

# A Note on the *Prajñā-nāma-mūlamadhyamakakārikā* of Nāgārjuna

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The importance of Nāgārjuna's *Prajñā-nāma-mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (P-MK) may be inferred from the fact that this work, now available in the Tibetan tripiṭaka, is the only extant text of the MK except for those which are contained in several commentaries on the MK. Despite the significance of the P-MK, however, relatively little attention has so far been paid to it, probably because this text is almost identical with the MK quoted in the Tibetan translation of the *Prasannapadā* (PSP)<sup>1)</sup>. According to its colophon<sup>2)</sup>, the P-MK was first rendered into Tibetan by the Indian scholar Jñānagarbha and the Tibetan translator Klu'i rgyal mtshan in the early ninth century. Klu'i rgyal mtshan appears to have made the translation by extracting it from his rendering of the *Prajñāpradīpa* (PP)<sup>3)</sup>. Afterwards, the P-MK was retranslated by the Indian scholar Hasumati and the Tibetan translator Nyi ma grags (1055-?) so that it may agree with the contents of the PSP. This is the reason for the similarity between the Tibetan translations of the present P-MK and the MK as cited in the PSP.

This paper thus aims at giving a textual outline of the P-MK through the analysis of different renderings found in the above two texts. First, the following list points out those verses of the P-MK in which, unlike the MK of the PSP, the first translation by Klu'i rgyal mtshan has been kept unchanged:

Stanza	Skt.	P-MK=MK in PP etc.	MK in PSP
VII 3	anavasthā	<i>thug pa med</i> (PNonly) <sup>4)</sup>	<i>thug med 'gyur</i>
11	ihasthaḥ	<i>'di na 'dug pa</i> (PNonly) <sup>4)</sup>	<i>'di na gnas pa</i>
VIII 11	tat tu (?)	<i>'dir yang</i>	<i>'di yang</i>
XXIII 4	ime	<i>de dag</i>	<i>'di dag</i>
XXIV 4	abhāvāc cārya- satyānām/	<i>'phags pa'i bden rnam med pa'i phyir  </i>	<i>'phags pa'i bden pa rnam med phyir  </i>

9	ye 'nayor...sa- tyayor dvayoh/	gang dag bden pa de gnyis kyi	gang dag bden pa gnyis kyi ni
18	yaḥ pratītya- samutpādaḥ	rten cing 'brel 'byung gang yin pa  (PNonly) <sup>4)</sup>	rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba gang
XXVI 4	nāmarūpaṃ pra- tītya	ming dang gzugs brten nas	ming gzugs brten nas ni
8	bhāvāj jātiḥ pravartate/	srid pa las ni skye ba 'byung (DC: bar 'gyur)	srid pa de las skye ba 'byung
XXVII 13	eṣā	de dag	de ni

This discrepancy between the P-MK and the PSP (Tib.) well testifies to the above-mentioned history of the translation of the P-MK ; that is, it was first rendered by Klu'i rgyal mtshan, and more than two hundred and fifty years later it was retranslated by Nyi ma grags in accordance with the PSP (Tib.). For this reason, although most of the Tibetan renderings of the P-MK are identical with those of the MK in the PSP, its first translation by Klu'i rgyal mtshan can still be traced in some kārikā-s of the P-MK.

Secondly, in a few instances the P-MK enables us to correct the Sanskrit text<sup>5)</sup> and the Tibetan translation<sup>6)</sup> of the MK as cited in the PSP. Quoting the MK I 12, Candrakīrti comments on it as follows: athāsad api tat tebhyaḥ [pratyaye-  
bhyaḥ] pravartate/\* phalam ity abhiprāyaḥ syāt/ apratyayeṣv api nāsti phalam  
iti apratyayebhyo 'pi vīraṇādibhyaḥ kasmān nābhipravartate paṭa iti nāsti phala-  
pravṛttiḥ svarūpataḥ// (PSP p. 87, l. 13-p. 88, l. 4, see also p. 88, n. 1 ; \*R/, TD250, 251, 252, MBB-11//). As was discussed in my former paper<sup>7)</sup>, MK I 12 is regarded as consisting of the underlined words, which can be ascertained by the P-MK I 12 (PN) : ci ste 'bras bu de med kyang|| rkyen de dag las skye 'gyur na|| rkyen  
ma yin pa dag las kyang|| ci yi phyir na skye mi 'gyur||.

However, owing to the copyists' or the editors' misunderstanding, the Tibetan translation of the above-quoted passage is rather confused in all four editions (PNDC). The translation must have originally been : ci ste 'bras bu de med ky-  
ang||\* rkyen de dag las skye 'gyur na||\*\* zhes bya bar bsams par gyur na ni|  
rkyen ma yin pa dag la yang (PNDC: yang||) 'bras bu yod pa ma yin pas| (PNDC: pas||) rkyen ma yin pa 'jag ma dag las kyang snam bu ci'i phyir na skye bar mi

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*'gyur*/... (\*DC: *ci ste de ni med par yang*// =MK in PP etc.; \*\* Here PN wrongly insert two pāda-s: *rkyen min las kyang 'bras bu ni*// *ci yi phyir na skye mi 'gyur*// =pāda *cd* of MK in PP etc.). The following Sanskrit text edited by La Vallée Poussin seems to have been influenced by the N (P) edition of the PSP (Tib.): *Athāsad api tat tebhyaḥ* [pratyayebhyaḥ pravartate/] *ity abhiprāyaḥ syāt*/ [*apratyayebhyo 'pi kas-mān nābhi*] pravartate phalam//... (PSP p. 87, l. 13-p. 88, l. 2).

Lastly, let us turn to another example. MK XXVI 10 reads: *samsāramūlaṃ\* saṃskārān avidvān saṃskaroty ataḥ/ avidvān kārakas tasmān na vidvāṃs tattva-darśanāt*// (PSP p. 558, ll. 5-6; \* LVP *samsāramūlān*, see de Jong “Notes”<sup>8</sup>) p. 248). This text well accords with Candrakīrti’s comment on it (p. 558, ll. 7-13). However, Nyi ma grags appears to have read this text as *samsāramūlaṃ saṃskārā na vidvān saṃskaroty ataḥ*/...; therefore, both in the P-MK and in the PSP he rendered it as *'khor ba'i rtsa ba 'du byed de*// *de phyir mkhas rnams 'du mi byed*//. This is probably because in manuscripts *saṃskārā na vidvān* is written in the same way as *saṃskārān avidvān*, and also because after quoting this verse Candrakīrti explains *saṃskārā* as follows: *tatra saṃsārasya vijñānādipravṛttilakṣaṇasya mūlaṃ pradhānaṃ kāraṇaṃ saṃskārāḥ*/ (p. 558, l. 7). Following this explanation, however, he continues: *tataś ca saṃsāramūlaṃ saṃskārān<sup>9</sup> avidvān saṃskaroti*//, which confirms the above text of pāda *ab*. Consequently the Tibetan translation of pāda *ab* should have been: *de phyir mi mkhas 'khor bayi*// *rta ba'i 'du byed 'du byed do*// or something similar<sup>10</sup>).

Concerning the pāda *cd* (Tib.), it might be mentioned that the PSP (Tib. PNDC) runs: *de phyir mi mkhas byed po yin*// *mkhas pas de nyid mthong phyir ro*//. *Mkhas pas* should probably be emended to *mkhas min* (=na vidvāṃs) on the authority of the P-MK (PN: *mkhas min*).

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#### Abbreviations

MK = *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. P-MK = *Prajñā-nāma-mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. PP = *Prajñāpradīpa*. PSP = *Prasannapadā* (LVP ed.). LVP = La Vallée Poussin, L. de. TD = Sanskrit manuscripts preserved in the Tokyo University Library. MBB-II = Sanskrit manuscript published in microfiche form by the Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions, No. 117.

#### Notes

1) In his footnotes of the PSP, LVP refers, when necessary, to different renderings

found in the P-MK or in the other commentaries on the MK. However, it is to be noted that, with regard to those kārikā-s in which different renderings are found between the Tibetan translations of the P-MK and the MK as cited in the PSP, LVP is not always consistent in his citation of the MK (Tib.), i. e. whether it is from the P-MK or from the MK in PSP. E. g. for MK IV 5, VII 3, 11, VIII 11, XXIII 4, he quotes their corresponding Tib. from the P-MK, and for MK XXIV 4, 9, 18, XXVI 4, XXVII 13 he cites from the MK in PSP (Tib.), without mentioning their different renderings as given in each other's text. Cf. M. Saigusa, *Chūron-geju Sōran*, Tokyo, 1985 (in which the author compares LVP's MK (Tib.) with the P-MK [PD] verse by verse).

- 2) See P-MK, D Tsa 19a4-6, P Tsa 22a7-b2.
- 3) For Klu'i rgyal mtshan's procedure of translating the MK, see Akira Saito, "Konponchūron Chibetto-yaku Hihan (A Criticism of the Tibetan translation of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*)", *Bukkyōgaku*, to be published in early 1987.
- 4) In the case of these kārikā-s it is difficult to decide whether PN's reading has been kept unchanged or DC's (=MK in PSP) is correct and original. If the latter is the case, PN's reading will be regarded as having been changed in later times to accord with the MK in PP etc.
- 5) MK XX 24a: na sāmagrikṛtaṃ phalaṃ should be corrected as: tasmān na sāmagrikṛtaṃ (=P-MK *de phyir tshogs pas byas pa med*||). See A. Saito, "Textcritical Remarks on the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* as Cited in the *Prasannapadā*", *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 33-2, 1985, pp. 844-845.
- 6) PSP (Tib.) IV 5c: *gzugs kyi rnam par rtog pa ni*// is to be corrected as: *de phyir (...gzugs kyi rnam par rtog*|(P-MK, =PSP p. 125. ll. 9-11, tasmāt...rūpagatān...vikalpān). XXIV 9: *gang dag bden pa gnyis kyi ni*// should be: *gang dag bden pa de gnyis kyi*|(P-MK, =PSP p. 494, l. 4, ye 'nayor...satyayor dvayoh|).
- 7) See A. Saito, *op. cit.*, pp. 844-845.
- 8) J. W. de Jong, "Textcritical Notes on the *Prasannapadā*", *Indo-Iranian Journal* 20, 1978, pp. 25-59, 216-252.
- 9) *Ibid.*, p. 248.
- 10) Cf. PSP (Tib.) D Ḥa 184b4, P Ḥa 208b6; Y. Kajiyama, "Chūganha no Jūnishiengi Kaishaku", *Bukkyōshisōshi* 3, Kyoto, 1980, pp. 137-138.

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