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Buddhist Echoes in Māgha's *Śiśupāla-vadha*¹

Abstract

Māgha probably worked in the second half of the 7th century (before 800 A.D.). He was the author of a great epic poem (*mahā-kāvya*) *Śiśupāla-vadha* – “The Killing of Śiśupāla”, which was modelled after Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya*. In twenty cantos (*sarga*), in ornate stanzas composed in various metres, the poet presented a motif taken from the *Mahā-bharata* – the killing of Śiśupāla by Kṛṣṇa. Māgha's wide erudition extended over such subjects as grammar, drama, poetics, music, *ars amandi*, philosophy, politics, astrology, and medicine. He also displayed his knowledge of the Buddhist tenets and showed respect to the Buddha. These “Buddhist” stanzas, together with respective references and explanations will be the subject of the present paper.

§1. “Bhāravi and Māgha shine forth as the Gemini in the bright stellar sphere of classical Sanskrit literature. For they seem linked together by a mutual likeness in their works which must strike every reader” – wrote Hermann Jacobi in his paper “On Bhāravi and Māgha”.² Māgha worked probably in the second half of the 7th century (before 800 AD.).³ He was the author of a great epic poem (*mahā-kāvya*), *Śiśupāla-vadha* (abbr.: Śv) – “the Killing of Śiśupāla”, which was modelled after Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya*.⁴ In twenty cantos (*sarga*), in ornate stanzas composed in various metres the poet presented

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² Jacobi 1889: 121 (1970: 447).

³ See Hultsch 1926: vii; Winternitz 1985: 72-76; Lienhard 1984: 187ff; Trynkowska 2000a.

⁴ In its turn Māgha's poem inspired Ratnākara to compose his poem *Hara-vijaya*; cf. Smith 1985: 7ff: “Ratnākara, it seems likely, set out to surpass the most influential of Sanskrit mahākāvyas, Māgha's *Śiśupālavadha*, a work dedicated to Viṣṇu, and itself modelled on Bhāravi's Śaivite *Kirātārjunīya*.”

a motif taken from the *Mahā-bhārata*, the killing of Śiśupāla by Kṛṣṇa.⁵ It seems that the *Māgha-kāvya* (as it is also styled) was his only poem, since other works of his are not known.⁶

§2. There are many commentaries on the Śv.⁷ Of the two edited commentaries on the *Māgha-kāvya*, one is by Vallabhadeva and the other by Mallinātha. Vallabhadeva (first half of the 10th century)⁸ is the author of the *Samdeha-viśauśadhi* (“Medicine against the poison of doubt”). Mallinātha(sūri) (coming from Vijayanagar), a well-known commentator from the 15th century, compiled the *Sarvaṃ-kaṣā* (“All-destroying”).⁹ As was noted by Eugen Hultsch (1857-1927), the editor and student of the poem¹⁰, Vallabhadeva commented upon a different version of *Śiśupāla-vadha* than the later commentator Mallinātha(sūri). Particularly great differences can be discerned in canto XV (untitled), to the effect that one can speak about two recensions of the poem. Vallabhadeva commented upon the epilogue *Kavi-vaṃśa-varṇanam* which follows canto XX at the end of the poem, while Mallinātha did not. Moreover Vallabhadeva referred to the explanations of earlier commentators and mentioned one of them by name, viz. Bhaṭṭa-Śaṅkara (ad Śv XX.54).

The Indian scholar, writer and traveller, Śrī Rāhula Saṃkrtyāyana (1893-1963), in his report on the search for Sanskrit manuscripts in Tibet mentioned yet another commentary by a certain Bhavadatta, perhaps earlier than Vallabhadeva.¹¹

§3. Māgha was a great and learned poet. His wide erudition extended over such subjects as grammar (he mentioned Pāṇini’s grammar), Bhārata’s treatise on drama, poetics, music, ars amandi (*Kāma-sūtra*), philosophy (Nyāya, Sāṃkhya, Yoga), politics, astrology, and medicine.¹² In particular the second canto of the *Māgha-kāvya*, under the title *Mantra-varṇanam*, is full of references to different fields of knowledge.¹³

§4. Stanzas from the *Māgha-kāvya* were often quoted in various Sanskrit works.¹⁴ Thus for example the *Śiśupāla-vadha* I.3 was used by Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, a Nyāya logician, the author of a reputed treatise *Nyāya-mañjarī* (“Bunch of flowers of logic”) from the

⁵ Śiśupāla, king of Cedi, one of those invited to the consecration ceremony (*rāja-sūya*) of Yudhiṣṭhira, got into conflict with Kṛṣṇa, the main officiant, and as a result of this quarrel was killed by him (*Mahā-bhārata* II.41-45). Cf. Stutley 1977: 278.

⁶ Lienhard 1984: 188.

⁷ See Krishnamachariar 1970: 157 (a list of 29 commentators).

⁸ One should not mistake him with another Vallabhadeva, a later commentator on the *Subhāṣitāvali*.

⁹ Cf. Trynkowska 2000b.

¹⁰ Hultsch 1926: iii-iv.

¹¹ Saṃkrtyāyana 1935: 23: “After reaching Lhasa on the 19th May, 1934, I began to search for MSS. The first MS. I saw was a commentary (*Pañjikā*) on the *Śiśupāla-badham* of Māgha by Bhavadatta, along with a few pages of a grammatical work. These MSS. were afterwards purchased and now they are preserved in Patna Museum.”

¹² Cf. Hultsch 1927; Hultsch 1926: v (see also Register, pp. 242-249); Kielhorn 1908.

¹³ Cf. Winternitz 1985: 73: “The second canto offers the poet an opportunity to display his knowledge of nītiśāstra, the science of politics. Here we find several nice aphorisms.”

¹⁴ See Cappeller 1916 (1977); Sternbach.

2nd half of the 9th century, in a context which is not at all poetic. Māgha was cited by name as an illustration of his considerations on the process of perception: From a distance only a general characteristic of a thing is apparent whereas details can only be seen when a thing is near.¹⁵ What the Nyāya calls *saṁśaya*, 'doubt', is a process of transition from a state of uncertainty to a state of discernment and ascertainment of something, which can be compared to the situation when a thing emerges from a mist. A similar picture is found in Māgha's poem. B.K. Matilal observed (ad Śv I.2-3): "The Sanskrit poet, Māgha, typifies, in Śīsupālavadha, a similar process in his rather ornamental description of the descent of Nārada on earth from the sky:

- (1) People anxiously looked upwards and wondered: The light of the Sun's charioteer, Anuru, travels horizontally, (and) it is well known that the fire blazes upwards; but what is this light that is descending downwards, glowing in all directions?
- (2) The Lord (Kṛṣṇa) first took it to be a mass of light, then he ascertained it to be an embodied being with a particular shape; afterwards he saw him to be a man having limbs distinctly, and thus gradually he recognized him to be Nārada."¹⁶

Cakradhara in his *Granthi-bhaṅga* commented upon the passage ad Śv I.3 in the *Nyāya-mañjarī* as follows:

"Mighty Lord, Hari (Viṣṇu), gradually recognised the seer descending from the heaven as Nārada by the following distinction: What has been recognised at first, due to the lack of clear grasping, as a mass of light, i.e. a ball of glare, next has been cognised as a figure due to an approximation to the mark of corporality, then it was cognised as a person from a near distance due to recognition of the particular members, finally, at close inspection [he] recognised him as [the seer] Nārada."¹⁷

§5. It is very interesting to observe that Māgha, a follower of Viṣṇu, also added a few stanzas which directly refer to Buddhism, viz. Śv II.28; XV.58; Epilogue: *Kavi-varṇśa-varṇanam* 2.¹⁸ Māgha displayed his knowledge of Buddhist tenets and showed respect to the Buddha perhaps under the influence of his Buddhist environment, or rather as a result of a process of the formation of the syncretistic doctrine of the avatars

¹⁵ NM, 130.4-5:

*dūraddhi vastu-sāmanyam dharmā-mātropalakṣitam /
adūratas tu viśpaṣṭa-viśeṣam avasthyate //*

NM, 130.6-8: *yathā māghena varṇitam [//]*

[7] *cayas tviṣām ity avadhāritam purā tataḥ śarīriti vibhāvitaḥ*

[8] *vibhūr-vibhaktāvayavam pumān iti kramād amuṁ nārada ity abodhi saḥ //* [= Śv 7.8].

¹⁶ Matilal 1986: 98.

¹⁷ *cayas tviṣām iti / vibhūr harir ambarāt khād avatarantaṁ munim kramān nārada ity anena* [23] *viśeṣābodhi buddhavān / yaḥ pūrvaṁ dūratayā spaṣṭa-grahaṇābhāve sati tviṣām cayas tejasām piṇḍa* [24] *ity avadhāritāḥ, punaḥ kiñcin nikaṭatayā śarīritayā jñātākāram, tato 'pi naikaṭyād avayava-* [131.1] *-vibhāgāvabodhāt puṁstvena nirjñātam, tato 'py atinaikaṭyān nārada ity evam abodhi /* (NM 130.22-131.1)

¹⁸ Cf. Krishnamachariar 1970: 157.

of Viṣṇu (Buddha was included as the ninth *avatāra*¹⁹). These “Buddhist” stanzas, together with the respective references and explanations, will be the subject of the present paper.

I

1. The most interesting – from the point of view of the history of Indian philosophy – is the stanza Śv II.28 (together with its commentary), which is inserted into Māgha’s longer deliberations on “politics”:

*sarva-kārya-śarīreṣu muktivāṅga-skandha-pañcakam /
saugatānām ivātmānyo nāsti mantro mahī-bhṛtām //*

“In all undertakings there is no (better) advice for the kings than the five members [of ‘politics’], as with the Buddhists in all the bodies there exists no other ‘self’ than the five aggregates [of factors].”²⁰

2. Mallinātha, the commentator of Śv, mentioned five members or parts (*aṅga-pañcaka*) of a *mantra*, i.e. the art of making the right decision by a king on the basis of the good advice of his ministers. Here, however, Mallinātha was referring to a later work, the *Nīti-sāra*²¹ (also known as *Kāmandakīya*) compiled by Kāmandaka (or Kāmandakī, ca. middle of the 8th century), which is heavily dependent on the *Artha-śāstra*.²²

Śv (Mallinātha) 38.14-15: *yathāha kāmāndakāḥ / sahāyāḥ sādhanopāyā vibhāgo deśa-kālayoḥ / vipatteś ca pratikāraḥ siddhiḥ pañcāṅgam iṣyate // iti /*

“As it was said [by] Kāmandaka: ‘Companions, the means of accomplishing, the apportionment of place and time, the counteraction in case of (or: against) failure or success – are regarded as five members.’”

¹⁹ Cf. e.g. Kṣemendra’s *Daśāvatāra-carita* (from 1066 A.D.). The name of Śiśupāla was mentioned in Aśvaghōṣa’s *Buddha-carita* XXVIII.28, towards the end of the poem, in that part which has not been preserved in the Sanskrit original, but only in the Tibetan and Chinese translations: “Śiśupāla and the Cedis, in taking the sacrificial gifts (*dakṣiṇā*) for the sake of pride, strove with Kṛṣṇa; why should we not risk even our lives in order to perform our adoration to Him Who abandoned pride?” (Johnston III: 118. Tib. Byis pa skyong = Śiśupāla)

²⁰ Cf. Schütz 1843: 17: “28. Wenn man bei allen Unternehmungen die fünf Mittel des Erfolges, wie bei den Körpern die fünf Skandas, wegnimmt, ist die Beratung nichts anderes, als die Seele des Saugatas.” Hultsch 1926: 14: “28. (26. Vall.) Für die Könige gibt es bei allen Unternehmungen keinen anderen Ratschlag als die fünf Glieder (der Politik), wie es (nach der Ansicht) der Anhänger des Sugata (Buddha) in allen Körpern keine andre Seele gibt, als die fünf Skandhas.”

²¹ *Nīti-sāra*, XII. sarga *mantra-vikalpa*, 17. prakaraṇa, 36. śloka.

²² Cf. Winternitz III: 2, 635 (dating); Keith 1961: 462.

2.1. The definition of the five members is found in the *Artha-śāstra*, the classical Indian treatise on politics by Kauṭilya, in the chapter on good advice or counsel (*mantrādhikāraḥ*):

As I.15.42: *karmāṇam ārambhopāyaḥ, puruṣa-dravya-sampad, deśa-kāla-vibhāgo, vinipāta-pratīkāraḥ, kārya-siddhir iti pañcāṅgo mantraḥ* ²³

“The means of starting undertakings, the excellence of men and materials, (suitable) apportionment of place and time, provision against failure (and) accomplishment of the work – this is deliberation in its five aspects.”²⁴

2.2. According to Mallinātha, in stanza Śv II.28 the poet used a particular figure of speech called *upamālaṃkāra* (lit. ‘adornment by comparison or similarity’)²⁵ since he compared the five principles of good counsel (*mantra*), which were defined in the science of politics, with the five aggregates of the factors of existence (*skandha*), which is one of the fundamental teachings of the Buddha. As for the king in all his undertakings the best directives are these five principles of good counsel, similarly for the followers of the Buddha the best directive is the teaching on the five aggregates of factors which shows that the bodies of all sentient beings are deprived of a “self” or “soul”.²⁶ Here we have an interesting combination of the classical principle of the *artha-śāstra*, viz. the fivefold counsel, and, on the other hand, of the fundamental Buddhist teaching, viz. the fivefold analysis of the factors of the existence of sentient beings.

2.2.1. The Buddha taught that such notions as “human being”, “man”, “person”, “self”, etc., are but nominal appellations (*prajñapti*). There exists neither any substantial, everlasting, unchangeable principle, nor any individual soul or cosmic first mover. What is actually existent is a dynamic stream of ever-changing, mutually dependent ultimate factors called *dharma*s. They can be classified into five groups or aggregates.²⁷ The conditioned arising which occurs at the moments of time of that stream of factors gives an apparent perception of “persons” and “things” – we perceive them as real objects and we believe that the relations between these “persons” and “things” are also real. In

²³ Text after Kangle I (I.15.42).

²⁴ *Artha-śāstra* I.15.42 [*mantrādhikāraḥ*]: “The means of starting undertakings, the excellence of men and materials, (suitable) apportionment of place and time, provisions against failure (and) accomplishment of the work – this is deliberation in its five aspects.” (Kangle II: 35). Cf. Shamasastri 1967: 28: “The Business of Council Meetings” – “Means to carry out works, command of plenty of men and wealth, allotment of time and place, remedies against dangers, and final success are the five constituents of every council deliberation.”; Meyer 1926: 33 (cf. Nachtrag p. 679): “Das Mittel, die Unternehmung anzugreifen, die Vollzahl und Vollkommenheit der Menschen und Sachen, die Richtige Bestimmung von Ort und Zeit, die Gegenmittel gegen Fehlschlag und die glückliche Beendigung, das sind die fünf Dinge, die beim Rat in Betracht kommen.”

²⁵ See Porcher 1978: 23-58.

²⁶ Śv (Mallinātha) 38.19-20: *evaṃ yathā baudhdhānāṃ sarveṣu śarīreṣu skandha-pañcakāṭirikta ātmā nāsti, tathā rājñām aṅga-pañcakāṭirikto mantro nāstīty upamālaṃkāraḥ* /

²⁷ Cf. Walpola 1974: 20: “What we call a ‘being’, or an ‘individual’, or ‘I’, according to Buddhist philosophy, is only a combination of ever-changing physical and mental forces or energies, which may be divided into five groups or aggregates (*pañca-kkhandha*).”

fact we create in our minds false ideas and images of a certain “I” or a “self” which is the center of such identifications and the focus point of those relations. The Buddhist teaching of the non-existence of the similar unchangeable individual principle, an “I” or “self” (*ātman*), which is the central point of all relations, both internal and external, was directed against the Brahmanic static concepts of an everlasting, substantial individual “soul” – while the Buddhist vision of the world presupposed a dynamic interplay between momentary physical and mental factors.

2.2.2. Now, Mallinātha in his commentary listed these five *skandhas* or aggregates supplying them with short explanations;²⁸ interestingly, their arrangement is different from the standard Buddhist order (see below 2.2.3., §1.), and it comes closer to that which is found in Śāṅkara’s *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* and its commentators²⁹:

“Material form (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), consciousness (*viññāna*), perception (*saṃjñā*), [and] formations (*saṃskāra*) [are] the five aggregates [of factors of being]. Thus: [1] the domain of [sensual] objects [is called] ‘the aggregate of material form’; [2] the sphere of their cognition [is called] ‘the aggregate of sensation’; [3] the stream of base-consciousness [is called] ‘the aggregate of consciousness’; [4] the sphere of names [is called] ‘the aggregate of perceptions’; [5] the sphere of latent impressions [is called] ‘the aggregate of formations’. In this way, according to the Buddhists, an ‘I’ (‘self’, ‘soul’) is but a stream of cognition (consciousness), which is active in a fivefold manner.”³⁰

2.2.3. The teaching on the five *skandhas* and its explanation can easily be traced back to the Buddhist texts³¹; for example Vasubandhu’s *Pañca-skandha-prakaraṇa*, a highly representative work of Buddhist scholasticism from the middle of the 5th century, contains a detailed description of the five aggregates:

“§1. As it was concisely taught by the Blessed One, there are five aggregates (groups) (*skandha*) [of the factors of existence]: the aggregate of material form (*rūpa*), the aggregate of sensation (*vedanā*), the aggregate of perceptions (*saṃjñā*), the aggregate of formations (*saṃskāra*) and the aggregate of consciousness (*viññāna*).

§2. What is the aggregate of material form (*rūpa-skandha*)? – This is the four great elements (*mahā-bhūta*) and the derivatives of the four great elements (*upādāya-rūpa*).
(...)

²⁸ From the viewpoint of the history of Indian philosophy, Mallinātha clearly referred to the exposition of the doctrine of the *yogācāra/vijñāna-vāda* school of Buddhism which is known from the basic treatise *Triṃśikā* (–*viññapti-mātratā-siddhi*) composed by Vasubandhu (“The Substantiation of the existence of the consciousness alone in thirty verses”). The main tenet of the school is that the phenomenal world is but a transformation of consciousness, and the base-consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*) contains the seeds or germs (*bīja*) of all actions, thoughts, sensations, etc.

²⁹ Śāṅkara, *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* ad II.2.18 (BSBh 450.7-451.1): *tathā rūpa-viññāna-vedanā-saṃjñā-saṃskāra-saṃjñakāḥ pañca-skandhāḥ* // Cf. also the definitions of the commentators.

³⁰ *rūpa-vedanā-viññāna-saṃjñā-saṃskārāḥ pañca skandhāḥ / tatra viśaya-prapañco rūpa-skandhaḥ, taj-jñāna-prapañco vedanā-skandhaḥ, ālaya-viññāna-saṃtāno viññāna-skandhaḥ, nāma-prapañcaḥ saṃjñā-skandhaḥ, vāsanā-prapañcaḥ saṃskāra-skandhaḥ / evaṃ pañcadhā parivartamāno jñāna-saṃtāna evātmā iti bauddhāḥ* //

³¹ Cf. Walpola 1974: 20ff (brief exposition with references to Pāli sources).

§5. What is the aggregate of sensations (*vedanā-skandha*)? – This is the threefold sensation (*anubhava*): unpleasant, pleasant, and neutral. (...)

§6. What is the aggregate of perceptions (*saṃjñā-skandha*)? – This is the grasping of a characteristic mark of an object (*viśaya-nimittodgrahaṇa*).

§7. What is the aggregate of formations (*saṃskāra-skandha*)? – This [group] comprises all the mental factors (*caitasikā dharmāḥ*) as well as formations dissociated from thought (*citta-viprayuktāḥ saṃskārāḥ*), except [two: the factors of] sensation (*vedanā*) and perception (*saṃjñā*). (...)

§25. What is the aggregate of consciousness (*viññāna-skandha*)? – It has the nature of recognition of its object (*ālambana-viññāna*); it is also called ‘thought’ (*citta*) and ‘mind’ (*manas*) – it is ‘thought’ because it ‘collects’ (*cinotīti cittaṃ*), it is ‘mind’ because it ‘grasps’ (*grahaṇa*).

§26. The highest thought (*agra-citta*) is the base-consciousness (*ālaya-viññāna*). Why? – Because all the seeds (*bīja*) of formative factors (*saṃskāra*) are gathered in it.”³²

2.2.4. In another famous work of Vasubandhu, the *Abhidharma-kośa*, or “Treasury of Higher Doctrine”, which is still the basic compendium of Buddhist doctrine in China, Japan, and Tibet, it was said:

“There is no ‘self’ (*ātman*) and it is only [the continuum of] the aggregates stimulated by the [previously accumulated] afflictions and actions which, by means of a stream of intermediate being, enters [the mother’s] womb; like light. (AK III.18)³³ – What kind of a ‘self’? – One which is supposed to cast down these [aggregates] and to take on again those aggregates (*skandha*); such a one does not exist, a spirit, an internal agent (*antar-vyāpāra-puruṣa*), [etc.]. And thus it was said by the Blessed One [in the *Paramārtha-śūnyatā-dharma-paryāya*]: ‘There is action, there is result, but the doer is not perceived who casts down these aggregates and takes on again other aggregates, except the dharma-convention (*dharma-saṃketa*). Here, this dharma-convention means: when this exists, that exists too, i.e. in full – the dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*).’”

II

1. Śv II.28 is quoted by Ratnaśrījñāna (perhaps the 1st half of the 10th century), the commentator of the famous treatise on poetics *Kāvyaadarśa* by Daṇḍin (ca. 6th century), in his explanation of the definition of *sarga-bandha*³⁴, as an illustration of the word *mantra* in KD I.17.

³² Cf. Dantinne 1980: 3-26.

³³ AK III.18 (p. 432-433): *nātmāsti skandha-mātram tu kleśa-karmābhisaṃskṛtam / antarābhava-santatyā kukṣim eti pradīpavat //*. “There is no self (*ātman*) and it is only [the continuum of] the aggregates (*skandha*), formed by the [previously accumulated] afflictions (*kleśa*) and actions (*karman*), which by means of a stream of intermediate being (*antarābhava*) enters [the mother’s] womb, like a lamp.”

³⁴ Daṇḍin, *Kāvyaadarśa* I.14-19. Cf. Dimitrov 2002.

vipralambhair vivāhaiś ca kumārodaya-vardhanaiḥ /
mantra-dūta-prayānāji-nāyakābhyudayair api // [= KD I.17]
 [...] *mantraḥ kriyārambha-deśa-kāla-vibhāga-puruṣa-dravya-samyag-*
vinipāta-kriyā-kārya-siddhi-lakṣaṇa-pañcāṅgātma-kārya-niścayaḥ / yad
āha māghaḥ /
sarva-kārya-śāstreṣu muktivāṅga-skandha-pāñcakam /
saugatānām ivātmānyo nāsti mantro mahī-bhṛtām // [= Śv 2.28]
iti / vistaras tu tac-chāstrāt ³⁵

“Poetical composition should be adorned/embellished with descriptions of separation and marriage, the birth and nurturing of a son, as well as [with descriptions of] a counsel, an envoy, an advance [of an army], a combat, and the success of a hero.’ – ‘Counsel’ means the resolution of taking an action, being in its nature five-membered and characterised by (1) undertaking of an action, (2) allotment of place and time, (3) [employment of] the right people and things, (4) measures [preventing eventual] defeat, (5) accomplishment [of the undertaken] action. As was said by Māgha – ... (= Śv II.28) – Detailed [explanation of the meaning] according to that treatise.”³⁶

2. Śv II.28 is also quoted in Bhoja’s “Necklace of Sarasvatī” (*Sarasvatī-kaṇṭhābharaṇa*) from the 11th century:

śāstra-mātra-pratītatvād apratītaṃ yad ucyate /
guṇatvaṃ tasya tadvidya-sambhāṣādaḥ vidur budhāḥ // (I.97)
yathā -- [Śv II.28] –
atrāṅga-skandha-pāñcakam ity asya śāstra-mātra-prasiddhasyāpi tadvidya-
sambhāṣāyāṃ guṇatvam //

“What is called ‘not intelligible’ because of being known from the *śāstra* alone, the wise men consider as possessing its quality in a conversation of the connoisseurs, etc. As [it was said in the *Śiśupāla-vadha*] – [Śv II.28] –

³⁵ Ratnaśrījñāna, *Kāvya-lakṣaṇam*, ad *Kāvya-darśa* I.17, p. 12.21-13.1. I read in pada b *vardhanaiḥ* after Dimitrov 2002: 162, against *varṇanaiḥ* in Ratnaśrījñāna.

³⁶ Cf. modern commentary by Vidyābhūṣaṇa Paṇḍit Rangacharya Raddi Shastri, KAD 1970: 20.10-14: *mantraḥ pradhāna-puruṣaiḥ saha ripu-jayārthaṃ gupta-sambhāṣā kāryakārya-vicāraś ca / sa pañcāṅgaḥ / tad uktaḥ – sahāyāḥ sādhanopāyā vibhāgo deśa-kālayoḥ /*

vipatteś ca pratīkāraḥ siddhiḥ pañcāṅgam iṣyate // iti //
sa ca kirāta-prathama-sarge māgha-dvītiya-sarge ca draṣṭavyaḥ / [...] *[20] idam mantrādi-pāñcakam krameṇaiva varṇanīyam / tathāhi / ādau mantraḥ anantaram dūta-preṣaṇam tato yuddhaya gamanam tataḥ samaraḥ paścād vijaya-lābha iti*

“Counsel is clandestine talk and discussion, with the chief people, about what is to be done and what is to be avoided in order to defeat an enemy. It is five-membered. It was said – ‘Associates (partners), means of accomplishment [of the plan], determination of time and place, counteraction against failure, and accomplishment are regarded as the five parts [of a counsel].’ It is apparent in the first canto of the *Kirāta*[-*arjunīya*] and in the second canto of [the] *Māgha*[-*kāvya*]. (...) These five [elements] beginning with counsel (*mantra*) should be described in turn, viz.: first there is a counsel, next sending the envoys, then military expedition, then battle, and in the end – gaining a victory.”

here, [the expression] ‘five members as five aggregates’ means possessing the quality also of what is known from the *śāstra* alone during the conversation of the connoisseurs.”

III

1. The next “Buddhist” stanza by Māgha is found in canto fifteen and reads as follows – Śv XV.58 (Mallinātha) = XV.65 (Vallabhadeva):

*iti tat tadā vikṛta-rūpam abhajat tad-avibhinna-cetasam /
māra-balam iva bhayaṇi-karatāṃ hari-bodhisattvam abhirāja-maṇḍalam //*

“In this way then the circle of kings, with deformed forms, manifested their monstrosity to Hari, having an unshaken mind, like the forces of Māra to the Bodhisattva.”³⁷

According to Mallinātha, here again the poet employed the poetic figure called *upamālaṃkāra* (‘adornment by similarity’) and *upamiti-samāsa* (‘comparative compound’): In this way, at that time the circle of kings³⁸ [Mallinātha: *rāja-maṇḍala* = *narapati-gaṇa* ‘host of kings’] with figures deformed by anger and terrifying appearance [Mallinātha: *roṣa-bhīṣaṇākāra*], like the army of Māra [Mallinātha: *māra-bala* = *madana-sainya* ‘army of the maddening one’], manifested their frightening monstrosity in the presence of Hari, who remained with unshaken mind, like the Bodhisattva, i.e. the Buddha. In other words, as the Lord Buddha destroyed the army of Māra, which intended to break his meditation (*samādhi*), similarly Hari, or Kṛṣṇa, will destroy the array of kings.

2. In the Buddhist tradition, the episode of the defeat of Māra (lit. ‘Death’), the Buddhist personification of all evil, destruction, passion, darkness, etc., occupies a prominent position in the legendary life of the Buddha. The Evil One appeared as a tempter in front of the Bodhisattva, i.e. the prince Siddhārtha Gautama, sitting under the āśvattha tree and deeply sunk in a cycle of meditations, which would finally lead him to the ultimate state of perfect “awakening” (*bodhi*) – he became the Awakened One, i.e. the Buddha. Māra intended to disturb the pure state of exalted meditation of the Buddha-to-be and sent against him his terrifying troops, with deformed bodies and the horrible appearance of half-men, half-animals. When the attack of his armies did not have any effect, Māra despatched his three charming daughters: Passion (*Ragā*), Aversion (*Aratī*) and Lust (*Taṇhā*). But they were unable even in the slightest measure

³⁷ Hultsch 1926: 161: “So furchtbar erschien damals die Fürstenschar, deren Äußeres entstellt war, gegenüber dem Hari, dessen Herz unverändert blieb, wie Māra’s Heer gegenüber dem Bodhisattva.”

³⁸ See Apte 1997: 418a sub *maṇḍala* (12).

to distract the meditating Siddhārtha. Thus Māra was defeated and had to acknowledge the superiority of the Buddha.³⁹

IV

1. The last of the series of “Buddhist” stanzas is found in the closing part of the poem, entitled *Kavi-varṇśa-varṇanam*, or “Description of the poet’s lineage”. On that part of the poem only Vallabhadeva commented. According to this description, both Māgha’s father, Dattaka, and his grandfather, Suprabhadeva, were highly respected by the people. Suprabhadeva was a minister at the court of the king Varmāyata⁴⁰; his wisdom and good counsel which he gave to the king was compared by the poet to the instructions of the Buddha.

Śv, Epilogue 2:

*kāle mitaṃ tathyaṃ udarka-pathyaṃ tathāgatasyeva janaḥ sacetāḥ /
vinānurodhāt svahiteccayaiva mahī-patir yasya vacaś cakāra //*

“As a wise man acted according to the instructions of Tathāgata (Vallabhadeva: *Tathāgata* = *Buddha-bhaṭṭāraka* ‘Venerable Buddha’), so also the king [Varmāyata] applied his [i.e. his minister’s] advice – not because of complaisance but wishing his own good – [advice] which was just in time, concise, correct and leading to a successful result.”⁴¹

2. The complete reliability of the words of the Buddha, the only teacher of the truth, has been emphasised by Vasubandhu in the opening stanza of his *Abhidharma-kośa*:

“Having paid respect to Him who completely, in every respect, destroyed darkness and drew out the world [of sentient beings] from the mire of transmigration, who is a true teacher – I shall proclaim the treatise ‘Treasury of Higher Doctrine’.” (I.1)⁴²

³⁹ Cf. BHSD s.v.; see 25. *sutta*, section *Māra-saṃyutta* in *Samyutta-nikāya* IV; *Lalitā-vistara* XXI (*Māra-dharṣaṇa-parivarta*); Āśvaghoṣa, *Buddha-carita* XIII (*Māra-vijaya*).

⁴⁰ Text of the Bombay edition reads *Śrī-Varmāya*, in the Calcutta edition: *Śrī-Dharmanābha*. Hultsch (1926: 224 n. 1) refers to the inscription from 625 A.D. and Kielhorn’s conclusions; see also Winternitz III:1, 72 & n. 3.

⁴¹ Hultsch 1926: 224: “2. Wie ein kluger Mann die Gebote des Tathāgata (Buddha) befolgt, befolgte der König nicht aus (bloßer) Rücksichtnahme, (sondern) nur im eignen Interesse seine Ratschläge, die zeitgemäß, kurz, wahrhaft (und) in der Folge heilsam waren.”

⁴² *yaḥ sarvathā-sarva-hatāndhakāraḥ saṃsāra-paṅkaj jagad ujjahāra /*

tasmai namaskṛtya yathārtha-śāstre śāstraṃ pravakṣyāmy abhidharma-kośam // AK I.1, p. 4.1-4.

The Blessed One removed completely the darkness of ignorance with regard to all cognisable things and achieved the highest wisdom. Thanks to his absolute knowledge he attained good for himself, and since he teaches according to the truth, he extends the good to all – his instructions have the value of rescue. The Blessed One out of pity for the world of sentient beings which is drowned in this mire of transmigration extends his hand to each being in order to pull it out of the mire. Neither the miracles nor the promise of gifts but the truthfulness and reliability of the Buddha's instructions bring liberation to suffering sentient beings.

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