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The *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita* is a typical Mahāyāna sūtra in the sense that it deals with the key terms of the *abhidharma* systems, as well as the main concepts of the Mahāyāna, in the context of emptiness and deconstruction, of *śūnyatā* and *nīrvikalpa*. Thus, our present sūtra, as does its *genre* in general, consists of lists of these concepts, and the somewhat tedious repetition that they are all empty, etc. However, to enliven the text, it is furnished with a quite charming frame story, also not unusual for the Mahāyāna style, depicting a person not supposed to be particularly saintly. In the case of the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita* this is a very beautiful prostitute named Suvarṇavarṇottamaprabhāśrī, who, it seems, is also the daughter of a prostitute – a *gaṇikāduhitā*.¹ Now, the

¹ *suvarṇavarṇottamaprabhāśrī gaṇikāduhitā*, as we have reconstructed. The name has unfortunately not been identified. Its obvious connection with the hero of Suv, would establish *suvarṇa* as equivalent of *gser*; *mchog* may be *vara*, *parama*, *uttama*, or the like, *mchog* is found e.g. in the title of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamarājasūtra*, Tib. *gser 'od dam pa mchog tu rnam par rgyal ba'i mdo sde'i rgyal po* – supporting *uttama*, but the word *suvarṇottara* is found in the *Bhikṣuṇīvinaya* p. 208,9. *prabhāśrī* is found in Dbh p. 21,4 as *vimalaprabhāśrītejorājagarbha*, and in Sdhmp p. 404,11 et passim we find *candrasūryavimalaprabhāśrī*. Cf. also the Buddha-name in *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama-rājasūtra* p. 113,14: *ratnakusumaguṇasāgaravaiḍūryakanakagirisuvarṇakāñcanaprabhāśrī*. But *-avabhāśrī* is also possible, cf. *Ratnaketuparivarta: jyotiḥsomyagandhāva-bhāśrī*, and Edg. s.v. *suvarṇāvabhāśa* etc., but Gaṇḍavyūha p. 38 has *prabhāśrī*; and *Upālipariprcchā* p. 170 no. 52 *suvarṇaprabha* = *gser 'od*. Thus the choices are many. Dharmarakṣa's translation of Mañj has 上金光首, Narendrayāśas' 勝金色光明德, which brings nothing new for the reconstruction. Because of the number of syllables – eight – in the whole name, the possible *prabhāśrī* is chosen for *prabhāśrī*, though, as showed above, the examples of the last mentioned are more numerous than the first variant. But, evidently, the name is constructed for the occasion by the creators of this Mahāyānasūtra, and a transformation of the name of the hero in Suv, *suvarṇavarṇa*, and attempted reconstructed by us. The word *gaṇikāduhitā* is also not identified anywhere, but has been reconstructed by us on the basis of Vin iii p. 135-36, which has *purānagaṇakīyā*

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girl Suvarṇavarṇottamaprabhāśrī, whose skin shines with a golden hue and who is the most beautiful of all girls is, of course, courted by all the boys in town. One, the banker's son Bhayadatta, "Given to Fear", gets hold of her, but when the girl sees the princely Mañjuśrī, she instantly falls in love with him. Then the god of riches, Vaiśravaṇa, appears, introduces Mañjuśrī by name, and, on being asked, explains what a bodhisatva is. Mañjuśrī is clad in a fine white garb, such as is usual for laymen, and she asks the bodhisatva whether she can have it. "Yes, you can," says the great figure – "if you develop the mind of awakening, the *bodhicitta*." When the prostitute asks what this is, Mañjuśrī answers that "It is yourself, your body", and "All beings are included in Awakening." This accords with the Mahāyāna conviction that truth and awakening are not found in some theoretical system, but in that which we are as human beings, in compassionate action towards our fellow beings, whichever class they might belong to.

In this way, the sūtra also goes to great lengths to argue for universal sameness. As elsewhere in the Mahāyāna scriptures, *nirvāṇa* is the same as *saṃsāra*, and so even the vices, are really the same as awakening – prefiguring a tantric world view. As our text says: "The vices are also the diamond basis of awakening (*kleśās tu bodhivajrāśrayaḥ*)."¹ This is because to understand the vices is in fact awakening: "Why is this? Because awakening is immovable, and the vices are the seed of awakening. Awakening is in fact the understanding of the vices (*kleśā hi bodhibījaṃ kleśāvabodha eva bodhiḥ*)", the

dhītā and *gaṇakī dhītā*, and it has been reconstructed as one word in analogy with *kuladuhitr*, *kulaputra*, *śreṣṭhiputra* etc. Dharmarakṣa p. 817a7 逸女人 and Narendrayaśas p. 825b1 婬女 say nothing of daughter, however, supporting a reconstruction like *gaṇikākumārī*, *veśyadārikā* or the like. Suv has *strī veśyā*, for *smad 'tshoṅ ma* e.g. p. 187-8, p. 1,10 and p. 18,7-8: *tena khalu samaḥyena rājagṛhe nagare kāśisundarī nāma strī veśyā prativasati*. But Vkn has *gaṇikā* for *smad 'tshoṅ* and no *bu mo* which decides our choice *gaṇikādūhitā* for *smad 'tshoṅ ma' i bu mo*.

text here playing on the similarity of the words *bodhi* and *avabodha*.² The way to get rid of the vices is to understand their emptiness, etc.³ Thus, Suvarṇavarṇottamaprabhāsrī proclaims her new understanding to the city of Rājagṛha in the presence of King Ajātaśatru and his entire retinue of women and warriors. It is even acknowledged by the Buddha himself, who is taking a walk with Ānanda on the slopes of the Gṛdhrakūṭa: “The essential nature of the vices, Mañjuśrī, is an essential nature which is beyond construction and thought-construction (*akalpāvikalpasvabhāvo mañjuśrīḥ kleśasvabhāvaḥ*). The essential nature of the vices is a fundamentally unborn essential nature. The vices are adventitious (*āgantukāḥ*). They do not remain when emptiness is understood. They do not remain when the absence of distinguishing marks and the absence of wishful thinking is known. They do not remain when the originally pure light (*prakṛtiprabhāsva*) is present.”⁴ But still, as Mañjuśrī says: “The essential nature of the vices (*kleśasvabhāva*) is very difficult to reach. And why is this? Because the essential nature of the vices is awakening (*bodhi*).”⁵

Suvarṇavarṇottamaprabhāsrī, having now met the even more beautiful Mañjuśrī, adopted his teaching and attained a higher goal in life, decides to teach her male friends about *bodhicitta*. As a consequence of this, she follows the Mahāyāna call never to tire in educating our fellow beings,⁶ and thus, in the park where she goes to amuse herself

² Section iv,c2-3, Sanskrit reconstructed, also in the quotations below.

³ As in section v,a,1ff.

⁴ Section vii,a.

⁵ Section vii,c.

⁶ “A bodhisatva, Mañjuśrī, a great being, to the extent he penetrates the vices, does not get tired of bringing beings who behave in accordance with their desires to maturity. Nor does he get tired of bringing beings who behave in accordance with their aversion to maturity, nor those who behave in accordance with their bewilderment, nor those who behave in accordance with the three vices in equal combination.” (*bodhisatvo mañjuśrīr mahāsatvo yathā yathā tān kleśān pratividhyate tathā tathā na sa rāgacaritānām satvānām paripācanayā parikhidyate, na dveṣacaritānām, na mohacaritānām, na sabhāgacaritānām satvānām paripācanayā parikhidyate*. Section iv,d,1.) She also has no fear of vices, nor of anything else, as in contrast with her lover,

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with the banker's son, Bhayadatta, she transforms herself into a rotting corpse in accordance with the canonical meditation practice which describes our frail bodily existence ending up as a stinking dead body. Seeing his beautiful companion thus transformed, her escort is filled with great abhorrence, and then fear – as befits his name. He is also afraid of being punished by the king's men, and so he flees the scene and leaves the corpse, which had been a beautiful girl only a few moments before. All goes well, however, and they end up with the Blessed One, the Buddha, where a dialogue takes place between Mañjuśrī and the Blessed One on the usual Mahāyāna themes. The girl is also present – her death was only *māyā* and *upāya* employed in order to educate the fearful boy. The boy then seeks refuge in the only refuge which is worth anything, namely the Blessed One himself, who confirms by his teachings to him that the bodhisatva does indeed seek awakening by seeking the essence of desire, and that fear is just an illusion grounded in attachment to the false idea of a self, just as had been argued in the previous dialogues.

The title of the sūtra, *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita*, literally means “Mañjuśrī's Amusement” – the verb *krīḍ-* (and thus also *vikrīḍ-*) means to amuse oneself and to have fun, but here also to play with the supernatural knowledges and states of meditation, the *abhiññāḥ* and the *samād-hayaḥ*. This word often has a sexual connotation, as in the common phrase *sa tayā sārddha krīḍati ramate paricārayati sma*,⁷ and refers to what young people may do secretly in parks (as with Mañj and Suv), expressing sexual joy. Evidently, though, the games of Mañjuśrī have as their purpose the education of all living beings – even prostitutes –

being strengthened by the Mahāyāna: Thus, Mañjuśrī, I have no fear of the vices (*evam mañjuśrīr nāsti me kleśais trāsabhayam*). Why? The bodhisatvas, Mañjuśrī, are clad in the armour of fearlessness (*tat kasya hetor, bodhisatvā mañjuśrīr abhayaśaṃnāhasaṃnaddhāḥ*). Just as, Mañjuśrī, one cannot call someone who fears the enemy a hero; in the same way, Mañjuśrī, one cannot call someone who fears the vices a bodhisatva. (*tadyathā mañjuśrīr yaḥ śatruṇā trasto na sa sūra ity ucyate, evam eva mañjuśrīr yaḥ kleśais trasto na sa bodhisatva ity ucyate*. Section iv,e,11-12ff.)

⁷ E.g. in Suv, see the numerous references in BP, s. v. *krīḍ*.

about *bodhi* and *bodhicitta*, and even the sexual games of a prostitute may be transformed into those of a bodhisatva.

This is the usual setting of the Mahāyāna sūtras, directed towards a lay audience, and with only a single, somewhat formalistic reference to the monastic community in the opening phrase. The girl even asks in which religious group (*gana*) the Mahāyāna teachings are to be found – evidently referring to a lay group rather than the *saṃgha*. Embracing the life of an ascetic monk is also not much valued by the text. As Mañjuśrī says, in tune with the message of the text, when his new pupil asks him to help her adopt the the monastic way of life: “It is like this, sister. Shaving the hair on your head is not equivalent to embracing the ascetic life (*pravrajyā*) as it pertains to the bodhisatva. Why not? Girl, the bodhisatva embraces the ascetic life by means of the effort to eliminate the vices of all beings.”⁸ Engaging in ordinary lay life with all its imperfections rather than living in monastic isolation is the ideal set forth. Practicing the altruistic social virtues of compassion, friendliness and so forth, rather than leading a silent life of meditation, is the obligation of the bodhisatva according to our text.

The story of the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita* as we have it, though, is a Mahāyāna transformation of a similar story, namely that of the *Suvarṇavarṇāvadāna*:⁹ Here, the hero is Suvarṇavarṇa – even the name is close to that of our heroine in the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita*. The message of this *avadāna*, though, is more in accordance with the classical, very positive view of monastic and ascetic life, where the vices are nothing but *bad*. The Mahāyāna polemics are therefore clearly evident here in the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita*.

Suvarṇavarṇa is a beautiful boy, whose parents had waited a long time for a son. Because they had taken refuge in the Three Jewels though, it all worked out, and the boy was born. His father is a rich merchant,

⁸ Section viii,a, following are a number arguments along the same principle.

⁹ For a full English resumé of the Avadāna, see the introductions to Suv I & II.

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Divākara, but his life takes a tragic turn. He is not interested in any of the girls in the town who court him. He just wants to follow the way of the Buddha, live as a recluse, and read his notes from the religious lectures of his teachers. Once, he goes to his father's park to do exactly that. However, he is followed by a girl, a beautiful prostitute loved by all, named Kāśisundarī.¹⁰ She also happens to be the mistress of King Ajātaśatru's evil minister, Praçaṇḍa ("Angry") – but she loves only with the beautiful and chaste boy Suvarṇavarṇa, and wishes only to be with him. She blames a headache for not being able to meet the minister, who eventually finds out about her true love, and orders his men to cut off her head. None of them, though, are willing to kill the beautiful girl, now in Divākara's park where Suvarṇavarṇa is piously reading his notes, and she escapes. However, she is bitten by a snake and almost faints, and Praçaṇḍa catches her and beats her to death. Suvarṇavarṇa finds her, and Praçaṇḍa sends his men after him. They find him, and after being paraded down the main street, despite various court proceedings, petitions from the populace, and the involvement of Ajātaśatru, the Just King he is blamed for the murder. Suvarṇavarṇa is convicted because of the machinations of the evil minister, and though nobody wishes to execute him, in the end he is taken to the place of execution to be impaled. His family are beside themselves with grief, and his father returns from his naval business expedition. He offers all his wealth to save his son, but to no avail, as Praçaṇḍa obstructs all his efforts in order to save his own skin. Ānanda, who of course has seen everything by means of his supernatural power, is then invoked on the advice of a certain *upāsaka*. He contacts Ajātaśatru by means of the same powers (Ānanda is in Vaiśālī and Ajātaśatru in Rājagṛha), and Ajātaśatru tries to intervene to stop the execution of Suvarṇavarṇa by sending messengers and making payments in gold. Suvarṇavarṇa is of course not afraid to die, but he feels sorry for his mother, and tries to find a way to escape death. He is also very concerned that the Tathāgata is dead, and so too is Mahākāśyapa, but then it occurs to him that he could invoke the successor, Ānanda, who then

¹⁰ In Av §76, Kāśisundarī is a princess who declines every tempting offer of marriage, choosing instead the life of a nun.

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comes to the place of execution with his entourage – airborne. Suvarṇavarṇa is suspended above the stake on which he is placed, but – what wonder! – he hovers above it by means of Ānanda’s power. Kāśisundarī too, who is about to be cremated, is revived through the combined powers of Ānanda and Suvarṇavarṇa. She wakes up, abhors her *strītvā*, that is, her female sex, transforms instantly into a more acceptable male form, and takes the name Kāśisundara. Thus, both the main characters of the avadāna are ordained, and even the evil minister Pracanda listens to Ānanda’s preaching – with the result that he instantly attains *arhattva*. The former lives of the *dramatis personae* are also recounted.

There is evidently a recycling of the story of the *Suvarṇavarṇāvadāna* in the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita* for Mahāyāna purposes, even though the former text is much longer and much more elaborate than the latter. The *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita* only uses the fairly short story to frame its lists of key Mahāyāna concepts, surely in order to make the repetitious style more palatable. The reuse of the story is also somewhat polemical, as is often the case in Mahāyāna texts, where the supposed hypocritical moralism of monasticism is often attacked by locating real moral force not in the monk, but in a figure not expected to possess such moral force, as, *in casu*, the prostitute Suvarṇavarṇot-tamaprabhāśrī, or, as elsewhere, the dandy Vimalakīrti, the small boy Ratnadatta,¹¹ the young girl Candrottarā,¹² all figures that contrast with the chaste Suvarṇavarṇa in the *Suvarṇavarṇāvadāna*. Thus, the intention of our sūtra, as of the Mahāyāna in general, is evidently to express a different and more universal kind of morality, free from the conventional thinking that is always so much depreciated in the Mahāyāna sūtras. The name of the heroine of Mañj, Suvarṇot-tamaprabhāśrī, clearly indicates that she is a transformation of the hero in Suv, as regards both her name and the contexts she is placed in. Indeed, the frame story as a whole is a transformation of the story in the Suv, expressing the Mahāyāna’s somewhat polemical and

¹¹ Hero of the *Bodhisatvacaryānirdeśa*, Bcn, see also BP.

¹² *Candrottarādārikāvya-karaṇa*, BMSC vol. ii p. 51–68.

ideologically pointed transformation of earlier Buddhist philosophies and legends. Thus, the frightened boy Bhayadatta of Mañj takes on the role of the courtesan in Suv, and the girl living by her beauty, *rūpañivīnī*,¹³ takes on the role of Suvarṇavarṇa. A bodhisatva, she lectures on the sameness of body and *bodhi*, of *samsāra* and *nirvāna*, and on universal sameness and true morality, which transcends class and rules – a truly anarchist and radical morality.

In this way, the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita*, by its structure, bears witness to how the literature of the Mahāyāna came into being, namely as an edited literature based on the dharma lists of the traditional Abhidharma, but adding the flavour of emptiness, sameness, suchness and imperishability, as well as *bodhicitta*, the six perfections and the four forms of pure conduct, with some personification of basic concepts such as the Great Bodhisatvas, and with frame stories befitting its deconstructionist and anti-authoritarian project. Who the editors of this extensive literature may have been, we do not know.

The reception of this unquestionably charming Mahāyāna sūtra by the later scholastic literature was not great. However, there is one *locus classicus* taken from the text, namely: “Mañjuśrī said: Girl, what is aversion like? The girl said: Mañjuśrī, it is called aversion because it destroys the roots of good collected for a hundred world ages.” – a quotation which appears in several later anthologies and commentaries.¹⁴ Kamalaśīla evidently liked the sūtra, as he also

¹³ Suv I, §14.

¹⁴ The piece is found in Śiks p. 149,5-6 in the form: *āryamañjuśrīvikrīḍita-sūtre 'py āha | pratighaḥ pratigha iti kalpaśatopacitaṃ kuśalamūlaṃ pratihanti tenocyate pratigha iti ||* and in Bcap, p. 168,1-3, which has: *āryamañjuśrīvikrīḍitasūtre cāha | pratighaḥ pratigha iti mañjuśrīḥ kalpaśatopacitaṃ kuśalamūlaṃ pratihanti | tenocyate pratigha iti | Madhyamakāvātāra p. 51,17-19 has: de skad du yañ | 'jam dpal khoñ khro ba khoñ khro ba zes bya ba ni | bskal pa brgyar bsags pa'i dge ba ñe bar 'joms par byed pa de'i phyir khoñ khro ba zes gsuñs so | and Sūtrasamuccaya p. 36,14-18: | 'phags pa 'jam dpal rnam par rol pa'i mdo las kyañ | khoñ khro ba khoñ khro ba zes bya ba ni | 'jam dpal gañ dge ba'i rtsa ba bskal pa brgyar bsags pa 'joms par byed pa*

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quoted the following passage: “Mañjuśrī said: Girl, how is the bohi-satva victorious in battle? The girl said: Mañjuśrī, he discerns all moments of existence but does not apprehend them.”¹⁵

Some Chinese Buddhists, too, appreciated the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍitasūtra*, for much the same reasons that they loved the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra*. In a commentary to the Vkn, 注維摩詰經, *Zhù Wéimójié jīng*, compiled by 僧肇, *Sēngzhào*, the famous disciple of Kumārajīva, the following story is reported to have been told by Kumārajīva in relation to a verse in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*: *sarvagaṇikākulāni ca praviśati kāmadoṣasaṃdarśanāya*, “He even enters all the brothels so as to be conscious of the imperfections of passion.”¹⁶

Kumārajīva says:

In a foreign country there was a girl whose body was the color of gold. A banker’s son (*śreṣṭhiputra*) named Dámùduōluó (Dharmottara? Dharmatrāta?) wanted, by means of a thousand liang of gold, to take her into a bamboo grove. Thus, they mounted a carriage and departed. On the road, Mañjuśrī transformed himself into a layman clad in white. His clothing was adorned with jewels and was very beautiful, and when the girl saw it, a great desire for it arose within her.

Mañjuśrī said: “If you wish to have the garment, you must develop the mind of awakening.” The girl said: “What is the mind of awakening?” He answered: “It is yourself.” Then she asked: “How can it be?” He answered: “The essence of awakening is emptiness, and your body is also emptiness.” Because she had planted roots of good in the

stelde bas na khoñ khro ba zes gsuñs so | Mañj vii,d, verse 24.

¹⁵ *Bhāvanākrama* III, p. 17-18: *tathā cokaṭaṃ mañjuśrīvikurvitasūtre | kathaṃ, dārike, bodhisatvo vjitasamgrāmo bhavati? | āha | yo, mañjuśrī, vicīya vicīya sarvadharmān nopalabhata iti* | This work, as edited by G. Tucci, and then probably the MS, gives the title wrongly as *Mañjuśrīvikurvitasūtra*, which is another sūtra unrelated to the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita*. The *locus*, Mañj vii,d, verse 26, is very close to the other quotation!

¹⁶ The reference is to Vkn 9b3. The 注維摩詰經 is found in T. 1775, and the relevant paragraph is p. 340a9-23. The date of the commentary is given as 後秦 later Qin, 384-417 A. D. Cf. also Vkn Lamotte p. 128 and note 12.

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presence of the Buddha Kāśyapa in former times, and because she had cultivated wisdom, as she heard these words she attained patient acceptance of the fact that all things are unborn. When she had attained the patient acceptance of the fact that all things are unborn, she became conscious of the imperfections of passion. Then, again, she entered the bamboo grove with the banker's son. In the bamboo grove she manifested herself as a swelled and rotting corpse. When he saw this, the banker's son was terrified, and he went to the Buddha. He spoke to him about the Dharma, and he attained patient acceptance of the fact that all things are unborn. When he became conscious of the imperfections of passion he thus attained great merit. Sēngzhào says: That courtesan of a foreign country left her town, and did not, even for a moment, care about the sullied looks of the men of the crowd, as she had before. Her desires were like those of great men. After that she was conscious of her imperfections.

The story referred to in the 注維摩詰經, Zhù Wéimójié jīng, is clearly that of the Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita, though the sūtra is not referred to by any of its titles,¹⁷ “the courtesan of a foreign country” is not mentioned by name, and though Kumārajīva may have had difficulties in remembering the name of the girl's admirer – the Chinese transcription does not seem to match any reconstruction of the Tibetan *'jigs byin*, most probably corresponding to Bhayadatta. Another verse in Vkn refers to the same motif, that of the prostitute who according to the Vkn is really an exalted being or bodhisatva, and who has taken rebirth as a

¹⁷ The titles of Mañj (all of which are reconstructions apart from *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita*) are the following.

a) Those in the end of the sūtra itself: *mahāvvyūhamukhaparivarta*, *suvarṇottamaprabhāśrīgaṇikāduhitāvinaya*, and then the main title as given also in the introduction to the Tibetan version, viz., *mañjuśrīvikrīḍito nāma mahāyānasūtra*. See Mañj 0 and xxi.

b) The titles of the sūtra in Chinese are *buddhabhāṣitamahāvvyūhadharmamukhasūtra* in Dharmarakṣa's translation (for 大淨 = *mahāvvyūha*, see Vkn T. 474 519b7 = Vkn 2b1, the earliest Chinese translation, see BP, cf. also Mvy 1368 with Chinese equivalent in BP), then in Narendrayaśas *mahāvvyūhadharmamukhasūtra*, as well as *mañjuśryabhijñābalasūtra* and *suvarṇottamaprabhāśrī(?) -sūtra* (the equivalent to 明德 is uncertain). See below for the full versions of the Chinese titles.

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prostitute in order to educate living beings in such circumstances: “Intentionally they make themselves into courtesans to attract men, and they establish those who have been thrown into confusion by the hook of passion in buddha-knowledge.”¹⁸

This takes us to the core of the Mahāyāna ideology, shared by the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita* and a great number of other related Mahāyāna sūtras: Any person, be it a prostitute, or a powerful layman such as Vimalakīrti, even one living a licentious life, may be a great bodhisatva who has sought such a rebirth for the sake of his fellow beings. Birth is really an illusion, suffering is really emptiness, and great compassion is the means of reaching this radical acceptance, this understanding which is the same as awakening, *bodhi*.

¹⁸ Vkn 49b3: *saṃcintya gaṇikā bhonti puṃsām ākarṣaṇāya te | rāgāṅkuṣeṇa lobhetvā buddhajñāne sthāpenti te ||*

Abbreviations and bibliography

- Bcap – La Vallée Poussin, Louis de (1901-14), Prajñākaramatī's commentary to the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* of Ćāntideva, Bibliotheca Indica: a collection of Oriental Works No. 150, Calcutta.
- Bcn – *Bodhisattvacaryānirdeśa*, “The Practice of the Bodhisattvas: Negative Dialectics and Provocative Arguments. Edition of the Tibetan text of Bodhisattvacaryānirdeśa with a translation and introduction”, *Acta Orientalia* 1994, no. 55: p. 113-160, ed. et tr. Jens Braarvig. Electronic version in BP.
- Bhāvanākrama* – I and III, ed. G. Tucci, Minor Buddhist Texts II and III, SOR ix, 2 and xliii, Roma 1958 and 1971.
- BMSC – *Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection*, General Editor: Jens Braarvig, Editorial Committee: Jens Braarvig, Paul Harrison, Jens-Uwe Hartmann, Kazunobu Matsuda, Lore Sander, Oslo 2000–
- BP – Bibliotheca Polyglotta, <https://www2.hf.uio.no/polyglotta/>
- Madhyamakāvatāra* – ed. L. de La Vallée Poussin, Bibliotheca Buddhica ix, St. Petersburg 1907-12.
- Mañj – *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍitasūtra*, electronic version in BP.
- Mvy – *Mahāvvyutpatti*, ed. R. Sakaki, Kyōtō 1916-36, se also BP.
- Śikṣ – *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, ed. C. Bendall, BB I, St. Petersburg 1897-1902.
- Sūtrasamuccaya* – ed. Bhikkhu Pāsādika, Fontes Tibetici Havnienses, no. II, Copenhagen, 1989.
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- T. – *Taishō shinshū daijōkyō*.
- Vkn – (2004), *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa: Transliterated Sanskrit Text Collated with Tibetan and Chinese Translations*, Study Group on Buddhist Sanskrit Literature, The Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism, Taisho University, Tokyo, 2004, references to the MS, folio and line. *L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, traduit et annoté par Étienne Lamotte, Leuven 1962, Bibliothèque du Muséon, vol. 51. Electronic version in BP.

INTRODUCTION

Note: On the BP site there is a critical edition of the Tibetan text of Mañj, with ample critical notes based on the editions of Derge, Jañ-sa-tham (Lithañ), London, Narthañ, Phug-brag, Qianlong (Peking), Stog and Tokyo. Extant are also two Chinese translations by a) Dharmarakṣa I, 竺法護, *Zhú Fǎhù*, 314 A.D.: 佛說大淨法門經, in T 817, and b) by Narendrayaśas 那連提耶舍, *Nà-liántíyěshè*, 583 A.D.: 大莊嚴法門經卷上亦名文殊師利神通力經 亦名勝金色光明德女經, in T 818, and an English translation, as reproduced in this book, parallel paragraph by paragraph and verse by verse with the Tibetan and Chinese versions. The translation in the BP version has also ample Sanskrit reconstructions – many of them based on Suv – waiting to be corrected by anyone with a better ability to do so, or to be replaced by an original Sanskrit version, if such a text were ever to surface. The reconstructions, though, are given in the electronic version to document the process of translation from Tibetan, via the reconstructions, into English. The division into 21 paragraphs has been made by the author.