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**The Sūtra on Transmigration Through  
Existences**

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*Bhavaśaṅkrāntisūtra*

འཕགས་པ་སྲིད་པ་འཕོ་བ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

*'phags pa srid pa 'pho ba zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “Transmigration Through Existences”

*Āryabhavasāṅkrāntināmamahāyānasūtra*

· Toh 226 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 63 (mdo sde, dza), folios 175.a–177.a

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

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Translated by the Kīrtimukha Translation Group  
under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha

First published 2021

Current version v 1.0.12 (2024)

Generated by 84000 Reading Room v2.21.1

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co.

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## SUMMARY

- s.1 King Śreṇya Bimbisāra of Magadha approaches the Buddha and asks him how a past action can appear before the mind at the moment of death. The Buddha presents the analogy of a sleeping person who dreams of a beautiful woman and on waking foolishly longs to find her. He cites this as an example of how an action of the distant past, which has arisen from perception and subsequent afflictive emotions and then ceased, appears to the mind on the brink of death. The Buddha goes on to explain how one transitions from the final moment of one life to the first moment of the next, according to the ripening of those actions, without any phenomena actually being transferred from one life to another. The Buddha concludes with a set of seven verses that offer a succinct teaching on emptiness, focusing on the two truths and the fictitious nature of names.

ac.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 This sūtra was translated by the Kīrtimukha Translation Group. Celso Wilkinson, Laura Goetz, and L.S. Summer translated the text from the Tibetan and Sanskrit. William Giddings provided comparisons to the Chinese versions of the text.

The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.



i.

## INTRODUCTION

i.1

*The Sūtra on Transmigration Through Existences (Bhavasāṅkrāntisūtra)* is set in the Kalandakanivāpa, at the Veṇuvana near Rājagṛha, where King Śreṇya Bimbisāra of Magadha approaches the Buddha and asks him how, given the doctrine that formations are empty, an action that has long ceased can appear before the mind at the moment of death.<sup>1</sup> The Buddha presents the analogy of a beautiful woman in a dream; the sleeping person dreams of cavorting with her, and even after waking foolishly longs to find her. The analogy illustrates how a karmic deed of the distant past, which arose from perception and ensuing afflictive emotions and then ceased, manifests in the mind of someone on the verge of death. The Buddha goes on to explain the transition from the final moment of one life to the first moment of the next, according to the ripening of that karmic deed, without any phenomena actually being transferred. Thus, in this sūtra, the Buddha provides a fundamental explanation for how transmigration between lives occurs in conformity with the view that there is no self—as an immutable, incomposite entity—that goes from this life to the next. The Buddha concludes with a set of seven verses that do not summarize his prose teachings or even mention transmigration at all, but rather offer a succinct teaching on emptiness, focusing in particular on the two truths and the fictitious nature of all nominal designations.

i.2

It is notable that this sūtra can be divided into two distinct parts—the prose and the verse sections—which are thematically quite different. The second has little relation to the title of the sūtra and seems to be more a deep reading of the preceding prose than the kind of verse summary commonly found in other Mahāyāna sūtras. This divide is one key to navigating the sūtra’s complex history, which is explained below. In essence, this early Mahāyāna sūtra holds an important place in the tradition as one of the

earliest statements on the two truths<sup>2</sup> and was used by both the Madhyamaka and early Yogācāra schools as a scriptural authority on the ultimate truth.

### · Extant Sources of the Sūtra ·

- i.3 The *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* was translated and edited by the Indian scholars Jinamitra and Dānaśīla and the Tibetan translator and editor Yeshé Dé, who were active from the eight–ninth centuries CE. The Denkarma and Phangthangma imperial catalogs, dated to the early ninth century, both include it in their lists of translated sūtras.<sup>3</sup> It is also listed in the *Mahāvīyūtpatti*.<sup>4</sup>
- i.4 There was no known Sanskrit witness of this sūtra until recently, when a manuscript containing twenty texts, all of them sūtras, was found in the Potala Palace in Lhasa. Bhikṣuṇī Vinītā published a critical edition and English translation of this collection in the series Sanskrit Texts from the Autonomous Region (2010). Unfortunately, due to the inaccessibility of the manuscript collection and because it was missing a final colophon, its origin and date are currently unknown.<sup>5</sup> There seems to be a thematic connection among the twenty sūtras. Vinītā gives the example of moral discipline (*śīla*) as a recurrent theme running through the manuscript,<sup>6</sup> and we can likewise note the recurrence of themes of karmic cause and effect and the hierarchy of merit. Interestingly, this sūtra is quoted among others, including several from the Potala manuscript, by Kawa Paltsek (*ska ba dpal brtsegs*) in a text contained in the Tengyur called the *\*Pravacanaratnākhyānaśākyavaṃśāvalī*.<sup>7</sup> Here we can identify the same recurrent themes among the quotations.
- i.5 Other fragments from the Sanskrit text have been found extant in quotation in other works, with a great number of variations.<sup>8</sup> The *Pitāputra-samāgamasūtra* (*The Sūtra of the Meeting of Father and Son*) contains a passage that closely parallels the prose passage of the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* in both the Tibetan and Sanskrit. The extant Sanskrit is found in quotation in Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya*.<sup>9</sup> In addition to being quoted extensively among treatises, the verse section of the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* has some passages in common with or closely resembling verses found in other sūtras and treatises. There are three similarly titled treatises found in the Tengyur, all attributed to Nāgārjuna, called the *Bhavaśāṅcara* (Toh 2277), the *Bhavaśāṅkrānti* (Toh 3840), and the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntiparikathā* (Toh 4162), and for the second of these there is a word-by-word commentary called the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntitīka* (Toh 3841), attributed to a "Paṇḍita Maitreya-nātha."<sup>10</sup> All three of these treatises contain within them verses that loosely match the verse section of the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra*. Ostensibly these treatises are themselves a commentary on the sūtra;

however, the relationships are ambiguous, and some scholars have suggested the possibility that it was the treatises, in some form, that had a later influence on the verse section of the sūtra.<sup>11</sup> Since the whole set of the canonical quotations and parallel passages to the verse section is complex and extensive, a comprehensive list of these instances is found in the appendix.

i.6 There are three translations of the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* found in the Chinese Tripiṭaka: one (Taishō 575) translated by Bodhiruci (菩提流支, sixth century CE), another (Taishō 576) translated by Buddhaśānta (佛陀扇多, sixth century), and a third (Taishō 577) translated by Yijing (義淨, seventh to eighth century).

i.7 There are several other Western-language translations of this sūtra available. In 1936, Giuliana Stramigioli translated both the Tibetan and Chinese (Taishō 557) versions, separately, into Italian. The Tibetan translated was derived from a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century manuscript found in Tholing Monastery.<sup>12</sup> N. Aiyaswami Sastri published a translation in 1931 from the Narthang Kangyur and another in 1938 from the Tibetan and all three Chinese translations. Fernando Tola and Carmen Dragonetti translated the sūtra into Spanish based on Stramigioli's edition in 1977, again in 1980 based on Sastri's edition, and into English in 1986. As is mentioned above, there is also Vinītā's 2010 English translation based the Sanskrit manuscript from the Potala. Most recently of all, Peter Skilling has included a fine translation of the sūtra and some helpful notes on it in his 2021 collection, *Questioning the Buddha: A Selection of Twenty-Five Sutras*.<sup>13</sup>

## · The History and Philosophy of the Sūtra ·

i.8 Noriaki Hakamaya, in his detailed analysis of *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra*, theorizes that the prose section of the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* and its parallel in the *Pitāputrasamāgamāsūtra* originated as an explanation on the topic of transmigration that later developed under the influence of the Prajñāpāramitā tradition, at which time elements of the emptiness doctrine would have been introduced. He further suggests that the verse section may have been an addition of the Yogācāra school.<sup>14</sup>

i.9 Hakamaya's thesis is supported by several contextual points in the sūtra. To begin with, the prose section presents an explanation of rebirth as resulting from the causal force of an action (*karma*) without the actual transmigration of any self or permanent phenomenon. This accords with the standard Buddhist nominalist view, in which what seems to be a coherent "self" is merely a collection of factors known as the five aggregates, which include consciousness, and thus rebirth occurs through causality and

without a “self” transferring from this life to the next. In general, this explanation of rebirth would be accepted by any Buddhist school. One exception would be those schools described by their critics as Pudgalavādins, or “proponents of a person,” who assert that a person (*pudgala*) transmigrates from one life to the next. However, two such schools, the Vātsīputrīya and Saṃmitīya, make this claim while maintaining the Buddhist tenet of no-self (*anātman*): this “person” is defined as neither permanent nor impermanent and is neither the same nor different from the five aggregates.<sup>15</sup>

i.10 Interestingly, the Tibetan, Sanskrit, and Chinese versions of the sūtra unanimously state that “no phenomenon whatsoever transmigrates from this world to another world,” with one notable exception in Bodhiruci’s Chinese translation (Taishō 575), which states in the same passage, “there is one phenomenon that transmigrates from this life into the future life.”<sup>16</sup> Intriguingly, the Bodhiruci version does not indicate what exactly this one phenomenon is or how it functions in the process of transmigration. Discussing this passage, N. Aiyaswami Sastri speculates that this version, as the earliest translation, may indicate that the original narrative of the sūtra originated from schools, such as the Vātsīputrīya and Saṃmitīya, that assert the transmigration of the “person” or some similar phenomenon. In this case, the title of the sūtra, *Transmigration Through Existences*, would indeed accord with those that say transmigration occurs.<sup>17</sup> However, our research has not unearthed any other evidence that traces the sūtra specifically to these schools, and all the later editions clearly do not reflect this view.

i.11 Regardless of this disparity, the prose section of the sūtra provides a standard early Buddhist explanation of rebirth. As in the analogy of the dream, even something we know so well to be illusory can have consequences: the dreamer remembers the dream woman or even goes out searching for her.<sup>18</sup> In the same way, although nothing passes from one life to another, the effects of the actions of one life can shape the next.

i.12 The prose section of the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* is concordant with the Sautrāntika view that consciousness, which itself seems to be a continuity, consists only of distinct momentary consciousnesses arising and ceasing. Thus, it is said in this sūtra that when one reaches the last moment of consciousness of one life, in the next moment the first consciousness of the next life arises in turn, and these are connected only by the potential of the past karma that shapes each moment as it arises.

i.13 The Sautrāntikas maintained that karma, too, is momentary, and thus an action leads to an evolving stream of germinal potentialities (*bīja* or “seed”) leading to the fruition. The difference in the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* and other Mahāyāna sūtras is that all the elements of the transmigration—

consciousness, karma, and so forth—are said not to arise, remain, or cease; they are devoid of essential nature, so any seeming functioning of karma is an illusion.

i.14 A particularly interesting feature of the prose is that it makes this doctrinal assumption that the karma of a single action arises in the mind at the moment of death and is instrumental in determining a being's next state of existence. While the Buddha accepts this principle implicit in King Bimbisāra's question, he does not explain the reasoning behind it, which could be interpreted in different ways according to various Buddhist views. It is worth noting that this sūtra does not implicate an intermediate state between lives and seems to imply that the first moment of consciousness of the next life arises immediately following the cessation of the final moment of consciousness in the previous one.<sup>19</sup> In light of this, without forcing a specific interpretation of how this causality functions, we can say that the arising of the karma in the mind in the final moment of death provides an explanation for how the continuum of consciousness transmigrating from one existence to the next occurs in lieu of a self or any perpetuating phenomena to be carried through that transmigration. This explanation also maintains the ethical principle of the law of karma, indispensable to Buddhism, that one's ethical conduct determines one's next existence and that pleasure and suffering arise from one's past actions.

i.15 It is also up for interpretation exactly how the analogy of the dream should be understood. The Buddha gives this analogy to explain the principle of how the karma appears at the moment of death, stating that the woman in the dream is analogous to that karma, and that her arising in the mind of the man waking from the dream is to be understood as analogous to the karma appearing before the mind at the moment of death. Certainly, he is not implying that the phenomena of karma itself appears, since it has explicitly long since passed, but its potentiality or causal force is present somehow at that crucial moment of death. Perhaps the analogy also emphasizes that the karma itself is nonexistent, like the woman in a dream. But on the whole, the precise implications of this analogy might be explicated differently according to the theory of karma and transmigration held by any particular Buddhist school.

i.16 In the Buddha's final remarks of the prose section we find some passages that align the narrative closely with the Prajñāpāramitā teachings on how phenomena lack any essential nature and on emptiness, in particular at [1.14](#), where the phenomena including final consciousness, transmigration, karma, first consciousness, and birth are declared to be empty of themselves.

- i.17 Moving on to the verses, the first four pertain to the Buddhist nominalist position that all phenomena are only nominally existent (*prajñaptisat*), having no independent substantial existence (*dravyasat*), a position that was used by Madhyamaka thinkers to support their school's interpretation of emptiness.<sup>20</sup>
- i.18 The final three verses present a śūnyavāda interpretation of the two truths. The relative truth refers to conventional appearances, as in verse five when "one who observes correctly" says "The eye sees forms." From the perspective of the ultimate truth there is only the nature of emptiness, all phenomena existing dependently, or, according to the statement in verse six, "seeing comes from a conjunction."<sup>21</sup> Finally, verse seven points out the "supreme truth" that "The eye does not see form / And the mind does not know phenomena," meaning that the conceptual notion of the two truths is itself provisional.
- i.19 Although the verse section presents a Madhyamaka position, and despite having parallel treatises attributed to Nāgārjuna, Hakamaya intriguingly suggests the possibility that these verses were an addition of the Yogācāra school. The evidence he provides is that the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* is cited in numerous Yogācāra texts, including the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* and Sāgaramegha's commentary on its treatment of the second verse, in which it is interpreted according to the Yogācāra *trisvabhāva* (three nature) theory,<sup>22</sup> and the fact that the sūtra is cited in dialectical treatises to refute the Yogācāra position as the basis of their scriptural authority.<sup>23</sup> Regardless of the question of the sūtra's history, the verse section is quoted or echoed in many treatises as a definitive statement on the two truths and the nominalist position of phenomena.
- i.20 All of this is merely an overview, food for further research, and is intended to draw attention to some facets of the fascinating history of this brief sūtra.

### · Our Translation Approach ·

- i.21 We have based our translation primarily on the Tibetan version in the Degé Kangyur, but we consulted the Sanskrit and versions in other Kangyurs in the case of questionable terms or passages, in order to establish the most plausible and accurate readings of the text. The citations of the Sanskrit we provide in the notes are from Vinītā's emendations of the handwritten Potala manuscript. Instances where our translation diverges from the Degé have been noted, and any significant differences found in the various versions of the sūtra are recorded and explained in the notes. In general, all these versions, along with the Sanskrit and Chinese sources, are unanimous in terms of their general structure and meaning (except for the phrase found in

Bodhiruci's translation, Taishō 575, mentioned above). However, there are many minute variations to be found among the various versions, especially in comparison to the parallel passages found in the *Pitāputrasamāgamasūtra* and quotations of both the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* and *Pitāputrasamāgamasūtra* found in many other texts. These numerous variations are both the likely result and evidence of the sūtra's complex development.

i.22 Since the minor variations found in comparing the different versions are particularly numerous, we have chosen to provide annotations only for differences that change the meaning in a significant way or that we otherwise deemed to be interesting or noteworthy.<sup>24</sup> To note all variant readings would require the preparation of a diplomatic edition of the multiple texts, which lies beyond the scope of this translation. As mentioned above, a comprehensive list of all the Kangyur and Tengyur quotations and congruent passages relating to the verse section of the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* is given in the appendix.

**The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra  
Transmigration Through Existences**



1.

## The Translation

[F.175.a]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling in the Kalandakanivāpa, at the Veṇuvana near Rājagṛha, together with a great monastic saṅgha of 1,250 monks and a multitude of bodhisattva mahāsattvas. The Blessed One, surrounded [F.175.b] and venerated by an audience of many hundreds of thousands, taught the Dharma. He expounded the wholesome conduct that is virtuous in the beginning, virtuous in the middle, and virtuous in the end, and that is excellent in meaning, excellent in words, distinctive, perfect, completely pure, and thoroughly refined.

1.3 At that time King Śreṇya Bimbisāra of Magadha set out from the great city of Rājagṛha. With great royal pomp and power, he arrived at the Veṇuvana before the Blessed One. He bowed his head to the feet of the Blessed One, circumambulated him three times, and sat to one side.

1.4 Seated to one side, King Śreṇya Bimbisāra of Magadha inquired of the Blessed One,<sup>25</sup> “Blessed One, how does an action, performed and accumulated, having ceased and ceased for a long while, manifest in the mind when the moment of death is imminent?<sup>26</sup> Since all formations are empty, how are actions not lost?”

1.5 The Blessed One replied to King Śreṇya Bimbisāra of Magadha,<sup>27</sup> “Great king, it is like this: To give an analogy, a man has dreamed that he has cavorted with the most beautiful woman in the land,<sup>28</sup> and then upon waking he keeps recollecting that most beautiful woman in the land. What do you think, king? Does that most beautiful woman in the land from the dream exist?”

“No, Blessed One, she does not,” he replied.

- 1.6 The Blessed One then asked, “Great king, what do you think? In that case, is that person who has become fixated on the most beautiful woman in the land wise in nature?”<sup>29</sup>
- 1.7 “No, Blessed One, he is not,” he replied. “Why is that? Blessed One, the most beautiful woman in the land from the dream is utterly nonexistent and cannot be [F.176.a] observed; as there is no way he can cavort with her, that man is bound to be miserable and exhausted.”
- 1.8 “Great king,” said the Blessed One, “childish and unlearned beings, in the same way, become fixated on pleasant<sup>30</sup> forms that they see with their eyes. Having become fixated, they then become desirous. Being desirous, they then become enamored. Being enamored leads them to commit actions stemming from passion, anger, and ignorance, which are conditioned by body, speech, and mind.<sup>31</sup> The actions, thus conditioned, then cease.<sup>32</sup> Having ceased, an action does not remain anywhere—in the east or in the south, in the west or in the north. It does not remain above, below, or in the intermediate directions.
- 1.9 “But at some other time, whenever it might be, when the moment of death is approaching and the karma concordant with one’s fortune for this life is exhausted, the final consciousness ceases, and this next karma—just like the most beautiful woman in the land for the person in the analogy sleeping and waking from sleep—will manifest in the mind.<sup>33</sup>
- 1.10 “Great king, that is how, as the final consciousness ceases, there arises the first consciousness belonging to the next life,<sup>34</sup> be that among the gods, humans, asuras,<sup>35</sup> hell beings, animals, or pretas.<sup>36</sup>
- 1.11 “Great king, immediately after that first consciousness ceases,<sup>37</sup> there arises the mindstream concordant with one’s fortune along with the experiences of karmic fruition that manifest therein.
- 1.12 “Great king, no phenomenon whatsoever transmigrates from this world to another world,<sup>38</sup> yet there are the manifestations of death and birth.<sup>39</sup>
- 1.13 “Great king, the cessation of the final consciousness [F.176.b] is known as *death*. The arising of the first consciousness is known as *birth*. Great king, the moment the final consciousness ceases, it does not go anywhere. The moment the first consciousness pertaining to birth arises, it also does not come from anywhere. Why is that? It is because they<sup>40</sup> are devoid of essential nature.
- 1.14 “Great king, the final consciousness is empty of final consciousness, transmigration after death is empty of transmigration after death,<sup>41</sup> action is empty of action,<sup>42</sup> the first consciousness is empty of the first consciousness, and birth is empty of birth, yet actions manifest without being lost.

- 1.15 “Great king, no sooner does the first consciousness pertaining to birth cease than there arises, without any interruption, the mindstream in which the experiences of karmic fruition manifest.”<sup>43</sup>
- 1.16 Thus spoke the Blessed One. The Sugata having spoken, the Teacher further declared:<sup>44 45</sup>
- 1.17 “All of these are mere names—  
They abide only as notions.  
Set apart from their verbal designations,  
What is designated does not exist. {1}
- 1.18 “By whatever names  
Any phenomena are designated,  
They do not exist therein.  
This is the very nature of phenomena. {2}
- 1.19 “The nature of *name* is empty of name.  
A name does not exist as a name.  
All nameless phenomena  
Have been designated by name. {3}
- 1.20 “These phenomena do not exist;  
They originate from conceptual thought.  
The conceptual thought that conceptualizes them as empty  
Also does not exist. {4}
- 1.21 “ ‘The eye sees form’  
Is said by one who observes correctly.  
To the world with its perverse arrogance,<sup>46</sup>  
This was taught as the relative truth. {5}
- 1.22 “What the Guide has made known—  
That seeing comes from a conjunction<sup>47</sup>—  
The wise speak of  
As the grounds for designating ultimate truth. {6}
- 1.23 “The eye does not see form  
And the mind does not know phenomena.  
That is the supreme truth;  
The world does not fathom<sup>48</sup> it.” {7} [F.177.a]
- 1.24 The Blessed One having spoken, King Śreṇya Bimbisāra of Magadha, the bodhisattvas and monks, and the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised the words of the Blessed One.

1.25      *This concludes the noble Mahāyāna sūtra “Transmigration Through Existences.”*

c.

## Colophon

c.1 Translated and edited by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Dānaśīla and the chief editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé. It was then revised and finalized according to the new terminology.

ap.

## Appendix

### APPENDIX

ap1.1 The verse section of the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* is quite significant to Buddhism's commentarial literature, as it has been used as scriptural authority to support philosophical views concerning key concepts about emptiness, phenomena, the nature of phenomena, and the two truths. However, because these verses were so often quoted in treatises, they at times appear to have been altered and are attributed to various sources. Furthermore, as noted in the introduction, it is uncertain whether the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* was the original source of these seven terse but important verses. What follows is an account of all the quotations and verses we found in the Kangyur and Tengyur; here we have supplemented the research of previous scholars with our own findings. The list is by no means exhaustive, and it is confined to the seven verses found at the end of the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* with a primary focus on Tibetan sources. There are also numerous Sanskrit fragments of the verses that are not listed here. For a comprehensive view of these, see Vinītā (2010), pp. 438–47, which compares Sanskrit readings found in different extant quotations, and some of the Chinese sources as well.

ap1.2 Braces {} have been used when referring to the verse numbers as they appear in the present translation of the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra*, to disambiguate them from indexes used in other texts.

ap2. . Similar Verses Found in Other Sūtras of the Kangyur .

ap2.1 *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (Toh 107): Verse {1} is found at folio 129.b3 and folio 260.b5; note that the wording here is quite different: *ming dang 'du shes bye brag gis/ /mdo dang mdo las rnam rtog bshad/ /brjod pa dag ni ma gtogs par/ /brjod par bya ba'ang mi rig go/*. Verse {4} is found at folio 159.a6; note that the wording here is also quite different: *chos 'di dag ni snying po med/ /rlom sems las ni byung ba*

*yi/ /gang gis stong zhes snyems pa yi/ /snyems pa de yang stong pa'o/*. Some of the Tengyur treatises listed below quote these verses as they appear in the *Bhavasāṅkrāntisūtra* but attribute them to the *Lāṅkāvatārasūtra*.

ap2.2 *Ghanavyūhasūtra* (Toh 110): Verses {1–2} are found together in three instances: folio 39.b4–6, folio 40.a6–7, and folio 41.b3–4. Note that the content is somewhat different, and the first instance is interspersed with parts of dialogue.

ap2.3 *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra* (Toh 133): Lindtner (1992), p. 264, n. 30, mentions this sūtra as having verses in common with the *Bhavasāṅkrāntisūtra*, although these do not appear to be present in the Tibetan editions.

### ap3. · Nāgārjuna's *Bhavasāṅkrānti* Treatises ·

ap3.1 As mentioned in the [introduction](#), these treatises attributed to Nāgārjuna each contain a section resembling the seven-verse section of the *Bhavasāṅkrāntisūtra* but contain significant differences and some partial omissions. While there are further variations between the verses of the three treatises themselves, Sastri suggests that they are all recensions of the same older source. See Sastri (1931), pp. xxii–xxxi, for his discussion of the differences between each text.

ap3.2 *Bhāvasaṅcara* (Toh 2277), Nāgārjuna: Includes verses {1–7} with some variation at folio 128.a1–5.

ap3.3 *Bhavasāṅkrānti* (Toh 3840), Nāgārjuna: Includes verses {1–7} with some variation at folio 151.b2–6 (verse {4} is shortened into two lines). This treatise is also referred to as the *Madhyama (dbu ma) Bhavasāṅkrānti*, according to the colophon.

ap3.4 *Bhavasāṅkrāntitīka* (Toh 3841), Paṇḍita Maitreyanātha: Contains a phrase-level commentary on the *Bhavasāṅkrānti* treatise (Toh 3840) above.

ap3.5 *Bhavasāṅkrāntiparikathā* (Toh 4162), Nāgārjuna: Includes verses {1–7} with some variations at folios 167.b7–168.a3 (verse {2} is shortened into two lines and {3} is omitted).

ap3.6 *Bhavabhedaśāstra* (Taishō 1574), Nāgārjuna: This is not included in the Tengyur but is found in the Chinese Tripiṭaka, vol. 30, no. 1574. Sastri describes this as yet another recension of the treatises attributed to Nāgārjuna above.





*Bhavaśaṅkrāntisūtra*: ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

*Bhāvaśaṅcara*: ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

*Bhavaśaṅkrānti[śāstra]*: ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

*Bhavaśaṅkrāntiparikathā*: ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

**{V}: {6}**

*Bhavaśaṅkrāntisūtra*: ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

*Bhāvaśaṅcara*: ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

*Bhavaśaṅkrānti[śāstra]*: ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

*Bhavaśaṅkrāntiparikathā*: ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

**{V}: {7}**

*Bhavaśaṅkrāntisūtra*: ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

*Bhāvaśaṅcara*: ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

*Bhavaśaṅkrānti[śāstra]*: ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

*Bhavaśaṅkrāntiparikathā*: ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

ap4. · Other Quotations from the Tengyur, Sorted by Verse ·

ap4.1 This section contains all other Tengyur sources that contain quotations of the verses found in the *Bhavaśaṅkrāntisūtra*. The list is indexed in subsections by the latter’s verse number. Treatises that quote multiple verses are repeated for each subsection. Note that in most cases the source of the quotation is not stated in the treatise. It has been noted when the quotation is attributed to the *Bhavaśaṅkrāntisūtra* or if it is attributed by the text to a different source (often when the quote was attributed to another source, it is in fact most close to that of the *Bhavaśaṅkrāntisūtra*).

- ap4.2 *Acintyastava* (Toh 1128), Nāgārjuna: Verse {1} is quoted at folio 78.a3. This text also quotes verse {4}; see below.
- ap4.3 *Pañcaviṁśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitopadeśaśāstrābhisamayālaṅkāraṅṣṭi* (Toh 3787), Vimuktasena: Verse {1} is quoted at folios 150.b7–151.a1.
- ap4.4 *Pañcaviṁśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitopadeśaśāstrābhisamayālaṅkārikāḥvārttikā* (Toh 3788), Vimuktasena: Verse {1} is quoted at folio 118.a3–4.
- ap4.5 *Abhisamayālaṅkāralokā* (Toh 3791), Haribhadra: Verse {1} is quoted at folio 32.a4 and folio 253.b5–6.
- ap4.6 *Bhagavadratnaguṇasañcayagāthāpañjikā* (Toh 3792), Haribhadra: Verse {1} is quoted at folio 24.a5.
- ap4.7 *Prajñāpāramitāsaṅgrahakārikāvivarāṇa* (Toh 3810), Triratnadāsa: Verses {1–3} are quoted at folio 314a4–5 ({2–3} appear before {1}).
- ap4.8 *Madhyamakāloka* (Toh 3887), Kamalaśīla: Verse {1} is quoted at folio 230.a4–5.
- ap4.9 *Munimatālaṅkāra* (Toh 3903), Abhayākaragupta: Verse {1} is quoted at folio 140.b6.
- ap4.10 *Laṅkāvatāranāmamahāyānasūtravṛttitathāgatahṛdayālaṅkāra* (Toh 4019), Jñānavajra: Verse {1} is quoted at folio 73.b7.
- ap4.11 *Yogācārabhūmaubodhisattvabhūmivyākhyā* (Toh 4047), \*Sāgaramegha: Verse {1ab} is quoted at folio 71.b2, and then the text proceeds to comment on lines from verse {2}.
- ap4.12 *Vyākhyāyukti* (Toh 4061), Vasubandhu: Partial quotations of verses {1–3} at folio 110.b1–7 with interspersed commentary.
- ap4.13 *gsung rab rin po che'i gdam rgyud dang shAkya'i rabs rgyud* (Toh 4357), Kawa Paltsek: Verses {1–2}, {3ab}, and {7} are quoted at folio 265.b5–7, and verse {7} is quoted again at folio 281.a4–5.
- .. Verse {2} ..
- ap4.14 *Prajñāpāramitāsaṅgrahakārikāvivarāṇa* (Toh 3810), Triratnadāsa: Verses {1–3} are quoted at folio 314a4–5 ({2–3} appear before {1}).
- ap4.15 *Bhagavatyaṁnāyānusārīṅtīnāmavyākhyā* (Toh 3811), Jagaddalanivāsin: Verse {2ab} is quoted at folio 52.a2; the lines following this paraphrase ideas in the other verses found in the *Bhavasāṅkrāntisūtra*.

- ap4.16 *Prajñāpāramitāvajracchedikāṭīkā* (Toh 3817), Kamalaśīla: Verse {2} is quoted at folio 254.b3–4.
- ap4.17 *Prajñāpradīpamūlamadhyamakavṛtti* (Toh 3853), Bhāvaviveka: Verse {2} is quoted at folio 243.b6.
- ap4.18 *Madhyamakahṛdayakārikā* (Toh 3855), Bhāvaviveka: Verse {2} is quoted at folios 22.b7–23.a1.
- ap4.19 *Madhyamakahṛdayavṛttitarkajoālā* (Toh 3856), Bhāvaviveka: Verse {2} is quoted at folio 219.a5. “This scripture is renowned among both traditions” (*de la gzhung lugs gnyi ga la grags pa’i lung yang yod de*) refers to proponents of both the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra.
- ap4.20 *Prajñāpradīpaṭīkā* (Toh 3859), Avalokitavrata: Verse {2} is quoted at vol. 101, folio 282.b4–5. The source is unspecified (*gzhan las kyang ji skad du*), but following this is the same quote in prose form attributed to the *Bhavasāṅkrāntisūtra* (*srid pa ’pho ba’i mdo las*).
- ap4.21 *Sugatamatavibhaṅgabhāṣya* (Toh 3900), Jitāri: Verse {2} is quoted at folio 64.a5.
- ap4.22 *Akṣayamatiniṛdeśaṭīkā* (Toh 3994), Vasubandhu: Verse {2} is quoted at folio 80.a6.
- ap4.23 *Mahāyānasūtrāṅkāraṭīkā* (Toh 4029), Asvabhāva: Verse {2} is quoted at folio 41.a2.
- ap4.24 *Sūtrāṅkāravṛttibhāṣya* (Toh 4034), Sthiramati: Verse {2} is quoted at folio 9.a5.
- ap4.25 *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (Toh 4037), Asaṅga: Verse {2} is quoted at folio 27.a4–5. The quote is attributed to the *Bhavasāṅkrāntisūtra* (*srid pa ’pho ba’i mdo las*).
- ap4.26 *Vyākhyāyukti* (Toh 4061), Vasubandhu: Partial quotations of verses {1–3} at folio 110.b1–7 with interspersed commentary.
- ap4.27 *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* (Toh 4079), Ratnākaraśānti: Verse {2} is quoted at folio 145.a3. The quote is attributed to the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (Toh 107) (*’di skad du ’phags pa lang kar gshegs pa las*).
- ap4.28 *Tattvasaṅgraha* (Toh 4266), Śāntarakṣita: Verse {2} is represented at folio 33.a1–2 using different words, but following the same structure as found in the *Bhavasāṅkrāntisūtra*.
- ap4.29 *Tattvasaṅgrahapañjikā* (Toh 4267), Kamalaśīla: Verse {2} is quoted at folio 143.a5–6 and folio 312.b1.

ap4.30 *gsung rab rin po che'i gtam rgyud dang shAkya'i rabs rgyud* (Toh 4357), Kawa Paltsek: Verses {1–2}, {3ab}, and {7} are quoted at folio 265.b5–7, and verse {7} is quoted again at folio 281.a4–5.

.. Verse {3} ..

ap4.31 *Prajñāpāramitāsāṅgrahakārikāvivarāṇa* (Toh 3810), Triratnadāsa: Verses {1–3} are quoted at folio 314.a4–5 ({2–3} appear before {1}).

ap4.32 *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (Toh 3940), Śāntideva: Quotes verse {3}; however, the quote is omitted in the Tibetan but is found in the Sanskrit. See Vaidya (1960), p. 241, v. 9–14. The verse is attributed to the *Lokanāthavyākaraṇa*, the identity of which is uncertain.

ap4.33 *Vyākhyāyukti* (Toh 4061), Vasubandhu: Contains partial quotations of verses {1–3} at folio 110.b1–7 with interspersed commentary.

ap4.34 *gsung rab rin po che'i gtam rgyud dang shAkya'i rabs rgyud* (Toh 4357), Kawa Paltsek: Verses {1–2}, {3ab}, and {7} are quoted at folio 265.b5–7, and verse {7} is quoted again at folio 281.a4–5.

.. Verse {4} ..

ap4.35 *Acintyastava* (Toh 1128), Nāgārjuna: Verse {4} is quoted at folio 78.a3. This text also quotes verse {1}, see above.

ap4.36 *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* (Toh 3872), Prajñākaramati: Quotes the *Acintyastava* above, containing this quotation of Verse {4} at folio 274.b1–2.

.. Verse {5} ..

ap4.37 *Prajñāpradīpaṭīkā* (Toh 3859), Avalokitavrata: Verse {5} is quoted at vol. 100, folio 8.a5. The quote is attributed to the *Bhavasāṅkrāntisūtra* (*srid pa 'pho ba'i mdo las*). In other sections this text also quotes verses {6} and {7}, see below.

.. Verse {6} ..

ap4.38 *Prajñāpradīpamūlamadhyamakavṛtti* (Toh 3853), Bhāvaviveka: Verse {6} is quoted at folio 203.b7.

ap4.39 *Madhyamakahrdayavṛttitarkajvālā* (Toh 3856), Bhāvaviveka: Verse {6} is quoted at folio 53.a1–2. The connotation of {6cd} is somewhat different: *de ni blo can 'jig rten chos/nye bar gdags pa'i sar ston to*.

ap4.40 *Prajñāpradīpaṭīkā* (Toh 3859), Avalokitavrata: Verse {6} is quoted at vol. 101, folio 147.a4. The quote is attributed to the *Bhavasāṅkrāntisūtra* (*srid pa 'pho ba'i mdo las*). In other sections this text also quotes verses {5} and {7}; see above and below.

ap4.41 *Prasannapadā* (Toh 3860), Candrakīrti: Verses {6–7} are quoted at folios 40.b7–41.a1. Verse {6} is placed after verse {7}.

.. Verse {7} ..

ap4.42 *Prajñāpradīpaṭīkā* (Toh 3859), Avalokitavrata: Verse {7} is quoted at vol. 100, folio 8.a2, folio 8.a6, and folio 35.a3. The quote is attributed to the *Bhavasāṅkrāntisūtra* (*srid pa 'pho ba'i mdo las*). In other sections this text also quotes verses {5} and {6}; see above.

ap4.43 *Prasannapadā* (Toh 3860), Candrakīrti: Verses {6–7} are quoted at folios 40.b7–41.a1. Verse {6} is placed after verse {7}.

ap4.44 *gsung rab rin po che'i gdam rgyud dang shAkya'i rabs rgyud* (Toh 4357), Kawa Paltsek: Verses {1–2}, {3ab}, and {7} are quoted at folio 265.b.5–7, and verse {7} is quoted again at folio 281.a4–5.

ab.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BhSS</i>	<i>Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra</i>
<i>C</i>	Choné ( <i>co ne</i> ) Kangyur
<i>D</i>	Degé ( <i>sde dge</i> ) Kangyur
<i>H</i>	Lhasa ( <i>zhol</i> ) Kangyur
<i>J</i>	Lithang ( <i>'jang sa tham</i> ) Kangyur
<i>K</i>	Peking ( <i>pe cin</i> ) Kangxi Kangyur
<i>K<sub>y</sub></i>	Peking Yongle ( <i>g.yung lo</i> ) Kangyur
<i>N</i>	Narthang ( <i>snar thang</i> ) Kangyur
<i>PPSS</i>	<i>Pitāputrasamāgamasūtra</i> (Toh 60)
<i>S</i>	Stok Palace ( <i>stog pho brang bris ma</i> ) Kangyur
<i>Sanskrit</i>	Sanskrit manuscript found in the Potala Palace (see introduction and bibliography)
<i>Taishō</i> 575	Sixth-century Chinese translation by Bodhiruci (菩提流支)
<i>Taishō</i> 576	Sixth-century Chinese translation by Buddhaśānta (佛陀扇多)
<i>Taishō</i> 577	Seventh–eighth-century Chinese translation by Yijing (義淨)
<i>U</i>	Urga ( <i>ku re</i> ) Kangyur

n.

## NOTES

- n.1 The ideas that actions committed in the past appear to the mind at the moment of death, and that a person's last thought determines their next existence, are not frequently encountered in Mahāyāna literature. There are, however, precedents for the second idea—the karmic efficacy of final thoughts—in Hindu and early Buddhist texts. See McDermott (1980), pp. 177–78. For an example from the Pali suttas, see MN 3.214 in Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (1995), pp. 261–62.
- n.2 Willis (1982), p. 119.
- n.3 Denkarma folio 299.b; Phangthangma (2003), p. 17. Both catalogs describe the sūtra as seventy ślokas in length.
- n.4 *Mahāvvyutpatti*, no. 1379.
- n.5 Currently, the manuscript is kept in the Potala. Vinītā's critical edition is based on a copy of the manuscript that is kept in the China Tibetology Research Center. For further details on the state of this manuscript see Vinītā (2010), pp. xv–xvii.
- n.6 Vinītā (2010), pp. xxvii–xxix.
- n.7 Kawa Paltsek, *gsung rab rin po che'i gtam rgyud dang shAkya'i rabs rgyud*. BhSS is quoted on pp. 805–7 in the Pedurma edition.
- n.8 There are numerous Sanskrit fragments of this text. See Vinītā (2010), pp. 410–47, for a detailed critical edition, which compares the various sources. Vinītā includes transcribed sections of Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvātārabhaṣya* from a copy of a Sanskrit manuscript from the Potala kept at the China Tibetology Research Center (Box 136). The critical edition also includes Sanskrit fragments from Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*, Prajñākaramatī's *Bodhicaryāvātārapañjikā*, Asaṅga's *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, and Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya*,

all of which quote the BhSS or parallel passages of the PPSS (as is the case with the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*).

- n.9 See [n.8](#).
- n.10 See Degé Tengyur, vol. 96 (dbu ma, tsa), folio 158.a. The authorship of these texts is uncertain. See Hakamaya (1977), p. 482; see also Tola and Dragonetti (1986), p. 13, fn. 1. The Tibetan and restored Sanskrit editions of these texts, along with a translation of the *śāstras* and summary of the *ṭīka*, are given in Sastri (1938).
- n.11 Lindtner states that Nāgārjuna had adopted these verses from the BhSS, while Tola and Dragonetti suggest that it may have been the other way around, and that while the prose section certainly predates Nāgārjuna's work, it is possible that some of the verses, being later additions, were drawn from the *śāstra*. See Lindtner (1992), pp. 264–66; see also Tola and Dragonetti (1986), pp. 4–5.
- n.12 Tola and Dragonetti (1986), p. 3.
- n.13 Skilling (2021), pp. 393–408.
- n.14 Hakamaya (1977), pp. 480–82. This very informative paper is merely an abstract from a larger, more detailed article. Unfortunately for us it was only available in Japanese. See “The *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra*—Introduction and Translation,” *Journal of Buddhist Studies (Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gakuburonshū)* 8, Tokyo: Komazawa University, 1977: 276–302.
- n.15 See Buswell and Lopez (2014) under “pudgala” and “pudgalavāda.” See also McDermott (1980), pp. 168–69. There may also be some theoretical discrepancy between the causality described in the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra*, in which the action from the past ceases before the first consciousness of the next birth arises (although the two are causally connected), and the general Sarvāstivādin view that maintains that past, present, and future actions exist simultaneously.
- n.16 See [n.38](#).
- n.17 Sastri (1938), pp. xvi–xvii.
- n.18 The *Viṃśatikā* of Vasubandhu (Toh 4056) describes the causal efficacy of external objects using an example, similar to that of BhSS, of a person having intercourse in a dream, but in which the perception is compared to the resulting seminal emission. Nāgārjuna's *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* gives another similar account, in which three brothers wonder why dreaming of



three courtesans who were described to them brought them pleasure and woke them up from sleep. This story is used to teach the emptiness of phenomena. Lamotte (1944), p. 425.

- n.19 The Theravādins and several other Buddhist schools likewise refute an intermediary state. For a discussion of the different theories of transmigration in early Buddhist schools, see McDermott (1980), pp. 165–92, and Wayman (1984), p. 251.
- n.20 It should be noted that theories of the nominalist critique of “self” go back to Pali sources like the *Milindapanha* and were later used to support the śūnyavāda view in Madhyamaka works. We are grateful to David Higgins for providing this insight along with the following note: “A shared premise of such [Madhyamaka nominalist] critiques is that the ‘self’ is a mere nominal designation (*prajñāpti*) for what is in reality a heterogeneous assemblage of partite factors. Although nominalism is often associated with Buddhist epistemological views concerning the ontological status of universals, early Buddhist thinkers already regarded composite entities such as selves and persons as having a mere nominal existence. Along these lines, early Abhidharma traditions distinguished between substantially existent (*dravyasat*) and nominally existent (*prajñaptisat*) entities and regarded the ‘person’ as nothing more than a merely conventional denomination established on the basis of the five psychophysical aggregates and having a merely conventional reality. According to Mi bskyod rdo rje, [...] Madhyamaka thinkers such as Candrakīrti denied even ‘nominal existence’ to selves and persons within the tenets of their own system.” Higgins (forthcoming).
- n.21 That is, “seeing” cannot occur independent of a number of causes and conditions.
- n.22 Hakamaya (1977), p. 479, fn. 4. The trisvabhāva theory (*mtshan nyid gsum*) is a creation of the Yogācāra school used to address what it perceived to be insufficiency (and nihilism) of the two truths of the Madhyamaka school. The three natures are (1) *parikalpitasvabhāva* (*kun brtags pa’i mtshan nyid*), the “imagined” nature, that is our mistaken conception of phenomena; (2) *paratantrasvabhāva* (*gzhan dbang gi mtshan nyid*), or “relative” nature, which refers to the causal, interdependent nature that gives rise to that conceptuality; and (3) *pariniṣpannasvabhāva* (*yongs grub pa’i mtshan nyid*), or the “perfect” nature, which is the true, ultimate nature of phenomena.
- n.23 To quote Hakamaya, “The most part of the *BhSS* is quoted in the *Madhyamakāvatarabhāṣya* [...] of Candrakīrti in order to refute the *ālayavijñāna*

of Yogācāra. Though it is difficult to explain the reason why Candrakīrti would be better pleased to take the *BhSS* than the *PPSS*, he would perhaps expected [sic] the more efficacious refutation by means of employing the *BhSS* as the scriptural authority, which belonged to the just opposite of him, *i.e.* the Yogācāra. It was also to the Yogācāra tradition that the Chinese translators of the *BhSS* had belonged.” Hakamaya (1977), p. 480.

- n.24 For a more detailed comparison of the various editions, see Vinītā (2010), pp. 409–51. See also Sastri (1938), pp. 8–19, for a side-by-side translation of the three Chinese versions.
- n.25 In Taishō 575 and Taishō 576, the Buddha initiates the conversation by immediately describing the example of a man dreaming of a beautiful woman. This corresponds to the parallel passage found in *PPSS*.
- n.26 See [n.1](#).
- n.27 The following section from here up until the verse section at [1.16](#) has a parallel in the *PPSS*.
- n.28 In the Chinese versions, the content of the dream varies slightly. Taishō 575: “Suppose a man had a dream in which he saw a crowd of people, and among them was a beautiful woman taking part in amusement.” Taishō 577: “Suppose a man, while asleep and dreaming, saw some people, and among them was a very beautiful woman, and he became completely overwhelmed.” The other versions more closely resemble the scenario here in D.
- n.29 In the Sanskrit, the Buddha’s question here varies slightly: “Great king, what do you think? Would the man be wise who would reminisce about the most beautiful woman in the land, whom he has enjoyed in his dream and consequently become passionate for?” (*tat kiṃ manyase mahārāja, api tu sa puruṣaḥ paṇḍitajātīyo bhavet, yaḥ svapnāntare bhuktāṃ janapadakalyāṇīṃ striyam anusmaret, tataś cāsyāḥ pratiharṣanam*). There are also slight variations in the way the question is worded in the Chinese and the editions of the parallel passage found in *PPSS*, although the meaning is essentially the same.
- n.30 Sanskrit reads “pleasant and unpleasant” (*saumanasyadaurmanasya*).
- n.31 *PPSS* reads “enacted by three types of conditioning of the body, four types of conditioning of speech, and three types of conditioning of mind” (*lus kyis rnam pa gsum/ngag gis ni rnam pa bzhi/yid kyis ni rnam pa gsum mngon par ’du byed*).

- n.32 Sanskrit: “ceases in the mind” (*manasi nirudhyate*); PPSS: “are exhausted and cease from the beginning” (*thog ma nyid nas zad cing 'gags*).
- n.33 Taishō 575: “Just as with the man waking from a dream who *does not see* the beautiful woman and the crowd.” (Note that in Taishō 575, the man dreams of a crowd; see [n.28](#).) In all the other versions, the woman appears in the mind of the person waking from the dream; here perhaps it is implied that while she is *not* seen in actuality, the mental attachment to her continues in the waking state. It is also possible that this is a scribal error in the Chinese.
- n.34 PPSS adds: “Great king, on the basis of two conditions, the last consciousness as the empowering [condition] and the action as the object [condition], the first consciousness pertaining to birth appears” (*rgyal bo chen po de la rnam par shes pa tha ma'i dbang dang / las dmigs pa de dag dang / rkyen gnyis kyis skye ba'i char gtogs pa'i rnam par shes pa dang po 'byung*). This phrase is not found in the quotation of PPSS found in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*.
- n.35 Y, K, Taishō 575, and Taishō 577 omit being born among the asuras. All the other versions, including PPSS, mention six realms of birth. Hakamaya suggests that this indicates that this prose section originated from a non-Mahāyāna discourse. See Hakamaya (1977), p. 481.
- n.36 On the fact that this sūtra does not implicate an intermediate state between lives, see [n.19](#).
- n.37 Sanskrit and Taishō 577 have “arises” (*pradurbhūta*). PPSS also has “ceases” (*'gag*).
- n.38 Here Taishō 575 is unique among all the sources, reading “there *is* one phenomenon that transmigrates from this life into the future life.” Based on this statement, Sastri theorizes that this edition may indicate that the sūtra originates from schools, such as the Vātsīputrīya and Saṃmitīya, that assert the transmigration of a “person” (*pudgala*) or some similar phenomenon from one life to the next. See introduction, [i.10](#); and Sastri (1938), pp. xvi–xvii. However, with little context or commentary for this statement in Taishō 575, it is difficult to say exactly what is meant by this curious statement.
- n.39 The Chinese version of the PPSS (Taishō 310) reads (quoted from Vinītā’s translation), “It is perceived that both the performed karma and the experienced result do not perish. There exists neither a doer, nor an experiencer.” Vinītā (2010), p. 433, note b.
- n.40 Sanskrit has *sarvadharmāṇaṃ* (“all phenomena”), as does Candrakīrti (*Madhyamakāvatārabhaṣya*).

- n.41 Taishō 576 omits this part of the list (“transmigration after death is empty of transmigration after death”).
- n.42 Sanskrit omits this part of the list (“karma is empty of karma”).
- n.43 Sanskrit reads, “Then, great king, when the first consciousness pertaining to birth has consecutively arisen, there arises, without interruption, the mindstream concordant with one’s fortune, in which the experience of the result of the previous actions is perceived” (*tasya ca mahārāja aupapattyaṃśīkasya prathamavijñānasya samanantaropapannasya tatsabhāgāvicalā cittasaṃtatiḥ pravartate yatra karmaṇāṃ vipākasya pratisaṃvedanā prajñāyate*).
- n.44 In the following verse section Taishō 576 is significantly different; it is only six verses long and, in several instances, quite difficult to decipher. Taishō 575 and 577 are more coherent and generally accord with the Tibetan and Sanskrit, albeit with some differences in phrasing. See Sastri (1938), pp. 16–19 for a comparative translation of the three Chinese versions of this verse section.
- n.45 In addition to being quoted extensively among Tengyur treatises, the following verse section contains many parallels to other sūtras and treatises. These citations are provided in the appendix.
- n.46 The Tib. *nga can* (N, H: *ngang can*) is likely a shortened form of *nga rgyal can*, which conforms with the Sanskrit *abhimānin*. This is supported by the translation of the last two lines of this stanza in *Prajñāpradīpaṭīkā* (Toh 3859), vol. 100, folio 8.a5: *log pa’i nga rgyal ’jig rten la // de ni kun rdzob bden par bstan //*.
- n.47 Meaning a combination of causes and conditions such as the object, the eye, the consciousness, etc.
- n.48 Translated from H: *mi dpog*, in reference to the Sanskrit *na gāhate* (“does not penetrate”). C, D, K, Y, J, N, and S read *dpogs*, which is the same verb but usually only used for the imperative tense.

b.

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## GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for names and terms of the corresponding ·  
source language

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in a manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other manuscripts with a parallel or similar context.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in dictionaries matching Tibetan to the corresponding language.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where the relationship between the Tibetan and source language is attested in dictionaries or other manuscripts.
RP	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan phonetic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the Tibetan phonetic rendering of the term.
RS	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan semantic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the semantics of the Tibetan translation.
SU	<i>Source unspecified</i> This term has been supplied from an unspecified source, which most often is a widely trusted dictionary.

g.1 action

*las*

ལས།

*karman*

A single term is used in Sanskrit and Tibetan to denote both an “action” as a conditioning factor and the “karma” that it conditions. In translation it may be necessary to use one term or the other to clarify the meaning, but the source term is no different.

g.2 concordant with one’s fortune

*skal ba 'dra ba*

སྐལ་བ་འདྲ་བ།

*tatsabhāga*

“One’s fortune” in this phrase refers to the realm of birth (*gati*) that one experiences currently or will experience in the future as the maturation of karma, both positive and negative.

g.3 devoid of essential nature

*ngo bo nyid dang bral ba*

ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་དང་བྲལ་བ།

*prakṛtīvīvikta*

g.4 emptiness

*stong pa nyid*

སྟོང་པ་ཉིད།

*śūnyatā*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

Emptiness denotes the ultimate nature of reality, the total absence of inherent existence and self-identity with respect to all phenomena.

According to this view, all things and events are devoid of any independent, intrinsic reality that constitutes their essence. Nothing can be said to exist independent of the complex network of factors that gives rise to its origination, nor are phenomena independent of the cognitive processes and mental constructs that make up the conventional framework within which their identity and existence are posited. When all levels of conceptualization dissolve and when all forms of dichotomizing tendencies are quelled through deliberate meditative deconstruction of conceptual elaborations, the ultimate nature of reality will finally become manifest. It is the first of the three gateways to liberation.

g.5 five aggregates

*phung po lnga*

ཕུང་པོ་ལྔ།

*pañcaskandha*

The five constituents of a living entity: form, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness.

g.6 formations

*'du byed*

འདུ་བྱེད།

*saṃskāra*

In its most general usage this term refers to any phenomenon has been formed, conditioned, or dependently brought into being. It is this broad use of the term that is used in the *Bhavaśaṅkrāntisūtra* when King Bimbisāra asserts that “formations are empty” (1.4). The same term is also used to describe the second of the twelve links of dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*) and also the fourth of the five aggregates, where the term has a more specific usage related to those teachings.

g.7 Kalandakanivāpa

*bya ka lan da ka gnas pa*

བྱ་ཀ་ལན་དཀ་གནས་པ།

*kalandakanivāsa*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

A place where the Buddha often resided, within the Bamboo Park (Veṇuvana) outside Rajagṛha that had been donated to him. The name is said to have arisen when, one day, King Bimbisāra fell asleep after a romantic liaison in the Bamboo Park. While the king rested, his consort wandered off. A snake (the reincarnation of the park’s previous owner, who still resented the king’s acquisition of the park) approached with malign intentions. Through the king’s tremendous merit, a gathering of *kalandaka*—crows or other birds according to Tibetan renderings, but some Sanskrit and Pali sources suggest flying squirrels—miraculously appeared and began squawking. Their clamor alerted the king’s consort to the danger, who rushed back and hacked the snake to pieces, thereby saving the king’s life. King Bimbisāra then named the spot Kalandakanivāpa (“Kalandakas’ Feeding Ground”), sometimes (though not in the *Vinayavastu*) given as Kalandakanivāpa (“Kalandakas’ Abode”) in their honor. The story is told in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* (Toh 1, ch.17, Degé Kangyur vol.4, folio 77.b et seq.).

g.8 Magadha

*ma ga d+hA*

མ་ག་ལྷ།

*magadha*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

An ancient Indian kingdom that lay to the south of the Ganges River in what today is the state of Bihar. Magadha was the largest of the sixteen “great states” (*mahājanapada*) that flourished between the sixth and third centuries BCE in northern India. During the life of the Buddha Śākyamuni, it was ruled by King Bimbisāra and later by Bimbisāra's son, Ajātaśatru. Its capital was initially Rājagṛha (modern-day Rajgir) but was later moved to Pāṭaliputra (modern-day Patna). Over the centuries, with the expansion of the Magadha's might, it became the capital of the vast Mauryan empire and seat of the great King Aśoka.

This region is home to many of the most important Buddhist sites, including Bodh Gayā, where the Buddha attained awakening; Vulture Peak (*Gr̥dhra-kūṭa*), where the Buddha bestowed many well-known Mahāyāna sūtras; and the Buddhist university of Nālandā that flourished between the fifth and twelfth centuries CE, among many others.

g.9 nature of phenomena

*chos nyid*

ཚོས་ཉིད།

*dharmatā*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

The real nature, true quality, or condition of things. Throughout Buddhist discourse this term is used in two distinct ways. In one, it designates the relative nature that is either the essential characteristic of a specific phenomenon, such as the heat of fire and the moisture of water, or the defining feature of a specific term or category. The other very important and widespread way it is used is to designate the ultimate nature of all phenomena, which cannot be conveyed in conceptual, dualistic terms and is often synonymous with emptiness or the absence of intrinsic existence.

g.10 notions

*'du shes*

འདུ་ཤེས།

*saṃjñā*

Often this term is translated as “perception” or “discrimination” when it is included as the third of the five aggregates, in which case it refers to the mental function of differentiating and identifying objects according to their

qualities. Thus it does not refer to the perceptions of the senses but to the conceptual notions or labels that are ascribed to sense perceptions before they may be conceived by the rational mind. In this sense, they are not really concepts or thoughts either, but rather the fundamental units ascribed to phenomena by the dualistic mind in order to form conceptual thoughts about them. Thus we have translated this as a “notion,” as the verses of the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra* emphasize the insubstantiality of the names as mere notions ascribed to phenomena, which exist as nothing other than a designation imputed by the mind.

g.11 phenomena

*chos*

ཚོས།

*dharma*

The term *dharma* has many different interrelated meanings: it may refer to the teaching of the buddhas, to religious teachings in general, to phenomena in general, or to the specific characteristics of an object or objects in a generic sense, among other meanings. In our translation of the *Bhavaśāṅkrāntisūtra*, we have translated this term as “phenomena,” as it is generally used in this latter sense; however, we have translated the term as “Dharma” when it specifically refers to the teaching of the Buddha.

g.12 Rājagṛha

*rgyal po'i khab*

རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཁབ།

*rājagṛha*

Literally “King’s House”; the capital city of Magadha ruled by King Bimbisāra. It is currently the modern-day city of Rajgir in Bihar, North India.

g.13 relative truth

*kun rdzob bden pa*

ཀུན་རྫོབ་བདེན་པ།

*saṃvṛtisatya*

Conveys the relative or conventional view of the world according to the understanding of ordinary unenlightened beings. This is distinguished from the ultimate truth, which conveys the understanding of phenomena as they really are. *Saṃvṛti* literally means “covered” or “concealed,” implying that the relative reality seen by ordinary beings seems to be convincingly real, but it is ultimately, in its actual state, illusory and unreal.

g.14 Śreṇya Bimbisāra

*bzo sbyangs gzugs can snying po*

བོ་སྤྲེལ་མཁུགས་ཅན་སྣོད་པོ།

*śreṇya bimbisāra*

The king of Magadha and a great patron of the Buddha. In other sources he is simply called “King Bimbisāra.” There are several accounts of King Śreṇya Bimbisāra’s first meeting with the Buddha, early on when the latter was the wandering mendicant known as Gautama. Impressed by his conduct, Bimbisāra offered to take Gautama into his court, but Gautama refused, and Bimbisāra wished him success in his quest for enlightenment and asked him to visit his palace after he had achieved his goal. One account of this episode can be found in the sixteenth chapter of *The Play in Full* (Toh 95, *Lalitavistara*). There are other accounts where the two meet earlier on in childhood. Later, after the Buddha’s enlightenment, Bimbisāra became one of his most famous patrons and donated to his saṅgha the Kalandakanivāpa Bamboo Grove, which is the setting of the *Bhavaśaṅkrāntisūtra* and many other teachings.

g.15 supreme truth

*bden pa mchog*

བདེན་པ་མཚོག།

*paramasatya*

An unusual feature of the *Bhavaśaṅkrāntisūtra* is that it presents a third “supreme truth” in contrast to the usual doctrinal presentation of the two truths (the relative truth and the ultimate truth). In doing so, the *Bhavaśaṅkrāntisūtra* does not propose a third ontological category but demonstrates in its final verse that both the relative and ultimate truths are conceptual categories and therefore provisional to understanding the ultimate nature of reality. The conception of ultimate truth should not be misunderstood, like a finger pointing to the moon, but to arrive at its actual understanding one must transcend any dualistic notion or designation altogether. See 1.23.

g.16 transmigration

*'pho ba*

འཕོ་བ།

*saṅkrānti*

The causal process of the transference of a mindstream from one life to the next. The *Bhavaśaṅkrāntisūtra* asserts that there is no phenomenon that actually transmigrates from one life to the next, but rebirth occurs through

the causal power of actions (*karma*). See introduction at [i.9](#). The term may also refer to the yogic or tantric practice of deliberately ejecting consciousness from the body, but this practice is not related to the context of this sūtra.

g.17 two truths

*bden pa gnyis*

བདེན་པ་གཉིས།

*satyadvaya*

The relative truth and the ultimate truth. See glossary entries for each. Later schools of Buddhism defined and categorized the two truths in varying ways, but in all cases the presentation of the two truths is understood to be an exhaustive categorization that includes all phenomena. Note that the two truths are not understood to be separate dimensions, but rather as two aspects of the same reality, although from the perspective of the relative truth reality is falsely perceived.

g.18 ultimate truth

*don dam · don dam bden pa*

དོན་དམ། · དོན་དམ་བདེན་པ།

*paramārtha · paramārthasatya*

*Paramārthasatya* literally means “the highest-object truth,” because it is what is realized by wisdom (*prajñā*) as the highest form of mind. It refers to the absolute understanding of phenomena and reality as it is perceived by a mind that is purified of all delusion, in contrast to the relative truth that is perceived by ordinary unenlightened beings.

g.19 Veṇuvana

*'od ma'i tshal*

འོད་མའི་ཚལ།

*veṇuvana*

The famous bamboo grove near Rājagṛha where the Buddha regularly stayed and gave teachings. It was situated on land donated by King Bimbisāra of Magadha and, as such, was the first of several landholdings donated to the Buddhist community during the time of the Buddha.

g.20 verbal designations

*brjod pa*

བརྗོད་པ།

*abhidhāna*



Literally, "speaking" or "telling"; any expression of words or speech that conveys meaning.