Buddhavacana
Notes on Buddhist Vocabulary

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For Akira Yuyama, word collector and much else

This is the first of a projected occasional series of notes on Buddhist vocabulary. The first two items here concern suggested corrections to Edgerton's monumental Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary, the third a Sanskrit word unknown to dictionaries, while the remaining two items concern Chinese Buddhist translation vocabulary.

I. Vemātri / vemāṭṛ
II. *Parikarati: A ghost word
III. Vajrāgni
IV. Rāhu: 藍根 and associated vocabulary
V. Two Chinese Kinship Terms Unknown to Dictionaries: qīnmei 親妹 and qīnūr 親姐

I. Vemātri / vemāṭṛ

In the editio princeps of the Mahāvastu we find the following sentence:1 tehi dāni kumārehi mā mo jāti-saṅdoṣam bhaviṣyatī jāti-saṅdoṣa-bhayena svakarṣkā yeva māṭrīyo bhaginīyo paraspāraya vicāhitā. Edgerton suggested that the manuscript reading māṭrīyo should be kept, and proposed translating the final portion of the sentence “(the princes) gave to each other in marriage each their own sisters by the same mother (thus avoiding the marriage of any with his own co-uterine sister).”2 Other interpretations had already been offered by Senart and Jones. Senart suggested:3 “dans la crainte de compromettre la pureté de leur race, ils épousèrent leurs propres soeurs, chacun en choisissant une d’une autre mère que lui.” Jones translated:4 “Those young princes said to themselves: ‘There

1 Senart 1882-1897: 1.351.2-4, reprinted on 8-9.
2 Edgerton 1953 s.v. māṭrī. What Edgerton means by “co-uterine” here is “full sister,” that is, having both parents in common, but see below.
3 Senart 1882-1897: 1.625.
must be no corruption in our race.' And from fear of such a corruption they each married a half-sister born of a different mother."

The palm-leaf manuscript recently published by Yuyama may assist us here. It reads in this passage and its reprise a few lines below not svakarāka yeva mātṛyō but svakarāka vematīrā / vematīrā. The expression is attested in both Pāli and Sanskrit. In the former we find vematīka bhūgini in the Jātaka, when the prince Udayabhadda is forced to wed his half-sister Udayabhaddā. The translation of the original should be svanaprūpakaṃ. The expression is attested in both Pāli and Sanskrit. In the former we find vematīka bhūgini in the Jātaka, when the prince Udayabhadda is forced to wed his half-sister Udayabhaddā.

udayabhaddānālākāravā1 tassa santike ṣhapasam 1 saṁta svanaprūpakaṃ2 abhībhavīvā arthāsi 1 atha nesāī3 anicchamānamānaṇī eva vematīkā bhūgīnīṃ4 udayabhaddakūmārīṃ aggamahesāni vittvā bodhisattvaṃ rajaṃ abhiṣiṃcitum 1 te pana de pi bhrahmarājyavasāṃ eva viśaṃta 1 ... ubho ekāgābhī vasamānā5 pi lohavasena indryāni bhīndivā aṁhamāṭṭhā na olokesam 1

1) PTS: alakaritvā 2) PTS: svanaprūpan 3) PTS: tesām 4) PTS: vematikabhaṅgain 5) PTS vasamanā

Adorning Udayabhaddā, they set her in his presence, and she stood there outshining that golden image. Then even against the couple's wishes they made his agnicī half-sister the princess Udayabhadda his principal consort, and anointed the bodhisattva [that is, Prince Udayabhadda] in the rulership. But the two of them lived together in perfect celibacy. ... Even though both were living in a single chamber, mastering their senses they did not look upon each other with desire.

In Sanskrit, in the same story as that in the Mahāvamsa, the tale of the origins of the Śākyan clan,5 we find the sage Kapila describing the sons of King Virudhaka Ikṣvāku, svakaraka bhūgini tyaktvā vaimārtyākābhī bhūgīnīḥ sārdham vāsam kalpayata, "Avoiding your full sisters, cohabit with your agnicī half-sisters."6

In light of the new manuscript evidence, we obtain an understandable text which, moreover, has the virtue of presenting a vocabulary item attested also in Pāli and Sanskrit. I therefore believe that the passage should be understood as follows: "Those princes said: 'There must be no corruption in our lineage.' And out of fear of corruption of the lineage, they gave to each other in marriage their own agnicī half-sisters."7 With the exception of the fact that they seem to gloss over the causative nature of the participle visāḥita, the translations of both Senart and Jones appear to be quite correct, grasping the true meaning in spite of the corrupt readings before them.

I do not, I confess, entirely understand Edgerton's rendering, but he too may be after the same thing. Based, however, on his wrong assumption concerning mātṛ, his "by the same mother" cannot be accepted. The correct meaning of vematīrī / vematīr entered, with reference to the standard Sanskrit and Pāli forms of the word.

II. Parikarati: A ghost word

The Pūrṇavādāna of the Divyavādāna contains the following:8

āyuṃmān mahāmaudgalyāyanaṃ saṃlakṣayati 1 pūrvam uktam bhagavatā duṣkarākārakau hi bhikṣavah putrasā mātāpitārvā āpyakau poṣkau saṁvartdhaṅkau stanyasā dātau jātityasā jambudvīpasya darṣayitātu 1 ekenānśena putra mātāmānā dvitiyena pitaram purnavārāsaṣṭāni parikarād ya vasyam mahāpṛthivyān manayo mukta vaidūryaśanākhaśāpravādaṃ rajataṃ jātīrapaṁ asmaragho mūṣasārālo lohitāka daksīṇvarṣe ity evamrute vīvadāḥvivardhāpyaty prātisēṣāpyati neyāta putreṇa mātāpitāro kṛtaṃ vā syād uktapatiṃ 1 vā yas tv asāṇānaḥ mātāpitārah śraddhāsāpanti samādāpyāti vinayā nivāseyati prātisēṣāpyati duṣṭhāla śilanāpadi mastsarāṇaṃ tyagāsāpante duṣpaṭāṇaḥ prājāsanāpadi samādāpyāti vinayā nivāseyati prātisēṣāpyati ityāt putreṇa mātāpitroḥ kṛtaṃ vā syād uktapatiṃ vīti 1

The verb printed in the editio princeps as parikaret is discussed by Edgerton.9 Under the lemma "parikarati" he took the word as "possibly denom. to Skt. parikara," and identified it with Pāli parikarati, saying "cited Karo by PTS, but all its citations fit the stem in -a-.

He then offered the definition "aids, serves, waits upon." I suggest rather that we conjunctively emend very slightly to parikaret, as a form of parikara (or parikaraṣaya), "carry around." This suggestion is supported by Chinese dàn 軒, and probably, although less certainly, by Tibetan kṣub, the terms we find in the corresponding passages in the Mālasāravāsīdāna Vinaya from which the Divyavādāna drew its account. Interestingly, this understanding was already adopted by Burnouf,10 who translated from Cowell and Neil 1886: 51.18-52.3. The text is found in Tibetan (Derge Kanjur 1, 'ulā ha, kka, stīḥ) and Chinese (T. 1448 [XXV] 16a18ff [Juan 4]) as well. The text was translated by Burnouf 1844: 270f; compare also Tatelman 2000: 77ff. The Chinese translation was translated into Japanese by Iwamoto 1968: 172ff.

Edgerton 1933 s.v. parikarati.
manuscripts, working decades before the publication of the first edition. Burnour’s manuscripts were not made use of by the editors, however, and we cannot know precisely how he read the word. There are, however, some complications.

In a passage in the Aṅguttara-Nikāya we find the duty a child owes his parents expressed as follows: ekena bhikkhuno amisesa mātaram paribhāreyya ekena amisesa pitaram paribhāreyya ..., “if, monks, one were to carry his mother around on one shoulder and his father around on the other ...” the text going on to say that even centuries of this and other sorts of good treatment would not repay the debt.” The verb here, paribhāreyya, is, of course, the optative of paribharati, which also exists as such in Buddhist Sanskrit. Although Edgerton defines it (s.v.) as “protects, guards, looks after,” he in fact cites a passage perfectly parallel to the Pāli Aṅguttara-Nikāya example, this from the Avadānakaṭakā: ya ekamukhaṃ puruṣo mātaram deviṣyāṃ pitaram pāram varṣatāṃ paribhāreyad vā ... 14 The Pāli commentary to the Aṅguttara-Nikāya, the Mahanaddapārīṇā,15 explains the usage as follows: ekena bhikkhuno amisesa mātaram paribhāreyya ti ekamukhaṃ amakṣiṇā ādhāreyām mātaram parijāggyeyya, “the expression ‘if, monks, one were to carry his mother around on one shoulder’ means ‘if one were to carry his mother having placed her on his shoulder.’” Here the verb paribhāreyya is glossed as parijāggyeyya, the present indicative of which is parijāgatti, Buddhist Sanskrit pratiṣāgari.16

From another point of view, regarding the Tibetan equivalent of the postulated *paricarṇet, in the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, parikāraṇya is translated yongs so brungs ba,19 in which the idea of protection is emphasized. While there is no necessary reason we should expect consistency in the Tibetan translations of the Indic word, the term may well benefit from further study.

In sum, I propose as a translation of the Pāñcavijñāna passaging the following:

The Reverend Mahī-Maudgalāyaṇa thought to himself: “Previously the Blessed

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11 Bernour 1884: 270: “Supposons, d’un côté, un fils qui passe cent années entières à porter sa mère sur ses épaules...”
12 Morris and Hardy 1885-1900: i.61,30-62,1 (I14.2).
15 Neriyyā Kudo, in preparing this paper for the press, kindly brought to my attention the following expression in the Karmavīhārya (Kudo 2004: 123.2 = 123.2): yo bhikkavo māśīparīṃ “pitaraṃ skandhena gṛhyān” ... as well as his note 39 (pp. 264-265), which also provides examples of parallels in Chinese to the expression “carrying one’s parents on one’s shoulders.”
16 Wogihara 1932-1933: 945.15-16 = Derge Kanjur 12; slob phyin brgyad stong pa, ka, 267b7.
17 Wogihara 1932-1933: 961.7.

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One said: ‘Mother and father, monks, do what is difficult for a son, they are nurturers, nourishers, fosterers, givers of milk, teachers of multiform ways of the world. Should a son carry his mother on one shoulder and his father on the other for a full hundred years, or were he to establish them in any variety of wealth or sovereignty [giving them] all the jewels, pearls, lapis lazuli, coral, conches, gems, gold, silver, emerald, sapphire, ruby, and right spiral conch of the whole earth,20 such a son would not do anything for his parents nor would he benefit them. But one who instigates, guides, directs to and establishes his unbelieving parents in the wealth of faith, or instigates, guides, directs to and establishes [parents] who are ill-behaved in the wealth of good behavior, selfish [parents] in the wealth of renunciation, ignorant [parents] in the wealth of wisdom, such a son would do something for his parents, he would benefit them.’

III. Vajraṇi

The word vajraṇi is not defined in Sanskrit dictionaries known to me,21 but occurs twice in the Ratnagotra-viḥāra. However, the word is far from unknown, appearing already in the Mahābhārata.22 A number of other Sanskrit examples were brought to my attention by Harunaga Isaacson, whose note I quote here, before going on to discuss a passage in which an alternative interpretation seems more likely.

In the Sandararanda of Āvaghoṣa, in describing Nanda’s wife Sundari when Nanda has left to follow the Buddha and has not returned as promised, the poet says of her sā sundari suksacalodari hi vajrāṇisambhūtadari gūbeva, which Johnston translates “For Sundari, with her bosom straining with sobs like a cave whose opening has been split by the fiery thunderbolt.” In the ‘Ur-Śandaparāṇa, concerning a member of Śiva’s army, Vitapā, releasing an arrow against Vṛtra, we find (141.3cd): mumoca vajrāṇisamāna ripukṣayakaran vāram. A verse from the Mokṣapīya (vairāgyaparākrama 16.47) reads: nāśādīrā na vajrāṇir na taṃtāyaḥkārīcāyaḥ
tathā tiktān yathā brahmaṃ tṛṣṇayāḥ bhūti samasthitāḥ!24

Finally, in Bhavabhūti’s Mābhārakara 3.21d we find vajrāṇir dṛṣṭam āvaḥ bhāmaśātakarami (where the object of bhāmaśātakarami is ātatāyinam in pāda b). In the context of an email discussion of this word, which prompted Isaacson’s kind contribution, Arlo Griffiths pointed to a passage in the Dīcyāvindana’s Kanālāvindana,25 in

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20 My translation of the list of precious substances here makes no attempt to determine the exact identification of each item, if indeed this is even possible.
21 See however Turner 1966: 653b, who cites the Old Awadhi word bhāgī, “fire caused by lightning.” It is also listed but not defined by Wogihara 1964-1974: 969b.
22 Johnston 1959: 118.18, 106.3.
which we have the half-verse: na āstravajraṇīvijātā panngāthā kurvanti pīḍām nābhasa 'vijānāraḥ.' Although in all the cases cited above vajraṇī appears to be a single word, it is questionable whether that is the case here. Heretofore it took us as two words, which is also the understanding of a Chinese version of the same text (非刀劍殺，亦非金剛，非火，非毒，非怨恨殺)， translated by Przyluski: "Ce n’est pas le glaive qui blesse; ce n’est pas non plus la foudre ni le feu, ni le poison, ni le serpent hostile et cruel." The Tibetan translation of the Kanałāśādana has something different: mtshon dang rdo rje dag dang srid nams kyis 11 nam mkha’ ‘gyur zhib gnad gzad mi nas so 11. Here mtshon = sastra, rdo rje = varja(agni) and dag = vajā. The translators appear to have skipped agni, unless they considered the compound identical in meaning with varja alone. In this Kanałāśādana passage, then, vajraṇī seems to be a dvandva. Any future dictionary should, therefore, list both possibilities, giving both the meanings “thunderbolt” and “cudgel and fire” (or some such).

IV. Rānābui 染礬 and associated vocabulary

We find a striking sentence in the *Abhidharmakokārikā*, narrating the story of Mahādeva:21 其子長大，染礬於母，“The son had grown up and defiled his mother.” Here the verb rānābui 染礬, to defile, has mother, mā 母, as its direct object, a relation which is clearly marked by yā 於. The word rānābui 染礬 is relatively rare (as is its inversion, buisā qualifiers). When rānābui 染礬 is used in the Chinese Dīrghaṅkara, the expression yā bī rānābuicāla 由染礬穢惡 is equivalent to aparajyotasasahākāya in the Pali version, a word which the Critical Pali Dictionary defines as “whose aspirations are unsatisfied.”22 Okayama,23 however, suggests that the Chinese means simply “defiled” (kogare), and he translates the line kano kogareshi onoi ni yorite,24 “through that defiled thought.” The latter sense is to be noticed more in the equivalence in Narendrayasa’s translation of the Samādhiyāya-śūtra, where in verse 10 of the first chapter we find 無染穢心越佛道 for what in Sanskrit reads asamkṣitāna cīttena buddhañānam gacchate,25 “to

6. striving after the wisdom of a Buddha with unfounded mind.” A sense of disgust is more strongly brought out in a verse from the same Āvadāna-sūtra, kāmāṇi kārayaṁ bālāḥ striyāṁ sevanti pātikāṁ l pātikāṁ gati gacchanti patante [te]na durgatiṁ 11,26 “Fools driven by lusts attend on putrid women. They go on the path of those putrid [women], and through that fall into evil destinies [after death].” This is quoted in the Saṅghabihāṣya as follows:27 愚者貟夢諸欲事，親近女人染礬身。 遂當彼染礬中，隨業墮於惡趣。 We might conclude from this that, first, we cannot with any confidence suggest a good Sanskrit equivalent for rānābui 染礬, and second, that it certainly appears to be used euphemistically, in perhaps something close to the same sense that is conveyed in English by the expression “he defiled her.” It is interesting that it is only the example from the *Abhidharmakokārikā* which uses rānābui as a verb.

Although no direct connection between the words can be established, we should note that Sanskrit dācāya appears in something very much like the same meaning.28 In addition to Buddhist examples, see for instance the Mahābhārata verse (1.57.61-62): rājasthāṇyopīc ca ducyeta kanyāhāto 11 kanyāre dāṣīte āsī patham ākaye dvijottama 1, where the reference is to the violation of virginity.

V. Two Chinese Kinship Terms Unknown to Dictionaries: qinmei 親妹 and qinzi 親子

The term qinmei 親妹 is not recorded in the Hanuva Dädian, and taken by Morohashi as a modern word, defined as “sister-in-law.”29 However, the word is used several times by the Zhou-Yang period translator Yijing, in contexts in which it seems to mean only sister(s) in general, either specifically full sister, or generically sister. In a Mulasarvastivada Vinaya Vinayakṣudravakavastu passage the expression de dag gis der rang rang gi sring mo btong ste 1 mas dzen gyi sring mo rnam dang lhan cig 'tshe gnas 'khood de is paralleled in Chinese with 遂捨親妹取異母者.30 Here qinmei 親妹 clearly corresponds to rang gis sring mo, an established translation of Sanskrit nakavakā bhaginī. The correspondence, however, need not always be so strict. In the Pravrajyavastu of the Mulasarvastivada Vinaya we find the expression 'di ni kbo bo' chung ma ma yin gyi 1 'di ni kbo bo' sring mo yin no 11, to which corresponds Chinese 此非我妻，是親妹也.31 Here qinmei 親妹

22 Cowell & Neill 1886: 416-20 = Muktophadyaya 1963: 121-3. The same verse with the same reading is also found in the Abhāvadānamālā, Bondgad-Levin and Volkova 1965, verse 261. There is no equivalent in chapter 59 of Ksemendra’s Bodhicaryavatāraudhakalpattra.
23 Heretofore 1908: 263.
24 T. 2042 (L) 109c23-24 (juan 3).
26 Derge Tanjur 4145, ‘dul ba, ra 237b2.
27 T. 1345 (XXVI) 510b27 (juan 99).
28 T. 1 (14) 658b11 (juan 10), Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: ii.287,7 (21.2.9).
29 Trencnner et al. 1924- s.v.
30 Okayama et al. 2000: 300, n. 140.
31 Okayama et al. 2000: 147.

36 T. 639 (XV) 549b10 (juan 1); Matsumani 1975: 229.1 = Dutt 1939-1959: ii.1.13.8.
37 Dutt 1939-1959: ii.2.414,1-2.
38 T. 1635 (XXIII) 58a4-5 (juan 4).
39 On the verb sā dag in legal literature, which sometimes plays on the dual sense of defiling and defaming, see Hopkins 1925: 41-42 (e.g., Vyākhyākatā 1.66cd: adhyāta ca tavan kanyām dāsāyaṁ tu mṛdayatām). Note, incidentally, the Latin usage of stuprare, “to debase or ravish,” in descriptions of incest, mentioned by Archibald 2001: xiii.
corresponds simply to *ring mo*, sister.

The certainly related *qinzi* (親妹), as far as I know not recorded at all in dictionaries, appears to be equally rare, if not rarer. I have found it only in a tenth-century translation of Faxian,\(^4\) and in an eighth-century translation of Bodhiruci.\(^4\) In the latter case, the correspondence of the expression as a whole, however, is not clear to me.\(^4\)

Both kinship terms should be entered in future comprehensive dictionaries of Chinese.

**Literature**


\(^4\) T. 191 (III) 937b1 (juan 2).

\(^4\) T. 1092 (XX) 252c14 (juan 5).

\(^4\) Derje Kanjuri 686, nyuul *hun, ma, 39b6-7: *ring mo *zhes phyi *bas ni *dgos pa'i yo *byad thams cad tebang *bar stong par *gyur zhi *yan lag *shong *bar *byid do* ! 1. T. 902 (XX) 252c14-15 (juan 5): 若乞龍女為親姊者。言中寶具衣服甘露飲食亦感實受。
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