupta's commentary is approximately seven pages long and summarizes the Mahāyāna and Abhidharma traditions related to the Four Immeasurables. It is also the longest work in the *Bstan 'gyur* devoted entirely to the subject. This paper will also explore the issue of the author's name; in most Tibetan sources, he is known as Buddhaguhya, though a minority of sources use Buddhagupta. Buddhagupta was a prolific and influential figure during the *snga dar* or early spread of Buddhism in Tibet. More than thirty texts are attributed to him preserved in the *Bstan 'gyur*, ranging from practical letters of advice to the rulers, ministers, and Buddhist clergy of Tibet to lengthy commentaries on esoteric topics such as advanced tantric practices. Despite his importance, little is known about his historicity, and many of the works attributed to him are of uncertain provenance. The presence of two very similar names—Buddhaguhya and Buddhagupta—across various recensions complicates matters further. This paper proposes that this is the result of mistranslations that took place as the Tibetan canon was revised across the centuries, and that the correct rendering of his name is in fact Buddhagupta.

A Study and Translation of *An Extensive Commentary on the Four Immeasurables (Tshad med bzhi'i rgya cher 'grel pa)* attributed to Buddhagupta, with a Note About the Author

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Keywords : caturapramāṇa, Four Immeasurables, Buddhagupta, Buddhaguhya

The Four Immeasurables (*caturapramāṇa*, *tshad med bzhi*) are a set of virtues ubiquitous among Buddhist traditions: benevolence (*maitrī*, *byams pa*), compassion (*karuṇā*, *snying rje*), joy (*muditā*, *dga' ba*), and equanimity (*upekṣā*, *btang snyoms*). Early Buddhist sources for these include descriptions from *suttas* in the Pāli Canon—where the term Divine Abodes (*brahmavihārā*) is preferred—such as the *Mettasuttas* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* and the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*.⁽¹⁾ Moving toward the fifth century CE, we find extensive explanations of the meaning and practice of the Four Immeasurables in Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* ⁽²⁾ and Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*.⁽³⁾ In Tibet, the recitation of prayers invoking the Four Immeasurables is *sine qua non* for setting the proper motivation during Buddhist liturgies.⁽⁴⁾ The Four Immeasurables are also mentioned in the fourth-to-fifth century

⁽¹⁾ Leon Feer, ed., *Saṃyutta-Nikāya, Part V: Mahā-vagga* (London: Pali Text Society, 1898), 115 and Richard Morris, ed., *Aṅguttara Nikāya, Part II Catukka Nipata* (London: Pali Text Society, 1888), 128-129. In Pāli, the Four Divine Abodes and *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, and *upekkhā*. For a study in Japanese on the Divine Abodes in the Pāli scriptures with an emphasis on their relationship to nirvāṇa, see NAWA Ryūken 名和隆乾, “Pāri minori ni okeru shimuryōshin no yobiteki kenkyū: shimuryōshin to nehan no kankei ni tsuite,” *パーリ聖典における四無量心の予備的研究：四無量心と涅槃の関係について*, *Shinshū bunka: Shinshū bunka kenkyūjo nenpō* 真宗文化：真宗文化研究所年報 25 (March 2016): 1-21.

⁽²⁾ C.A.F. Rhys-Davids, ed., *The Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa* (London: The Pali Text Society, 1975), 295-325. In the Theravāda tradition, the Four Divine abodes are connected to the four *jhānas* or levels of meditative concentration.

⁽³⁾ Prahlad Pradhan, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu* (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Center, 1975), 452-454.

⁽⁴⁾ For one of many examples, see fol. 3a6 Dbang phyugs rdo rje, Karma pa XI. *Sgrub brgyud rin po che'i phreng ba karma kaṃ tshang rtogs pa'i don brgyud las byung ba'i gsung dri ma med pa rnams bkod nas ngag 'don rgyun khyer gyi ri ma pa 'phags lam bgrod pa'i shing rta*, in *Gdams ngag mdzod*, ed. 'Jam mgon kong sprul Blo gro mtha' yas (Delhi: Shechen Publications, 1999). This is a *sngon 'gro* or preliminary practice in the Karma or Kaṃ tshang Bka' brgyud tradition.

Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali.⁽⁵⁾ And in contemporary times, psychologists have developed scales to measure the application of the Four Immeasurables in meditation, and have even compared the varying psychological effects of meditating on compassion versus joy.⁽⁶⁾ The Four Immeasurables even enjoy a cameo in the popular 1983 film *Star Wars: Episode VI—Return of the Jedi*.⁽⁷⁾

The history and importance of Four Immeasurables have already been noted in the scholarly literature, most notably Harvey B. Aronson's *Love & Sympathy in Theravāda Buddhism* and in Mudagamuwe Maithrimurthi's comprehensive monograph, *Wohllwollen, Mitleid, Freude und Gleichmut*.⁽⁸⁾ There are also several studies in Japanese, including Masunaga Reihō's 1936 essay "Shimuryōshin no kenkyū" and Shima Yoshiatsu's "Shimuryōshin to ekō."⁽⁹⁾ This essay aims to contribute to this body of scholarship through a study and translation of *An Extensive Commentary on the Four*

⁽⁵⁾ See I.33 of the text in Edwin F. Bryant, *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali: A New Edition, Translation, and Commentary* (New York: North Point Press, 2009). The verse reads: *maitrī-karuṇā-muditopekṣāṇām sukha-duḥkha-puṇyāpuṇya-viṣayāṇām bhāvanātaś citta-prasādanam* ||.

⁽⁶⁾ Respectively, Sue Krause & Sharon Sears "Measuring the Immeasurables: Development and Initial Validation of the Self-Other Four Immeasurables (SOFI) Scale Based on Buddhist Teachings on Loving Kindness," *Social Indicators Research* 92, no. 1 (May, 2009): 169-181 and Xianglong Zeng, Vivian Y. L. Chan, Xiaoliu Liu, Tian Po Oei, & Freedom Leung "The Four Immeasurables Meditations: Differential Effects of Appreciative Joy and Compassion Meditations on Emotions" *Mindfulness* 8, Issue 4 (August 2017): 949-959.

⁽⁷⁾ The use of Tibetan language as an alien language in this film is mentioned in passing in Donald S. Lopez Jr., *Prisoners of Shangri-la: Tibetan Buddhism and West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 2. In scene 24, "An Ewok Trap," several of the protagonists of the film—Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Chewbacca, R2-D2 and C-3PO are caught in a net set up by the teddy-bear-like Ewoks, the native species of Endor, a forested planet colonized by the Galactic Empire. Coming to collect their prey, the Ewoks approach the protagonists who have managed to free themselves from the net. Upon seeing C-3PO's golden metal exterior (he is a droid or robot), the Ewoks take him to be a god and begin bowing. A careful listener will hear that the Ewoks' hymn of worship includes the first verse Four Immeasurables prayer in Tibetan: *sems can thams cad bde ba dang bde ba'i rgyu dang ldan par gyur cig*, "May all sentient beings have happiness and the causes of happiness." See Richard Marquand, dir., *Star Wars: Episode VI – Return of the Jedi*, DVD (Beverly Hills: 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2013).

⁽⁸⁾ Harvey B. Aronson, *Love & Sympathy in Theravāda Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980) and Mudagamuwe Maithrimurthi, *Wohllwollen, Mitleid, Freude und Gleichmut: Eine ideengeschichtliche Untersuchung der vier apramāṇas in der buddhistischen Ethik und Spiritualität von den Anfängen bis hin zum frühen Yogācāra*, vol. 50 of *Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999). Maithrimurthi challenges Aronson's assertion that the *brahmavihārās* represent an altruistic ethics that encouraged monastic social engagement. Instead, Maithrimurthi argues that monks' and nuns' social activities were motivated by the possibility of increasing monastic wealth.

⁽⁹⁾ MASUNAGA Reihō 増永靈鳳, "Shimuryōshin no kenkyū" 四無量心の研究, *Komazawa daigaku jissen shūjō kenkyūkai nenpō* 駒沢大学実践宗乗研究会年報 4 (March 1936): 120-132 and SHIMA Yoshiatsu 島義厚, "Shimuryōshin to ekō" 四無量心と廻向, *Nippon bukkyō gakukai nenpō* 日本仏教学会年報 72 (May 2007): 43-55.

Immeasurables⁽¹⁰⁾ (*Tshad med bzhi'i rgya cher 'grel pa*, hereafter *Commentary*), which is the longest work in the *Btsan 'gyur* devoted entirely to the Four Immeasurables.

According to its colophon, the *Commentary* is attributed to Buddhagupta, a figure whose name, identity, and *oeuvre* has remained in question; it is in fact the only canonical text whose colophon records the name Buddhagupta rendered phonetically in Tibetan script (*bu ddha gup ta*). In the 812 CE *Dkar chag ldan kar ma*, the earliest catalog of Buddhist texts translated under the auspices of the Tibetan imperial government, we find three commentaries—all of which are on the *kriyā*, *caryā*, and *yoga* tantras—attributed to an author of the same name.⁽¹¹⁾ However, in the modern received recensions of the *Bstan 'gyur*, these commentaries are ascribed to Buddhaguhya (*Sangs rgyas gsang ba*). Moreover, in the Tibetan tantric manuscripts at Dunhuang, the name Buddhagupta is mentioned in connection with the *mahāyoga* and Dzokchen (*Rdzogs chen*) traditions. Yet again, however, certain recensions of the *Btsan 'gyur* preserve several *mahāyoga* treatises attributed to Buddhaguhya. The issue of the identity—particularly the name—of this illusive figure will be discussed in further detail below.

The first third of the *Commentary* consists of an explanation of the foci or focal objects (*dmigs pa*) of the Four Immeasurables: immeasurable sentient beings, immeasurable accumulations, immeasurable Dharma and immeasurable gnosis. In his *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, Vasubandhu writes in similar terms, noting that “They are called Immeasurables because they apply to immeasurable numbers of beings, drawing

⁽¹⁰⁾ There are two translations of this text published independently online. See Lhasey Lotsawa Translations, “An Extensive Commentary on the Four Immeasurables,” Lhasey Lotsawa Translation and Publications, 2011, revised 2016, <https://lhaseylotsawa.org/texts/an-extensive-commentary-on-the-four-immeasurables> (accessed September 25, 2019) and William May, trans., “Extensive Explanation of the Four Immeasurables by Buddhaguhya,” Buddhist Open Online Translation Lab, <https://www.bootl.org/html/Buddhaguhya-caturapramanatika.htm> (accessed September 25, 2019). The former misattributes this text to Buddhaguptanātha, the sixteenth-century Indian master who worked closely with Jo nang pa Tāranātha (1575-1634). See <https://lhaseylotsawa.org/authors/buddhagupta>. A Buddhaguptanātha authorship is quite unlikely since the text is already mentioned in, *inter alia*, Bu ston Rin chen grub's (1290-1364) well-known history of Buddhism in India and Tibet of 1322. See NISHIOKA Soshū 西岡祖秀, “Putun bukkyōshi' Mokurokubusakuin 2” 『プトゥン仏教史』 目録部索引 II [=Index to the Catalogue Section of Bu-ston's 'History of Buddhism' 2], *Tōkyō daigaku bungakubu bunka kōryū kenkyū shisetsu kenkyū kiyō* 東京大学文学部文化交流研究施設研究紀要 [=Annual Report of the University of Tokyo Department of Literature's Institute for the Study of Cultural Exchange] 5 (1981): 62. In this case, however, our text is ascribed to Buddhaguhya. This issue will be dealt with below.

⁽¹¹⁾ Adelheid Hermann-Pfandt, “The Lhan kar ma as a Source for the History of Tantric Buddhism” in *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism* (Leiden: Koninklijk Bill NV, 2000), 129.

after them immeasurable merit, and producing immeasurable [retributive] results.”⁽¹²⁾ There seems to be, however, even greater resonance between the four foci in the *Commentary* and the “Four Universal Vows” (*shi hongshi* 四弘誓) common in Tiantai and Chan liturgies. As Robert Sharf⁽¹³⁾ has noted, one formulation of these vows is found in the *Skillful Means of Birthlessness in Mahāyāna* (*Dasheng wusheng fangbian men* 大乘無生方便門) by the seventh-to-eighth century Chan master Shenxiu (神秀):

Sentient beings are limitless, I vow to deliver them.
 The defilements are limitless, I vow to destroy them.
 The Dharma teachings are endless, I vow to learn them.
 I vow to realize the unexcelled way of the buddhas⁽¹⁴⁾

Sharf notes that these vows eventually found their way, albeit with different wording, into the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (*Liuzu tanjing* 六祖大師法寶壇經)⁽¹⁵⁾ and it is likely because of this, the recitation of the Four Universal Vows continues to be practiced in contemporary Sōtō Zen liturgy.⁽¹⁶⁾ A five-fold formulation of these vows is found in the *Essentials of Meditation of the Tripitaka Master Wuwei* (*Wuwei sanzhan chanyao* 無畏三藏禪要), which presents itself as a record of teachings of the seventh-to-eighth century Indian master Śubhakarasiṃha. Sharf, however, concludes that Śubhakarasiṃha’s formulation is of Chinese provenance, based perhaps on the earliest source for the four vows, the works of the Tiantai master Zhiyi (智顓, 538-597).⁽¹⁷⁾ In any case, it is interesting, if not somewhat perplexing, that there is such

⁽¹²⁾ Louis de la Vallée Poussin, trans. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu, Vol 4*, translated from French by Leo M. Pruden (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), 1264.

⁽¹³⁾ Robert H. Sharf, “Buddhist Veda and the Rise of Chan” in *Chinese and Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism*, edited by Yael Bentor and Meir Shahar (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 104-105, n.35.

⁽¹⁴⁾ 衆生無邊誓願度。煩惱無邊誓願斷。法門無盡誓願學。無上佛道誓願證 (T 2834: 85.1273b14-15). I have reproduced Sharf’s translation, with a few minor changes. A similar formulation is found in the *Dasheng bensheng xindi guan jing* 大乘本生心地觀經: 衆生無邊誓願度。煩惱無邊誓願斷。法門無盡誓願學。無上佛道誓願證 (T 2834: 85.1273b14-15). Since this text was translated by Prajña (744-ca. 810), its presence in China postdates Shenxiu by a century or so and thus may not have been a source for him. On Prajña, see Paul Copp, “Prajña,” in *Esoteric Buddhist and the Tantras in East Asia*, edited by Charles Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 360-362.

⁽¹⁵⁾ 自心衆生無邊誓願度自心煩惱無邊誓斷。自性法門無盡誓願學。自性無上佛道誓願成。(T 2008: 48.354a11-13).

⁽¹⁶⁾ Soto Zen Text Project, *Soto School Scriptures for Daily Services and Practice* (Tokyo: Sotoshu Shumicho, 2001), 74 and 134. This is an English translation with Roman transliteration of the of the original Japanese text, *Sōtōshū nikka gongyō seiten* 曹洞宗日課勤行聖典.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Sharf *ibid* points out that they appear in, *inter alia*, Zhiyi’s *Shi chanboluomi cidī famen* 釋禪波羅蜜次第法門 (T1916:46.476b14-18): 一未度者令度。亦云衆生無邊誓願度。二未解者令

similarity between Buddhagupta's four foci and the four universal vows. If indeed *An Extensive Commentary on the Four Immeasurables* is a translation of an eighth-century Indian text, then it may suggest that the ideas behind the four universal vows may have drawn on some Indian source.

The remaining two-thirds of the text describes techniques for meditating upon each of the Four Immeasurables, with the balance focusing on benevolence. The author introduces three types of benevolence: 1) benevolence that focuses on the suffering of sentient beings; 2) benevolence focused on phenomena, which is practiced by bodhisattvas on the first to the seventh *bhūmis* or bodhisattva stages; and 3) benevolence without focus, which spontaneously arises in bodhisattvas on the eighth *bhūmi* and above. The *Akṣayamatīrdeśa Sūtra (Blo gros mi zad pas bstan pa'i mdo)*⁽¹⁸⁾ contains a similar explanation of these three types of benevolence:

Venerable Śāriputra, there are three [kinds of] benevolence: benevolence focused on sentient beings, benevolence focused on phenomena, and benevolence without focus. Benevolence focused on sentient beings is that of beginner bodhisattvas; benevolence focused on phenomena is that of a bodhisattva with practice experience; and benevolence without focus is that of a bodhisattva who has attained forbearance of the non-arising of phenomena.⁽¹⁹⁾

解。亦云煩惱無數誓願斷。三未安者令安。亦云法門無盡誓願知。四未得涅槃令得涅槃。亦云無上佛道誓願成。Sharf suggests that Zhiyi “goes to some length” to trace the four universal vows to scriptural sources such as the *Lotus Sūtra*, indicating a “felt need to legitimize his liturgical innovations.” For more on the four universal vows in Japanese, see KAGAWA Takao 香川孝雄, “Shiguseigaku no genryū” 四弘誓願の源流 [=The Origins of the “Four Universal Vows”], *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度学仏教学研究 [=Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies] 38, no. 1 (December 1989): 294-302.

⁽¹⁸⁾ The passage quoted below from Tibetan translation of the *Ārya Akṣayamatīrdeśa Mahāyānasūtra* is also found in the Chinese translation of this text, 無盡意菩薩, T397:13.14-19. With reference to the Chinese translation, Huimin Bhikshu, citing Nagao, notes that this text is the “source of the three kinds of objects for meditation on the Four Immeasurables. See “The Four Immeasurables in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* and *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* and their Implementation in a Measuring Scale for a Study of Brain Imaging.” *Dharma Drum Journal of Buddhist Studies* 16 (2015): 40 and n.12 & 13. However, the Chinese Buddhist canon contains more than one translation of the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa Sūtra*. For a discussion of these translations, see Jens Braarvig's introduction to *Akṣayamatīrdeśasūtra, Volume II: The Tradition of Imperishability of in Buddhist Thought* (Oslo: Solum Forlag, 1993), xvii-cxxxii.

⁽¹⁹⁾ *Ārya Akṣayamatīrdeśanāma Mahāyānasūtra*, 'Phags pa blo gros mi zad pas bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo, Sde dge bka' 'gyur, D 174, Mdo sde ma, fol. 132a: |btsun pa sha ra dwa ti'i bu| byams pa ni gsum po 'di dag ste| gsum gang zhe na| 'di lta ste| sems can la dmigs pa'i byams pa dang | chos la dmigs pa'i byams pa dang | dmigs pa med pa'i byams pa'o| |de la sems can la dmigs pa'i byams pa ni sems dang po bskyed pa'i byang chub sems dpa' rnam ky'i'o| |chos la dmigs pa'i byams pa ni spyod pa la zhugs pa'i byang chub sems dpa' rnam ky'i'o|

Much of this passage is quoted in Śāntideva's (c. seventh-to-eighth-century CE) pivotal work, *Śikṣāsamuccaya*.⁽²⁰⁾ In contrast, the commentary on Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* attributed to Vasubandhu extends the three types of foci⁽²¹⁾ (*trividhāmbana*, *dmigs pa rnam pa gsum*)—sentient beings, phenomena, and objectlessness⁽²²⁾—to all four Immeasurables. In his comments on chapter seventeen, verse eighteen, Vasubandhu states that

When their focus is sentient beings, they engage sentient beings who desire happiness and those who are afflicted. *Benevolence* has the feature of [wishing] happiness for sentient beings; *compassion* has the feature of [wishing] them freedom from suffering; *joy* has the feature of [wishing] they not be separated from happiness; and equanimity has the feature of ridding sentient beings of their afflictive emotions regarding their experiences.

When their objects are phenomena (*dharma*),⁽²³⁾ they engage phenomena that have manifested, that is, the states [of being] that have been taught.

When their focus is objectless, they engage suchness itself. They are objectless because they are devoid of conceptualization.⁽²⁴⁾

[*dmigs pa med pa'i byams pa ni mi skye ba'i chos la bzod pa thob pa'i byang chub sems dpa' rnam kyī ste*].

⁽²⁰⁾ P.L. Vaidya, ed., *Śikṣāsamuccaya of Śāntideva* (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute of Post-graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1961), 17: *sattvārambaṇā matrī prathamacittotpādikānāṃ bodhisattvānāṃ dharmārambaṇā caryāpratipannānāṃ bodhisattvānāṃ anārambaṇā matrī anuṣṭhikadharmakṣāntipratilabdhanāṃ bodhisattvānāṃ* ||. This passage constitutes one of a few extant Sanskrit fragments of the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa Sūtra*. For the Tibetan, see Śāntideva, Zhi ba lha, *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, *Bslab pa kun las btus pa*, Sde dge bstan 'gyur, D 3940, Dbu ma khi, fol. 120a2.

⁽²¹⁾ For more on the *trividhāmbana*, see NAGASAKI Yōko 長崎 陽子, “Yuishiki ronsho ni okeru san'en no shimuryōshin ni tsuite” 唯識論書における三縁の四無量心について, *Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 仏教学研究 5 (March 1999): 42-64.

⁽²²⁾ On objectlessness applied to compassion as discussed in chapter seventeen of the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, see WAKAHARA Yūshō 若原雄昭. “Muen no jihi—Daijō shōgon keiron XVII aki wo chūshin ni” 無縁の慈悲 -- 大乘莊嚴經論 XVII 章を中心に. *Nihon bukkyō gakkai nenpō* 日本仏教学会年報 [=The Journal of the Japan Buddhist Research Association] 62 (May 1996): 91-108.

⁽²³⁾ Lobsang Jamspal et al. note that in Vasubandhu's commentary on the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* “there seems to be confusion” between the two meaning of *dharma* as referring either to the teachings of the Buddha or phenomena. See *The Universal Vehicle Discourse Literature (Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra) by Maitreya-nātha/Āryasaṅga Together with its Commentary (Bhāṣya) by Vasubandhu* (New York City: The American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2004), 229 n. 9.

⁽²⁴⁾ Sylvain Lévi, *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālamkāra, exposé de la doctrine du Grand Véhicule selon le système Yogācāra*, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1907), 121: *satvālambanāḥ*

The *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, attributed to Asaṅga, also applies the three types of foci to the other three Immeasurables.⁽²⁵⁾

The author of the *Commentary* then proceeds to describe in detail how to cultivate benevolence by gradually extending the feelings of closeness and affection one has for loved ones first to people one likes, then to people one is indifferent toward, and finally to people one dislikes. A similar meditation is described in both the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*.⁽²⁶⁾ Moving to the next Immeasurable, the author explains that compassion means having sympathy for those who suffer, those who do wrong, and those who have not had the opportunity to practice Dharma. Joy entails rejoicing in the material wealth, happiness, and Dharma practice of both oneself and other. Finally, the author explains equanimity in terms of the eight worldly dharmas (*'jig rten chos brgyad*): he urges the reader to be neither happy nor unhappy in the face of gain or loss, happiness or suffering, praise or criticism, and fame or obscurity.

This brings us to the question of the provenance and dating of the *Commentary*. One possible early reference to the text is Bcom ldan rig pa'i ral gri's (1227-1305) *An Ornamental Sunbeam for the Spread of the Teachings (Btsan pa rgyas pa rgyan gyi nyi 'od)*, dated by Kurtis Schaeffer and Leonard van der Kuijp to the late 1260s to the early 1270s. This text is a history and survey of Buddhist literature in Tibet, the latter half of which contains scripture and treatises in organized lists. Chapter 30, which lists treatises composed by Tibetans (*bod kyis byas pa'i bstan bcos*) during the reign of the Tibetan emperor Khri Ral pa can (alias Khri gtsug lde btsan, reigned 815-841) contains a reference to a *Tshad med bzhi'i rgya cher 'grel pa* with no indication of an author.⁽²⁷⁾ Schaeffer and van der Kuijp associate this text with a non-extant, anonymous commentary of the same name in Bu ston Rin chen drub's history of Buddhism in India and Tibet.⁽²⁸⁾ A more stable, slightly later reference is found in the *Catalog of the*

sukhārthini yāvat kliṣṭe satvanikāye pravartante | tathā hi maitrī satveṣu sukhasaṃyogākārā | karuṇā duḥkhaviyogākārā | muditā sukhāviyogākārā | upekṣāsu vedanāsu teṣāṃ satvānāṃ niḥkleśatopasaṃhārākārā | dharmālambanāstadeśite dharme | yatra te vihārā deśitāḥ | anālambanāstattathatāyāṃ | te hyavikalpatvād anālambanā ivetyanālambanāḥ |.

⁽²⁵⁾ Maithrimurti, 306-307. Maithrimurti provides a critically edited Sanskrit text and German translation for the section of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* that discusses the Four Immeasurables.

⁽²⁶⁾ Vaidya, 151 and Pradhan, 454.

⁽²⁷⁾ Kurtis Schaeffer and Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp, *An Early Tibetan Survey of Buddhist Literature: The Btsan pa rgyas pa rgyan gyi nyi 'od of Bcom ldam ral gri* (Cambridge: The Harvard Oriental Series, 2009), 267, text. no. 30.93.

⁽²⁸⁾ NISHIOKA Soshū 西岡祖秀, “‘Putun bukkyōshi’ Mokurokubusakuin 3” 『プトゥン仏教史』 目録部索引 III [=Index to the Catalogue Section of Bu-ston's 'History of Buddhism' 3], *Tōkyō*

Narthatang Tengyur (under the title *Bstan bcos kyi dkar chag*) by Dbus pa Blo gsal Rtsod pa'i seng ge (ca. 1270-ca. 1355), a disciple of Bcom ldan rig pa'i ral gri, and dated to the first quarter of the fourteenth-century. This catalog, however, records this text as “*An Extensive Commentary on the Four Immeasurables* by the *ācārya* Buddhaguhya” (*tshad med pa bzhi rgyas cher 'grel pa slaun* [=slob dpon] *sangs rgyas gsang ba'i mdzad pa*), returning us again to Buddhagupta/Buddhaguhya issue.⁽²⁹⁾ OCHI Junji has observed that there is some inconsistency between the catalogs (*dkar chag*) and the colophons of this text in D and Q. He notes that while colophons say the author is Buddhagupta, the catalogues ascribe the texts to Buddhaguhya.⁽³⁰⁾ This, as I will demonstrate below, is the result of mis-rendering and mistranslation of this figure's name across text catalogues from the Tibetan empire and to up to Dbus pa blo gsal's time. That said, I propose that the *terminus ad quem* of *An Extensive Commentary on the Four Immeasurables* is first quarter of the fourteenth-century. Determining a definitive *terminus a quo* is difficult, if not impossible, since there are no early references to the text in any of the Tibetan imperial period catalogs, nor are the Tibetan translators of the text mentioned in the colophon.

Translation

An Extensive Commentary on the Four Immeasurables

Benevolence, Compassion

Joy, and Equanimity—

These are the great Immeasurables that I shall explain herein

So that one may diligently meditate upon them.

The foci of these are immeasurable sentient beings, immeasurable accumulations, immeasurable Dharma and immeasurable gnosis.⁽³¹⁾ *Immeasurable sentient beings*

daigaku bungakubu bunka kōryū kenkyū shisetsu kenkyū kiyō 東京大学文学部文化交流研究施設研究紀要 [=Annual Report of the University of Tokyo Department of Literature's Institute for the Study of Cultural Exchange] 6 (1983): 117, text no. 3033.

⁽²⁹⁾ Dbus pa Blo gsal Rtsod pa'i seng ge, *Bstan bcos kyi dkar chag* (Publisher and date unknown) BDRC W2CZ7507, fol. 54b5.

⁽³⁰⁾ OCHI Junji 越智淳仁 “Buddhagupta to Buddhaguhya ni tsuite” Buddhagupta と Buddhaguhya について,” *Nihon chibetto gakkai kaihō* 日本西蔵学会々報 [=Report of the Japanese Association for Tibetan Studies] 28 (1980): 5.

⁽³¹⁾ Cf. *Essentials of Meditation of the Tripiṭaka Master Wuwei* (*Wuwei sanzhan chanyao* 無畏三蔵禪要, T917:18.943a13-16) associated with the Indian master Śubhakarasiṃha:

means that one is incapable of calculating them, saying, “This is how many or few sentient beings there are in the three realms.” As the Lord teaches in the *Noble Sūtra Teaching the Great Compassion of the Tathāgatas*:

O Child of Noble Birth, the sentient beings who dwell within this very space [the size of] the hole of a mere chariot wheel that are visible to the Tathāgatas are quite many. But the gods and humans in the world-systems of the trichiliocosm are not like that. Indeed, the realms of imperceptible sentient beings are immeasurable.⁽³²⁾

Therefore, since the realms of sentient beings are incomprehensible, sentient beings are said to be immeasurable. In meditating on the Immeasurables, one might ask: how then does one focus and meditate upon immeasurable sentient beings? In the following way: from beginningless time, all sentient beings in the three realms cycle through the higher and lower abodes through the power of their individual karmas; there is none among them who I have not been close to hundreds of thousands of times. Focusing on immeasurable sentient beings means [extending] the Four Immeasurables to all sentient beings and dwelling in equanimity, having thought “They are my dear ones!”

Immeasurable accumulations means immeasurable accumulations of merit and gnosis. The Four Dharmas⁽³³⁾ are the primary cause of these, since they are the cause or essence of immeasurable accumulations of merit and gnosis. As the Lord also teaches in

Sentient beings are limitless, I vow to deliver them.
Meritorious wisdom is limitless, I vow to amass it.
The Dharma teachings are limitless, I vow to learn them.
The Tathāgatas are limitless, I vow to serve them.
I vow to attain the unexcelled way of the buddhas.

衆生無邊誓願度。福智無邊誓願集。法門無邊誓願學。如來無邊誓願仕。無上佛道誓願成。 Translation from Sharf, 105 n. 35.

⁽³²⁾ Though the meaning is similar, the passage cited here differs from the wording of the canonical Ārya Tathāgata-mahākaruṇā-nirdeśa-nāma Mahāyāna-sūtra, *'Phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying rje chen po nges par bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po 'i mdo*, Sde dge bka' 'gyur, D 147, Mdo sde pa, 142a1-242b7. On f. 199a2-3 we find: *yang shing rta'i phang lo tsam gyis phyogs na snang bar ma gyur pa'i sems can gang dag de bzhin gshegs pa la snang bar gyur pa de dag ni ches mang gi |stong gsum gyi stong chen po'i 'jig rten gyi khams kyi lha dang mi rnams ni de ltar ma yin te| |de ltar snang bar ma gyur pa'i sems can gyi khams ni tshad med do|*. According to its colophon, the text was translated into Tibetan by the dynastic period translator Ye shes sde with the Indian master Śilendrabodhi. This text is found in Chinese translation as T 398, 大哀經 and in chapters 1 & 2 of T 397, 大方等大集經.

⁽³³⁾ I take this term—*chos bzhi po*—to refer to the Four Immeasurables; this interpretation implied in the author's discussion of immeasurable gnosis further down in the commentary.

the sūtras:

O Child of Noble Birth, making offerings to someone who, not rising from their seat, meditates on the samādhi of benevolence, will generate incalculable merit.⁽³⁴⁾

Therefore, if one can obtain so much merit just by making offerings to a person who is meditating on benevolence and the rest of the Immeasurables, what need is there to mention one who meditates upon and practices the Immeasurables? The amount of merit generated thereby would be so much greater! This is how an immeasurable accumulation of merit and gnosis is generated. This becomes the cause of generating immeasurable accumulations of dharma, which in turn causes the generation of an immeasurable accumulation of gnosis.

Immeasurable Dharma is the tremendous qualities of a buddha, such as the powers, fearlessness, and the rest. The cause of obtaining these is abiding in the Four Dharmas because they give rise immeasurable accumulations of merit and gnosis. And since this in turn gives rise to and establishes the great qualities of a buddha, one should persistently endeavor in the Four Immeasurables.

The Four Dharmas is the focal object of the Tathāgata's *immeasurable gnosis*; it is also the gnosis itself that abides in the state, that is, the essence of benevolence and rest of the Four Dharmas. This is what is meant by “the essence is transformed” or “within the perceptual sphere of the object of cognition undifferentiated from cognition itself.”⁽³⁵⁾

Now, regarding *benevolence*, there is a stage of aspirational practice consisting of the four factors of ascertainment: the obtainment of appearance, the enhancement of appearance, the partial engagement in the meaning of suchness, and unobstructed samādhi.⁽³⁶⁾ A bodhisattva remains in those four factors of ascertainment.⁽³⁷⁾ For a

⁽³⁴⁾ I have not been able to find a canonical source for this quotation. The author might simply be referring to general Buddhist ideas rather than quoting from any particular text.

⁽³⁵⁾ I have not been able to find the source of this exact phrase.

⁽³⁶⁾ These “four factors of ascertainment” (*nges par byed pa'i cha bzhi po*) are referenced by Ska ba Dpal brtsegs, the Tibetan dynastic period translator of the eight-century, and his unnamed coauthors in *Memorandum on the Enumeration of Phenomena* (*Chos kyi rnam grang kyi brjed byang*). See f. 265a7 of Ska ba Dpal brtsegs et al., *Chos kyi rnam grangs kyi byed byang*, Sde dge bstan 'gyur, D 4362, Mdo 'grel jo, 231b6-289a5. For an English translation of this work, see Thubten K. Rikey & Andrew Ruskin, trans., *A Manual of Key Buddhist Terms: Categorization of Buddhist Terminology with Commentary* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1992). And for a brief overview of the text in Japanese, see ISHIKAWA Mie 石川美恵, “Dpal

bodhisattva who dwells within the four factors of ascertainment, the gods, humans, pretas and others, as well as the beings of the hell realm, are all within the perceptual sphere of their supernormal faculties. Having seen the gods, humans, and others, and the beings in the lower states of rebirth whose very nature is suffering, [a bodhisattva] gives rise to great compassion. They understand that these beings have been cycling through saṃsāra from beginningless time and that all have been their friend at some point. They thus give rise to great benevolence towards all these sentient beings, considering them as their own children. They make aspirations to liberate all sentient beings from suffering and bring them to a state of happiness, while acting to benefit all sentient beings through the Dharma. This is the meaning of *benevolence focused on sentient beings*.⁽³⁸⁾

Bodhisattvas on the first to seventh bodhisattva bhūmis give rise to benevolence for sentient beings by having directly realized the immanent nature of phenomena. Although all phenomena do not have an essential nature, sentient beings do not realize as much and, by being attached to physical objects, they circle through the three realms. Therefore, these [bodhisattvas] give rise to benevolence for those who suffer in this way and make aspirations to understand the true nature of phenomena, while acting to benefit sentient beings through the Dharma. This is the meaning of *benevolence focused on phenomena*.⁽³⁹⁾

The eighth bodhisattva bhūmi up to and including the attainment of buddhahood are known as “the stage of spontaneous accomplishment without focus.” From the eighth bhūmi and onward, they give rise to benevolence for sentient beings while also acting for their benefit through the mode of non-conceptuality and spontaneous accomplishment. For example, they benefit sentient beings like a precious wish-fulfilling jewel or wish-fulfilling tree. Moreover, although they are free of conceptual thought, great benevolence for sentient beings still spontaneously arises

brtsegs no ‘chos kyi nram grangs kyi brjed byang’ ni tsuite,” dpal brtsegs の“chos kyi nram grangs kyi brjed byang”について, in *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究 [=Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies] 12 (2008): 551-546.

⁽³⁷⁾ Implying that, by contrast, they remain aspirational for non-bodhisattvas.

⁽³⁸⁾ With this passage, the author begins describing the three types of benevolence. These are also mentioned in *Sūtra Teaching the Great Compassion of the Tathāgatas (Tathāgatamahākaraṇānirdeśa Sūtra)*, which the author quotes from in the *Commentary*. The sūtra states that “Benevolence focused on sentient beings and benevolence focused on phenomena are the roots of wisdom. Benevolence without focus is the application of wisdom” |sems can la dmigs pa dang| chos la dmig pa’i byams pa ni shes rab kyi rtsa ba’o| |dmigs med pa’i byams pa ni shes rab kyi las so|, fol. 235a3.

⁽³⁹⁾ There seems to be some *śleṣa* or equivoque with the word *dharma* (*chos*), which carries the meaning of both phenomena and Dharma. On the other hand, see *supra* n. 23; Lobsang Jamspal et al. point out a similar slippage in Vasubadhu’s commentary on the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*.

through the power of their past aspirations, while acting for the benefit of sentient beings. This is known as *objectless benevolence*.⁽⁴⁰⁾

But how, then, do ordinary individuals who are just beginners meditate on benevolence that is focused on sentient beings? Ordinary individuals who are just beginners should meditate on benevolence that is focused on sentient beings in the following way. There are three types of beings: 1) those one cares about, 2) those one is indifferent to, and 3) those one dislikes. Those one cares about are further divided into three: higher, middling, and lesser. Then there are ones is indifferent to, and those one dislikes can also be further divided into higher, middling, and lesser, for a total of seven divisions.⁽⁴¹⁾ Initially, you should meditate upon someone who you care about in a middling way as if they were someone you care about a lot, such as your parents or others. After you are familiar with this, you meditate upon all those one is indifferent to as if they were those you care a lot about. Then you mediate upon those you dislike only a little as if they were someone you care about a lot. Once you are familiar with this, meditate on someone you dislike in a middling way as if they were someone you care about very much. Then you [meditate] on some you really dislike as if they were your own parents. In this way, you can even take as the focus of your mediation all sentient beings without exception who, from beginningless time, have been your own parents or others who are close to you. Moreover, as you meditate in this way, meditating initially only on people from your own family, you then gradually [extend it to others]. This is the meaning of *limitless mediation*.⁽⁴²⁾

Regarding *compassion*, there is compassion that focuses on sentient beings who are suffering. There are three types of suffering such as the suffering of suffering and so on, or eight types of suffering such as birth and the rest.⁽⁴³⁾ [Focusing on] those sentient

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Or more literally, *benevolence without focus*.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Here, the Tibetan can easily be misread as implying that the people one is indifferent to can also be divided into divided into higher, middling, and lesser as well. However, this would result in nine groups, not seven. In his description of the meditation on benevolence from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, Vasubandhu also treats the people one is indifferent to as a single group, not dividing them into three: *na cecchaknoti kleśasyodbhataṅgavṛttivāt sa mitrapakṣaṃ tridhā bhittvā 'dhimātre tatsukhamadhimucyate | tato madhye mṛdau ca | teṣu cetsamāṃ maitrīm labhate tata udāsīnapakṣe | tataḥ śatrūpakṣaṃ tridhā bhittvā mṛdau tat sukhamadhimucyate | tato madhye 'dhimātre ca | tataścedadhimātra iva mitrapakṣe sukhādhimokṣo na vyāvartate |*. See Pradan, 454.

⁽⁴²⁾ Buddhagosa's description of meditating on benevolence in the *Visuddhimagga* begins not with a person one cares about in a middling way, but rather with oneself: *sabbapaṭhamam pana: aham sukhito homi, niddukkho ti vā avero avyāpajjo anīgo sukhī atthānaṃ pariharāmi ti vā evaṃ punappunaṃ attani yeva bhāvetabhā*, C.A.F. Rhys-Davids, 296.

⁽⁴³⁾ The three types of suffering are: 1) the suffering of suffering, 2) the suffering of change and 3) the suffering of pervasive conditionality. The eight types of suffering are the suffering of: 1)

beings who suffer in these ways is known as *compassion that clears away the suffering of all*. As for compassion focused on beings who do wrong, *compassion that clears away all non-virtue* means [eliminating] the non-virtuous conduct of those sentient beings, which is the root or cause of the forms of suffering mentioned above. *Compassion focused on beings who are not liberated because they lack the necessary conditions* means [focusing on] those sentient beings who have not heard the Dharma because they lack a spiritual teacher. Moreover, as the tantras state, “Sentient beings who do not rely upon a spiritual teacher, who have not heard the Dharma, and are not liberated, are liberated through compassion.”⁽⁴⁴⁾

Joy is the joy experienced by sentient beings due to possessing various types of wealth: the wealth of material objects, the wealth of Dharma, and the wealth of happiness. *Joy focused on perfecting one's own accumulations* is the joy [that arises] from focusing on your own great accumulations of virtue. *Joy focused on the taste of the holy Dharma* is joy [that arises] though oneself and others attaining the taste of hearing, contemplating, and meditating upon the Dharma.

As for *equanimity*, there is equanimity of acting for the benefit of sentient being who are either fortunate and unfortunate. Acting for the benefit of both equally means not differentiating between the two, thinking, “I will act for the benefit of those who are fortunate and not for those who are unfortunate.” The phrase “eight worldly dharmas, such as gain and loss, and the rest” includes the following: happiness and suffering, praise and criticism, and fame and obscurity. Remain in equanimity being neither happy nor unhappy with these. The eight worldly dharmas include gain and loss and all the rest. The eight worldly dharmas are referred to as such because these eight things are known and exist in the world.

How does one dwell in equanimity when faced with the eight worldly dharmas?

In the following way: if I were to gain marvelous amounts of wealth, I should neither take joy in it nor be attached to it. And if this great wealth were diminished or lost, I

birth, 2) old age, 3) sickness, 4) death, 5) encountering that which is unpleasant, 6) separating from that which is pleasant, 7) not getting what you want, and 8) perpetuating aggregates. See Mgon po dbang rgyal, *Chos kyi rnam grangs shes bya'i nor gling 'jug pa'i gru gzings* (Chengdu: Sichuan Nationalities Language Press, 1988), 37 and 255 respectively.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ I have not been able to identify a source for these words. My translation suggests that author is stating that this is a general notion expressed in the tantras.

should be neither distressed nor unhappy. This is called *equanimity without happiness or sorrow regarding in gain and loss*. If a loving spouse were to anoint my body with perfume, sandalwood, and other [substances], caress me, serve and honor me, I should not take joy in or be attached to [this kind of] veneration. And if an enemy were to strike, beat, and do other [acts of violence] to my body, I should not become angry. I should accept the suffering of being struck and beaten, and not think of the pain. This is called *equanimity without happiness or sorrow regarding pleasure and pain*. If a good friend speaks well of me and praise me with sweet words, I should not take joy in them nor should I think of myself as superior. And if an enemy were to uncover and proclaim my faults, I should not become unhappy or discouraged. This is called *equanimity without happiness or unhappiness regarding praise and criticism*. If many people hear of and come to know my good qualities, I should not take joy in the fame of my good qualities, thinking, “Since many people know that I possess good qualities, my good qualities are famous, and I will not be forgotten!” And even if many people have not heard of or know about my good qualities, I should not become unhappy, thinking, “My good qualities are not well known, I will fade [from memory].” This is known *equanimity without happiness or sorry regarding the fame or obscurity of one’s of good qualities*.

The term *accumulations* was mentioned above. *Equanimity focused on completely fulfilling the accumulations during the fortunate and unfortunate times* means not making differentiations, thinking “I will practice the fulfilment of the accumulations of virtue at this time, but not at this time,” but rather practicing it always.

For the sake of sentient beings, I have composed this treatise

On the meaning of all the meditations

Of the Four Immeasurables, the Divine Abodes:

Through this, may all beings be freed from defilement and attain Buddhahood!

—This concludes *An Extensive Commentary on the Four Immeasurables* composed by the *ācārya* Buddhagupta—⁽⁴⁵⁾

Critical Edition of *Tshad med bzhi'i rgya cher 'grel pa*⁽⁴⁶⁾

[C19a7] [D19a6] [G26a] [N19a4] [Q18b7]

⁽⁴⁵⁾ The colophon does not name any translators or revisers.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ The layout of the critical edition follows that of the English translation so that the Tibetan reader can easily refer back to the Tibetan text.

|tshad med bzhi'i rgya cher 'grel pa bzhugs|⁽⁴⁷⁾

[G26b1]

|byams pa dang ni snying rje dang |

|dga' ba dang ni btang snyoms te|

|de dag chen po tshad med pa|

|'bad pas bsgom phyir 'dir bshad bya|

|'di ltar sems can tshad med pa la dmigs pa dang | tshogs tshad med pa dang | [Q19a]
chos tshad med [C19b] pa dang | ye shes tshad med pa'o | de la sems can tshad med pa
ni khams gsum pa'i sems can mang nyung de tsam zhig yod do zhes dpag par mi nus
pas nasems can tshad med pa zhes bya ste| ndi ltar bcom ldan 'das kyis 'phags pa de
bzhin gshegs pa'i snying rje chen po bstan pa'i mdo las 'di skad du|

rigs kyis [D19b] bu phyogs 'di nyid na shing rta'i 'phang lo tsam gyi bug pa na
gnas par gyur pa'i sems can gang dag de bzhin gshegs pas gzigs par gyur pa de
dag ni ches mang gi|stong gsum gyi stong chen po'i 'jig rten gyi khams kyis lha
dang mi rnams ni de lta ma yin te| de ltar snang bar ma gyur pa'i sems can gyi
khams ni tshad med do zhes gsungs te|

de lta bas na sems can gyi khams tshad med pa⁽⁴⁸⁾ gzung bar mi nus pas na⁽⁴⁹⁾ sems can
[N19b] tshad med pa zhes bya'o | tshad med pa bsgoms pas⁽⁵⁰⁾ sems can tshad med pa la
ci ltar dmigs par bya zhing bsgom zhe na| 'di ltar khams gsum pa'i sems can thams cad
thog ma med pa'i dus nas| so so'i las kyis dbang gis gnas mtho dman du 'khor ba 'di dag
bdag dang lan brgya stong du mar gnyen du [G 27a] ma gyur pa med de| 'di ni bdag gi
gnyen yin no snyam nas| sems can thams cad la tshad med pa bzhi pos btang snyoms su
gnas pa 'di ni sems can tshad med pa la dmigs pa zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go|

|de la tshogs tshad med pa ni| bsod nams dang ye shes kyis [C20a] tshogs tshad
med pa ste| rgyur gyur pa ni chos bzhi po yin la de ni bsod nams dang ye shes kyis tshogs
tshad med pa rnam pa gnyis bskyed pa'i rgyu'am ngo bo yin te| 'di ltar bcom ldan 'das
kyis kyang mdo dag las gsungs pa|

rigs kyis bu byams pa'i ting nge 'dzin bsgom pa stan las ma langs pa la yon

⁽⁴⁷⁾ tshad med bzhi'i rgya cher 'gral pa slob dpon buddha guptas mdzad pa'o GNQ

⁽⁴⁸⁾ om. GNQ

⁽⁴⁹⁾ mi nus pa GNQ

⁽⁵⁰⁾ pa'i GNQ

[Q19b] 'bul bar byed pa ni bsod nams dpag tu med pa bskyed par 'gyur ro zhes gsungs pa lta bu ste|

'di ltar byams pa la sogs pa tshad med pa bsgom pa'i mi la yon phul bas kyang bsod nams mang po 'thob na gang tshad med pa rnams su dngos su⁽⁵¹⁾ nyams su blangs te bsgom⁽⁵²⁾ pa lta smos kyang ci dgos te| bsod nams kyi phung po gong ma bas ches mang du bskyed do| |de ltar bsod nams dang ye shes kyi tshogs tshad med skyes pa dang | rgyu de las chos kyi tshogs tshad med pa bskyed la| rgyu de las ye shes kyi tshogs tshad med pa bskyed pa'o|

|chos tshad med pa ni sangs rgyas kyi che ba'i yon tan stobs dang mi 'jigs pa la sogs pa ste| de 'thob pa'i [D20a] rgyur 'gyur ba ni chos bzhi po la gnas pa'i sgo nas bsod nams dang ye shes kyi tshogs skyes⁽⁵³⁾ pa'i rgyus sangs rgyas kyi che ba'i yon tan rnams skye zhing 'grub par 'gyur bas na tshad med pa bzhi la nan tan [G 27b] du bya'o|

|chos bzhi po de rnams de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes tshad med pa'i dmigs pa'i yul du gyur pa'am| ye shes nyid byams pa la sogs chos bzhi po de dag gi ngang du 'am ngo bor gnas te| shes bya [N20a] dang shes pa tha mi dad pa'i spyod yul du 'am| ngo bor gyur pa'o zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go|

de la byams pa ni⁽⁵⁴⁾ mos pas spyod pa'i sa ni nges par 'byed pa'i cha bzhi po snang ba thob pa dang snang ba mched pa dang | de kho na nyid kyi don la phyogs gcig pa rjes su zhugs pa dang | bar chad med pa'i ting nge 'dzin zhes bya ba nges par 'byed pa'i cha bzhi la gnas pa'i byang chub sems dpa' ste| 'di ltar nges par 'byed pa'i cha bzhi la gnas pa'i byang chub sems dpa'i mngon par shes pa'i dbang po'i spyod yul du ni lha dang mi dang yi dwags la sogs pa dang sems can dmyal ba'i gnas rnams [Q20a] mngon sum du gyur te| lha dang mi la sogs pa dang ngan song gi gnas de dag na sdug bsngal ba'i rang bzhin can gyi sems can rnams mthong nas lhag par snying rje chen po skye zhing sems can de dag thog ma med pa nas 'khor bar 'khor ba na| bdag gi gnyen du ma gyur pa med par khong du chud nas sems can de dag thams cad la bu gcig pa dang 'dra bar sems pa'i byams pa chen po'i sems skyes⁽⁵⁵⁾ pa'i sgo nas sems can thams cad sdug bsngal las thar te bde ba la gnas par gyur cig ces smon lam 'debs shing | sems can thams cad la chos kyis⁽⁵⁶⁾ phan 'dogs par byed pa ni sems can [G28a] la dmigs pa'i byams pa zhes bya ba'i

⁽⁵¹⁾ om. GNQ

⁽⁵²⁾ bsgoms CD

⁽⁵³⁾ skyed C

⁽⁵⁴⁾ pa'i GNQ

⁽⁵⁵⁾ skyed C

⁽⁵⁶⁾ om. GNQ

tha tshig go|

byang chub sems dpa'i⁽⁵⁷⁾ sa dang po brnyes pa nas sa⁽⁵⁸⁾ bdun pa'i bar gyi byang chub [C20b] sems dpa' rnam ni chos kyi de kho nyid mngon sum du rtogs pa'i sgo nas sems can la byams pa skye ste| de yang 'di ltar chos thams cad rang bzhin nyid med pa yin na| sems can rnam kyi de ltar ma shes te dngos po la mngon par zhen pas khams gsum [D20b] du 'khor bar gyur pa re sdug pa de dag la byams pa'i sems skye zhing 'di dag gi chos nyid rtogs par shog ces smon lam 'debs shing | sems can thams [N20b] cad la chos kyi phan 'dogs pa byed pa ni chos la dmigs pa'i byams pa zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go|

byang chub sems dpa' sa brgyad pa brnyes pa yan chad nas sangs rgyas kyi sa brnyes pa man chad ni lhun gyis grub pa'i sa dmigs pa med pa zhes bya ba ste| sa brgyad pa yan chad na rtog pa med pa lhun gyis grub pa'i tshul gyis sems can la byams pa skye zhing phan 'dogs par mdzad de| dper na yid bzhin gyi nor bu rin po che [Q20b] dang dpag bsam gyi shing bzhin du sems can la phan 'dogs te| de yang rtog mi mnga' bzhin du sngon gyi smon lam gyi dbang gis sems can la byams pa chen po yang lhun gyis grub par 'byung zhing sems can gyi don mdzad pa de ni dmigs pa med pa'i byams pa zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go|

'o na so so'i skye bo las dang po pas [G28b] sems can la dmigs pa'i byams pa ji ltar bsgom zhe na| 'di ltar so so'i skye bo las dang po pas sems can la dmigs pa'i byams pa'i bsgom rim 'di ltar bya ste| sems can snying du sdug pa dang | tha mal pa dang | snying du mi sdug pa yin pa'i rnam pa 'di gsum yod pa las| sems can snying du sdug pa la yang gsum du dbye ste| rab 'bring tha ma gsum du'o⁽⁵⁹⁾ |⁽⁶⁰⁾ sems can tha mal pa dang | mi sdug pa la yang gsum du dbye ste| rab 'bring tha ma ste| bdun du dbye ba byas la| thog mar 'bring tsam du sdug pa de pha ma la sogs par rab tu bsgom mo| |de goms pa dang tha mal pa kun rab dang 'dra bar bsgom| de nas cung zad mi sdug pa sdug pa⁽⁶¹⁾ rab dang 'dra bar bsgom| de goms pa dang mi sdug pa 'bring sdug pa rab dang 'dra bar bsgom| |de nas shin tu mi sdug pa la yang pha ma dang 'dra [C21a] bar bya ste⁽⁶²⁾ | de ltar goms pa'i dmigs pa yang sems can thams cad thog ma med pa'i dus nas pha ma la sogs pa gnyen du ma gyur pa med pa dang | de ltar sgom pa yang thog mar yang khyim gang gi mi tsam la bsgoms⁽⁶³⁾ pa nas rim gyis te| de nas ni mtha' yas par [D21a] bsgom

⁽⁵⁷⁾ dpa' CD

⁽⁵⁸⁾ om. CD

⁽⁵⁹⁾ om. GNQ

⁽⁶⁰⁾ dmigs pa'i add. GNQ

⁽⁶¹⁾ om. GNQ

⁽⁶²⁾ byas te GNQ

⁽⁶³⁾ bsgom GNQ

mo zhes bya ba'i don bstan to⁽⁶⁴⁾|

|de la snying rje ni [N21a] sdug bsngal ba'i sems can la dmigs pa'i snying rje ni sdug bsngal gyi sdug bsngal la sogs pa⁽⁶⁵⁾ gsum mam| skye ba la sogs pa brgyad kyis⁽⁶⁶⁾ sdug bsngal ba'i sems can de dag kun gyi sdug bsngal snying rjes sel [G29a] zhes⁽⁶⁷⁾ bya ba'i tha [Q21a] tshig go| nyes pa byed pa'i sems can la dmigs pa'i snying rje ni gong gi sdug bsngal de dag rtsa ba'am| rgyu mi dge ba la spyod pa'i sems can de dag gi mi dge ba kun snying rjes sel zhes⁽⁶⁸⁾ bya ba'i don to| |rkyen dang mi ldan pas rnam par ma grol ba'i sems can la dmigs pa'i snying rje ni sems can dge ba'i bshes gnyen dang mi ldan pas chos ma thos pa ste| de yang rgyud las| dge bshes ma bsten chos ma mnyan bya ba dang | ma grol ba'i sems can snying rjes grol bar byed zhes bya ba'i don to|

|de la dga' ba ni de la sems can dag zang zing gi 'byor ba dang | chos kyi 'byor ba dang | bde ba'i 'byor ba dang ldan pas dga' ba'o| |bdag gi tshogs yongs su rdzogs pa la dmigs pa'i dga' ba ni bdag nyid dge ba'i tshogs che ba la dmigs nas dga' ba'i don to| |dam pa'i chos kyi ro la dmigs pa'i dga' ba ni bdag dang gzhan chos thos pa'i ro dang | bsam pa dang bsgom pa'i ro rnyed pa'i sgo nas dga' ba'i don to|

|de la btang snyoms ni sems can gyi don la spyod pa dag ni skal ba yod pa dang skal ba med pa'i btang snyoms ni| skal ba dang ldan pa'i don ni bya| skal pa dang mi ldan pa'i don ni mi bya zhes de ltar 'byed pa med par gnyis ka'i don snyoms par bya zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go| 'jig rten gyi chos brgyad po rnyed pa dang ma rnyed pa la sogs pa'i sgras bsdus pa 'di lta ste| bde ba dang | [C21b] sdug bsngal ba dang [G29b] | bstod pa dang | smad pa dang | grags pa dang | ma grags pa⁽⁶⁹⁾ la dga' ba dang mi dga' med par btang snyoms su gnas pa ste| de la 'jig rten gyi chos brgyad ni rnyed pa dang ma rnyed pa la sogs pa⁽⁷⁰⁾ la bya ste| chos brgyad po de dag 'jig rten na [N21b] grags shing yod pa'i phyir 'jig rten gyi chos brgyad do|

[Q21b] |chos brgyad po de dag la ji ltar btang snyoms su gnas she na|

'di [D21b] ltar bdag gis longs spyod phun sum tshogs pa rnyed pa na de la dga' ba ste

⁽⁶⁴⁾ te GNQ

⁽⁶⁵⁾ om. CD

⁽⁶⁶⁾ kyi GNQ

⁽⁶⁷⁾ ces GNQ

⁽⁶⁸⁾ ces GNQ

⁽⁶⁹⁾ dang add. GNQ

⁽⁷⁰⁾ om. GNQ

chags pa yang med la| longs spyod {'grib}⁽⁷¹⁾ sam ma rnyed na yang de'i yid chad pa med cing mi dga' ba med pa ni rnyed ma rnyed la dga' mi dga' med pa'i btang snyoms zhes bya'o| bdag gi mdza' bo byams pa zhig gis bdag gi lus la spos dang tsandan la sogs pa'i byug pas nyug cing bsnyen bkur dang bsti stang byed na bkur sti'i bde ba la dga' zhing chags pa yang med la| dgra bo zhig gis bdag gis⁽⁷²⁾ lus la brdeg brdung la sogs pa byed na yang de la'ang mi khro zhing brdeg brdung gi sdug bsngal dang du blang ba dang | sdug go mi snyam⁽⁷³⁾ ste| bde sdug la dga' mi dga' med pa'i btang snyoms zhes bya'o| bdag gi mdza' bo⁽⁷⁴⁾ zhig gis⁽⁷⁵⁾ bdag gis rigs las glengs te snyan pa'i tshig gis bstod na de la dga' zhing gzengs mtho bar 'gyur ba yang med la| dgra bo zhig gis bdag gi skyon brus⁽⁷⁶⁾ shing bsgrags na yang de la yang⁽⁷⁷⁾ mi dga' zhing dpa' zhum pa med pa ni bstod pa dang smad pa [G30a] la dga' ba dang | mi dga' ba med pa'i btang snyoms zhes bya'o| bdag gi yon tan yod pa skye bo mang pos thos shing shes par gyur pa na 'di snyam du bdag ni yon tan can du skye bo mang pos shes pas bdag gi yon tan grags te ma subs so zhes yon tan grags pa la dga' ba yang med la| bdag gi yon tan skye bo mang pos ma thos shing ma shes na yang bdag gi yon tan ma grags te| nub bo zhes mi dga' ba med pa ni yon tan grags pa dang ma grags pa la dga' ba dang mi dga' ba med pa'i btang snyoms zhes bya' ba'i don to|

|tshogs zhes bya ba ni gong gi tshig ste| tshogs yongs su bskang ba la dus dang dus ma yin pa la dmigs pa'i [C22a] btang [Q22a] snyoms ni bdag nyid dge ba'i tshogs bskang zhing spyad pa la dus 'dir ni bya| dus 'dir ni⁽⁷⁸⁾ mi bya zhes [N22a] 'byed pa med par dus kun tu spyod par byed pa'o|

|tshad med bzhi po dag ni tshangs pa'i gnas|
|bsgom⁽⁷⁹⁾ pa'i kun gyi don du bdag gis 'di|
|sems can don du byas shing bsdebs⁽⁸⁰⁾ pa des|
|'gro kun sgrib bral myur du sangs rgyas shog

|tshad med pa bzhi'i rgya cher 'grel pa slob dpon buddha⁽⁸¹⁾ guptas mdzad pa rdzogs so||

⁽⁷¹⁾ 'gribs CDGNQ

⁽⁷²⁾ gi Q

⁽⁷³⁾ pa add. GNQ

⁽⁷⁴⁾ mdza'o GNQ

⁽⁷⁵⁾ gi C

⁽⁷⁶⁾ bru GNQ

⁽⁷⁷⁾ om. C

⁽⁷⁸⁾ bya| dus 'dir ni om. GNQ

⁽⁷⁹⁾ sgom GNQ

⁽⁸⁰⁾ bsgrebs Q

⁽⁸¹⁾ buddhā GNQ

||

[C22a2] [D21b7] [G30a6] [N22a2] [Q22a2]

Note on the Names “Buddhagupta” (Sangs rgyas sbas pa) and “Buddhaguhya” (Sangs rgyas gsang ba)

As I alluded to above, there has been much uncertainty in the scholarship around the identity of this figure (or *these figures*)? Is the author of *Commentary*—Buddhagupta—the same as the author (*Sangs rgyas sbas pa*=Buddhagupta) of IOL Tib J 549, “The Small Hidden Grain” (*Sbas pa’i rgum chung*), and/or the Buddhagupta (*’bu ta kug ta*) who is mentioned in IOL Tib J 1774/2 and in Gñub chen Sangs rgyas ye shes’s *Lamp for the Eye in Contemplation* (*Bsam gtan mig srgon*) as a master of *mahāyoga* tantra?⁽⁸²⁾ Yet, there are no *mahāyoga* commentaries in the canon ascribed to a Buddhagupta, though there are several attributed to Buddhaguhya.⁽⁸³⁾ And is this the same Buddhaguhya⁽⁸⁴⁾ who has famously commented extensively *Vairocanābhisambodhi Tantra*⁽⁸⁵⁾ other tantras of the *kriyā*, *caryā*, and *yoga* classes? Determining the authorship of these expansive works requires deep textual-historical criticism and is beyond the scope of this essay. However, I argue that two determinations can be made: 1) that the name Buddhaguhya and its Tibetan translation *Sangs rgyas gsang ba* is a reconstruction of the early translators and compilers of Buddhist texts in Tibet and 2) that the name of the commentator whose is normally referred to as Buddhaguhya is in fact Buddhagupta. To be clear, the latter is a rather straightforward argument and has been proposed by Matthew Kapstein and recently advanced by Nicholas Schmidt.⁽⁸⁶⁾ Here, I will attempt to show how the name

⁽⁸²⁾ Gñubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes, *Rnyal ’byor mig gi bsam gtan* (Leh: S.W. Tashigangpa, 1974), fol. 112a1. Gñubs chen also uses the spelling *’bu ta kug ta*.

⁽⁸³⁾ For example, *Lam rnam par bkod pa sangs rgyas gsang ba’i man ngag*. Pe cin bstan ’gyur, Q 4736, Rgyud ’grel bu, ff. 465b-506b.

⁽⁸⁴⁾ For a synthetic biography of this figure and a condensed discussion of some of the issues discussed here, see Jake Nagasawa, “Buddhaguhya” in *Treasury of Lives: A Biographical Encyclopedia of Tibet, Inner Asia, and the Himalaya*, March 2017, <https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Buddhaguhya/10546>.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhivikurvātī-adhiṣṭhānavaipulya-sūtra-indrarājā-nāma-dharmaparyāy a*, *Rnam par snang mdzad chen po mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa rnam par sprul ba byin gyis rlob pa shin tu rgyas pa mdo sde’i dbang po rgyal po zhes bya ba’i chos kyi rnam grangs*, Sde dge bka’ ’gyur, D 494, rgyud *tha*, fols. 151b-260a.

⁽⁸⁶⁾ Matthew T. Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 62-63 n. 73, and Nicholas Schmidt, “The Jewel’s Radiance: A Translation of ‘*Ratnabhāsvara,’ an Extensive Commentary on the Vajravidāraṇa-nāma-dhāraṇī,” MA thesis, Kathmandu University, 2018, 149-155. I am

Buddhaguhya became the name associated with this commentator by tracing its development in early sources.

Returning to the 812 *Dkar chag ldan kar ma*,⁽⁸⁷⁾ three tantric commentators recorded therein are clearly said to be authored by Buddhagupta (*slob dpon bu ddha gu ptas mdzad pa*): the *Condensed Commentary on the Vairocanābhisambodhi Tantra*,⁽⁸⁸⁾ *A Word-by-word Commentary on the Durgatipariśodhana Tantra*,⁽⁸⁹⁾ and the *An Extensive Explanation of the Dhyānottaraṭṭalakrama*.⁽⁹⁰⁾ The other extant imperial text register, the *Dkar chag 'phang thang ma*, which dates to 842 at the earliest⁽⁹¹⁾ but was added to throughout the rest of ninth century and beyond,⁽⁹²⁾ contains a reference to the commentary on the *Dhyānottaraṭṭalakrama*, again attributed Buddhagupta (*bud dha gupta mdzad pa*). Here however, we see for the first time a reference to the name Buddhaguhya as the author (*sangs rgyas gsang ba mdzad pa*) of a treatise on essence extraction (*rasāyana, bcus kyis len*) or alchemy that is attributed to Buddhaguhya.⁽⁹³⁾ It is important to note that the Sanskrit words *gupta (sba pa)* and *guhya (gsang ba)* in the name variants Buddhaguhya and Buddahgupta have similar meanings—“concealed,” “covered,” “hidden,” or “secret.” I also draw attention to Cristina Scherrer-Schaub’s suggestion that prior to 814, that is to say the period in which the texts found in the *Dkar chag ldan kar ma* were most likely translated, the imperial period procedures for approving and registering newly translated terms with the imperial translation board had

particularly grateful to Nicholas Schmidt for our scholarly exchanges and for his excellent thesis, which has helped me to completely rethink the Buddhagupta/Buddhaguhya name issue.

⁽⁸⁷⁾ Adelheid Herrmann-Pfandt, *Die lHan kar ma: Ein früher Katalog der ins Tibetische übersetzten buddhistischen Texte. Kritische Neuauflage mit Einleitung und Materialien*, vol. 367 of *Philosophisch-Historische Klasse Denkschriften* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009), 176-180, text nos. 322, 324, 328.

⁽⁸⁸⁾ *Vairocanābhisambodhitrantraṭṭārtha, Rnam par snang mdzad mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa'i rgyud kyi bsdu pa'i don*. Sde dge bstan 'gyur, D 2662, Rgyud nyu, 1b-65a. This commentary is translated in Stephen Hodge, *The Maha-Vairocana-Abhisambodhi Tantra with Buddhaguhya's Commentary*. London: Routledge, 2005.

⁽⁸⁹⁾ *Ngan song sbyong ba'i don gyi 'bru 'grel, Sde dge bstan 'gyur, D 2624, rgyud cu, ff. 152b-231a.*

⁽⁹⁰⁾ *Dhyānottara-ṭṭalakrama, Bsam gtan gyi phyi ma rim par phye ba, Sde dge bka' 'gyur, D 808, rgyud wa, ff. 223a-225b.*

⁽⁹¹⁾ Brandon Dotson, “Emperor” Mu rug btsan and the 'Phang thang ma Catalogue,” in *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* Issue 4 (December 2007): 4. Also in this article, Dotson notes that a later date for the aforementioned Denkar Catalogue may be possible, but this has yet to be definitely proven.

⁽⁹²⁾ Halkias, Georgios. “Tibetan Buddhism Registered: A Catalogue from the Imperial Court of 'Phang thang” *The Eastern Buddhist* 36, nos. 1-2 (2004), 77-79.

⁽⁹³⁾ KAWAGOE Eishin 川越 英真, *dDar chag 'Phang thang ma*. Sendai: (Tōhoku indo chibetto kenkyūkai, 東北インド・チベット研究会, Tōhoku Society for Indo-Tibetan Studies, 2005), 25 & 45. Unfortunately, the alchemical text is no longer extant.

not yet been in use.⁽⁹⁴⁾

The next major cataloging projects unfolded over the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The first was undertaken by Bcom ldan rig pa'i ral gri's in his aforementioned *An Ornamental Sunbeam for the Spread of the Teachings*. This catalog combines elements of both the *Dkar chag ldan kar ma* and the *Dkar chag 'phang thang ma*, containing references to the *Dhyānottarapaṭalakrama (buddha gu ta pa tas mdzad)* by Buddhagupta, the alchemical text by Buddhaguhya, and several other texts also attributed to Buddhaguhya, such as a text on Vajravidāraṇa.⁽⁹⁵⁾ But Dbus Blo gsal's *Catalog of the Narthang Tengyur* marks a major turning point—it is the first catalog to standardize the translation the name of our author. In this catalog, two of the tantric commentaries found in the *Dkar chag ldan kar ma* have the authorial statement “written by the *ācārya* Buddhaguhya” (*slob dpon sangs rgyas gsang bas mdzad pa*). In each instance, there is an interlinear note of uncertain origin pointing out that *sangs rgyas gsan ba* means *bud dha gu hya*.⁽⁹⁶⁾

The final stage of this development is the large scale *Bstan 'gyur* compilation project supervised by Bu ston Rin chen grub ay Zhwa lu Monastery and documented in his *Letter to the Editors (Yig mkhan rnam la gdams pa)*. As Schaeffer relates in his study and translation of this letter, Bu ston directed his editors to correct spelling mistakes, update remnants of old orthography, and emend texts “in accordance with his reasoned understanding of what the text *should* say.” This point, combined with Dbus blo gsal's standardizing likely led to back translations of *Snags rgyas gsang ba* in cases such as phonetic spelling of *Bu ddha gu hya* in the D & P colophons of *Condensed Commentary on the Vairocanābhīṣambodhi Tantra*. And since Bu ston's catalog served as the model for most succeeding text catalogs, the Buddhaguhya name error was replicated, resulting in all contemporary catalogs recording the author of all of the works mentioned above—except for the *Commentary*—as Buddhaguhya.

⁽⁹⁴⁾ Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, “Enacting Words. A Diplomatic Analysis of the Imperial Decrees (*bkas bcad*) and their Application in the *sGra sbyor bam po gnis pa* Tradition,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 25, nos. 1-2 (2002): 283.

⁽⁹⁵⁾ Schaeffer & van der Kuijp, 180-185.

⁽⁹⁶⁾ Dbud pa Blo gsal, fols. 28b6 and 29a1. This catalog also introduces numerous other texts, now attributed to *Sangs rgyas gsang ba*, including the text translated herein, and others such as a commentary on the *Subāhupariṣṛcchā Tantra*, and a text on yogic instructions.

Bibliography

Abbreviations, Sigla, and Signs

- C *Co ne Bka' 'gyur* and *Bstan 'gyur*
 D *Sde dge Bka' 'gyur* and *Bstan 'gyur*
 G *Gser bris Bka' 'gyur* and *Bstan 'gyur*
 N *Snar thang Bka' 'gyur* and *Bstan 'gyur*
 P *Pe cin Bka' 'gyur* and *Bstan 'gyur*
 T 大正新脩大藏經 *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*
 add. Adds
 fol. Folio
 n. Note
 no. Number
 om. Omits
 { } indicates emendation of the text

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