AÑJALI

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INDOLOGY AND BUDDHISM

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PRESENTED TO
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J. TILAKASIRI

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The Aggañña-Sutta or "Discourse on the beginning of things" in the Dighanikāya is called by T. W. Rhys Davids in his "Dialogues of the Buddha", Vol. I, pp. 105 sq., "in many respects one of the most interesting and instructive of all the Dialogues. It is a kind of Buddhist book of Genesis. . . . . when the evolution of the world began, beings were at first immaterial, feeding on joy, giving light from themselves, passing through the air. There was thick darkness round about them, and neither sun nor moon, nor stars, nor sex, nor measures of time. Then the earth rose in the midst of the waters, beautiful as honey in taste and colour and smell, and the beings, eating thereof, lost their brightness, and then sun and moon and stars appeared, and time began to run..." A corresponding text is preserved in the Mahāvastu, Ed. Senart, Vol. I, pp. 338 sq.; besides there are many versions and citations of the story, handed down to us in Chinese, Tibetan and other translations.

Here I am going to notify a Sanskrit fragment—it represents one third of a folio only—found in the oasis of Sorcuq by the third German expedition to Sin-Kiang (Central Asia) between 1907 and 1908. It contains a few passages of the beginning of the story on primeval times and apparently has come from a manuscript of a Sanskrit version of the Aggañña-Sutta. After the provisional identification by Dr. Else Lüders mentioned in note 3, I examined, for the sake of a clear understanding of the text, some of the Chinese and Tibetan translations of lost Sanskrit originals, referred to already by former writers on the subject. There is no doubt, Sūtra 154 in the Chung-a-han-ching (= Madhyamāgama) has a near relation to the wording of our text, but even more closely related to it is a section in the Vinayavibhanga (on Pārājika 1) of the Mūlasarvāstivāda school. With the help of this parallel, especially in its Tibetan translation, it has been possible to fill up the gaps in our text and to give below in the right column a continuous translation of the Sanskrit transcribed in the left column.

1. (03) bhavati sa samayo yad ayaṁ lokāḥ saṁvartate (l) saṁvartamāne
loke y(adbhūyasā satvā abhāsvare devanikāye upapadyante | te tatra bhavanti rūpiṇā manomaya avikalā ahūndendriyā sarvāṅgāpṛatyāṁ)(04)-gopetā(h) subhā varṇastraḥāyināḥ sva-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. bhavati sa samayo yad ayaṁ lokāḥ saṁvartate (l) saṁvartamāne</td>
<td>1. There comes a time, when this world-system passes away. And when it passes away, (beings are mostly reborn in the class of the Ābhāsvara gods. They have form, are made of mind, are not defective, with perfect sense-organs), provided with (all limbs great and small), shining, continuing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sanskrit

yaṃprabhā vaihāyasagāminah pr(lit-
bhaksāḥ prītyāhārā dirghāyuṣo dirg-
ham adhvānāṃ tiṣṭhanti ) 11.

2. (tena khalu samayena mahāprthivi ekodikā bhavati ekārnavā | tasya(05)-
ā(m) ekodikāyām mahāprthivyām ekārnavāyāṃ vāyunā śarab sammū-
rechitaḥ saṃtanoti (tadyathā pakvasya kērasya śarab12 sammūrechitaḥ saṃta-
oty evam eva tasyām ekodikāyāṁ mahāprthivyāṁ ekārnavāyāṁ vā)(06)-
yunā śarab sammūrechitaḥ saṃ (ta) noti ( ) sa bhavati prthivirāso varṇasampa-
anno gandhasampanno (rasasampa-
nab | tadyathā navanitam evamvar-
ṇab | tadyathā13 kṣaudrān madhv aneḍakam evamāsvādah ) 14.

3. (bhavati sa samayo yad ayaṃ loko vivartate |) (R1) vivartamāne loke
satvā āyuḥkṣayāt karmakṣayāt puṇya-
-kṣayād ābhāsvarād devanikāyāe cavi-
tvā16 (ihaute manusyasahāgatāmāgac-
chanti | te 'pi rūpiṇo pūrvavad yāvad
dīrgham adhvānam tiṣṭhanti ) 17.

4. (tena khalu samayena)(R2) na sūrya-
candramasau prajñāyete na rātridiva-
saṁ na māsa(m) ardhamasaṁ na rūm na (kṣaṇalavamuhurtam prajñā-
yante .... na stri na pumān18 | satvaḥ19
satva ity ekasaṁ)(R3)khyāṁ gac-
chati ( )20.

5. athānyatamo lolupajātiyāḥ satvah
aṃgulyagren prthivirasaṃ āsvāda-
yati | yathā21 yathāsvādayati tathā

Translation

in beauty, self-luminous, going through
the air, (feeding on joy, having joy as
food, of long life, remaining for a long
period of time).

2. (At that time the great earth was only
water, was only flood; then on that)
great earth, which was only water, which
was only flood, a scum-like substance
having congealed by the wind extended
(as a crust). (Just as the scum of cook-
ed milk having congealed extends
(as a crust), in the same manner on
that great earth, which was only water,
which was only flood,) a scum-like
substance having congealed by the
wind extended (as a crust). This savour
of the earth was endowed with colour,
was endowed with odour, (was
endowed with flavour. The colour was
just the same as that of fresh butter,
the taste was just the same as that of
pure15 honey of the Kṣudrā bee).

3. (There comes a time, when this world-
system re-evolves. And) when it
re-evolves, beings, on account of decay
of life, decay of action (and) decay
of merit, having fallen away from the
class of the Ābhāsvara gods (come in
this state here into the common lot
of men. They too have form etc. (see
§ 1) up to: remaining for a long period
of time).

4. (Now at that time) neither sun nor
moon appeared, neither night nor day,
neither month nor half-month, no
season, no (instant, minute, or moment
appeared, no fortnight, no period, no
cyclical year appeared, no female or male. ‘A
being’, ‘a being’) this was the only
designation.

5. Then some being of very greedy nature
(tasted the savour) of the earth with the
tip of his finger. (The more he tasted,
Sanskrit

tathā pratikāmkṣatī | yathā yathā
pratikāmkṣatī tathā tathā kabadīṃkāropakramaṇa praparibhuktāḥ |

6. (R4) adrāks(ur)23 anyatame satvā(s)
tāṃ satvām kabadīṃkāropakramaṇa
prthivīrasam paribhuṇjānam | drṣṭvā ca te 'pi satvā angulyāgrena
prthivīrasam āsvādayanti| yathā yathā
svādayanti pūrvavad yāvad24 kabadīṃkāro)(R5)pakramaṇa praparibhukta(h | yataś ca te satvā tāṃ
prthivīrasam (kabadīṃkāropakramaṇa
praparibhuktās teśām25 kāye drṣṭha
tvām gurutvam prajñāyete subhavaro
'tantarhitāḥ | andhakāro loke prādur-
bhūtah)26.

7. (dharmatā kha)(R6)lu vāsiṣṭha
andhakārya loke prādurbhāvāt sūr-
yā(candramasaṃ prajñāyete) etc. as
in § 4.27

Translation

the more he became desirous; the more
he became desirous, the more he feasted by means of making balls).

6. Other beings saw that being feasting
on the savour of the earth by means of
making balls. (Having seen they also
tasted the savour of the earth with the
tip of their finger. The more they
tasted etc. up to); they feasted by means
of making balls.

And because these beings had feasted
on the savour of the earth (by means of
making balls there appeared solidness
and heaviness with their bodies; their
luminous appearance faded away.
Darkness became manifest in the
world).

7. (Now it is a rule), Vāsiṣṭha, that on
account of the manifestation of dark-
ness in the world sun and moon appear
(and so on as in § 4).

At this stage of world evolution the text of our fragment comes to its end. None of the
Berlin manuscripts from Sin-Kiang I have come across as yet gives anything of the con-
tinuation of the "genesis" down to the manifestation of bisexuality and of social grades
and distinctions.

NOTES

1. Quotations from the Pāli text refer to the edition of the Pali Text Society by J. E.
Carpenter, Vol. III, London, 1911, pp. 80-98, especially to §§ 10-12 on pp. 84-86. For
general information on the Aggaṇā-Sutta see pp. 258-260 in Malalasekera, Ency-
clopedia of Buddhism.

2. Professor Hiǎn-lin Dschi of Peking gave in Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländi-
schen Gesellschaft (ZDMG), Vol. 97, 1943, pp. 318 sq. a German translation of the
story on cosmogony as found in the Chinese version of the Aggaṇā-Sutta contained
in the Dirghāgama = Ch’ang-a-han-ching of the school of the Dharmaugptas (=Sūtra
5, Taisho Ed., Vol. I, p. 37b sq.). His article has the heading: "Parallelversionen zur
tocharischen Rezension des Punyavanta-Jātaka".—In a note on pp. 317-319 Dschi
supplied comprehensive bibliographical references for the episode on cosmogony.
An earlier "Bibliographie sommaire de lagenése bouddhique" is found with Louis
de La Vallée Poussin, in his translation "L’Abhidharmakosa de Vasubandhu, traduit
et annoté", Troisième Chapitre, Paris, Louvain 1926, p. 204. I also like to hint at
German translations of relevant Pāli texts and bibliographical references to be found
in the paper of H. Günther, "Die buddhistische Kosmogonie", ZDMG, Vol. 98,
1944, pp. 44-83, especially on pp. 48 sq. —Some years ago the Aggaṇā-Sutta has

3. The fragment (Cat.-No. 1583, formerly S 489) has not been recovered after the precautionary shifting of the Central Asian manuscripts from the Berlin Academy of Sciences to a mine at the end of the last world war. Luckily Dr. Else Lüders had made a first transliteration of the text many years ago on which our treatment could be based. She already referred to the Aggañña-Sutta in the heading of her transcript.

4. As passages on cosmogony, similar to those in our fragment, are found at many places of Buddhist literature, it is the vocative vāsiṣṭha (cp. §7) in line 6 on the reverse of the fragment (corresponding to Pāli vāsettha) that gives a decisive support to the identification; vāsettha is used in the Aggañña-Sutta by Lord Buddha in addressing a young brahmin of this name who, together with his friend Bhāradvāja, appears as the Lord’s interlocutor in the Sutta. Besides, we find in the first line of our fragment some akṣaras read by Mrs. Lüders as: ṛṇa (gau), a(ɡo) durvarṇo (so ya) yan. Apparently this has to be emended to (suva)ṇa gautamo durvarṇo so ’ham, corresponding to pāśūdiko samāno gotamo dubharṇo ’ham asmi (in the Aggañña-Sutta, l.c.p. 84).


7. Peking Ed. as reproduced by the Tibetan Tripitaka Research Institute, Tokyo-Kyoto, Vol. 42, 1957, p. 159.3.5-5.2 (for our §§ 1-7).

8. The passages or words preserved in the Sanskrit fragment have been underlined. O (observe) and R (reverse) together with the number of the line give the particular place from where the text comes. Throughout the text retranslated or restored letters or passages are given in round brackets.

9. The Sanskrit text of § 1 from this sentence onwards is known from the Vidyāsthāno­ pamasūtra §§ 4-5, cp. E. Waldschmidt, Von Ceylon bis Turfan, Göttingen 1967, p. 374, and is also found in the Śakrapraśnasūtra, ep. l.c., note 16. There is a reference also in Vasubandhu’s Abhidharmakośa, Taisho Ed., Vol. 29, p. 223b, l.1: cp. La Vallée Poussin, l. c. (note 1) pp. 204 sq.

10. La Vallée Poussin quotes the interpretation of the words rūpīṇaḥ etc., given in Yaśo­ mitra’s Vyākhya (=Ed. Wogihara, Tokyo 1932-1936, p. 339, 9-14). The order of succession of the attributes in the three texts mentioned in the foregoing note is always the same.

11. Pāli (§ 10): hoti kho so vāsetṭha samayo yam kadāci karaḥacī dighassa addhuno accayena ayaṁ loko savavattati | savavatamāne loke yabhuyyena sattā ābhassarasamvattanikā honti te tattha honti manomayā pitibhakkhā sayampabhā antalikkhacarā subhāṭṭhāyino ciraṅ digham addhānāṁ tīṭṭhantī.—Mahāvastu (I. 338.13-15); bhavati bhikṣavaḥ sa kālo bhavati sa samayo yad ayaṁ loko dirghasyādhihaavo ‘tyayena savavartati | savavartamāne ca punar bhikṣavo loke yabhuyyena satvā ābhāṣvare devanikāye upapadyantī.


16. Hybrid for *cyavitvā, cyutvā*; the following ihatya is explained in Yaśomitra’s Abhidharmakośavyākyāya (Ed. Wogihara, p. 330. 25) as follows: *ihabhava ihatyaḥ | adhobhāmika ity arthaḥ*.

17. Pāli (§ 10): vivāṭṭamāne loke yebhuyena sattā ābhassarakāyā cāvatvā itthattām āgacchanti | te ca honti manomayaḥ prīṭhibhākẖā sayampabhā antalikkhacarā subhaṭṭhāyino cīrāṁ ādgham addhānaṁ titṭhanti.—Mahāvastu (I. 338.16-19): vivatamāne khalu punar bhikṣavo loke samśhitē lokasannivese anyatarā sattā āyuḥkṣayāya ca karmakṣayāya ca ābhāsarato devanikāyāto cyavitvā itchatam āgacchanti | te bhavanti satvā svayamprabhūh antarīkṣaracā manomayaḥ prīṭhibhākẖā sūkhasthāyino yena-kāmāṃgataḥ.

18. Gap fully filled up according to the Tibetan version in my English translation.

19. Tibetan: *sems-can sens-can žes bya-ba hbaḥ-zig-gi graṅs-su hygro-ho*.


21. Tibetan: *ji-lta ji-ltar myan-bar byed-pa de-lta de-ltar hdo-d-par byed-do | ji-lta ji-ltar hdo-par byed-pa de-lta de-ltar kham-ji zas-kyi rtsom-pas zos-par gyur-to*.


23. The fragment reads *adrākṣa*. Common is (3.sg.) *adrākṣit*.

24. The Tibetan has the full wording as in §5.
