ON ATISA'S BODHIPATHAPRAKṚṢṬA

-Helmut Eimer

In his article "About Dipankara Atisa", published in the Bulletin of Tibetology, New Series, No. 2, Nirmal Chandra Saha writes on page 34: "Restoration of Bodhipathapañcāla, from Tibetan or Mongol translation, is undoubtedly an academic as well as patriotic duty for Indian scholars. Such a "Sanskrit restoration of the Bodhi-patha-praśṭa" by Professor Mrinmukanti GANGOPADHYAYA, Department of Sanskrit, Vidyasagar College, Calcutta, was published in 1967 within Alaka CHATTOPADHYAYA's book Atish and Tibet. Life and Works of Dipankara Srijana, in relation to the History and Religion of Tibet (pp. 545-549). The same restoration now in Devanagari letters - was printed in the Atish Atish Dipankar Millennium Birth Commemoration Volume (i.e. Jadegati, Sept, 1982 to Jan. 83 Combined Number and Special Number on Atish Dipankar Srijan, Calcutta), pp. 12-14.

This "Restoration" renders the first stanza of the Byang-chub lam-yi sgron-ma in prose, although the Tibetan version gives four lines in the eleven syllable metre indicating the elaborate metre of the Sanskrit original.

With the words "...sdong-po-skod-po-yi/mdo-las..." in the lines 49/50 the Tibetan text refers to a canonical text contained in the Kanjur the title is restored by Mrinmukanti GANGOPADHYAYA (stanzas 11-12) as "创造出帽眼帽眼Үө". But, as a matter of fact, srong-po skod-po'i mdo is the standard Tibetan rendering of Gāyatrī śastra, the Sanskrit text of which has come down to us and has been edited more than once. That the Bodhipathapañcāla refers to the Gāyatrī śastra, we can see from the corresponding passage of the Bodhimangalaprapāṇī, the canonical commentary on the Bodhipañcāla. The references given in this commentary have been found in the original Sanskrit of the Gāyatrī śastra.

For evaluating the "Sanskrit restoration" we can refer to three stanzas from the Viradattaparyaptā śastra,
which are quoted in den Bodhicaryavorsa. The original Sanskrit of these stanzas has come down to us as a quotation within Prajñākaramati’s Bodhicaryavatārāṇāmya (to I,26 and 27) and within Kanakānātha’s First Bhūvālakārama (edited by Giuseppe Tucci, Minor Buddhist Texts, II, Roma 1934). Here follows the version as given by the Bodhicaryavatārāṇāmya, the variant readings contained in the Bhūvālakārama not being noted.

The "Sanskrit restoration" by Mrinalkanti Gangopadhyaya of the Byang-chub lam-gyi sgron-ma lines 38-70 (in the restoration counted as stanzas 11-16) runs as follows:

बोधिचित्रचाति यत्समपं तस्मि महेश्वरि ।
आकाशवाचां चंद्रेः संपूर्य भूयशोचारि तद्द्वतेष ॥
ग्रहावाचिकसंपूर्यां वद्वक्षेत्राणि चो नारः ॥
देवासद्वद्वृणां चोक्षतनयेम्य एव हि ॥
पश्चिमः प्राच्छिठ्ठो चिवं वोधाय नायते ॥
इम् विषेष्वते पूजा यस्यास्तोधिपि न विषेष्वते ॥
In the original language 24 further lines (i.e. lines 105-128) of the Byang-chub-lam-gyi aṣṭroṇ-ma have been preserved. Within the Bodhipathaprabhā six stanzas from the Mahāyāna-buddhagetrā śāstra are quoted, the same verses appear as a quotation within Santideva's Śīleśvaramuḍdha (edited by Cecil BENDALL, St.-Petersburg 1902 (Bibliotheca Buddhica. II), p. 16, lines 1-12). One can compare these stanzas with the verses 25-30 in the "Sanskrit restoration" by Mrinalkanti GANGOPADA-HYAYA as well.

The Byang-chub-lam-gyi aṣṭroṇ-ma has been translated several times into modern languages. Here follow the references to the translations known so far:


5. (English) Richard Faust SHERBURNE, "A Study of Atisha's Commentary on His Lamp of the Enlighten- ment Path" (Byang-chub lam-gyi sgron-ma'i dka'-rigs, grel), Diss. phil. Washington 1976, pp. 34-47.


8. (English) GONSAE Tulku/Brain C. BERESFORD, "Atisha's 'Lamp for the Path'", Mahayana Texts on the Graded Path. Published in memory of the Bodhisattva Tenzin Gyatso, the Khunu Lama Rinpoche, Dharamsala. H.P. 1978, pp. 1-25 (Poth)


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